

Tyrant 188

Chapter 188: Vincent's Insight

The streets of Euclid were quiet beneath the pale light of the moon, the snow crunching softly under each step. Trafalgar walked at a steady pace beside Vincent, offering his arm when the old man faltered. The wooden prosthetic creaked faintly with every movement, a reminder that survival came with a price.

'He still hasn't gotten used to it,' Trafalgar thought, glancing down. 'If this had happened in the Morgain estate, one of the top Healers could've restored his leg. But Euclid doesn't have that kind of luxury. This is as far as medicine goes here.'

Fortunately, the walk wasn't long. Just a short distance from the book stall, Vincent stopped in front of a row of modest houses. They were all the same: identical structures built quickly after the dragon's attack, practical but lacking character. Still, they stood as proof of recovery—Mordrek's reconstruction crews had made sure no survivor was left without shelter.

Vincent tapped his cane against the step, gesturing toward the door. "Here we are. Not much, but it's home."

Inside, the house carried the scent of fresh timber. The walls were bare, the furniture plain, but everything was solid and new. Two bedrooms, a small bath, a kitchen, and a living room—it wasn't luxury, but it was enough to live.

"Make yourself comfortable," Vincent said, voice carrying a note of hospitality. "I'll prepare the tea."

"Thank you," Trafalgar replied, nodding once.

He lowered himself into a cushioned chair in the living room, noting the arrangement: two armchairs, a small wooden table between them. His eyes drifted to the mantle, where a handful of framed photographs rested. Most were too faded to make out clearly, but one showed an elderly woman, smiling softly at the camera.

Trafalgar leaned forward slightly, studying it in silence. 'His wife, probably. She isn't here now. Either gone... or gone long before the dragon ever came.'

The soft scrape of wood on stone announced Vincent's return. He paused in the doorway, following Trafalgar's gaze to the photograph on the mantle. For a moment, silence hung heavy in the air.

"That was my wife," Vincent said quietly, his voice tinged with a distant melancholy. "She passed a few years ago. Not from the dragon, no... but from a curse. A powerful one. No Healer could undo it, not even the strongest I sought out. So don't trouble yourself with sympathy, boy. I made peace with it long ago."

Trafalgar sat back, folding his arms across his chest. He didn't offer hollow comfort—words couldn't mend that kind of loss. Instead, he simply inclined his head, acknowledging the weight behind Vincent's words.

With a faint shake of his head, Vincent pushed away the heaviness and shuffled forward, balancing a tray with surprising steadiness. He set it down on the small table, the porcelain cups rattling faintly against their saucers. The scent of steeping herbs filled the room, warm and grounding.

"Here," Vincent said, offering a cup with a small, almost cheerful smile. "Tea. It helps with the cold and the bones."

Trafalgar accepted it with both hands, nodding once more. The warmth seeped into his fingers before he even tasted it.

Vincent lowered himself into the opposite chair with a tired sigh, wrapping his wrinkled hands around his own cup. Then, after a moment of silence, his expression shifted, brightening as though someone had lit a lantern inside him.

"Well then," Vincent said, leaning forward with sudden eagerness. "Tell me—what is it you wish to know about dragons? Careful, though... once I start on that topic, I can get carried away."

Trafalgar allowed a faint smile to tug at his lips. "That's fine. I'd like to know about their bloodline. What traits does it carry?"

Vincent's eyes lit with a spark that made him seem decades younger. He set his cup aside and clasped his hands together, leaning forward as though he were about to reveal a treasure.

"The dragon bloodline," he began with deliberate weight, "is without question the strongest bloodline in existence. Do you know why?"

Trafalgar tilted his head slightly. "Enlighten me."

Vincent chuckled, pleased by the invitation. "Because their bodies are born with advantages no other race can match. Passive gifts, ones they never have to train for. Their absorption of mana is extraordinary—dragons drink it in from the air itself, more efficiently than even elves or spirits. Their recovery is unmatched. Wounds that would cripple a man for life close in days for them. And their affinity with mana..." He tapped his temple, his eyes gleaming. "It's as if the world itself bends to them."

'Sounds broken,' Trafalgar thought dryly, sipping his tea. 'But considering what I've seen, I believe it.'

"And then there's their lifespan," Vincent went on, his voice almost reverent. "Hundreds, even thousands of years. Imagine a creature who never stops feeding on mana, never stops growing stronger. Time itself becomes their greatest weapon."

