

Tyrant 212

Chapter 212: Confrontation

The first light of dawn had barely touched the academy towers when Trafalgar's eyes opened. He rarely woke this early, but after a full night of rest — his first in weeks — his body felt light, sharp, almost humming with mana.

He stretched lazily, the cool air brushing against his skin. Of course, he was completely naked.

'If Mayla saw this, she'd probably call me insane,' he thought, a faint smirk tugging at his lips. 'But... she'd understand, right? It's not weird if it's part of the morning routine.'

The room was quiet except for the faint hum of magic in the air. Trafalgar sat cross-legged in the middle of the polished floor, closing his eyes as threads of mana began to gather around him. The energy felt thicker than before — denser, more eager to obey.

He inhaled slowly, letting it flow into his core. The sensation was different now. Since advancing to Pulse Core, the world itself seemed to respond to his breathing. The mana didn't resist him anymore; it belonged to him.

'So this is Pulse,' he thought. 'Mana feels like water... and I'm the tide that moves it.'

Minutes passed, then nearly an hour. The air around him dimmed as he absorbed nearly everything within reach. The Primordial Body didn't tire; his focus remained unshaken, like an ancient statue surrounded by invisible current. Even the cold stone beneath him was a faint memory — something that existed only for mortals, not for what he was becoming.

When the mana around him finally thinned to almost nothing, Trafalgar opened his eyes. A faint blue ripple of energy shimmered across his pupils before fading.

He exhaled slowly, satisfied. "That's enough for today."

His voice sounded steadier than usual — grounded, confident. Standing up, he stretched once more and rolled his shoulders.

'It's strange,' he mused, looking at his hands. 'It keeps getting easier. Mana used to be something I had to fight to control. Now it feels... natural. Almost alive.'

He glanced toward the window, where the first rays of light broke through the glass and kissed the edge of his desk.

'Three weeks gone... and it feels like a different world already.'

With that, Trafalgar turned toward the washroom, ready to begin his first full day back at the academy.

Steam fogged the mirror as Trafalgar finished his shower, toweling his hair dry with absentminded precision. The scent of soap and mana-infused water lingered faintly in the air. He slipped into his academy uniform. For a moment, he studied his reflection.

The man staring back wasn't the same boy who had once arrived here half lost, half angry. His posture was firmer, his eyes sharper — deep navy-blue, steady like tempered steel.

He pulled his hair back, tying it neatly into a small ponytail. 'Still missing something... ah, right.'

His coat felt lighter than usual. The realization hit him. 'Zafira still has my jacket.' He sighed. 'I should probably ask her for it back.'

Straightening his collar, Trafalgar grabbed his notebook and stepped toward the door. He paused briefly, glancing once more at his reflection — the heir of one of the Eight Great Families, a descendant of Primordial blood, pretending to be just another student.

'Today's class... History with Professor Rhaldrin,' he thought. 'Probably the only class I almost slept through last time. Still, maybe it's worth paying attention now. This world's history might not be just history to me.'

Bartholomew came to mind — his quiet mate who came alive whenever he spoke of the past.

'That guy could talk about ancient wars for hours without breathing,' Trafalgar mused. 'At least he makes it interesting.'

He opened the door and stepped into the corridor. The hall was unusually silent — polished floors, tall mana lamps casting pale light. Only three doors in the entire section were occupied: his own, Zafira du Zar'Khael, and Alfons au Vaelion.

'Three heirs out of eight,' Trafalgar thought, glancing down the silent hallway. 'What are the odds that two of the Eight Great Families would have heirs my age?'

He rested a hand on the cool railing of the mana platform, feeling the hum of energy beneath his palm. The circular lift glowed faintly, waiting to descend, but he stayed where he was.

He wasn't in a rush. What he wanted was to see Zafira du Zar'Khael before class. It had been weeks since their last conversation, and after everything that happened in Velkaris, he wanted to know how her family had reacted to the news about Mordrek. The Morgain name was still fragile; hearing a foreign perspective could help him gauge the political climate.

