

Tyrant 62

Chapter 62: Forest March

The carriage came to a slow halt, its wheels crunching over the frost-laced soil at the edge of the forest.

Mordrek stepped down first, adjusting his coat. "Wait here for when we return. Shouldn't take long," he told the butler.

"Yes, my lord," the man nodded, reins still in hand.

Near the clearing ahead, a squad of armored soldiers stood in tight formation—about twenty men, all clad in shining silver breastplates adorned with the sigil of House Morgain: two swords crossing beneath a wolf's eye.

As Mordrek approached, the soldiers immediately dropped to one knee, heads bowed.

"We greet Lord Mordrek du Morgain and Lady Sylis du Morgain!"

Mordrek gave a slight nod of acknowledgment. "Morning to you all. You might not know who this is—" He gestured behind him. "This is my nephew, Trafalgar du Morgain. Ninth heir of the main family."

A younger soldier at the end of the line whispered before he could stop himself: "The bastard?"

He instantly slapped a hand over his mouth.

Trafalgar, stepping forward with calm eyes, smirked. "That's me."

The soldier paled. "Forgive me, Lord Trafalgar—I didn't mean any disrespect."

Trafalgar shrugged. "Don't worry about it. Just remember next time."

"Y-Yes, sir. Thank you."

Mordrek let out a faint chuckle. "Well then. What's the current situation?"

The squad's captain stepped forward—taller than the rest, with cropped black hair, a thick beard, and a solid frame just shy of two meters tall. His armor bore slight gold trims, marking him as a veteran.

"Since the deaths of the two children, there've been no new casualties, my lord," the captain said. "But the monsters have shifted patterns. Instead of staying deep within the forest, they're moving outward. It's only a matter of time before they reach the city."

"Hm." Mordrek's tone turned flat. "Then we'll deal with the source directly. We head to the heart of the forest."

"That's what I would advise, my lord," the captain nodded.

Mordrek turned to the rest of the group. "Prepare your horses. We'll follow the marked trail. Should take two to three hours to reach the deeper region. Trafalgar, Sylis—you'll ride in the center. Your safety comes first. You'll get to hunt something later, but I don't want you taking risks. Soldiers, guard them well."

"Yes, sir!" the formation barked as one.

Trafalgar raised an eyebrow. "Do I have a horse?"

"You'll ride one of the ones we used for the carriage," Mordrek replied. "You can ride, can't you?"

Trafalgar smirked. "Didn't you see me last time?"

Mordrek scratched his chin. "Oh, right. I forgot the horse didn't have a head at that time, also Sylis you will go with the bastard."

Sylis grimaced slightly.

Mordrek noticed. "What is it, honey?"

"Nothing," Sylis said quickly, averting her gaze. "I'll manage."

Trafalgar took the reins of a nearby black mare and climbed into the saddle with ease. He extended a hand toward Sylis.

"Come on," he said softly.

She hesitated for a moment but took his hand. With his help, she mounted behind him.

Once settled, Trafalgar leaned back slightly and whispered so only she could hear:

"Still bothered by this morning? Forget it. Just an accident, I forgot already."

Sylis didn't answer.

With everyone mounted, the group began to move into the shadowed woods ahead. Snow crunched beneath hooves. The forest loomed.

The cavalcade moved at a steady pace beneath the dense canopy, following the narrow trail carved between gnarled trees and frost-covered underbrush. Rays of morning sunlight occasionally pierced through the branches, painting silver streaks across the mossy ground.

Trafalgar's black hair fluttered in the cold wind, a few strands brushing against Sylis's cheek as she sat behind him, silent.

He glanced over at Mordrek, who rode slightly ahead, already alert and scanning their surroundings.

"So, uncle," Trafalgar called, raising his voice just enough to carry. "What kind of monsters are we expecting?"

"Hm?" Mordrek didn't turn his head. "The usual around the outer rings—wolves, goblins, maybe the occasional slime if it's been raining."

"Nothing serious, then," Trafalgar muttered.

Mordrek added, "The deeper you go, the nastier it gets. Bears, rockhounds, sometimes trolls if you're unlucky. But this migration's odd. Something new may have stirred things up."

'I see...' Trafalgar thought, tightening his grip on the reins. 'Standard early-game enemies. Wolves and goblins should be no issue. Unless they're mutated or enhanced, they shouldn't be a threat.'

His gaze drifted to the forest shadows.

'But if something did break the natural order... that's worth investigating.'

After nearly an hour of cautious riding, the first threat revealed itself.

Three figures darted out of the underbrush—a goblin archer in the back, and two with daggers sprinting forward on either side of the path. They snarled, eyes gleaming with hostility.

Trafalgar pulled on the reins and halted. "Let me handle them."

Mordrek simply nodded. "Go ahead."

The convoy slowed as Trafalgar dismounted with a casual swing, landing with a light crunch against the icy path.

He raised his hand.

With a shimmer of black energy, Maledicta, the blade appeared in his grip, humming softly.

The goblin archer was already pulling back a crude wooden arrow.

Trafalgar's legs tensed. In a blink, he vanished forward with a burst of shadow.

[Severance Step]

He reappeared in front of the goblin, cleaving upward through its jaw before it could even scream. The head flew into the air, still wearing an expression of shock.

The other two goblins turned toward him, but he was already mid-movement.

[Morgain's Requiem]

He spun in a fluid, deadly motion—five graceful cuts slicing through the air, each wave of shadow trailing like black silk.

The curved slashes tore through the two goblins instantly, cutting them apart in a spray of blood and mana. The final arc rippled outward with extra force, as if reacting to the trio of enemies.

The path went silent once more.

Trafalgar stood still for a moment, then dismissed his blade with a flick of mana.

'Easy. Too easy, maybe. But Morgain's Requiem is still draining too much mana... I'll let my body recover naturally.'

He turned back to the convoy, expression calm.

Mordrek's horse stepped forward, the man raising an eyebrow.

"Impressive. You must've learned the Morgain Blade style to use that technique."

Trafalgar shrugged. "Yeah."

"And you've only been awakened for a few months? Hah... no wonder your father told me not to let you die."

Several soldiers exchanged glances, murmuring under their breath.

Everyone had heard the rumors—the bastard of the main family, the useless ninth heir, a political accident. But what they'd just seen was different.

His stance. His speed. His execution.

He wasn't strong yet, no. But he was a natural.

A prodigy.