Empress 36

Chapter 36: A Truly Sinful Fellow

Under Sif's insistence, the carriage directly took Roland to his new home.

After glancing at the new house Roland had purchased, Sif lightly furrowed her brows, secretly blaming herself.

"Roland, I have an estate on the outskirts south of the city. Although it's a bit small, it's at least a hundred times bigger than your current humble abode, fully furnished and staffed with a dozen servants. If you don't mind the distance, I'll give it to you."

Looking into Sif's clear eyes, Roland was at a loss for where to begin his retort.

Firstly, a two-story detached house with a private courtyard in the Imperial Capital's core district is definitely not a humble abode!

Then, what's with the "give it to him," what reason does he have to accept it?

Taking something from someone is a short hand.

Now that he and Sif are friends, can he accept the estate without guilt?

Besides, is that what he wants? He wanted to leverage his support to become truly elite. What is a mere estate; he wants a real castle to indulge in a decadent life of wine and revelry behind closed doors.

Roland smiled and said, "Sif, if you really have extra estates, why not sell them for cash and treat it as our funding for activities after setting sail."

He liked money but had principles in acquiring it.

The funds that should be taken shouldn’t be shortchanged, and he would never extend his hand for what shouldn’t be taken.

The last person who liked to extend his hand, Mr. Lori, was already suffering in the Netherworld.

Roland neither accepted nor solemnly declined but skipped the topic in a half-joking manner.

In Sif’s heart, his image grew a bit more majestic.

She silently adjusted Roland’s evaluation from S- to S.

Originally, she thought Roland’s desire for money was somewhat exaggerated, but it seemed she misunderstood.

Seeing Sif speechless, Roland was well aware that even the most tactful refusal was still a refusal, and the Countess was obviously displeased.

However, an estate worth thousands of pounds was indeed a considerable fortune even for Count Sif; there’s no reason to accept it for nothing.

He wanted to maintain an independent personality, and naturally, he couldn’t be kept.

Considering Sif’s delicate and sensitive self-esteem, Roland moved a bit closer, covered his mouth with his right hand, and said in a mysterious low voice:

"Sif, why spend this unjust money? We’re all working for the Empress; it only makes sense she should reward us, don’t you think?"

"I just don’t believe Her Majesty the Empress doesn’t have any extra estates. Of course, I’m not insisting on a reward. If her political foresight could extend a bit further and convert these immovable assets into cash, I’d rather want nothing."

Sif: "..."

She lowered her head slightly and softly asked, "Truly want nothing?"

"I want many things, not just an estate. Right now, our resources are limited, and every coin must be spent wisely."

While discussing money, the atmosphere in the carriage became somewhat heavy, so Roland opted to get out of the carriage, lowering his voice before leaving:

"Everyone is busy for their own interests, with no exceptions."

"In the foreseeable future, my interests align with yours."

Having said this much, the cards were laid out clearly.

Sif also understood.

Roland left out one person.

A person who both existed and didn’t exist.

Empress Sylph.

Seeing Roland about to leave, Sif called out to him, softly saying, "I’ll find you construction workers; it’s a friend’s help, so don’t refuse."

"Thank you."

Roland smiled, waved at her, and turned to leave.

Sif's house was large, requiring regular maintenance and upkeep; of course, she had the means to find workers, far better than him getting scammed.

This was indeed a friend's kindness.

The carriage resumed, gradually picking up speed.

Sitting inside the carriage, gazing at the gray sky of the Imperial Capital through the curtains, Sif's mood wasn't particularly beautiful.

Everything was terrible.

Absolutely terrible.

If Empress Sylph indeed existed in this world, it would be much better if she were only Count Sif.

It was evident that Roland, like her, was carefully maintaining their relationship and was not using her as a stepping stone to approach the Empress.

She was quite moved.

Yet amidst her emotions, she noticed that things were changing.

The Count was a Count, and the Empress was an Empress, and in Roland's eyes, they were not the same.

Roland's help was for her sake, and he wasn't familiar with the Empress.

Such loyalty to friendship, how could she not be moved?

However, what followed was a headache.

She truly hadn’t intended to deceive Roland deliberately.

She was indeed Count Tyrone Sif, but she also had a hidden identity.

The Empress casually leaving Sheffield Palace was inappropriate, but her good friend Count Tyrone entering and leaving the Imperial Palace was nothing.

At that time, she wasn’t familiar with Roland and was certainly not going to reveal everything.

Now that they could trust each other, she could remove her mask and reveal her true face, yet couldn’t unveil the fact that the Empress was also her.

She feared losing.

The teacher was old, and she could only rely on Roland.

After pondering, Sif’s eyes lit up, and she finally thought of a solution.

If she told Roland directly, he would most likely jump up in anger. So, she decided to wait until he did something unforgivable to her and then reveal it.

By then, both would be even.

Exactly, this was the method Roland taught her.

"If you ask to open a window, the other party will most likely refuse. So, first ask to remove the roof; at this point, they’ll most likely agree to open a window."

That’s the way to do it!

She indeed knew how to learn and apply.

Having thought of the perfect solution, Sif’s mood improved, so she had the carriage stop by the Tamas Riverbank, got out, and went to the riverbank for some fresh air.

This was the best spot for riverbank views, where one could see the wide Tamas River take a big turn toward the sea.

This was one of the busiest waterways in the world.

Though there was no sunshine, watching various ships come and go was still quite an interesting experience.

Sif stood casually on the viewing platform, recalling Roland’s suggestion to go the route of common familiarity, hesitating whether to try interacting with ordinary people today.

However, she was astonished to find that others were avoiding her.

The once bustling crowd automatically parted on either side of her, gradually dispersing.

The hand she had just raised froze in the air, with the autumn wind blowing through the lace-trimmed gloves, her slender fingers felt a chilly tingle.

This must be what Roland referred to as "thick wall barrier."

The air seemed like an invisible wall separating her from others.

Her opulent attire and elegant noble demeanor made her stand out.

Next time, she should try civilian clothing.

Sif silently contemplated.

Just when she thought no one dared to approach her, a newspaper boy cautiously inched forward, his eyes full of hope.

She waved her hand, signaling the newspaper boy to come forward.

"Esteemed and beautiful lady, would you like an issue of The Sussex Sun? This special edition is only one shilling," the newspaper boy said timidly, the newspaper in his hand trembling slightly.

The lady before him was incredibly noble, and he was gambling.

Either earn an extra tip or be whipped away by the noble’s servants.

Sif didn’t have a pocket for money, but she had a mobile payment tool.

The coachman quickly came over, seeking her instructions with his eyes while tightening his grip on the whip.

If Sif instructed him to drive the newspaper boy away, the whip would be flicked without hesitation.

"Give him one shilling, plus a three shilling tip!"

Sif seldom dealt with small currency like shillings and had no concept of its purchasing power, so she casually paid four times the amount.

The newspaper boy, initially frightened by the robust coachman, was now trembling with excitement upon receiving four silver coins.

He quickly bowed in thanks to Sif and then promptly slipped away.

He had never seen such a kind-hearted noble lady.

Though she wore a light veil, he was quite certain.

She was very beautiful.

Just like today’s newspaper content.