

Tyrant 173

Chapter 173: Compass

The study fell silent. Trafalgar's words still hung in the air like a blade: a way to find Mordrek's killer.

It was no small claim. The Morgains, with all their power, resources, and reach, hadn't managed to track a wounded dragon hiding somewhere in their vast territories. For a sixteen-year-old to suddenly declare he might know? It shook the air itself.

Valttair leaned back, his expression unreadable, gray eyes narrowing slightly.

Armand, however, did not share his son's restraint. The older man's calm façade cracked; fury bled into the room like smoke. This was no longer the grandfather Trafalgar had glimpsed by the cemetery. This was the true Morgain patriarch — cold, merciless, defined by the sharp edge of loss.

Armand's voice was low, but it cut deeper than a shout. "Can you back that up, boy?"

The words carried weight, and with them came pressure. Armand's aura surged outward, filling the room like an invisible storm. It pressed against Trafalgar's chest, a suffocating force that made the air thick, each breath heavier than the last.

It wasn't just strength. It was a reminder: Armand stood above Valttair in presence, even if both were SS-rank. The gulf between them was stark, and Trafalgar felt it with every beat of his heart.

But he didn't bow his head. He didn't flinch.

'So this is his true face. The kind of Morgain everyone whispers about. If I break here, they'll never take me seriously.'

He straightened his back, meeting Armand's cold gray eyes head-on. His silence was his answer for now — not defiance, but a promise that he would answer.

The weight of Armand's aura pressed harder, but Trafalgar didn't break. He lifted his hand slowly, mana flickering around his fingers.

In the next heartbeat, something shimmered into existence — a compass, its needle faintly glowing as though it pulled toward something unseen. The air around it vibrated with power, a subtle hum only few of their caliber would detect.

Armand's fury faltered for an instant, replaced by a sharper curiosity. "A compass?"

Trafalgar's voice was steady. "Correct. Not just any compass. An item — [Soulbound Compass]. Rank: Legendary."

The silence thickened again, but for a different reason. Even Valtair leaned forward now, eyes narrowing at the artifact resting in Trafalgar's palm.

"Legendary?" Valtair's tone was skeptical, edged. "Where did you get such a thing? Don't insult me by saying a monster dropped it, and you certainly didn't buy it. You lack the coin for that."

Trafalgar exhaled through his nose. 'No reason to lie about this.'

"It was crafted," he said simply. "Selara, the legendary alchemist. She's also my cooking instructor at the academy. We made a deal. That was what I asked for."

Valttair blinked once, slowly, his sharp expression breaking for just a moment. "Selara? The Selara?"

"That's right," Trafalgar confirmed. "But it only has one use."

The glow of the compass pulsed faintly in his palm, as if affirming his words.

For a long second, no one spoke. The oppressive aura faded as Armand drew it back, his gray eyes narrowing at the boy with new calculation.

The silence stretched—until Valtair finally broke it.

"Then tell me, Trafalgar. Why did you want this item in the first place?"

Valttair's gray eyes locked on him, sharper than steel. "Why this item? Why use it to find your uncle's killer? Is it repayment because he saved you? If that's the reason, dismiss it now. I gave that order. You don't owe Mordrek anything."

Trafalgar let the words sit for a moment. His grip on the compass tightened, the faint hum vibrating against his palm.

'He doesn't get it. It's not debt, it's not about honor. I wanted this for myself. For answers I've chased since day one. But I can't say that outright.'

His voice came calm, steady. "It's not about repaying a debt. It's because I can be useful. With all the Morgain resources, you still haven't found him. I can. That's what matters."

Valttair studied him, searching for cracks.

Armand's gaze softened a fraction, though his face remained hard. "And your first reason? Why desire such a thing at all?"

This time, Trafalgar hesitated. He stared down at the compass, its needle trembling slightly, as though it knew the weight of his words. Then, quietly, he said, "Because I wanted to know who my mother is. I have no memories of her."

The study went still.

Valttair leaned back, expression unreadable, but the silence from him said more than any denial. Armand shifted, his silver hair catching the lamplight. After a long pause, he was the one who broke it.

"If that's true, Trafalgar... then you have my gratitude."

Trafalgar met his grandfather's eyes, unsure if it was respect or pity reflected there. 'Doesn't matter. What's done is done.'

Valttair finally stirred, his voice low. "Very well. You'll come with me. Your absence from the academy will last longer. I'll send Caelum to deliver the message."

Trafalgar's jaw tightened at Valttair's words. 'Caelum leaving? That's a problem. If he goes, Mayla won't be protected. Damn it. No—there's still the Shadowlink Echo. I can reach him directly and tell him to take her to Velkaris. That'll solve it.'

He slid the compass back into his system storage, its glow vanishing in a faint ripple of mana. His thoughts spun as he kept his expression flat. 'This might actually be an opportunity. If I watch Valttair fight a dragon, I can study every strike, every movement. Sword Insight will record it all. The headache after will be brutal, but the growth... worth it.'

Valttair's gaze remained fixed on him, unblinking. "We leave at dawn. My wyvern will carry us to the hunting grounds. Be ready, Trafalgar. This isn't an excursion—it's war."

Armand gave a slow nod, his voice gruff. "Do not waste this chance, boy. You asked to prove yourself—now you'll see what it means to be Morgain."

Trafalgar met both sets of gray eyes, refusing to look away. His reply came short but steady. "Understood, father."

Valttair's hand cut the air in dismissal. "Then go. Prepare yourself. Everything is clear."

The heavy silence lingered as Trafalgar turned and walked toward the door. Each step echoed against the stone floor, his mind running faster than his feet.

'A dragon hunt with Valttair. Perfect. Dangerous as hell, but perfect. If I want to survive in this world, I'll need every skill I can steal.'