Empress 25

Chapter 25: This Family Can’t Do Without You

"Boss Reyno, as expected, you’re wise. You’ve even arranged other brothers to block the way at the other end. Your planning is truly thorough."

The man in black nodded and bowed, his face filled with a fawning smile, cautiously glancing at the burly figure sunk into the oversized sofa.

The burly man called Reyno raised an eyebrow, his expression slightly grave, as the fierce scars stretching from his chin to the root of his ear twisted with his expression.

"Which group of brothers made a move?"

He asked impassively.

The man in black was momentarily stunned, becoming even more obsequious.

"No wonder you’re the boss, arranging more than one group of people."

Seeing Reyno’s displeased expression, he quickly gave a brief recount of the scene at the time.

The more Reyno listened, the more things seemed off—racing carriage, white-gloved riders, soaked handkerchiefs. Every one of those tactics he could identify, but together, they appeared baffling.

The racing carriage was characteristic of the Cyclone Gang, white gloves were a mark of the White Rose Association, and using handkerchief narcotics was certainly the underhanded tactics of the Blue Night Rose Mercenaries.

Did they collaborate to ruin his plans?

But how did they find out? Could there be a mole within the organization?

As Reyno pondered how to catch the mole, the man in black thoughtfully reminded:

"Boss, it’s almost evening, we should give Mr. Lori a reply."

Mr. Lori?

Reyno’s face became particularly unpleasant.

He knew exactly how many men he sent.

Lisa was indeed kidnapped, but it wasn’t by his hand.

He beckoned, signaling the man in black to come over.

Just when the man in black thought Reyno was about to assign him a secret mission, Reyno’s massive body abruptly rose, and his hammer-like fist landed heavily on the man’s forehead.

With a "bang", the man in black slumped down before he could even scream.

Having resolved the leak hazard, Reyno hurriedly donned his coat, intending to take a walk outside.

Walking along, his brows remained furrowed as he slowly made his way toward the impoverished district where Roland and Lisa lived.

Seeing is believing, he must personally verify whether Lisa has returned.

Soon, he saw Roland searching everywhere.

Roland anxiously grabbed passersby, gesturing and inquiring.

It’s evident that Lisa was indeed kidnapped, and the kidnappers haven’t yet contacted Roland.

Just as he was about to leave, the visibly frantic Roland unexpectedly blocked the path of the clearly menacing Reyno.

"Sir, have you seen Lisa? She looks something like this..."

Seeing the urgency in Roland’s eyes, Reyno didn’t respond immediately.

Narrowing his eyes, he observed Roland with peripheral vision, carefully searching for any sign of pretense.

Finding none.

A raspy voice spoke, "Get lost, I haven’t seen the girl you’re talking about. Don’t block the way!"

He rudely pushed Roland aside, leaving with large strides.

He must find Mr. Lori immediately and act swiftly.

Who kidnapped Lisa doesn’t matter. As long as he intercepts before the kidnapper contacts Roland, Roland will surely fall into the trap!

Quickly, it must be done quickly!

Darkness is falling.

Just as long as he plays the timing right, tonight will be Roland’s death day.

Though he had no personal vendetta against Roland, Lori had offered one hundred twenty pounds in cash for his life.

This reward equals a house with a yard on Belphar Street.

It was an offer he couldn’t refuse.

Roland soon returned home and, through the second-floor window, watched Reyno’s massive frame quickly heading toward Lori’s house.

Alina’s intelligence was spot on.

Not only uncovering the mastermind behind all this but also finding out about Reyno’s financial relationship with Lori.

Lori had once penned writings portraying Reyno as a businessman keen on charity, while Reyno helped Lori deal with troubles that couldn’t be handled in the public eye.

This was the beginning of their collaboration, but not the end.

Hiding behind the curtains, Roland’s mind raced.

Lisa was taken by Sif, creating an appearance of "being kidnapped."

Upon hearing the news, Reyno would undoubtedly have to make a decision.

From Reyno’s earlier behavior, it was clear he was taken in.

No matter how daring he was, he’d never guess Lisa was snatched away by a noble in broad daylight.

Such an outrageous affair would not cross the minds of normal people even if their brains had burned out.

Reyno, ever adventurous, would surely use Roland’s "chaotic state" as a trap to lure him somewhere and then eliminate him.

Roland didn’t have to wait long.

In the quiet alley under the night sky, footsteps echoed.

His spirit jolted; here they come.

People walking on the streets at this hour were probably not decent folks.

Judging by time, the guy delivering a message for Reyno should be arriving too.

He had to play the anxious, angry, and panicked little brother looking for his sister.

Acting in front of gang members was not easy.

He had to get into character.

Roland closed his eyes, reminiscing about relying on Lisa after their parents passed.

He picked up the empty teacup, hoping to calm himself, only to find it empty.

Almost instinctively calling Lisa’s name, he abruptly realized his sister was absent.

Standing up to find the kettle, he discovered the water was cold.

Trying to boil water, yet unable to find the candle or firewood.

In the dim night, Roland accidentally misstepped. Despite skillfully supporting himself, his left hand pressed heavily on the floor, scraping out a bloodstain.

He was stunned to discover that with Lisa gone for half a day, his life became a chaotic mess.

He had long been accustomed to Lisa’s presence.

Should Lisa truly be absent...

Extreme anger made Roland’s hand tremble slightly.

He would not allow such a thing to happen.

Clenching his fist, he pounded on the table, the dull sound piercingly loud.

A knock on the door came at that exact moment.

"Who?!"

Roland’s voice carried three parts anger and seven parts impatience.

"Kid, your sister is in our hands."

A raspy voice came from outside the door.

Roland "thunk thunk thunk" dashed to the door, yanking it open and dragging the messenger inside, tightly clutching his throat, his eyes blood-red.

"Speak, where is she?"

"I'm just the messenger, it's not my business!" the messenger was startled by Roland's ferocious face and fierce murderous intent.

Quickly, he revealed the rendezvous location to Roland.

Intending to threaten Roland to let go, the messenger was rendered silent. Roland's eyes, akin to a lone wounded wolf, were chilling; his lips trembled, threats unable to leave his mouth.

Almost fainting from fright, Roland gradually regained composure.

Grabbing the messenger, he said slowly, "I can give the money. If you dare show her any disrespect, I'll make you all die with her. Remember, all of you!"

If someone else had uttered these words, the messenger would have dismissed it as the pathetic cry of a weakling.

But facing Roland's burning eyes, the messenger felt fear.

This guy would truly do it!

As Roland's vice-like right hand slowly relaxed, the messenger gasped for air, his face flushed from poor blood circulation gradually returning to normal.

He scuttled away, only to be kicked and sent flying by Roland.

"Get lost!"

Roland shut the door, his expression gradually calming.

The stars sparkled brightly tonight; the moon subdued, perfect for bleeding.

He hadn’t imagined confronting Lori, this literary titan, would proceed in such a manner.

Fake literary scholar duel: recite poetry, toast and feast, appraise with gentlemen.

Real literary scholar duel: gather and besiege, hacked to death chaotically, leave no aftermath.