

Tyrant 8

Chapter 8: The Return of the Patriarch

Trafalgar groaned as he opened his eyes, the light from the window stabbing through the curtains like a spear. His body ached from the midnight training sessions, but that wasn't the worst part of the day.

His black hair stuck out in all directions, wild and untamed. He dragged himself out of bed and walked to the wash basin. Splashing cold water onto his face, he stared into the mirror.

'Today's the day... Lysandra and father are coming back.'

He didn't know much about Valttair du Morgain beyond the memories of this body—cold, distant, powerful. But Lysandra? She was different. She had once spoken to him like a human being. Not like the rest of the wolves in this damned family.

'Maybe... if I ask nicely, she'll teach me swordsmanship. That alone would make all this worth it.'

The door creaked open behind him. A soft voice cut through the silence.

"Young master, you're not seriously planning to meet the Patriarch dressed like that, are you?"

Trafalgar turned to see Mayla standing with her arms crossed, her sharp eyes scanning him from head to toe.

He smirked. "What, not impressed by my casual elegance?"

She didn't respond with a smile.

"Take those off. Now."

He raised an eyebrow, lips twitching. "Aren't I a little too young for that kind of command?"

Mayla caught the jest, but her tone sharpened. "This isn't the time for jokes. The Patriarch has returned. He expects every wife and child to be present—as always."

Trafalgar sighed, brushing a hand through his messy hair. "I see. My apologies."

He began to undress without protest. Mayla walked to the massive armoire at the side of the room and pulled out a formal black noble suit, paired with a charcoal-gray tie.

"This will do," she said, laying it on the bed. "Hold still."

Within minutes, she had him fully dressed—black gloves, polished shoes, and every button perfectly aligned. She stood behind him and began combing through his hair with practiced ease, pulling it into a neat high ponytail, just as tradition demanded.

"You are now presentable, young master," she said softly, stepping back to inspect her work.

Trafalgar glanced at his reflection again. The boy in the mirror didn't feel like him.

"Right. Thank you, Mayla."

She smiled gently. "It's nothing, young master. Now, follow me. We need to reach the courtyard before the Patriarch arrives."

As they stepped out of the room and into the cold, echoing corridor, Trafalgar felt his shoulders tense.

'So much for peace and quiet.'

The wind howled through the northern peaks, whistling between the marble columns of House Morgain's grand courtyard. Trafalgar stepped forward, the sound of his polished shoes tapping against the stone floor. He tightened his gloves slightly, his black ponytail whipping behind him with every gust.

'Shit. It's freezing out here.'

The courtyard was already alive with motion. Over a thousand soldiers stood in perfect formation, clad in black armor engraved with the emblem of House Morgain—a silver wolf flanked by two crossed swords. They were silent, disciplined, like statues with steel for bones.

Behind them stood an army of servants—over two hundred of them—lined up with military precision. All eyes faced the massive gates of the estate, awaiting the return of their lord.

Trafalgar's eyes drifted across the crowd.

One by one, the members of the main family took their designated places, grouped by bloodline and seniority. All of them were striking in their own way—but more than anything, they were united by one trait.

Their hair. White. Blonde. Silver. Not a single exception... except for him.

'A black-haired disgrace among platinum royalty. Fitting.'

Lady Seraphine, the first wife, stood regally in a crimson gown trimmed with gold. An imperial noble by birth, her presence commanded silence.

Beside her, Maeron, the eldest son, stood with arms crossed. At twenty-eight, he looked every bit the heir—tall, sharp-jawed, and cold.

Lady Verena, the second wife, exuded military pride. Her stance was rigid, her body scarred, her eyes hard.

Her son, Helgar, towered over the others, built like a boulder in armor.

Rivena, her daughter, stood just behind him—beautiful, yes, but with a predatory edge in her smile that made Trafalgar's stomach twist.

Lady Naevia, the third wife, wore a soft blue dress and carried herself with grace.

Sylvar, her son, looked pale and thoughtful, almost sickly.

Nym, her daughter, barely looked up, whispering something to herself.

Lady Ysolde, the fourth wife, stood slightly apart. A foreign noble with piercing golden eyes and a distant air.

Her son, Darion, kept a low profile.

Elira, the youngest daughter, looked bored, fidgeting with a jeweled bracelet.

And then... at the very back. Alone.

Trafalgar.

Just as always.

The massive steel gates rumbled open with a deep groan. All heads turned.

From beyond the frost-covered archway, over a hundred mounted soldiers rode in, surrounding two grand carriages. Their black steeds snorted frost into the air.

Leading the procession was a man no one could mistake.

Valttair du Morgain.

Hair like burnished platinum, muscles hard as stone beneath a heavy black coat, and eyes that seemed to pierce through time itself. He was the head of House Morgain—and one of the eight ruling figures of the world.

Not that Trafalgar had known that when he first woke up here.

At Valttair's left side rode Lysandra, wearing lightweight battle gear stained with monster blood. Her presence was fierce, dignified.

Behind them, the carriages were pulled by armored beasts. Inside, Trafalgar caught glimpses of wyverns and captured monsters—trophies from their mission.

The procession halted. Silence reigned. Then:

"How did the mission go, dear?" Lady Seraphine asked, her voice elegant and unshaken.

Valttair dismounted with a heavy step. "A few wyverns were disturbing the northern villages. We arrived. They're no longer a problem."

