

Tyrant 87

Chapter 87: Precaution

Garrika lay unconscious on the bed, her long black hair spilling across the sheets, wolf ears twitching faintly even in her sleep. Trafalgar had hauled her up there with Barth's help, and now the three of them occupied the room together: one sleeping, one shaken, and one calculating.

Barth sat hunched in a chair, his eyes fixed on the floor as though he'd committed a crime. His hands trembled in his lap, and his breathing was shallow. For him, putting Garrika under had felt far too close to harming her.

Trafalgar, meanwhile, was busy searching the drawers of the bedside table. He pulled one open, raised an eyebrow, and shut it again quickly. The second and third weren't much better—stuffed with things that made him click his tongue in disgust. Finally, in the fourth, he found what he needed: a set of steel restraints, four pairs in total.

He pulled them out, the metal clinking sharply as they hit the surface of the table.

Barth's head shot up. "W-what are you going to do with those!?" His voice cracked with alarm, his imagination clearly leaping to the wrong conclusion.

Trafalgar turned to him, deadpan. "I'd prefer if your imagination didn't run that wild. Garrika is probably stronger than both of us. The only reason she was captured is because more than twenty men jumped her at once. She's at least some Core stages above mine, since I'm only at Spark. If she wakes up angry, she could tear me apart in seconds. And you? You wouldn't even last that long."

Barth blinked, his panic cooling into unease.

"That's why," Trafalgar continued, holding up the cuffs, "we're securing her. All four limbs. It's not pretty, but it's the only way we walk out of here in one piece."

Barth hesitated, then slowly stood. His movements were stiff, but he understood. Together, one on each side of the bed, they locked Garrika's wrists and ankles to the posts. The sight wasn't noble, but it was necessary.

When it was done, Trafalgar stepped back, dusting his hands off. "Good. Now we wait."

The room settled into silence once the cuffs clicked into place. Garrika breathed evenly on the bed, still lost in the haze of Barth's skill. The faint glow of the wall lamps made the place feel more like a cage than a bedroom.

Trafalgar dropped onto the sofa across from the bed, stretching out his legs as if he had all the time in the world. Barth sat stiffly beside him, shoulders hunched, eyes glued to the floor. His nervousness hung thick in the air.

Minutes passed. The only sound was the steady ticking of the wall clock and Garrika's quiet breathing. Finally, Barth's voice broke the silence.

"...Trafalgar."

"Hm?"

Barth shifted, swallowing hard. "Is it... true? That you're only Spark rank?"

The question came out timid, hesitant, but once it was spoken, the boy froze. His eyes widened as if he'd just realized he might have crossed a dangerous line.

He sat frozen, thoughts racing. 'I shouldn't have asked that. He's going to be angry. He's going to kill me...'

Trafalgar turned his head, his gaze steady, piercing directly into Barth's wide eyes. He didn't say anything at first. Just looked at him.

Barth's heart hammered in his chest. He quickly turned his head away, panic rising. 'He's going to snap. I shouldn't have said it. Stupid. Stupid.'

But Trafalgar's tone was calm, almost casual when he finally answered. "Yeah. Spark rank. I awakened my core at fifteen. That's all there is to it. Nothing mysterious."

Barth blinked. The tension in his chest eased, surprise softening his expression. He hadn't expected an answer—at least not such a simple, straightforward one.

For a moment, the fear in him gave way to curiosity. He dared to look back at Trafalgar, though only briefly, before shifting his eyes down again.

"...I see," he whispered.

Trafalgar leaned back against the sofa, arms crossed. "Satisfied?"

Barth nodded slowly, though his mind spun with questions he didn't dare ask. The silence returned, but it was a little less suffocating this time.

The silence stretched again, but this time it wasn't as heavy. Barth fidgeted with his hands, then dared to speak. "So... you really awakened at fifteen? That's... incredible. It's late, sure, but still. To come from a family like yours and manage it then... it's rare, isn't it?"

Trafalgar smirked faintly, leaning his head back against the sofa. "Rare, yeah. Incredible? Not really. Just means I'm behind." His tone carried a layer of sarcasm, but his eyes stayed closed as if the matter didn't bother him.

Barth hesitated, then shook his head firmly. "No... it is incredible. I mean it." His voice carried a sincerity that made Trafalgar's smirk falter.

He cracked one eye open, turning to glance at the boy. Barth wasn't stammering this time, nor hiding behind nervous glances at the floor. His eyes shone, full of an earnest admiration Trafalgar hadn't expected.

'Didn't think he'd take that seriously,' Trafalgar thought, caught off guard by the almost childlike awe in Barth's expression.

"You're really something, Trafalgar," Barth continued. "Most people wouldn't admit it so openly. Most people wouldn't even bother answering me. But you... you just said it straight. That's... well, it makes me want to trust you."

Trafalgar let out a quiet laugh, rubbing the back of his neck. "You've got strange standards, Barth. But I'll take it."

The room's fragile calm was shattered by a faint sound from the bed. A low groan, followed by the rustle of sheets.

Both Trafalgar and Barth turned their heads instantly. Garrika's fingers twitched against the cuffs, her body shifting slightly as consciousness began to creep back. Her wolf ears flicked, tail giving a sluggish twitch.

Barth's back stiffened. "She's... she's waking up," he whispered, his voice already shaking.

"I can see that," Trafalgar replied, standing smoothly. With a thought, his weapon materialized into his hand—Maledicta gleaming in the dim light, its blade pulsing faintly with a dark shimmer.

Barth stood too, though his knees looked ready to buckle. His eyes darted between Garrika and Trafalgar as if unsure which one to focus on.

Garrika let out a sharper groan, her eyes fluttering open. For a moment, she looked dazed, confusion flickering across her green irises. Then recognition struck like lightning. Her gaze sharpened, and her lips pulled back in a snarl.

"You..." Her voice was raw, thick with anger. She tugged against the cuffs, the metal rattling violently as her strength surged back. Her wolf tail lashed behind her. "I'm going to tear you apart."