

Tyrant 40

Chapter 40: A Gift Too Early

The black castle of House Morgain loomed in the distance, its towers piercing the grey-white clouds like frozen spears. Snow never stopped falling here—not because of weather, but altitude. The entire territory rested so high in the mountains that the sun rarely touched the ground.

Trafalgar leaned against the rail of the upper deck, arms crossed, wind biting at his cheeks. Icy flakes melted against his skin and dark coat.

'Now this looks like a demonic castle. The other one was just... fake fancy. This one? Gives off proper cursed energy.'

He narrowed his eyes as the ship approached the main platform carved into the side of a cliff. Enchanted lights flickered along the castle walls, and gothic statues of long-dead Morgains lined the perimeter like silent sentinels.

'How long has it been? A week? Maybe more... with all the back-and-forth and those three days missing in the mine, time's kind of a blur.'

His thoughts drifted to Alfred—the eccentric, silver-haired captain of the airship. The first landing he ever experienced here had been traumatic, to say the least. The ship hadn't landed so much as it had slammed into the dock. Trafalgar remembered gripping the chair for dear life as the cabin tilted like a crashing bird.

'Nope. Not doing that again.'

He spun on his heel and darted back inside the ship. Down the hallway, into his room. His eyes scanned the space. A chair. A rope. Done.

Within seconds, he had tied the rope tightly around his waist and the back of the chair, securing himself in place like a lunatic preparing for impact.

'I don't care if this landing is smooth. I'm not risking whiplash again.'

Time passed. A few minutes. Then a few more.

The ship began to descend—but it was different this time. Smooth. Graceful, even. A quiet hum filled the room, no sudden tilts or shocks. Still, Trafalgar stayed frozen in place until everything had stopped moving completely.

And then... nothing. Silence.

Trafalgar exhaled in relief and reached to undo the knot.

It didn't budge.

He tried harder. Pulled. Yanked. Even twisted his torso using all the power his Primordial Body could offer.

Still nothing.

'You've got to be kidding me.'

A knock. Then the door opened.

Standing in the frame was Alfred—long white hair tied behind his neck, a deep navy coat fluttering with his movements. His purple eyes sparkled with amusement beneath the rim of his faded captain's hat.

One gloved hand covered his mouth as he tried (and failed) to suppress a laugh.

"...You tied yourself to the chair?"

Trafalgar glared. "What's so funny? Help me out here, damn it."

Alfred chuckled, stepping into the room. "Ah, sorry, sorry. I do this to all the newbies."

Trafalgar narrowed his eyes. "Wait... you mean the last landing—was on purpose?"

"Of course," Alfred grinned. "Hahaha. Had to test your reflexes. You should've seen your face. Well, not that I did, but I can imagine it."

He snapped his fingers.

The rope loosened and dropped instantly from Trafalgar's body like it had never been tied.

Trafalgar blinked. "...How the hell did you—"

"An item," Alfred said casually, tapping his coat. "Thought that'd be obvious by now. C'mon, rookie. That knot looked like you were preparing for a dragon crash."

Trafalgar stood and dusted himself off. "You know, maybe you shouldn't mess with someone from House Morgain like that."

Alfred raised a brow. "Tch tch tch. Don't tell me you're one of those pampered brats. I figured you were more like Lysandra. I was actually starting to think we'd get along."

Trafalgar sighed. "Forget what I said. Old man."

Alfred blinked. "Old—?"

Trafalgar was already walking toward the door. "Later, Grandpa."

"You little bastard!" Alfred shouted after him. "I'm not that old, damn it!"

Trafalgar smirked.

'Grumpy. Just like a proper grandpa.'

He stepped out of the cabin, the mountain wind hitting him immediately as the deck opened before him once again.

Lysandra waited just beyond the exit ramp, standing tall in her white armor, the snow collecting on her pauldrons but melting instantly from the heat of her mana.

Trafalgar stepped down from the airship with practiced calm. Behind him, the Morgain staff had already begun unloading crates and organizing transport. Valtair had already dismounted his wyvern and was deep in conversation with two armored retainers.

Lysandra turned as Trafalgar approached.

"I didn't think you got along with Alfred," she said, tone even as always.

Trafalgar shrugged. "He seems like a grumpy old grandpa. Kind of funny, though."

She blinked. "That's... surprisingly accurate. Most find him terrifying."

"He just likes messing with people," Trafalgar replied.

"Well. I'll be heading off. Father's likely to send me on another mission before I can even rest, and I do intend to enjoy one night of peace before that."

Trafalgar gave her a nod. "See you later then."

"Don't slack on training," she said as she turned. "We've barely started your path as a swordsman."

Trafalgar watched her vanish into the shadows of the entrance gate.

At the base of the stairs, a small group of maids and butlers stood aligned, awaiting Valtair and Lysandra. They bowed in unison as soon as either of them came near.

No one was waiting for Trafalgar.

'Typical. I'm not officially "important" enough to warrant a reception, huh?'

He scanned the faces briefly, but saw no sign of Mayla.

'Weird. She's always here when I come back... Maybe she's prepping my room again?'

With a sigh and one last glance at the swirling snow around the castle walls, Trafalgar turned toward the central wing and began walking alone. His boots crunched against the frost-laced stones as he followed the familiar path toward the residential quarters.

From one of the higher windows above the courtyard, a faint movement caught his eye.

- Seraphine POV -

Behind frost-covered glass stood Lady Seraphine, arms loosely crossed, her long platinum blond hair flowing past her waist like a veil of ink.

Her golden eyes scanned the scene below—guards, staff, nobles—and finally, Trafalgar.

She smirked softly.

'Should've stayed small and quiet, little bastard.'

Her reflection rippled in the enchanted glass as the wind howled outside.

- Trafalgar POV -

The halls of the Morgain estate were colder than usual.

Trafalgar walked with his hands in his pockets, head down, boots echoing softly on the polished stone. Servants passed him with respectful nods, but none spoke to him. As always.

He reached his door and pushed it open.

The room was clean—immaculately so. The curtains had been drawn halfway, letting in the gray morning light. The floor had been polished, his bed neatly made, and even the tray by his reading chair had a fresh glass of water.

But no sign of Mayla.

'Still not here...?'

He stepped inside, closed the door, and immediately noticed something sitting on the table near his usual spot—the table where Mayla always left his meals.

A letter.

Folded neatly.

Just a single sheet of parchment.

Trafalgar frowned and walked over. He picked it up and unfolded it with a flick of his fingers.

One sentence was written across the page in a neat, elegant hand.

Since I won't be around for your sixteenth birthday, dear little brother, I'm leaving my gift early.

— Your beloved older sister,

Rivena

Trafalgar stared at the signature, his jaw tightening.

A chill ran down his spine—not the kind that came from the winter wind outside, but the kind that scraped against instinct and left your skin crawling.

His breath hitched.

'No. No way. That bitch... what the hell did she do?'

He dropped the note and ran out the door, slamming it open so hard the hinges groaned. His feet pounded against the stone floor as he dashed down the hall, ignoring the startled glances of passing servants.

"Mayla!" he shouted.

No response.

He turned a corner, faster now, nearly tripping.

'She wouldn't—she better not have—'

He burst into the next corridor, heart thundering in his chest, dread tightening in his gut like a vice.

'What the hell have you done now, Rivena!?'