

Tyrant 211

Chapter 211: Returning to Routine

The rhythm of the mana train filled the cabin — a deep, steady hum that pulsed through the floor and into the seats. Trafalgar sat near the window, his reflection faint against the glass, eyes unfocused as the landscape of Velkaris rolled past. He wasn't expecting much from this trip. Just twenty minutes of peace before returning to the academy.

That thought didn't last long.

Across the car, two familiar figures sat together. One was impossible to mistake — Aubrelle, her eyes covered by the same blindfold she always wore. The absence of her pale bird, Pipin, perched on her shoulder made her look strangely incomplete. Without its guidance, she faced forward in perfect stillness, seemingly unaware of Trafalgar's presence.

Next to her sat Director Selara, a contrast in every sense. Her long platinum-blond hair looked freshly combed for once, the usual chaos replaced by something almost elegant. Her emerald eyes glimmered behind clean spectacles, sharp and aware as ever, her posture more refined than the eccentric alchemist Trafalgar remembered.

He leaned back slightly, exhaling through his nose. 'Well... isn't this convenient. I was going to report to her when I arrived anyway. Might as well say hello now.'

Pushing himself up, Trafalgar adjusted his coat and walked across the car. The soft rumble of the train followed his steps as he approached the pair.

"Good morning," he said simply.

Aubrelle turned first, her lips curving into a faint smile. "Good morning, Trafalgar."

Selara looked up from a small mana tablet she'd been reading, blinking once before a grin tugged at her lips. "Oh! Look who it is — my personal chef."

Trafalgar froze for half a second, brow twitching. 'She's still on that? Seriously?'

He sighed quietly, forcing a small smile. "The same one, Director."

Selara's grin widened as she crossed one leg over the other, resting her chin on her hand. "You've been gone quite a while, my dear chef. The academy felt much duller without your cooking around."

Trafalgar gave a faint smirk. 'Still treating me like her kitchen assistant...' He didn't bother correcting her this time. "It's good to see you too, Director."

Aubrelle tilted her head slightly toward him. "You were away longer than we expected. I'm glad you're well."

Her voice carried the same calm steadiness it always had — that tone that never quite revealed what she was thinking. Trafalgar's eyes shifted toward her shoulder. 'Something's missing.'

"Where's Pipin?" he asked. "It's strange not seeing that little troublemaker trying to peck me."

Aubrelle chuckled softly, her smile growing. "He's resting. I didn't summon him today — he was exhausted. Even summons need sleep, you know."

Trafalgar nodded in understanding. 'Right... her family specializes in summoning magic. Makes sense that her familiar isn't just some pet.'

Selara adjusted her glasses, watching them both with mild amusement. "You two seem rather comfortable. How nice."

Trafalgar ignored her teasing and turned his attention back to the window, the scenery flashing by in streaks of gold and green. "It's been a hectic few weeks. I'm just trying to catch up."

Selara's tone softened a little. "I know. We received word from your family. Something about... an 'urgent personal matter.' That's putting it mildly, isn't it?"

Trafalgar nodded once. "Yeah. Things are fine now."

Selara leaned back, eyes glinting. "Good. Then maybe you can finally attend class without disappearing for almost a month."

He gave her a flat look. "I'll do my best, Director."

Selara laughed quietly to herself. "That's all I can ask for."

The train glided smoothly along the outer rails, sunlight flashing across the windows in rhythmic intervals. Selara's expression brightened as she leaned back with a confident grin, her emerald eyes gleaming behind her glasses.

"Of course," she said proudly. "It's not just my class — it's the most popular elective in the academy. You've been gone long enough that even the new students are asking who this 'prodigy' I mentioned is."

Trafalgar gave a low chuckle, rubbing the back of his neck. "You're still calling me that? I just made a few dishes — some recipes from the Morgains. You liked them, that's all."

Selara gasped in mock outrage. "Liked them? Those 'few dishes' were revolutionary! Whatever this 'Morgain cooking' of yours is, it puts our entire academy kitchen to shame."

Aubrelle chuckled softly beside her. "I still remember that stew you made. The aroma alone could make a demon hungry."

Trafalgar smirked faintly. 'Morgain cooking,' huh... better to let them think it's a family style than explain what 'Earth cuisine' means.'

Selara folded her arms with a playful glare. "You disappeared and left me to deal with students who think boiling mana crystals counts as soup. You owe me, mister."

"Punishment by cooking duty," Trafalgar said with mild sarcasm. "Terrifying."

Selara laughed quietly. "Oh, I'll make it terrifying. You're cooking for the entire class when you return."

After a pause, Trafalgar's tone softened. "By the way, Director... about that item you crafted for me — it worked perfectly, but I ended up using it differently than intended. Would you be able to make another?"

Selara blinked, then smiled knowingly. "No. That was a one-time favor, and I don't repeat miracles. Besides, it wouldn't be fair, would it?"

Trafalgar nodded with a faint grin. "I figured as much."

"Good boy," she said teasingly, crossing her legs. "Then I'll see you tomorrow. Don't forget your apron."

As the train curved along the hillside, the first towers of the academy came into view. Trafalgar watched them quietly. 'Back to routine,' he thought. 'Let's see how long it lasts this time.'

The train began to slow as the familiar towers of the Academy came into full view. The air shimmered faintly with mana as the city's outer district faded behind them, replaced by the sprawling marble courtyards and glistening blue spires of the academy grounds.

Selara stood up first, stretching her arms lazily. "Well, duty calls. I have a staff meeting in ten minutes. Try not to vanish again before next week, Trafalgar."

He smiled faintly and nodded.

Aubrelle rose beside her, holding her cane in one hand while her other palm glowed faintly — a summoning circle forming just above it. Within seconds, Pipin, her pale bird familiar, materialized in a burst of soft light, landing neatly on her shoulder. The creature ruffled its feathers and let out a quiet chirp that made nearby students glance over.

"Welcome back, Pipin," Trafalgar said with a faint smile.

Selara adjusted her cloak and gave Trafalgar a sideways glance. "You two catch up. I'll inform the staff that you've returned — officially this time."

"Appreciate it," Trafalgar said.

Selara waved lazily as she exited the car, her long platinum hair gleaming in the sunlight before she disappeared into the flow of faculty members. Aubrelle followed soon after, heading toward the eastern wing with Pipin perched elegantly on her shoulder.

Trafalgar lingered a moment longer at the platform's edge, watching the mana lines pulse through the academy's walls — steady, alive, the same as always.

He adjusted his collar and exhaled. 'Back again... same place, same rhythm.'