

Tyrant 175

Chapter 175: The Hunt Begins

The fortress courtyard was hushed at this hour, the sky still streaked with the last shadows of night. Breath fogged in the bitter cold, and the stone beneath Trafalgar's boots held the frost of the mountain's eternal winter. Valtair stood a short distance away, speaking briefly with a handler as the wyvern prepared, its wings folded like the sails of a warship.

Trafalgar adjusted his cloak, ready to move, when soft footsteps approached from behind.

He turned. Sylis was there. Her dark dress still bore the creases of mourning, her eyes rimmed red, but she held her chin high as if forcing herself not to waver.

For a heartbeat, neither spoke. Then she broke the silence, her voice rough. "So it's true. You're leaving already."

Trafalgar gave a short nod. "Yes. Valtair wants to move before anyone else expects it. Just the two of us."

She clenched her fists, looking past him toward the looming wyvern. "To hunt him. The one who killed my father."

There was no anger in her tone, only exhaustion and a cold clarity.

Trafalgar met her gaze, steady. "That's the plan."

Sylis swallowed, her lips pressing into a thin line. Finally she whispered, "Come back alive, Trafalgar. At least you."

He felt the weight of her words, but didn't let it show. Instead, he offered a small nod, the closest thing to reassurance he could give. "I'll do my best. You take care of yourself, too."

Valttair's voice carried across the courtyard, cutting the moment short. "Trafalgar. Time."

Sylis stepped back, her breath clouding in the cold. They didn't embrace, didn't linger—just a final exchange of glances before Trafalgar turned and walked toward the wyvern.

Trafalgar walked across the frost-slick stone. The wyvern shifted restlessly, its scales glinting faintly in the dim light, each breath spilling mist into the cold air.

For a moment, Trafalgar slowed his pace. He let mana flow into his palm, and with a muted shimmer the [Soulbound Compass] appeared in his hand. The weight was real, solid, its needle trembling as if impatient.

'Selara really made this thing. Legendary rank, one use only. I should ask if she can craft more in the future. I'm sure the price will be insane, but worth it. Artifacts like this pay for themselves a hundred times over.'

The thought steadied him as he closed his eyes and focused. Not Selara, not the Veiled Woman—only the assassin. The faceless presence responsible for Mordrek's death. The one name that hung like a blade over the family.

The compass reacted instantly.

Its glow flared brighter, the needle spinning in frantic circles before locking into place, pointing unwaveringly toward the horizon.

A sharp tone echoed inside his head: [Target located]

Trafalgar exhaled slowly, tension slipping from his shoulders. The weight in his hand felt heavier now, not from mana, but from certainty.

He closed his fingers over the compass and dismissed it back into storage. 'So it begins. Mordrek, Sylis... I don't know what I'll find when we reach him, but this is the only path forward.'

When he raised his eyes again, Valttair was watching, one brow slightly arched, as if he had seen more than Trafalgar wanted him to.

The courtyard opened wide into the landing platform, and there it was—Valttair's wyvern. The beast dwarfed every creature Trafalgar had seen until now. Its wings stretched like the sails of a fortress, the span so broad they blocked out half the sky. Thick scales shimmered with a metallic sheen, every shift of its body creaking against the leather harness strapped tight around its chest.

Trafalgar slowed, craning his neck to take in the sheer size. 'This thing... no way. It's like a dragon that decided to bulk up at the gym. A wyvern XXL. Hell, it almost looks intelligent.'

The creature lowered its head, a guttural rumble vibrating through the stone under their feet. Heat poured from its nostrils, each exhale rolling like smoke from a forge. Even its claws, curling against the ice-frosted rock, were the length of swords.

Valttair approached it without hesitation, running a hand along the beast's jaw. The wyvern bowed slightly, obedient, its slit-pupil eyes gleaming like molten silver. To Valttair, it was no threat—it was a weapon, trained and bound.

"Mount up," Valttair said, his tone curt, already swinging himself into the front saddle.

Trafalgar followed, placing a hand on the cold leather of the harness before pulling himself up. The seat was rough, the straps stiff with age and use. As he settled in behind Valttair, the wyvern shifted, wings twitching with restrained power.

The world looked smaller from up here, the fortress walls like toy blocks, the cemetery of swords shrinking below them.

Trafalgar gripped the reins tight, his pulse racing. 'XXL doesn't even cover it. Fucking gigantic flying fortress.'

Valttair glanced back, gray eyes sharp. "Hold tight. We're not wasting time."

The wyvern spread its colossal wings, the sound like thunder cracking across the courtyard. With a single beat, the air itself seemed to split apart, and then they were airborne—stone and fortress shrinking rapidly beneath them.

The cold hit Trafalgar instantly. Wind slashed against his face, biting into his skin like knives of ice. His cloak snapped violently, nearly torn from his shoulders, and every muscle in his body tensed against the sheer speed. Even with the resilience of the Primordial Body, the chill sank deep, gnawing at his bones.

He gritted his teeth, hunching low against the saddle. 'So this is what it's like... speed like a bullet, air like glass shards, it is faster than Mordrek's wyvern. I swear, my balls feel like marbles from how cold it is. Freezing as hell, but incredible at the same time.'

Valttair sat unshaken in front of him, his grey hair whipping behind like a banner. He guided the wyvern with a steady hand, utterly at ease with the monster beneath him.

Every few minutes, his voice cut through the roaring wind, calm and commanding. "Which way?"

Trafalgar clenched his jaw, focusing on the Compass's direction still burned into his mind. "Northwest. Keep straight for now."

The wyvern responded to Valttair's slightest movement, angling its wings and diving through the mountain winds with terrifying grace. The peaks rushed past beneath them, white and jagged, while the endless horizon stretched like a sea of clouds and ice.

Trafalgar's hands were stiff, his knuckles white from gripping the harness. His chest burned with each breath, the cold relentless, but he refused to show weakness. 'If I can't endure a ride, how the hell am I supposed to face a dragon?'