

Tyrant 73

Chapter 73: First Steps into Velkaris Academy

The hiss of steam and the grinding of brakes marked the train's arrival at the academy station. Trafalgar stepped down from the wagon behind Marlen, the cool air carrying the chatter of dozens of voices. Students, porters, and travelers alike spilled onto the platform, but not everyone disembarked, the train still had other stops ahead.

Marlen wove through the crowd with practiced ease, his posture straight and unhurried. Trafalgar followed closely, keeping a steady grip on the strap of his coat until they reached a quieter section of the platform.

"Well, young master Trafalgar," Marlen said, turning to face him, "this is where I leave you." He reached into his coat and pulled out a folded sheet of paper, offering it with both hands. "Here. As you would expect, your family has a branch office here in Velkaris. If you ever find yourself in trouble, go there immediately."

Trafalgar accepted the paper, tucking it into his coat pocket. "Alright."

Marlen handed over the two suitcases next. "Before we part, you'll need to register as a student. They'll know who you are, but you still have to fill out the form. There should be someone to help you, either a student or a professor."

"Got it. That's all?"

"That's all."

"Then I'll get going," Trafalgar said, adjusting his grip on the luggage.

Marlen gave him a short, respectful nod. "Best of luck this year, young master."

Without further ceremony, Trafalgar turned toward the academy gates, the crowd ahead parting slightly around him as he stepped forward.

The academy gates rose ahead like the entrance to a fortress, their black ironwork framed by thick stone walls. Beyond them stretched an expanse that made Trafalgar slow his pace just to take it all in.

The main building loomed in the center, a towering structure of pale stone and arched windows, its spires reaching high enough to cast shadows over the inner courtyard. Off to the side, a broad, multi-story building sat lower to the ground: the dormitories. In each corner of the grounds stood a tall tower, north, east, west, and south, their banners fluttering in the breeze.

Further out, fields and training grounds spread as far as he could see: sparring rings, archery ranges, open fields for drills.

'This place is at least three times bigger than my university campus back on Earth. And that place had everything: a dentist, driving school, football field, swimming pool, gym... But in terms of sheer size? This wins, no contest. If I'd been reborn as some random nobody instead of someone as apparently important as Trafalgar, I might've actually had a peaceful life here. Who wouldn't want that?'

Passing under the arch of the gate, he joined the flow of new arrivals. Students were everywhere — some walking alone, others in groups, voices carrying over the cobblestone path.

He spotted a few familiar faces in the crowd: Alfons, chatting with two other students, and further ahead, the siblings Cynthia and Bartholomew making their way toward the grounds.

Keeping his pace steady, Trafalgar set his eyes on the massive doors of the main building.

'That's probably where I need to register.'

He adjusted the grip on his luggage and started toward it, weaving between clusters of students.

Trafalgar was just a few steps away from the main building's grand entrance when something light but sharp tapped against the top of his head.

"Ow—" He flinched, swatting at it with one hand. Feathers brushed his fingers before the small weight hopped stubbornly in place and gave another quick peck. "Damn bird—wait... I know you."

The creature tilted its pale head, black bead-like eyes staring down at him.

"Pi... pi... that was your name, right?"

The bird made a chirping sound that almost felt like confirmation.

From behind him, a calm female voice answered, "Pipin. That's his name."

Trafalgar turned, his gaze falling on a girl approaching with measured steps. She wore a flowing red dress, a staff in one hand, and across her eyes — as always — was the dark band of cloth. Long blonde hair framed her pale face, and there was no mistaking her.

"It seems we meet again..." Trafalgar began, then caught himself. Right, she couldn't see him, not in the usual sense.

Aubrelle's lips curved into a small laugh. "Don't worry, you said it without thinking. I'm not offended."

He cleared his throat, shifting the subject. "Didn't expect we'd run into each other so soon after the Council."

"It was bound to happen," she replied easily. "By the way... have you changed?"

"You can see me?"

"Not exactly," Aubrelle said, lifting a hand toward the bird now perched comfortably on her shoulder. "I can see shapes through Pipin. His eyes are my eyes."

"I see... You could say I've been training," Trafalgar answered with a faint smirk.

She tilted her head slightly. "That makes sense. You're new here, aren't you?"

"Yeah. First year."

"Then that makes you my junior," she said lightly.

"You're a student here?"

"Second year," Aubrelle confirmed. "If you need help registering, I can guide you."

"I'll follow your lead. Need me to carry anything?"

"No need. I know every step of this place, and I have Pipin."

"Right... sorry," Trafalgar said.

With that, Aubrelle began leading him toward the reception, Pipin occasionally fluttering his wings but never leaving her shoulder.

Aubrelle guided Trafalgar through the wide entrance hall, her steps confident despite the steady flow of students moving around them. The marble floor echoed with their footsteps, and the air smelled faintly of parchment and polished wood.

At the reception desk, a young man in academy uniform straightened as they approached. Aubrelle stopped just short of the counter. "I'll leave you in good hands," she said with a faint smile. "See you around, Trafalgar."

"Likewise, Aubrelle."

She turned and walked away, Pipin still perched on her shoulder, disappearing into the crowd without a hint of hesitation.

The clerk behind the desk offered a polite nod. "Welcome. How can I help you?"

"I'm here to register," Trafalgar replied.

"Of course. May I have your full name?"

"Trafalgar du Morgain."

The pen in the clerk's hand stopped midair. Around them, conversations dulled as several people nearby turned to stare. The whispers started almost immediately.

"Did you hear that? One of the Eight Great Families."

"Yeah, I heard a few were enrolling this year."

"Isn't his nickname 'the good-for-nothing bastard'?"

"Shut up, he's looking this way."

The clerk cleared his throat and leaned forward slightly. "Would you like to step into the back so we can complete your paperwork in private?"

"Please," Trafalgar said, his voice even.

With a quick nod, the clerk came around the counter, leading him toward a door behind the desk and away from the curious stares.