

Tyrant 6

Chapter 6: Scars Beneath the Skin

Trafalgar stirred beneath the thick velvet covers, his body aching in places he didn't know could ache. He blinked slowly, adjusting to the dim morning light that seeped in through the tall windows of his room.

"Ugh... My whole body feels like I got trampled," he muttered, rubbing his neck.

He sat up sluggishly, still dressed in the same dark training clothes from the night before. The stiffness in his limbs protested every movement, reminding him of the midnight sword training he had forced himself through.

Shuffling over to the tall mirror near his dresser, he pulled his hair back into its usual short black ponytail. His fingers moved on instinct, tying the band with practiced ease. Then he paused.

His own face stared back at him.

Dark blue eyes, slightly sunken. Skin pale from lack of sun. And beneath his eyes, faint shadows—proof of a restless night.

"...I look half-dead," he murmured, touching the faint bags with two fingers. There was no surprise in his tone. Only dull resignation.

Without his shirt, he looked thinner than he remembered. Not weak—but not particularly strong either. He had the build of someone who had once trained seriously, then stopped halfway and let time chip away at his progress.

He turned his gaze toward the door of his private bathroom, intending to head straight for the bath.

Then came the sound.

Tock. Tock. Tock.

Three polite knocks.

Trafalgar sighed.

"Come in," he called out, straightening slightly as he turned from the mirror.

The door opened, revealing a familiar face.

Mayla, his maid, stepped in with graceful steps, balancing a silver tray. Her long chestnut hair was tied back yesterday, but today it hung loosely around her shoulders. She wore the same crisp maid uniform—neat, proper, and unassuming.

"Good morning, young master," she greeted with a warm, measured tone. Her eyes flicked briefly to his bare torso, then politely away. "I see you were preparing to bathe. I've brought your breakfast—toast with cured ham and fresh juice."

Trafalgar's gaze fell to the tray.

"Thanks. You can leave it there," he said, nodding to a nearby table. "I'll call you if I need anything else."

Mayla bowed slightly. "As you wish, young master."

She exited silently, leaving the room in its quiet morning stillness.

Trafalgar turned toward his pants, intending to strip for the bath—when he paused.

Something was tucked inside one of the pockets.

He reached in and pulled it out: a small glass vial with a faintly reddish liquid. The same one from yesterday.

"The poison..." he muttered.

He stared at it for a moment longer, as if weighing its significance. Then, with a resigned sigh, he carried it into the bathroom, uncorked it, and poured the remaining drops into the toilet. A swirl of faint red vanished into the water as he flushed.

"Better to get rid of that."

Now completely undressed, Trafalgar glanced at the mirror again—this time without clothes to hide behind.

His frame was lean, toned only just enough to suggest potential. His stomach showed faint lines of definition, but nothing impressive. The body of someone who could become strong... if they kept trying.

He tilted his head slightly.

Black hair. Blue eyes. Hollow expression.

And then he frowned at something else, muttering under his breath.

"Goddamn... Trafalgar was blessed in at least one area."

Shaking his head, he stepped into the bath and sank into the warm water.

For the next few minutes, there was only silence. The kind of silence that gave space to thoughts he wasn't quite ready to face.

Steam curled through the bathroom as Trafalgar stepped out, drying himself off with a thick towel. After getting dressed—plain black trousers and a deep gray shirt—he returned to the small table and sat down to eat.

He took a slow bite of toast, then another. The food was warm and good, though his mind was already far from breakfast.

'Sword Insight (Lv.Max)... if I really have that, I need to use it properly.'

He sipped the juice. It was slightly tart, probably orange with something else mixed in.

'But how? I can't just walk up to someone and say "Hey, fight me." That'd draw too much attention. And yesterday I literally promised I'd stay low-profile...'

Trafalgar tapped his fingers lightly on the tray. The chair creaked slightly beneath him as he leaned back.

'Is there anyone in this damn house who wouldn't immediately see me as a nuisance?'

He closed his eyes, not to rest, but to search. Not his memories—his own were few—but his memories. The other Trafalgar's. The one who used to live in this body.

He dug deeper. Faint impressions surfaced. Echoes of cold hallways, mocking laughter, heavy silence at family dinners. And then—

A name.

Lysandra.