Trafalgar nodded slowly, digesting the explanation. "I see. Then let me ask—about the dragon that attacked Euclid. The Gluttony Dragon. Do any records exist of it?"

Vincent frowned, gaze distant as he searched his memory. "Few, very few. In truth, you know more than I. You saw it with your own eyes. Your father fought it. What I can say..." He paused, then snapped his fingers. "Yes. It was young. Barely two centuries old at most."

Trafalgar blinked, the teacup hovering just shy of his lips. 'Two hundred years... and that counts as young? That thing nearly leveled a city, and it wasn't even mature?'

He set the cup down carefully, hiding his surprise behind a neutral mask. "I understand."

Vincent, oblivious to Trafalgar's private reaction, leaned back with a small, satisfied smile. "Yes, young indeed. Dangerous still, but far from its peak."

Trafalgar set his cup down and leaned forward slightly. "I can tell you what I observed myself. As its name suggests, the Gluttony Dragon gained strength by consuming others. Skills, traits, even elements—it devoured them all. Its lightning was dominant, but it displayed multiple abilities. Toward the end, it even tried to immolate itself. That part..." He exhaled through his nose. "That part was unsettling."

Vincent's eyes widened with fascination. "Absorptive evolution... extraordinary! Yes, yes, it makes sense. The lightning, then, likely came from some powerful prey it consumed. That became its primary weapon. Remarkable!" His voice trembled with the kind of excitement only a scholar could muster.

Trafalgar raised a brow. "I have another question. The dragon seemed... drawn to something. It's not the first time I've seen this behavior. Another dragon reacted the same way. What could they be sensing?"

Vincent froze, then his lips curled into a grin. "Ahh... now that is interesting. Not one case, but two? That suggests a pattern. Dragons are perceptive in ways we cannot fathom. If both were compelled, it means there is something out there calling to them."

'Yeah, thanks,' Trafalgar thought dryly, his jaw tightening. 'I figured out that much myself. I want to know why it's always me they end up chasing.'

Vincent tapped his cane against the floor, eyes alight. "If dragons are reacting, it could mean a force tied to bloodlines—perhaps even primordial in nature. Imagine it! A primordial bloodline, close enough for dragons to detect... oh, it would be world-shaking!"

He leaned forward eagerly, voice quickening. "Do you understand what that could mean? A primordial bloodline is not like any other. They once waged war against the Void Creatures themselves, banishing them to another dimension. If such a bloodline appeared again, it could disrupt the balance of the Eight Great Families entirely!"

Trafalgar narrowed his eyes. "That much? Aren't you exaggerating the weight of a single bloodline?"

"Exaggerating?" Vincent almost barked the word, his hands trembling with excitement. "Not at all! Such a bloodline would have the power to reshape the world order. To scholars, it would be a dream beyond measure... though logically, it should never happen again."

Trafalgar rested back in his chair, letting the old man's passion wash over him. The steam of the tea curled between them, carrying with it the weight of speculation—hope for Vincent, irritation and suspicion for him.

Trafalgar swirled the last of his tea, then spoke with deliberate calm. "One more thing. Have you heard of a dragon named Caelvyrn?"

Vincent's reaction was immediate. His eyes widened, and the air seemed to thicken with sudden energy. "Caelvyrn... yes, of course! One of the most ancient names in draconic lore. Revered as a sage among dragons—intelligent, wise, older than any written record. He's a legend in his own right."

Trafalgar let the silence stretch before answering, his voice quiet but steady. "I met him some time ago. In the forest just beyond Euclid."

The old man nearly dropped his cup. "You what? You encountered Caelvyrn and lived to tell it? By the gods, boy, you should have told me sooner! Do you understand what this means? A sage of his caliber... to meet one in person..." His voice trembled, somewhere between awe and disbelief.

Vincent's hands shook slightly as he set his cup down, leaning forward with burning eyes. "Caelvyrn is no ordinary dragon. He is among the wisest beings that still walk this world. To speak with him, even once, is a gift beyond price."

Trafalgar leaned back in his chair, expression unreadable, the steam of the tea rising between them.

'A sage? He seemed more like a child playing at wisdom when I met him. Are we sure we're even talking about the same Caelvyrn?'