

Tyrant 79

Chapter 79: A Favor for a Favor

The four of them had settled into a comfortable rhythm. Cynthia and Barth had ordered their own meals, and now all four sat around the table, chatting about light topics. Well... mostly Cynthia and Zafira. Barth listened more than he spoke, occasionally nodding or murmuring a short reply.

For Trafalgar, it felt... refreshing.

It had been a long time since he'd had a conversation that wasn't tense, dangerous, or laced with ulterior motives. Just normal talk. Relaxing.

Not that he was planning to stay innocent for long.

Barth seemed like a good person, and so did Cynthia—though she was clearly the protective older sister type. If she ever found out Trafalgar wanted to use Barth for something, she'd probably hate his guts. Still, that didn't change the fact that Barth's class might be exactly what Trafalgar needed.

When their plates were nearly empty, Trafalgar leaned back slightly.

"Well, I'm going to pay. Give me a second."

Cynthia frowned. "We can't let you pay for us again."

"Ah, don't worry about it," Trafalgar replied casually. "I just need change. I don't have anything smaller than a gold coin..."

She didn't know if he was being sincere or subtly flexing his wealth, but she didn't push the matter.

Then Trafalgar turned his gaze toward Barth.

"Hey, Barth. Want to come with me? Just to make sure they don't try to rip me off?"

Barth hesitated, glancing at his sister. But after a moment, he nodded. "...Alright."

They both stood up, leaving Zafira and Cynthia at the table. Trafalgar kept a neutral expression, but in his head he was already planning his next move.

'Perfect. Now let's see if I can hook him in.'

They walked together to the counter. The faint scent of roasted spices lingered in the air as a demon waitress cleaned the area nearby.

While they waited for the cashier to finish with another customer, Trafalgar leaned slightly toward Barth, keeping his voice low. "Hey, Barth... can you do me a favor?"

Barth blinked, caught off guard. "Eh? W-What do you mean?"

"I need help with something," Trafalgar said casually, as if it were no big deal. "And... you know, since I helped you out the other day, maybe you could return the favor?"

Barth shifted uncomfortably. "Why me and not my sister?"

"Because your sister looks like an [Archer], and I'm not interested in that," Trafalgar replied bluntly. "Your class is a lot more useful for what I have in mind. I told you before—you've got a good one. If you help me, I'll even show you how to check its full potential. And I'm willing to make it worth your while."

Barth narrowed his eyes slightly. "...Worth my while how?"

"Let's just say you might pick up some very good skills in the process," Trafalgar said, lowering his voice further. "I think it's a fair trade. You don't have to decide now—just come to my room tonight and I'll explain everything. But..." His tone shifted slightly, more serious. "Don't tell your sister."

"Why?" Barth asked.

Before Trafalgar could answer, the cashier finally looked up. "That'll be twelve silver," she said.

'Shit, is really expensive here.' Trafalgar pulled out a single gold coin and placed it on the counter.

The cashier glanced at it. "Please wait here, sir... it's still early, and I don't have enough change in the register. I'll fetch some from the back."

Trafalgar nodded, then turned back to Barth.

"Do you think your sister would even let you come with me alone? She doesn't seem like the type to let you wander off."

Barth shrugged faintly. "I don't know... probably not."

"Well," Trafalgar said, a faint smirk tugging at his lips, "the offer's on the table. My room's at the top floor—Eight Great Families' quarters. Find me if you're interested."

Barth didn't answer, but his thoughtful expression was enough to tell Trafalgar the idea was in his head.

The cashier returned with his change.

"Here you go. Sorry for the wait."

"Thanks," Trafalgar replied smoothly. "Shall we go back, Barth?"

The younger boy nodded, and they started walking back toward the table.

Back in his room, Trafalgar sat on the edge of his bed, absently tapping his fingers against his knee. The quiet was almost unnerving after the casual chatter at the restaurant.

This wasn't a plan without risks. In fact, it was the opposite. 'Let's be honest... I'm still just Spark rank. Anyone above that could crush me without much effort.'

Sure, he had his new evasion skill, Severance Step, but it wasn't something he could spam without draining his mana reserves in seconds. His mana pool was larger than most Sparks thanks to his Unique Talent, but even so, there were limits—and limits got you killed.

He exhaled slowly, staring at the ceiling.

'Still... if I don't push forward now, when will I? I can't just sit here and hope things fall into my lap.'

The safe move was clear: meet with Marella and Arden, tell them what he knew, and offer them the chance to buy the shop under his name while they managed it. No direct ownership for them meant less risk if things went bad—but they'd still have control over the day-to-day.

It was the most logical route. The smart one.

But Trafalgar knew how his luck worked in this world.

'Since I got here, nothing has gone smoothly. If something can get complicated, it will.'

That's where Barth came in. If the kid agreed, his abilities could prove incredibly useful—not just for this job, but for other opportunities down the line. And Cynthia... well, she was an obstacle in that regard.

He pushed himself up to his feet in one swift motion. There were only four days left before the academy's classes began. He wanted this matter wrapped up before then.

"Alright," he muttered to himself, grabbing his coat. "Time to move."

A short train ride to Velkari, straight to Arden's shop—that was the plan. After that, he'd see how the pieces fell into place.

The decision made, he stepped out of the room without a second thought, his mind already running through possible outcomes, allies, and escape routes.