

Tyrant 172

Chapter 172: Euclid Conversation

'Exactly what I expected. The sooner we have this talk, the better. It never made sense to hand me Euclid this quickly, not before I've even finished at the academy.'

Trafalgar stood inside the study, the morning light cutting through the tall windows and spilling across bare stone walls. The room wasn't lavish like the Morgain main castle chambers—no gold trim, no extravagant trophies—yet the weight of what would be said here was heavier than any ornament.

At the wide desk sat Valtair du Morgain, his long platinum hair loose over his shoulders, gray eyes sharp and commanding. Beside him stood Armand du Morgain, silver-haired, his presence quieter but no less firm, like steel tempered over decades.

The silence stretched only a moment before Valtair spoke, his voice crisp. "Trafalgar. I summoned you to discuss Euclid—why I placed it under your command, and why you must govern it well."

The words landed with the gravity of a verdict.

Trafalgar stepped forward, keeping his shoulders square. "Good," he said, voice even. "Because I have questions of my own about that, father."

Armand's gaze shifted toward him, calm and appraising. The faintest curl of amusement touched his lips, though he said nothing.

Valttair leaned forward, resting his forearms on the desk. "Then ask them. This is not a game. Euclid is no trinket to polish—it is a territory of strategic importance. And as of yesterday, it is yours."

Trafalgar's jaw tightened. He could already feel the trap inside the gift: responsibility dressed as protection, duty disguised as privilege. Still, better to face it head-on.

He nodded slowly. "Then let's start from the beginning. Why me?"

Valttair's gray eyes stayed locked on him, sharp as the steel hanging across the cemetery terraces outside. "Euclid may not be the largest city under our name, but its value is absolute. It houses a Gate. That alone makes it one of the most dangerous and vital places we control. Anyone could pass through—friend, rival, or enemy. Right now, the Gate is sealed, but that won't last forever."

He paused, letting the weight of the words settle.

Armand spoke next, his tone smoother, carrying the weight of seasoned authority. "Don't let it trouble you, boy. I handled the matter with the Velkaris council. The elders asked why Euclid was closed. I told them it was being completely remodeled. That bought us time."

Trafalgar blinked, surprised despite himself. The image of his grandfather weaving excuses for the most dangerous political arena in the continent was not what he'd expected.

Valttair gave his father a glance, the faintest curl at the corner of his lips. "Still sharp as ever."

Armand let out a quiet chuckle. "Of course. Don't forget who taught you. I may be old, Valttair, but I'm not senile yet. I'd never risk my family on something as stupid as negligence." His eyes shifted back to Trafalgar, cool and assessing.

Trafalgar's thoughts clicked into place. 'So that's how it works. A normal father-son exchange, clean and pragmatic. The kind of thing Valttair never shared with me. Now he suddenly throws me Euclid the moment I'm useful. Typical. Whatever—none of that matters. The only thing that does is getting stronger.'

Valttair straightened again, folding his hands together. "So, Trafalgar. The answer you want: why you? Why make you Lord of Euclid?"

The question was returned to its rightful owner.

Valttair's expression didn't shift as he delivered the truth. "The logical choice would have been Maeron. By order of birth, by expectation, the territory should have gone to him. But after Seraphine's attempt... punishment was necessary. He will not hold Euclid."

Trafalgar held his father's gaze, his thoughts sharp. 'So Maeron leaves Mayla in a coma, and the only punishment is losing land because Seraphine tried to kill me. They don't care about Mayla—just another servant in their eyes. Not for me. She won't go back to being a simple maid.'

Valttair continued, voice firm. "But there's more. You are one of the few with an SSS talent in the entire world. That cannot be squandered. You must be nurtured and protected. Euclid is a shield as much as a title. By placing it under your command, I make it clear to every ally and rival that you are untouchable."

Trafalgar's lips pressed into a thin line. He wasn't surprised. 'Exactly what I thought. Not kindness. Not fatherhood. Just politics, strategy, and family image. It benefits them—so they hand it to me.'

He broke the silence aloud: "But tell me this, father. How do you expect me to govern when I'm at the academy? I can't split myself in two, and I won't abandon training. The academy is important."

Valttair leaned back, unbothered. "Then choose someone. A trusted man to act in your stead. Leadership isn't about doing everything yourself—it's about appointing the right hands. Pick a captain, a squadron, someone who will serve you faithfully. I'll provide candidates."

Trafalgar asked, testing: "Anyone? Including Caelum?"

Valttair's response was quick. "Not Caelum. That would be too easy for you. Choose another. You'll learn more from the struggle."

Trafalgar's thoughts flashed. 'I already have an idea... Roland's old commander. He and his squad respected me. They might follow if I call.'

Trafalgar crossed his arms, shifting the conversation forward. "Fine. I'll choose someone. But there's another problem—Euclid is damaged. The dragon's attack wasn't light. The city doesn't have the resources to rebuild on its own."

Valttair nodded once, almost pleased. "Already thinking ahead. Don't worry. Euclid will be restored and reinforced. Craftsmen, mages, supplies—they'll be sent. Your only duty is to decide who will represent you."

Armand added, his tone steady, "The city will rise again, stronger than before. Consider it an investment. All you need is a steward loyal enough to keep your name steady."

Trafalgar inclined his head slightly. 'Good. Resources, manpower, and political cover. If Euclid becomes a fortified node, I can use it as a hidden passage—move quietly between territories. That's an advantage worth keeping.'

But another thought pushed forward, heavier, sharper. Valtair had spoken of vengeance last night, and the Veiled Woman's words still echoed in his head: Find Mordrek's killer.

He looked back to his father, eyes narrowing. "Then I have one more question. When do you plan to go after the dragon that killed my uncle?"

Valttair's answer was immediate, voice like iron. "When we know where he is. I'll find him myself, kill him, and tear every answer from his corpse. But until then, there is no date."

Trafalgar leaned forward, voice low but steady. "And if I could give you a way to find him right now?"