

Tyrant 92

Chapter 92: The Unexpected Trial

Trafalgar woke with a groan, rolling over in the bed of his academy room. His head was pounding, every throb reminding him of the little "celebration" from the night before. He covered his eyes with one arm, muttering under his breath.

'Fucking hell... my head feels like it's being hammered from the inside. Not even during my graduation or my eighteenth birthday did I feel this wrecked. What kind of poison did they put in that beer?'

He pushed himself upright, swaying slightly before forcing his legs to the floor. The room was faintly lit by the morning glow. The quietness contrasted sharply with the chaos of last night, when Marella had insisted on one final toast. Trafalgar couldn't even recall how he had made it back to his dorm—only fragments of laughter, clinking mugs, and Garrika joking about carrying him on her back if he collapsed.

Stumbling toward the bathroom, he turned on the cold water and let it crash over his face. The sting cleared some of the haze, though the pounding in his skull persisted. With a resigned sigh, he stripped down and stepped under the freezing shower. The icy stream shocked his body awake, washing away the lingering dizziness.

'If I don't wake up now, I'll end up late to the first day of classes. Great impression that would be... Trafalgar du Morgain, the useless drunk who can't show up on time.'

After about fifteen minutes, he dried off and slipped into the academy's uniform. The fabric fit snugly, sharp lines giving him a more formal look compared to the casual clothes he usually wore. There was no need for mirrors—he knew he looked presentable enough. What he didn't know was whether he was ready for whatever this academy was about to throw at him.

'Alright. First day. Let's see what kind of nightmare the academy has prepared for me.'

Trafalgar stepped into the corridor, his boots clicking softly against the polished floor. His headache had dulled but not disappeared, leaving a faint ringing in his skull. He made his way toward the circular platform that served as the elevator.

To his dismay, Alfons was already there, standing stiffly with arms crossed. The tall boy tapped his foot impatiently, his expression sour.

'Shit... of all people to run into first thing in the morning. Please don't talk to me.'

But of course, Alfons opened his mouth the moment Trafalgar approached.

"You know, you made me wait last time. I stood there like an idiot while everyone in the wagon stared at me. Do you have any idea how awkward that was?"

Trafalgar forced a weak smile. "Oh, Alfons. What a... pleasant surprise. I didn't even notice that day. Must've been my mistake."

Alfons narrowed his eyes. "What do you mean, mistake? We locked eyes, and when I came over, you stood up and walked away!"

"Oh... that." Trafalgar scratched his cheek, feigning embarrassment. "Yeah, my stomach was killing me. Nature called at the worst possible time, you know? And when nature calls..." He shrugged.

Alfons's jaw tightened, clearly unconvinced.

Before the tension could escalate, a familiar voice chimed in from behind.

"Are you bothering Trafalgar again?"

Zafira strolled up, her purple hair catching the morning light. She stepped onto the platform with them, eyes narrowed at Alfons. "Didn't you learn your lesson at the Council? I seem to recall you being humiliated by him."

A vein popped on Alfons's forehead. "That was only because we agreed to fight under equal conditions. If I had used my full strength, Trafalgar wouldn't have lasted a second."

Zafira smirked. "So you admit that if you were in the same Core rank, he'd beat you again. Sounds like you're acknowledging he's stronger."

'Why are you provoking him?' Trafalgar leaned closer, whispering hurriedly. "Don't. Please. I don't want trouble this early in the morning."

Zafira blinked at him, then sighed. "Fine. Thought he was picking on you again." She glanced at him curiously. "By the way, which extra class did you end up taking?"

"Cooking."

"You... cook?" Her voice was half disbelief, half curiosity.

"Is there a problem with that?"

Alfons barked a laugh. "The bastard Morgain learning how to cook? Guess you're preparing for your role in the family, huh?"

Zafira opened her mouth to retort, but Trafalgar shook his head. "Ignore him. It doesn't bother me."

The platform began to hum, glowing faintly as it descended toward the academy's main building.

