

Tyrant 57

Chapter 57: Dinner Among Strangers

The maid opened the tall wooden door with a graceful bow.

Trafalgar stepped into the dining room, taking in the soft glow of chandeliers above and the scent of warm, freshly cooked food. The table was long but not grand—six seats total, closely spaced.

Mordrek sat at the head of the table, his long silver hair now tied back in a low, effortless ponytail. To his right sat a woman with vibrant red hair, warm green eyes, and a dignified yet approachable air. Beside her, two young boys—clearly twins—sat bouncing in their chairs, barely able to hold still.

At Mordrek's left was a teenage girl, maybe fourteen or fifteen, arms crossed and posture stiff. The empty seat left for Trafalgar was right beside her—close, connected. Not distant like at the castle.

The red-haired woman looked up as he entered.

"You must be Trafalgar, my nephew, right?" she said, her voice soft but certain. "Welcome. It's our first time meeting."

Trafalgar bowed respectfully, placing one fist against his chest.

"That's correct, Aunt. Thank you for letting me stay. My name is Trafalgar du Morgain."

She smiled, a glint of motherly warmth in her eyes. "Come, sit down. You can tell us more while you eat. My husband told me what happened—you've had a rough time, haven't you?"

Trafalgar hesitated for just a breath.

The air in this room was different.

He nodded and stepped forward.

"With your permission."

He sat.

The food smelled incredible—fresh meat, roasted vegetables, soft bread, and thick soups. His stomach twisted slightly at the sight, and he realized how long it had been since he'd eaten something truly satisfying.

More than a day, at least.

Without hesitation, he picked up his utensils and started eating.

He didn't rush, but he didn't hold back either.

Everything was seasoned perfectly.

The red-haired woman chuckled lightly. "We haven't introduced ourselves properly yet. I'm Anthera—Mordrek's wife. These two troublemakers," she gestured to the twin boys, "are Eron and Mael. And the grumpy one next to you is our daughter, Syllis."

The girl gave a polite nod, but her expression didn't soften.

Trafalgar swallowed slowly, feeling something strange in his chest.

'What is this?'

Anthera noticed.

"Is something wrong? Is the food not to your liking?"

Trafalgar shook his head quickly. "Not at all. It's delicious. I just... it's different."

"Different?"

"The way I'm being treated," he said quietly. "Since the moment I arrived, it's been... respectful. Kind. It's not what I'm used to."

Anthera gave a small nod of understanding.

"In this house, respect comes first. We didn't even know who you were until recently—only because Mordrek told us. But we're glad you're here. Things have been a little dull in the city lately."

Trafalgar took another bite of the roasted meat—juicy, tender, perfectly spiced. The soup beside it was thick and hearty, and the bread warm enough to melt the small slab of butter resting on top. After a long, exhausting day filled with pain, battle, and travel, it tasted like a feast meant for kings.

He hadn't realized how hungry he was until he started eating. Now, it was difficult to stop.

Across the table, Anthera watched with quiet satisfaction.

"You must've really gone through a lot," she said softly.

Trafalgar glanced up, then nodded. "I've had worse... but this past days were intense."

Eron, one of the twins, dropped a spoon with a loud clatter and started giggling. Mael joined a second later, mimicking his brother's laugh. Anthera simply sighed, clearly used to it.

"Eat properly," she told them, not harshly—just firm.

"Yes, Mother," they echoed, trying and failing to look serious.

Sylis, meanwhile, hadn't touched much of her plate. Her arms were crossed again, and she seemed more interested in watching Trafalgar than in the food.

Trafalgar, still chewing, glanced sideways and caught her gaze.

She didn't look away.

Instead, she asked coldly, "Are you really going to train with us?"

Trafalgar set his fork down and wiped his mouth with a cloth napkin.

"That's what your father said."

Sylis raised an eyebrow. "Why?"

"Sylis," Anthera said warningly.

But Mordrek didn't stop her. He leaned back in his chair, sipping a dark-red drink that glowed faintly with mana.

"I told her you'd be joining us," he said. "And that you might even beat her in technique."

Sylis's head whipped toward him.

"Excuse me?"

Mordrek smirked.