Seraphine nodded. "Efficient as always."

"As expected," he said simply.

Then came the ritual.

Valttair walked down the line of his family, greeting each wife and child with brief words and sharp eyes. Some received nods. Others, short remarks.

And then he reached the end of the line.

Trafalgar.

Valttair said nothing at first. He just stared at him.

Trafalgar returned the gaze, refusing to look away.

'Why the fuck is he staring like that? What's going on in his head?'

Finally, the Patriarch spoke.

"You'll join the family for dinner tonight."

Trafalgar kept his voice steady. "Understood, Father."

But inside?

'FUCK. ME.'

Behind him, hushed murmurs broke out.

"Why now?"

"Is he going to get rid of the youngest?"

Rivena smirked faintly. "Interesting, little brother."

But before she could say more, Lysandra stepped forward, her boots clicking sharply. Her eyes narrowed as she passed Rivena—a cold, warning glance.

She approached Seraphine and bowed respectfully. "I've returned, Mother."

Lady Seraphine raised a brow. "You didn't disgrace our name, I hope?"

Lysandra straightened. "Not in the slightest. The mission was a success."

Then, she walked past the others and stopped briefly beside Trafalgar. Her tone softened.

"Good morning, little brother."

Trafalgar blinked. It was the same tone from the memories. Warm. Familiar.

'She hasn't changed.'

Valttair turned to the servants and soldiers.

"Family—dismissed."

Then his voice grew harsher.

"Everyone else—get to work."

The courtyard emptied as organized chaos began. Trafalgar lingered for a moment before turning toward the halls.

'Why the hell does this place feel more suffocating with each passing hour?'

The stone halls of the Morgain estate felt even colder than usual.

Trafalgar walked briskly, his breath visible in the frigid air as he made his way back toward his quarters. The noble suit itched against his skin, tight in all the wrong places, and his polished shoes clicked loudly with each step.

The silence of the castle wasn't peaceful—it was heavy.

'Fuck, it's cold. I should've worn another damn layer under this thing...'

He pulled the collar tighter around his neck.

'This is some bullshit. Getting dragged into a family dinner with the walking apocalypse and his harem of murder children. Can't wait to sit through a meal of forced smiles and backhanded threats.'

He exhaled, the fog of his breath mixing with the chill of the corridor.

""You'll join us for dinner," he says... Like I had a fucking choice. Wasn't the whole point of staying invisible to avoid this exact kind of attention?'

He turned a corner, the weight of the estate pressing down on him like mountain snow.

'Why now?'

He approached the tall double doors of his room, muttering under his breath.

"This day can't get worse."

He grabbed the handle and opened the door.

And froze.

Someone was already inside.

Seated casually on one of the chairs, legs crossed, back straight, and eyes fixed on him like a predator savoring the silence before a pounce—

Rivena.

Her smile was slow, deliberate.

"Hello, little brother. Long time no see," she purred.

Trafalgar's body stiffened instantly.

Every muscle tensed.

The air in the room felt like it dropped ten degrees.

Her voice was playful, but he knew what was behind it. The memories he inherited from this cursed body made sure of that.

She wasn't just dangerous. She was a fucking monster in human skin.

'Why is she here?'

His hand hovered near the doorframe, debating whether to shut it and run.

Rivena twirled a strand of her platinum-blond hair and tilted her head. Her eyes gleamed with amusement.

"You're awfully quiet. Cat got your tongue?"

Trafalgar didn't answer.

He stepped in slowly and closed the door behind him.

Click.

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The hearth in Valtair's private study crackled softly, casting golden light across shelves of ancient tomes and the steel sheen of countless swords mounted on the walls.

The room was massive, but there was no warmth in its grandeur.

Behind the obsidian desk stood Valtair du Morgain, his arms crossed behind his back, staring out through the wide arched window that framed the snowy expanse of his domain. The mountains loomed like frozen titans, and below them, the castle stretched over the cliffs like a fortress carved from ice and shadow.

Caelum, his most trusted aide, stood a few paces behind, waiting in silence.

"Report," Valtair said, voice calm but unyielding.

Caelum cleared his throat. "There has been... one development during your absence, my lord. Something rather unexpected."

Valtair did not turn. "It concerns the youngest, doesn't it?"

Caelum blinked. "...Yes. How did you—?"

"I saw it in him," Valttair replied flatly. "His mana Core it's awake."

Caelum nodded slowly. "So you noticed."

Valttair finally turned, his gaze sharp as ever. "No one told him to train. No one guided him. And yet, he forced open his Core."

"He's still at the Origin stage, but... yes. He did it alone. Quietly."

Valttair walked toward his desk, resting one hand on the dark wood. "That's why I summoned him to dinner."

"You want to test him?"

"I want to see if awakening changed him," Valttair said. "If something... deeper has shifted."

Caelum hesitated before asking, "Wouldn't a private audience be more effective for that?"

A faint smirk tugged at the corner of Valttair's mouth—barely noticeable. "Perhaps. But I'd rather watch how he acts when the wolves start circling. When every eye in the room is waiting for him to fall."

He turned his gaze back to the window, hands folding behind him once more.

"Pressure reveals the cracks."

Caelum said nothing. He knew that tone well—one of curiosity laced with cold calculation.

Outside, the wind howled across the peaks like a distant warhorn.