Second eldest daughter of the Morgain family. Twenty-six. Daughter of the first wife. She hadn't shown warmth, exactly, but... she hadn't been cruel either. She had treated him like a person. That alone made her stand out in a household like this.

'She's the only one who didn't act like I was a stain on the family name.'

He set his fork down, finishing the last bite of ham. The juice followed. Then he picked up the small silver bell on the side of the table.

It didn't ring when he shook it.

But a moment later, Mayla appeared again, as if summoned by instinct.

She curtsied. "Shall I clear the plates, young master?"

He nodded. "Yeah. And... wait a second."

She paused, plates in hand. "Yes?"

"I wanted to ask... do you know where Lysandra is right now?"

Mayla blinked, clearly surprised by the question.

"I believe she's currently away with Lord Valtair on a hunting expedition in the northern mountains. A mission came up, and they left two days ago. However... I did read in the morning post that they are expected to return tomorrow."

Trafalgar's brows furrowed. "I see. Thanks."

He thought that was the end of it. But Mayla lingered near the door, unmoving.

He glanced at her. "Something wrong?"

She hesitated, then spoke softly.

"Forgive me, young master... but do you not remember what happened the last time you tried to approach Lady Lysandra?"

Trafalgar tilted his head slightly, unsure how to respond.

"What do you mean?" he asked, voice calm but alert. "Something happened?"

Mayla looked away for a second, her hands tightening around the tray.

"...You may not remember," she said gently. "It could be because of the trauma. But... you once told me—crying, no less—about something that happened. About your second sister, Rivena."

The name alone sent a pulse through Trafalgar's chest. A sharp, sudden sting behind his eyes.

"She didn't take it well when Lady Lysandra showed interest in you. There's always been rivalry between them, and seeing Lysandra spending time with you... it made her lash out."

Mayla paused. Her voice softened further.

"You said she... hurt you. In a way no one should ever be hurt."

Trafalgar blinked.

Then the pain struck.

A dull ache bloomed at the base of his skull, and suddenly the room blurred around him. Memories—faint, fragmented, but vivid—rushed in like a broken dam.

Three years ago. He had been twelve.

He remembered standing in the training yard. Lysandra correcting his footwork, smiling faintly when he got it right. She didn't praise him like a child, but like a peer. It had meant something.

And then—Rivena.

Her cold voice. The jealousy in her eyes. The way she approached him days later, when no one was around. The way she smiled, too softly. The pressure in his chest. The sickening silence.

He stumbled a step back, nearly knocking over the chair behind him.

'So that's what happened... she used me... to hurt Lysandra.'

Mayla's voice returned, cautious.

"I only know because you told me... and swore me to secrecy. You were so scared. And angry. And ashamed."

Trafalgar gripped the edge of the table, knuckles white. His throat felt dry.

He didn't speak for several seconds. Just breathed.

Then, at last, he said, "...Thanks for telling me. I... I needed to know."

Mayla gave a slow, respectful bow.

"Of course, young master. If there is anything I can do—"

"There isn't. Just... leave me alone for a bit."

She hesitated again, but nodded and left the room silently.

The door clicked shut behind her.

Trafalgar stood there, staring at nothing.

His voice was low when it came, more a breath than a thought.

'She broke him.'

The moment the door closed, Trafalgar's body moved on instinct.

His legs carried him to the bathroom, bare feet slapping against the cold floor. The weight in his chest surged upward, a knot of nausea and revulsion twisting inside him.

He barely made it to the basin.

His stomach convulsed.

The taste of bile filled his mouth. Everything he had eaten—toast, ham, juice—forced its way out. Again and again. Dry heaving followed.

He clutched the edge of the sink, gasping for air, sweat forming on his forehead.

'She did that... to a twelve-year-old, how can you abuse a child. What kind of dev gave this background to Trafalgar... I knew from the character's information that his life was shit and he was miserable. I wanted to play him because it would be interesting precisely for that reason, not to experience it myself...'

His knuckles trembled.

'How the hell could someone do that to a kid?'

The sink stank of acid and half-digested food. Trafalgar didn't care. He rinsed his mouth with shaking hands, barely able to stand.

He looked up at the mirror.

The boy staring back at him looked pale. Fragile. Like something had cracked.

A thought echoed in his mind, like a whisper from the depths:

"You really were living in hell."