"You've got speed, strength, and a good foundation. But Trafalgar might surprise you."

She narrowed her eyes, unconvinced. "He doesn't look like much."

Trafalgar didn't take offense. He sipped from his glass of water and replied evenly, "You're not wrong."

'She has every reason to doubt me. I would too.'

Mordrek waved a hand dismissively. "You'll see tomorrow."

Sylis didn't respond—but the slight twitch in her brow made it clear she wasn't happy about it.

The rest of the dinner unfolded in soft conversation, the tension from earlier fading like mist in warm air.

Anthera refilled the boys' cups juice, while Sylis finally began eating, albeit slowly. Mordrek had relaxed into his seat, one arm slung over the backrest casually, his usual sharpness replaced by something... domestic.

It still felt strange to Trafalgar.

But he didn't hate it.

"So," Anthera said, turning to him again with a curious smile. "Aren't you excited to start at the academy?"

Trafalgar thought about it for a moment.

"...Maybe. I don't really know what to expect. But I do hope it's quieter than the castle."

That made Mordrek chuckle.

"Oh, it is. Might even be peaceful enough for you to meet your future wife, like I did."

Trafalgar raised an eyebrow. "Didn't you have an arranged marriage?"

Mordrek tilted his head. "How do you know that?"

"It's not exactly a secret back home."

"Hah. Typical."

Mordrek gave a small shrug and leaned forward slightly, resting his forearms on the table.

"It was arranged, yeah. But I chose to go through with it. I already knew Anthera from the academy—we weren't close back then, but... when the proposal came, I said yes."

Anthera's lips curled into a small smile, not looking up.

"She helped me," Mordrek continued, "in more ways than one. Because of her, I had the leverage I needed to leave that house behind."

Trafalgar looked between them.

They weren't the perfect, flawless couple from a fairy tale.

But they were... honest.

'One wife. A small family. Feels normal to me. Familiar, even. But compared to Valttair with four wives and nine children... it's a sharp reminder of where I really am. This thing on Earth shouldn't be possible.'

He took another slow bite of food.

Then looked toward Mordrek.

"Can I call you uncle?"

Mordrek gave a sideways grin. "Sure. I'd rather that than 'little brother of Valttair.'"

Trafalgar smirked faintly. "Understood. Sorry about before."

He paused for a beat—then added:

"By the way... do you have any books about the primordial bloodline? I'd like to study it a bit before heading off to the academy."

That made Syllis scoff quietly.

"You don't even know about the bloodline? Should've learned that already."

Trafalgar didn't flinch. "I didn't get the time. That's why I'd like to learn now."

Anthera glanced at him thoughtfully. "We have a small library in the city. You could visit it tomorrow."

She turned to her daughter.

"Sylis, you can take him."

"I don't want to."

Trafalgar raised a hand. "It's alright. I can find it on my own."

Anthera shook her head. "No. You're our guest. You won't wander the city alone."

Her voice wasn't harsh—but it was final.

Sylis groaned quietly but didn't argue again.

The night air inside the villa was calm—just warm enough to chase away the outside chill, with faint whispers of firelight flickering in the hallway sconces.

After dinner, Trafalgar had thanked the family again and been guided back to his room by one of the maids. She said nothing, just bowed politely and left him at the door with a quiet goodnight.

He stepped inside and closed the door behind him.

His room was untouched—the bed made, the curtains drawn, the fireplace softly crackling in the corner. A fresh nightshirt had been laid on the dresser. His boots had been cleaned.

Trafalgar exhaled through his nose and loosened the buttons of his coat.

He undressed in slow motions, folding his new noble attire neatly over a chair. Then he pulled on the nightshirt, its fabric soft against his skin, and approached the window.

Outside, the city of Euclid glimmered faintly under the moonlight. Lanterns floated above the rooftops like drifting fireflies. Snow blanketed the roofs. Everything was still.

'So this is what peace feels like... even if it's temporary.'

He pulled the curtains shut, turned toward the bed, and sat down.

His body welcomed the mattress like a long-lost friend.

His eyes drifted shut almost instantly—but just before he allowed sleep to take him, he whispered to himself:

"...Three weeks. That's enough."