

Tyrant 192

Chapter 192: A Place for Mayla

Garrika's arms were still wrapped tight around him, her wolf ears flicking happily as she refused to let go. Trafalgar sighed, placing a firm hand against her shoulder.

"Garrika," he said flatly, "that's enough."

With a controlled push, he pried her off. She stumbled back a step, blinking in surprise. For someone like her—a lycan with raw strength far beyond humans—it should have been impossible for him to move her unless she allowed it. Yet the effort in his grip hadn't been casual.

A grin spread across her face. "You've gotten stronger, Trafalgar. Don't tell me you finally advanced your core?"

He adjusted his bracer and gave a short nod. "I have. I'm at Pulse now."

Garrika barked a laugh, hands on her hips. "Heh. Still weaker than me, though."

"Whatever makes you happy," Trafalgar replied dryly. "If that entertains you, then keep thinking it."

From the side, Mayla's voice cut in softly. "You've reached Pulse already? That's... incredible, Trafalgar. It hasn't been that long since your awakening." Her brown eyes shone with genuine admiration.

Trafalgar raised a finger to his lips, making the gesture for silence. "Keep it quiet. Few need to know. I trust you, so I can say it here—but outside, it stays hidden. Understood?"

Both Garrika and Mayla nodded, though Garrika's grin lingered.

Arden leaned back in his chair, letting out a low whistle. "That's damn impressive, boy. I still remember how long it took Garrika to claw her way to Pulse. Years, it was."

"Grandfather!" Garrika snapped, her cheeks coloring.

Marella chuckled from her seat. "Don't be mad, child. You know it's true."

Garrika groaned, ruffling her hair in frustration, while Trafalgar sat quietly, expression steady.

'So much noise over one step forward,' he thought. 'Still, it means I'm not falling behind.'

The mood settled after the laughter, though Garrika still wore her mischievous smile. She leaned forward across the table, green eyes sharp with curiosity. "So then, when's our next mission together, Trafalgar? You can't just come back stronger and not test it out with me."

Trafalgar shook his head. "Not anytime soon. I've been away from the academy too long already. That's my next destination. You three keep handling things here as you always have. If I need information, I'll send word." His tone shifted slightly, firmer. "And most of all—keep looking after Mayla."

At that, Garrika's ears twitched, and she glanced sideways at the brown-haired girl. Mayla lowered her gaze, hands folded neatly on her lap.

"Now that you mention it," Garrika said, turning back to Trafalgar, "we've been shopping with Mayla, but she hasn't told us much about herself. I figured she was waiting for you to explain. So tell me—who is she, really? And why's she so important?"

Trafalgar raised an eyebrow. "What do you mean?"

"The man who brought her here," Garrika pressed, "said she was precious to you. That was enough for us to take it seriously, but I want more than vague words. I want to hear it from you."

Silence stretched for a moment. Trafalgar finally leaned back, arms folding across his chest. "She's known me since I was a child. She used to be my personal maid, and now she's a close friend I value greatly. That should be more than enough to satisfy your curiosity."

Garrika narrowed her eyes, unsatisfied but intrigued. Mayla, however, went still—her cheeks tinged faint pink at the quiet weight in Trafalgar's words.

Garrika tilted her head, her wolf ears flicking with suspicion. "A friend, huh? And nothing more?"

Trafalgar met her stare without hesitation. "A friend. Nothing more."

The words were simple, flat—but to Mayla, they carried more weight than she expected. Her heart quickened, warmth spreading across her cheeks. She hadn't thought he'd speak of her so openly, or with such esteem. Flustered, she rose abruptly from her chair. "E-excuse me. I'll be back in a moment." She slipped out toward the hallway, vanishing behind the door.

Trafalgar frowned faintly. 'What was that about? Strange reaction...'

Garrika smirked, leaning closer. "Are you sure, Trafalgar? Because her face told a different story. You say she's just a friend, but she clearly feels more."

"I didn't lie," he replied firmly. "Right now, I don't plan on being with anyone. My focus is strength. Being close to me is like living beside a bomb—constant danger."

Garrika crossed her arms, unimpressed. "Hm. You know I won't give up either, don't you?"

His eyes narrowed slightly. "Garrika..."

Before he could finish, Arden's gruff voice cut in. "She's right, boy. You've got more responsibilities than you realize. One day, she won't let you shove her away so easily."

"And we already told you," Marella added gently, "it's better if you watch over Garrika when we can't. That's what family does."

Trafalgar looked from one to the other, realizing he was cornered—three against one. He pressed a hand to his temple, muttering, "Great. A three-versus-one ambush. Just what I needed."

The door creaked then, signaling Mayla's return. Her steps were quieter, her expression calmer, though the faint pink still clung to her cheeks.

Mayla slipped back into the room, smoothing the folds of her skirt as though nothing had happened. She offered a small smile, though her eyes avoided Trafalgar's for a moment.

He cleared his throat, seizing the chance to shift the conversation. "Arden, give me the address of that contact you mentioned. If there's time today, I'll go secure a place for Mayla."

Mayla blinked, caught off guard. "A place... for me?"

"Yes," Trafalgar said simply. "A safe district. Somewhere you can live freely, without depending on anyone. You'll be better off with your own space."

Her lips parted, but no words came. She had expected him to check in, maybe ask about her well-being—but not this. Buying her a home was beyond anything she could have imagined.

Arden scratched his beard and nodded. "I'll write it down. The landlady's strict, but solid. And with your name, you'll have no trouble."

"And if you mention me," Marella added, smiling knowingly, "she'll even cut you a discount. She owes me a favor or two."

Mayla pressed a hand to her chest, warmth blooming there. "Trafalgar... I don't know what to say."

"Then don't," he replied, tone even. "Just use it. Consider it necessary. You need stability, and I need to know you're safe."

For a moment, silence stretched—Mayla staring at him, Garrika raising an eyebrow as if to say "see?", and Arden and Marella exchanging satisfied glances.

Trafalgar stood, brushing back his dark ponytail. "If there's time, we'll go look today. You'll come with me."

Mayla's eyes widened, her heart fluttering despite herself. After so long apart, they would finally spend time together again—this time, not as young master and maid.