

Tyrant 196

Chapter 196: The Deal for Mayla's Home

The carriage rolled to a stop before a tall stone building at the edge of the northern district. Unlike the grand villas with sprawling gardens they had passed, this structure was refined but understated—its façade polished, windows tall and symmetrical, iron balconies curling like black vines. It spoke of wealth, yet without the ostentation of nobles flaunting their coin.

"This is the property you selected," the vampire announced, stepping down first with fluid grace. She gestured toward the upper floors. "Not the largest we could offer, but one of the most admired for its views."

Trafalgar helped Mayla down, though his dark blue eyes were already scanning the building's surroundings: the street's quiet order, the guards posted discreetly at the corner, the glow of enchanted lamps lining the walkway.

Inside, polished marble greeted them in the entry hall. The vampire led them up a staircase to the top floor, stopping before a lacquered wooden door. With a twist of the key, she pushed it open.

The interior was modest compared to the mansions of the district, yet far from ordinary. Two bedrooms, compact but bright. A small kitchen fitted with runes for heating and preservation. A clean private bath, its stone basin enchanted for running water.

But the heart of the apartment was the balcony. Wide windows opened onto a view that stretched across the northern district, rooftops cascading toward the horizon where the spires of Velkaris caught the fading light. The air carried a calmness here, removed from the noise below.

Mayla stepped toward the balcony, her voice low with awe. "It's... beautiful. More than enough for me."

Trafalgar's gaze didn't linger on the view but on the locks of the balcony door, the strength of the railing, and the distance from the street below. 'Modest, but practical. Safe—if it's guarded well.'

They stepped further inside, their footsteps echoing softly against the polished wooden floors. The apartment was already furnished, though not lavishly. A sturdy oak table with four chairs occupied the

dining corner, a cushioned sofa faced the hearth, and shelves lined one wall, waiting for books or ornaments. A patterned rug of muted colors lay beneath, grounding the space with a quiet, homely warmth.

Mayla let her fingers brush along the back of the sofa, testing its fabric with a faint, approving nod. "It feels... ready to live in. Not empty it's enough."

"The furniture is ordinary," the vampire clarified as she glided past, her pale hand resting briefly on the table. "Nothing enchanted, no runes. What matters is the infrastructure—light, water, heating. All powered by mana channels woven into the building itself. You'll never need servants to keep it functioning."

Trafalgar's dark-blue eyes scanned the details with sharp precision. The sconces embedded in the walls emitted a soft glow; thin sigils traced along the baseboards, humming faintly with stored mana. In the hearth, a discreet circuit promised steady heat without the need for firewood. He took it in silently, his thoughts practical: 'Efficient. No excess. Just enough to live comfortably.'

The master bedroom held a wide bed draped in simple linens, a wardrobe of walnut, and a writing desk positioned before the window. The second bedroom was smaller, clearly for guests. Both bathrooms were tiled in pale stone, enchanted faucets letting water flow at a touch.

Mayla lingered by the window of the master room, the view stretching endlessly before her. "It doesn't feel like the Morgain castle," she murmured. "It feels... 'ike somewhere I could live safely."

Trafalgar stood in the doorway, arms folded. "Then it's enough."

The three of them moved into the kitchen, where a square wooden table and two chairs waited tucked against the wall. Mayla sat quietly, her hands folded neatly in her lap, while Trafalgar lowered himself into the opposite chair, his dark-blue eyes steady on the vampire across from them.

She rested her elbows lightly on the table, folding her pale hands together. "So. The price."

Trafalgar leaned back, arms crossing. "Let's hear it."

"For this apartment," she said smoothly, "the cost is three thousand gold."

Mayla's head turned sharply, her lips parting, but Trafalgar lifted a hand to silence her. His gaze didn't waver. "Three thousand... that's the price of a solid item. Maybe not legendary, but rare enough to change someone's strength entirely."

The vampire's crimson eyes glinted with amusement. "True. Items can shift battles, even destinies. A home, on the other hand, grants stability. This is a northern-district property—quiet, secure, and built to last. There are villas that sell for tens of thousands of gold. Compared to those, this is modest."

"Modest," Trafalgar repeated under his breath. His mind ticked through the numbers: 'Three thousand. Enough to supply Euclid's library for years. Enough to buy elixirs, materials, gear... and yet, this is just a roof, walls, and a balcony.'

Mayla fidgeted, whispering softly, "Trafalgar, it's too much. For me, especially."

He glanced at her briefly, then back at the vampire. "Three thousand gold. For something this small?"

Her smile didn't falter. "As I said, it's the district. Location is what you're buying, not just the stone and wood. Safety costs. Privacy costs. And as you noticed, the mana systems keep it independent—you won't need servants or constant upkeep."

Trafalgar drummed his fingers on the table, the sound sharp in the quiet room. "Still overpriced."

Her gaze narrowed, playful rather than offended. "Overpriced for a Morgain? Interesting."

Trafalgar leaned forward, resting his forearms on the table. His dark-blue eyes locked on the vampire, sharp and unwavering.

"Remember what Arden and Marella told me? That you owed them a favor. Don't you think it's time you repaid it—by lowering the price?"

For the first time, the vampire blinked, caught off guard. Then she gave a thin smile, tilting her head as if she had never forgotten. "Ah, yes... of course. How could I possibly forget? A favor is a favor, after all. Very well—two thousand gold. A fairer price, don't you think?"

Mayla's eyes widened, but Trafalgar's expression remained unmoved. He tapped a knuckle against the wood, slow and deliberate.

"Still too much. Two thousand for an apartment this size is robbery. You and I both know it."

The vampire's smile sharpened, crimson eyes narrowing with intrigue. "Then what are you suggesting, Lord Morgain?"

Trafalgar paused only briefly before answering. "An agreement. Gold isn't the only currency I can offer. You're in the business of real estate—then perhaps you'll value something more."

Her pale brows arched. "Go on."

"You may have heard Euclid's situation," Trafalgar said evenly. "It's recovering, rebuilding. People need homes, not just libraries or shops. I can authorize construction within the district. If you lower the price, I'll give you the right to build an apartment complex there—exactly like this one."

The vampire stilled, considering. Mayla glanced between them, unsure what surprised her more: the boldness of the offer or the way the vampire's playful façade faded into genuine interest.

"...A Morgain offering construction rights in Euclid," she murmured at last, voice low with calculation. "That's not something I expected to hear today."

Trafalgar met her gaze without flinching. "Take it or leave it. You'll gain more in the long run than bleeding me for gold now."

Her lips curled into a slow, approving smile. "Very well. You have a deal."