The platform stopped with a soft lurch, depositing Trafalgar, Zafira, and Alfons at the base of the main building. The crowd of students moved in the same direction, filing into the grand hall.

Inside, hundreds of seats were already filled, voices buzzing with excitement and nerves. The ceiling arched high above, shimmering with faint runes that glowed like constellations. At the far end, a raised balcony overlooked the assembly.

A hush fell as four figures stepped forward onto the balcony.

The first was a tall warrior with bronze skin, he was a human and he had a massive greatsword strapped to his back, his aura radiating raw strength.

The second, a sharp-eyed mage draped in deep blue robes, staff in hand, mana flickering like sparks around him.

The third, a woman with disheveled hair, a crooked grin, and stained gloves—an alchemist.

She wore a leather apron over her eccentric robes, and several strange flasks clinked at her belt.

The last was a composed, elegant woman with black hair braided down her back, her poise suggesting a strategist or tactician.

The mage raised his staff lightly. "Welcome, new students, to Velkaris Academy. I am Kaelen. With me are Eryndor, Selara, and Althea. Together, we oversee your training and survival."

'There it is.' Trafalgar's eyes narrowed slightly as he focused on the alchemist. 'The other legendary character... Selara, the Alchemist of Ruin. If anyone could help me find the Veiled Woman, it would be her. But getting close to her won't be easy.'

Kaelen's voice carried across the chamber. "Each of you has awakened different classes, and so too will your paths be different. For that reason, we offer no instructions but this: good luck."

The hall erupted in murmurs.

"That's it?"

"Good luck? What does that mean?"

"Wasn't that way too short for an introduction?"

Before more questions could spread, the floor beneath them shimmered. A vast array of glowing runes lit up, forming an enormous circle that encompassed every student.

"What the—!?"

A flash of light swallowed the chamber.

The next moment, Trafalgar blinked against a new sight. Hundreds of students now stood in a cavernous armory, racks of weapons and armor stretching as far as the eye could see.

The warrior, Eryndor, stepped forward, his voice booming. "Choose one weapon and one set of armor. Once you're equipped, you will enter the labyrinth. Survive, and you'll pass the trial."

The clamor inside the armory was deafening. Students rushed from rack to rack, snatching up weapons and armor as if they were free treasures. Some fought over shields, others argued about which sword was sharper, and a few even tried to hoard more than one item until the instructors barked at them.

Trafalgar ignored the chaos. His hand hovered over the blades and spears, but he shook his head. 'No. I already have Maledicta. Even if it's still in the system's inventory, it's more than enough when the time comes. I don't need a replacement—I just need something to protect myself for now.'

His eyes drifted toward a section lined with leather sets. Light, flexible, built for mobility rather than brute defense. That was what he needed.

He reached for a dark brown cuirass reinforced with thin strips of iron at the chest and shoulders. It was sleek, simple, and practical. The moment his fingers brushed the material, a faint glow pulsed across the armor before vanishing.

A crisp message echoed in his vision:

[Item Acquired: Shadowhide Leather Armor – Rare Rank]

Trafalgar blinked. 'At least it's Rare grade—better than the junk I had before.'

He pulled the cuirass over his head and adjusted the straps, surprised at how perfectly it fit. The weight was light, almost natural, as if the armor molded itself to him. Flexibility in the arms and torso was excellent; he could already imagine moving freely in a fight.

The other students still bickered, some even lunging across tables for a chance at a specific item.

"Enough." Kaelen's voice thundered across the hall. His staff tapped the ground, and silence rippled out instantly. "You've chosen. Now the true test begins."

The floor beneath them glowed again, brighter this time. The runes expanded in a vast circle, swallowing the armory's walls with blinding white.

Trafalgar felt his stomach lurch as space folded around him.

When the light faded, he stood at the mouth of a massive stone corridor. Torches burned dimly along the walls, casting shadows that stretched endlessly. The air smelled of damp stone and earth.

The labyrinth had begun.