The faint vibration of the mana platform continued underfoot. Then, from farther down the corridor, a door clicked open.

Not Zafira's.

The door at the far end of the corridor swung open. Alfons au Vaelion

stepped out — blond hair perfectly combed back, crimson eyes gleaming with the kind of confidence only someone born into unchecked privilege could carry. His uniform was immaculate, as if ironed by angels.

'Perfect,' Trafalgar thought flatly.

Alfons's smile widened the moment he spotted him.

"Ah, Trafalgar du Morgain," he said, tone drenched in false warmth. "It's been too long. How have you been? I heard... certain things happened to your family."

Trafalgar didn't answer immediately. His expression remained neutral — calm to the point of insult.

"Morning, Alfons," he said at last. "You've clearly been practicing your manners. Unfortunately, the delivery still sounds like gossip."

A faint twitch pulled at Alfons's lips. "No need to be defensive. I only meant to ask about your dear uncle Mordrek. He was quite... remarkable, wasn't he?"

The corridor fell silent. A single mana lamp flickered behind Trafalgar, the hum of the platform below barely audible.

"Remarkable," Trafalgar repeated quietly, then took a single step closer. His voice didn't rise; it didn't need to.

"You should choose your words carefully. Some of us learned to respect the dead. Others... still need a lesson."

Alfons's smile faltered, but pride forced him to stand tall. "It was just conversation."

Trafalgar's eyes hardened — the kind of gaze that could make a lesser man forget to breathe.

"Conversation?" he said. "No, this is you pretending to matter. You wear your family name like armor, but without it, you're nothing but a loud child waving a wand you barely understand."

Color drained from Alfons's face. It was strange to see Trafalgar in that mood.

"You talk about my uncle," Trafalgar continued, voice low, "yet when your own house falls — and it will — who will remember you? Because the Vaelion heir I see right now isn't a magician... he's just a coward hiding behind his family."

The words landed sharper than any strike. Alfons opened his mouth, but no sound came out.

Trafalgar straightened his sleeve with quiet precision, his tone almost polite.

"Next time, Alfons, remember this: power isn't inherited. It's proven."

Then he stepped past him without another glance, leaving only silence — and the echo of pride shattered across the hallway.

A soft click echoed from the far side of the corridor just as Trafalgar passed the mana platform.

Another door opened — this one with far more grace.

Zafira du Zar'Khael stepped out, adjusting one of her black gloves as her long, violet hair caught the pale light. Two elegant horns curved backward from her forehead, their dark sheen framing her porcelain skin. Her uniform was perfectly fitted, though her eyes carried that same distant, sleepy sharpness Trafalgar remembered.

She glanced between the two young men. Alfons still stood frozen, stiff and pale, his pride fractured and his tongue restrained.

Her gaze lingered on him for barely a heartbeat before her lips curved into the faintest smirk.

"Already losing arguments this early in the morning, Alfons?"

Her tone was smooth, teasing, but there was something in it that made the Vaelion heir flinch.

Alfons straightened his posture instantly, forcing a smile that didn't reach his eyes. "Zafira," he greeted, voice strained, "a pleasure as always."

"Mm." She adjusted the ribbon at her collar, the smirk still there. "I'd return the sentiment, but lying before breakfast isn't part of my routine."

That was enough to send Alfons walking — fast — down the opposite hall. He didn't look back once.

Trafalgar watched him go, exhaling through his nose. "He never learns."

Zafira turned her head toward him, amusement flickering in her gaze. "And yet, somehow, you always seem to be the one teaching him."

"Some people need repetition to understand simple things," Trafalgar replied.

"Or maybe," she said lightly, stepping closer, "you just enjoy putting him in his place."

Trafalgar gave a small shrug, neither confirming nor denying.

The mana platform beside them emitted a soft hum as the crystal beneath their feet glowed faintly. Zafira stepped onto it first, her long tailcoat swaying slightly. Trafalgar followed, standing beside her as the platform began its slow descent.

For a brief moment, silence filled the space.

Zafira's gaze flicked toward him. "Welcome back, Trafalgar. Try not to start another political incident before noon."