

Tyrant 88

Chapter 88: Trust in Shackles

"Good morning... you don't look happy at all," Trafalgar said, his tone calm, though his words carried the faint edge of provocation.

Across the room, Garrika's emerald eyes burned with fury as they locked onto him. She didn't hear his words as playful—she heard them as mockery.

"I will tear you apart," she snarled, her voice low and dangerous. "I don't care if you're a Morgain."

The chains clinked as she pulled against the cuffs. Her four limbs were still restrained, but Trafalgar could tell the restraints wouldn't hold forever. Once her strength returned fully, she could probably snap them like twigs.

On the sofa, Barth was curled up, knees close to his chest, trembling. His wide eyes darted nervously between Trafalgar and Garrika, as though the wrong move from either of them might end him.

Trafalgar exhaled slowly, forcing himself to remain steady. "Looks like you remember me. From your grandmother Marella's place—your grandfather Arden too. I remember you rushed to greet me, but your friends stopped you. They're fine, by the way. The human, Ronan, is missing an arm, but he's alive."

Garrika froze, her eyes narrowing with suspicion. "How do you know that?"

"Because," Trafalgar replied, his tone steady, "I came here to pull you out. Marella asked me herself. If you promise to calm down, I'll take off the cuffs."

The room fell into tense silence. Garrika's chest rose and fell with heavy breaths, her glare still fixed on him. Finally, she let out a sharp sigh and inhaled deeply, as if forcing herself to cool down.

"...Fine," she said.

"Good," Trafalgar nodded. "Give me a second."

He turned toward Barth, expecting him to help—but the boy was frozen in place, still too rattled to move. Trafalgar studied him for a moment, then gave a faint shake of his head.

'Nothing I can do. It's normal he's this scared.'

The metallic click of the last cuff echoed in the room, and Garrika's arms were finally free. She flexed her wrists, rubbing at the faint red imprints left behind by the steel. Her expression was sharp, but not as feral as before.

Trafalgar took a step back, raising his hands slightly in a gesture of peace. "Sorry about that. It was only a precaution. If I hadn't restrained you, things could've ended badly—for me and for Barth."

Garrika studied him for a moment, then gave a small nod. "I understand."

She swung her legs over the edge of the bed and stood, her posture tall and commanding despite the circumstances. She crossed the room and sat down on the sofa, right beside Barth.

The boy flinched, his body going rigid as though he'd been struck. His eyes darted down, completely avoiding her face. His ears turned pink, and he shrank against the armrest, too nervous to even breathe properly.

Garrika arched an eyebrow but said nothing. She simply leaned back, arms folded.

Trafalgar observed the scene with mild amusement. Then, without a word, he shrugged off his jacket and held it out to her.

She blinked, momentarily caught off guard. "...For me?"

"Better than sitting there in rags," Trafalgar said. "Take it."

She hesitated, then reached for it, slipping it on. The fabric hung loose around her frame, but it covered enough. Her expression softened—just slightly. "...Thanks."

"No problem," Trafalgar replied. "Now. Since you're calmer, let's talk. You asked earlier what the plan is. I'll tell you."

Her green eyes sharpened again, this time with focus rather than blind fury. "Alright. What is it?"

Trafalgar glanced toward Barth, who was still curled up, hands clamped tightly together. "The idea was to use his skill. Put Lucien and his guards to sleep. If we're lucky, that clears a path."

Barth stiffened, his lips parting as though to protest. The boy's gaze flickered nervously between Garrika and Trafalgar, his mouth working soundlessly.

Trafalgar raised an eyebrow at him. "Don't look so panicked. You've already done it once tonight."

Barth's head jerked up, his eyes wide. "W-what? On Lucien? On his men too? I... I don't know if I can—" His voice cracked, and he shrank into himself.

"How many times can you use it before you're drained?" Trafalgar asked.

Barth's throat bobbed as he swallowed nervously. "...Maybe three times. That's it. After that I'll be empty." He lowered his head, his bangs shadowing his eyes. "Sorry... my talent isn't very good."

Trafalgar sighed. 'I only asked a question, and he immediately goes to beating himself down. This kid...'

"Barth," he said, his tone sharper. "No. Don't talk like that. Thanks to you, we're here. Thanks to you, Garrika's not in Lucien's hands anymore. So cut the self-pity."

The boy froze, his shoulders stiffening.

Trafalgar turned his gaze to Garrika. "Right?"

Garrika looked at Barth and gave a small, genuine smile. "That's true. You did save me. Thank you."

Her words carried a warmth that Trafalgar's didn't, and they hit Barth harder than he expected. His cheeks flushed, and he looked down quickly, muttering, "I-It was nothing..."

The room fell quiet for a moment.

Then Garrika tilted her head. "So... we're stuck here until then?"

"Technically..." Trafalgar smirked, "Barth and I could just walk out whenever we wanted."

Her eyes snapped toward him, green irises flashing like a blade's edge. The weight of her glare pressed against him so hard Barth almost shrank into the sofa.

Trafalgar raised his hands quickly. "Relax—it was a joke. Just trying to lighten the mood."

Barth shot him a nervous look, clearly unimpressed by his sense of humor.

Clearing his throat, Trafalgar went on, "Point is, there's a way out. But we'll need timing and a little luck."

Garrika leaned forward, eyes sharp, though not as hostile as before. "Then stop joking around. If you're serious about getting us out of here, prove it."

Trafalgar watched her carefully. "Technically, right now you're considered a slave. I could buy you outright and walk you out of here."

Her head snapped toward him, eyes blazing. "I'm no one's property."

He raised a hand, calm. "I know. I'm not saying I want to own you. I'm saying it's the fastest way out. A transaction on paper, nothing more."

Garrika's glare softened only slightly. "That won't work. My value's too high now. Lucien wants my grandparents' place, and I'm leverage for that. He won't just let me go."

Trafalgar smirked faintly. "Don't worry about that part. I'll be the one owning that place soon enough."

Her brows furrowed. "What do you mean?"

"That was the condition," Trafalgar explained. "Marella agreed to let me take over the shop if I rescued you. Don't misunderstand—I'm not here to ruin it. I'll keep things the same. But in name, it'll belong to a Morgain."

Garrika rose suddenly, crossing the room in two quick steps. She planted herself in front of him, close enough that he could see the fire burning in her green eyes. She had to tilt her head slightly upward to meet his gaze—Trafalgar was taller—but her presence was no less imposing.

He didn't flinch, though inside his stomach knotted. 'Shit, she's intense... even shorter, she feels like she's towering over me.'

"Listen to me, Trafalgar du Morgain," she said firmly. "That place means more to us than just walls and furniture. It's our family. Our life. If you take it, even with good intentions, you'd better not betray their trust—or mine."

Trafalgar met her gaze head-on. "I won't. I want something for myself, sure. But I don't plan to destroy what your family built. If anything, I'll protect it better than before."

For a long moment, Garrika studied him, searching his face for any crack in his conviction. Then she stepped back slightly, exhaling.

"...Fine. I'll trust you. Don't let me regret it."

"I won't," Trafalgar said simply. Then he turned his head. "Barth, are you ready to use your skill again?"

Barth jerked upright, startled. "Y-yes... I'll try."