

Tyrant 48

Chapter 48: Wolves on the Road

Trafalgar adjusted the weight of his two suitcases—one in each hand—and stepped into the cold morning air. The marble floors behind him were silent now, his room left untouched, the place where Mayla once greeted him now only a memory.

Nobody wished him a happy birthday yesterday.

Nobody but Valtair and Caelum.

Lysandra was away in a larger city on official business. And Mayla... well, Mayla was still lying in that bed...

He walked alone.

'I don't want help,' he thought, tightening his grip on the leather handles. 'I don't trust anyone in this place, well only Caelum he proved himself killing Roland.'

The courtyard gates were just ahead, but footsteps echoed behind him.

A man in servant's garb approached—tall, slim, with a featureless expression.

Caelum.

"Young master," he said in a low tone, his eyes flicking to the sides to ensure they were alone. "Lady Seraphine will attempt to kill you during the journey."

Trafalgar didn't slow down. He didn't look surprised either.

"I know," he replied calmly. "You find out how?"

Caelum shook his head. "No. The method remains unclear. I suspect it won't be conventional. And given the limit of clones I can maintain, I cannot escort you. You asked me to stay and protect Mayla... and monitor the rest."

Trafalgar exhaled through his nose. "Correct. Stick to the plan. I'll handle this."

Caelum gave a small nod. "Good luck, young master."

And just like that, he vanished into thin air—no sound, no trace, no light.

Trafalgar continued walking.

'They're going to try to kill me again. It's not a possibility. It's a certainty. Whether it's Seraphine or that bitch Rivena, or some other family member, someone's going to make a move. Honestly, I'm glad Valtair finally put a leash on Rivena... she's been quiet lately because of that.'

He stepped through the archway and into the frostbitten courtyard, where the black carriage awaited—gleaming like obsidian under the pale light.

The black carriage was larger than most—reinforced with steel plates along the undercarriage and thickened mana-treated glass on the windows. Its exterior bore the unmistakable emblem of House Morgain: two crossed swords beneath a wolf's eye, etched in silver across the rear doors.

Trafalgar narrowed his eyes at the design.

'Subtle. Nothing says "target me".'

Beside the carriage stood five figures, dressed in dark traveling gear. They didn't wear the traditional Morgain armor. No ceremonial robes. Just pragmatic black leather reinforced with darksteel plates—and eyes that scanned everything.

Not soldiers of his house. Mercenaries.

Their presence made his skin itch.

'They don't match my core level... Each one of them feels like they're at least one or two ranks above me. If they're here to protect me, fine. But if they're here to kill me? I'm screwed, Valtair expects me to defeat them? Doesn't he want the only SSS talented person in the family to remain alive?'

The one who stepped forward was a large man—bald, muscular, with deep brown skin and a scar slicing from his left ear to his jaw.

"Good morning, young master," he said with practiced courtesy. "My name is Dren, and these are Kael, Beren, Rusk, and Tovin. We'll be escorting you to the Velkaris transit gate."

Trafalgar gave a neutral nod. "I hope the trip will be smooth."

Dren smiled without warmth. "As smooth as snow-covered roads allow, young master."

The man stepped aside and opened the carriage door.

Trafalgar climbed in, placing both suitcases on the floor in front of him. The interior was luxurious—velvet cushions, crystal lanterns infused with soft glowstones, and even a fold-out tea tray. But none of it comforted him.

As the door shut behind him and the carriage began to roll forward, he leaned against the side window, watching the front gates grow smaller in the distance.

'That castle... It tried to break me. Almost succeeded too. Rape, assassination attempts, betrayal, manipulation. But I survived. I found allies. I made enemies. I learned how to ride a horse. And I learned one more thing—'

His eyes slowly closed.

'That I'm still weak. Too weak to protect even one person. Too weak to stop Mayla from ending up in that bed. That's why... I have to change. I'll get stronger. No matter the cost.'

The cold wind outside howled through the mountain pass. Inside the carriage, Trafalgar reached up and drew the black curtains shut.

With the curtains closed and the sway of the carriage muffled by layered enchantments, the interior felt like a sealed chamber—quiet, private, isolated from the world.

Trafalgar exhaled slowly and sat cross-legged on the padded seat.

From his coat pocket, he retrieved the pill Valtair had given him—a deep crimson sphere, still swirling faintly with dormant mana. It glinted with an ominous pulse under the lanternlight.

He stared at it for a second longer.

'No veiled women this time.'

And then—he swallowed it whole.

For a heartbeat, nothing happened.

Then the explosion hit.

A violent surge of mana erupted inside him, bursting through his veins like wildfire. His breath caught in his throat as his heart pounded against his ribs. It was raw, untamed, not yet harmonized with his own flow.

But Trafalgar didn't panic.

He closed his eyes.

Focused.

He imagined the mana like a violent river tearing through a narrow canyon. He couldn't stop the current—but he could shape the walls.

Breath in. Channel down. Spread.

He guided the wave of energy through his arms, down his spine, and toward his core, nestled just above his diaphragm. The sensation was searing—like dragging burning threads through his bloodstream—but he endured.

'There. Into the core. Let it settle. Let it feed.'

He visualized the core—a glowing orb, once dim, now surging with new color. The mana curled around it, thickening its shell, expanding its density.

'A fifth more full than before... I can feel it. Not a rank up, but a solid step forward.'

Sweat trickled down his back. His shirt clung to his skin. But the pain was subsiding. The mana was calming.

He opened his eyes slowly.

The carriage still moved, rocking gently as it passed along the mountain road. Outside, the sky had begun to darken—the sun sinking behind jagged peaks.

He pulled the curtain aside for a moment and saw nothing but snow and stone.

No sign of ambush. No sudden attacks.

But he knew better than to relax.

'They'll come eventually.'

He let the curtain fall shut again, rolled his shoulders, and wiped his forehead with a sleeve.

By the time Trafalgar opened the carriage door, the sun had vanished behind the peaks and the cold had settled in like a curse. A thin fog clung to the snow-covered ground, and the distant howls of mountain wolves echoed across the dark valleys.

He stepped out, his shirt clinging to his back, damp with sweat. His legs ached slightly from sitting too long in meditation, but he was steady.

The five escorts had already set up camp.

A modest fire crackled in the center of a cleared patch, casting long shadows across the surrounding rocks. Bedrolls were rolled out, and a black iron pot hung above the flames, bubbling with the scent of meat and spices.

Dren was crouched by the fire, stirring the pot with a wooden ladle. He glanced up as Trafalgar approached.

"Good evening, young master," he said with a nod. "Give us a moment. It's almost ready."

Trafalgar didn't respond right away. He stood near the fire, arms crossed, eyes on the flames.

'Let's see what fate throws at me tonight...'