

Tyrant 86

Chapter 86: A Dangerous Gamble

Velkaris was alive with its usual nighttime pulse—bright lights spilling out from every doorway, the air thick with music, chatter, and the distant sound of coins clinking. Trafalgar walked with purpose, Barth trailing a half-step behind.

He didn't need to ask around; he knew exactly where Lucien would be. The man was a businessman, and businessmen of his sort gravitated to the same places—places where fortunes changed hands, where the real deals were made.

The casino loomed ahead, an opulent building with golden trim and crystal lamps glowing above the entrance. Even from outside, the sound of dice rolling and cards being shuffled blended into the hum of expensive entertainment.

Inside, the air smelled of polished wood, rich cigars, and perfume. Well-dressed patrons hovered over tables, gambling away sums most commoners wouldn't see in a lifetime. Trafalgar didn't slow down. He led Barth past the crowded main floor toward the elevated VIP section, where the lighting dimmed and the noise softened.

Lucien was there—reclined in a plush chair, a glass of amber liquor in hand, two women in silk dresses standing nearby. His sharp gaze locked onto Trafalgar the moment they approached.

"Well, if it isn't Trafalgar du Morgain," Lucien said, his voice smooth but edged. "Didn't expect to see you here tonight."

"I came for something specific," Trafalgar replied, matching his tone. "I'm looking to spend the evening with someone... particular. A lyan. Wolf-type."

Lucien raised an eyebrow, a slow smile forming. "Interesting taste. As it happens, we've just acquired some... new merchandise. Untouched. Can't say I expected that kind of fetish from a Morgain, though."

Trafalgar didn't flinch. "Prejudices like that can make you lose customers."

Lucien chuckled, swirling the liquor in his glass. "Fair point." He set the drink down and stood. "Very well. I think I have exactly what you're looking for. Come along."

Barth glanced at Trafalgar nervously but followed without a word as Lucien led them out of the casino.

The streets here were quieter, more exclusive. They stopped at a tall, lavishly designed building, its entrance guarded by two men in dark uniforms. One of them opened the door without question, and Lucien stepped inside, gesturing for them to follow.

The inside of the building was quiet. Velvet-lined walls absorbed most of the sound, and the faint scent of perfume drifted through the air. Expensive paintings hung in gilded frames, and the marble floor reflected the warm glow of crystal chandeliers overhead.

Lucien led them through a short corridor and into a private lounge. The room was spacious but intimate, clearly designed for high-end clients. A thick rug muffled their footsteps, and a low table sat between two large leather chairs.

"Wait here," Lucien said smoothly. "I'll make the arrangements."

Without another word, he stepped out, closing the door behind him.

Trafalgar walked to one of the chairs and sat down like he owned the place. Barth lingered by the wall for a moment before taking the seat opposite him, his hands clasped tightly together.

It wasn't long before the door opened again—this time to reveal a tall, elegant waitress in a form-fitting black dress. She carried a silver tray with a bottle of deep red wine and three crystal glasses.

"Compliments of the house," she said softly, placing the tray on the table.

Trafalgar picked up one of the glasses without hesitation. "Thanks."

Barth, on the other hand, could barely glance at her. His gaze darted toward the floor, his face turning slightly pink. He mumbled a quiet "Thank you" that was almost too soft to hear.

The waitress poured for both of them, then gave a graceful nod before leaving the room. The door closed with a muted click.

Barth let out a slow breath. "So... when are we doing this?"

Trafalgar leaned back in his chair, swirling the wine in his glass. "Be ready the moment I say. No hesitation."

Barth nodded stiffly, his leg bouncing in nervous rhythm.

For a few moments, neither of them spoke. The soft ticking of a wall clock filled the silence, mingling with the faint music drifting in from somewhere else in the building.

Barth finally broke the quiet. "I didn't know... these were your tastes."

Trafalgar smirked faintly. "They're not. We're here to rescue someone."

Barth froze. "Rescue?"

"Yeah. And that's where you come in," Trafalgar said. "So get your head straight. When the time comes, you do your part, and I'll handle the rest."

Barth swallowed hard, the weight of the task settling on him.

Barth shifted uncomfortably in his seat, the leather creaking under him. His hands tightened into fists against his knees.

"I... didn't know anything about this..." he said after a moment. "You just told me to be ready, not that it was about... rescuing someone."

"I didn't tell you because I didn't want you overthinking it," Trafalgar replied, his tone calm but firm. "All you need to know is that there's a girl in trouble. And the only way to get her out without making a scene is with your skill."

Barth's eyes flickered toward the closed door. "And if I mess it up?"

"You won't," Trafalgar said bluntly. "I've seen you practice. The only difference tonight is that it's real."

Barth swallowed, his throat dry. "Who is she?"

"The lycan girl. You'll see her when Lucien brings her in." Trafalgar's gaze hardened. "When that happens, you put her to sleep before she can react, I don't want her to rip us off. Understand?"

Barth nodded, though his nervous leg bounced faster.

The silence stretched for a while. Trafalgar sipped his wine, watching him. Barth's breathing was a little too quick, his posture tight—every inch of him screaming that he wanted to be anywhere else.

"Listen," Trafalgar said, leaning forward, his tone dropping into something colder. "We don't get second chances here. If you freeze up, this girl might not walk out of here at all. Do you want that on you?"

Barth's lips pressed into a thin line. "No."

"Then focus," Trafalgar said. "You don't have to talk. You don't have to fight. You just have to do one thing, I believe in you that's why I need your help."

A beat of silence passed. The words from Trafalgar seemed to sink in, and Barth looked a little more determined.

The wall clock ticked on. The air in the room felt heavier now, as if the walls themselves were waiting for the next move.

Trafalgar leaned back again, but his eyes stayed locked on the door. "It won't be long now."

The door opened with a soft creak. Lucien stepped in first, his sharp smile already in place, followed by a young woman who moved with the grace of someone ready to strike.

She has wolf ears poking through her long, sleek black hair, and a matching tail swaying behind her. Her eyes were a striking emerald green, bright enough to seem almost unnatural under the warm light of the room.

Trafalgar's gaze locked on her instantly.

"Enjoy," Lucien said smoothly, gesturing toward the girl as if presenting an expensive bottle of wine. "She's fresh and untouched." He stepped back toward the doorway.

The girl's eyes widened as they focused on Trafalgar. Recognition flashed, and her lips curled into a sharp expression. "You!?" she shouted, her voice filled with a mix of shock and fury.

Lucien's grin widened. "I'll leave you two to... get acquainted." With that, he turned and closed the door behind him, the lock clicking into place.

Garrika didn't waste a second. She stepped forward, tension in her shoulders, her movements sharp and predatory. It wasn't a casual walk—it was the kind of approach that ended with someone on the floor.

Barth tensed, glancing at Trafalgar for the signal. Trafalgar gave a small nod, barely noticeable but enough.

Barth's hands moved subtly, his focus locking on Garrika. The air between them seemed to grow heavier for a heartbeat—and then her steps faltered. Her eyes fluttered, the fire in them dimming, and within moments she collapsed forward onto the thick carpet, completely unconscious.

Trafalgar exhaled slowly, standing up from his chair. He walked over, crouching briefly to check her breathing—steady, calm. She was fine, just sleeping.

"Well..." he said, glancing over his shoulder at Barth. "Now we wait."

Barth swallowed hard, looking anywhere but at the sleeping girl. "...Sorry," he muttered.