Empress 42

Chapter 42: What Does Double Standards Mean?

The champagne still wasn’t opened in the end.

Lisa believed that life needed some sense of ceremony, so she insisted on opening champagne in the new home.

"Wouldn’t it be a waste to drink such good champagne in this dim, cramped dining room?"

Roland couldn’t refute Lisa’s reasoning.

Behind the grandiose reasoning, she actually had her own agenda.

She wanted to invite her former "good sisters" to taste the champagne together.

She, of course, knew that their fake sisterly bond had long vanished.

She had even heard their sneaky discussions behind her back more than once.

They said all sorts of things.

Some words were particularly harsh, with some saying she was Roland’s lover, and others certain that Roland would eventually tire of her and abandon her.

While the first comment was unpleasant, it didn’t anger her, as they were indeed innocent.

The second comment, however, was intolerable and needed to be seriously countered.

The more others wished her ill, the more she wanted to live a glamorously bright life.

Not only did she move into a new house, but she also became a Transcendent that they had to look up to.

She even thought of the routine on how to accidentally reveal her Extraordinary Abilities.

Her special ability was [Flame Control], which was very suitable for accidental exposure.

It wasn't that Lisa was being difficult, just that her sisters acted first.

People might not necessarily envy Her Majesty the Empress living comfortably in a distant Imperial Palace, but they would certainly explode when a "good sister" soared to new heights.

After confirming Lisa was unharmed, Roland hurried out the door.

Today was posting day, so he needed to leave early.

He was well aware of Lisa's intentions, but he wouldn't stop her.

Girls' squabbles, why would he interfere?

There is no right or wrong in these matters, and certainly no need to make it a big deal.

The celebration's champagne being opened was also a farewell to the past.

Where there's always genuine friendship, there's also deteriorated sisterly bonds.

Just as he was about to find Sif, the carriage arrived. Sif lifted the curtain, and he jumped onto the carriage to sit opposite her.

Sitting inside the carriage, Roland looked at Sif with some surprise, and the more he looked, the more he felt she seemed different from yesterday.

"Is there something wrong with my face?"

"There is, and it’s significant. Your beauty leaves me at a loss for words."

Sif seemed to be in a good mood today, and Roland’s spirits were also high, making their banter more exuberant.

"You have an eye for beauty." Sif slightly pursed her lips, her dimples graced with a playful smile.

Though she indeed held the title of the world’s most beautiful girl as verified by the Magic Mirror, Sif suddenly realized acknowledging it directly seemed a bit immodest and promptly changed the subject.

"You seem to be in a good mood, what’s the happy occasion?"

Sif asked with a radiant smile.

Only in front of Roland could she shed all burdens and enjoy a moment of relaxation.

There was no teacher instructing her on what to do.

No one was watching her every word and action.

No one was eyeing her share of the power pie, wanting a big bite.

Well, alright, Roland was eyeing the power pie, but in his eyes, it was Her Majesty the Empress’s power he was after, not hers.

This must be what pure friendship feels like.

It’s a wonderful feeling.

With Roland, she was not the Empress yet to ascend the throne, not a Minister to the Empress, nor the noble from an illustrious family.

She was Sif, just Sif.

In front of Roland, there was no need to maintain that tiresome etiquette, true freedom indeed.

"Do you remember Lisa?"

Roland casually asked.

Sif paused for a moment before hesitantly asking, "Is she the girl you live with? Are you happy because of her?"

Although Lisa had nothing to do with her, she inexplicably felt a bit irritable, her tone slightly sterner.

"Roland, you’re only eighteen this year, still in your career prime, as long as you can assist Her Majesty the Empress well, the future is limitless."

After a brief pause, she resolutely said, "Once we achieve our goals, you could at least be granted the title of Hereditary Count, and then it wouldn’t be too late to seriously consider marriage."

"I have no intention of interfering in your private life, just reminding you purely as a friend, that with your prospects, you could absolutely marry a true noble maiden."

"If it’s physical needs, it’s actually easy to satisfy. I can help you buy a few maids with decent looks, you can directly tell me your preferred type, no need to be shy."

Roland: "..."

Despite Sif frantically stacking up emotional armor, it was apparent she was a bit anxious.

He could understand Sif’s feelings.

These past few days, small troubles came one after another.

Roland had already proven he was not inferior to Wald in strategy and even superior in adaptability.

He possessed significant value in united front matters.

Within the small exile team, Empress Sylph played the team leader and beautiful vase role, while Roland acted as chief advisor.

Sif was the coordinator and embodiment of the Empress, sharing the role as team combat power with the mysterious White Rose Knight.

Given that Wald was old and had to remain in the Imperial Capital, Roland was undoubtedly the backbone of this team.

Sif certainly didn’t want the team core to break down due to romance distractions.

Roland accepted her advice.

Wait a minute...

What nonsense was this person spouting? He merely mentioned Lisa’s name, how did it end up here?

He looked at Sif with a serious expression, using his most earnest tone:

"Sif, I'll only say this once, Lisa and I are non-blood-related kin, both our parents are deceased, and we have lived together all these years, closer than siblings."

"I'm happy because she became a Transcendent, just yesterday."

"Sif, I know the difference between urgency and leisure, I won't be distracted, please trust me."

Roland's solemn statement made Sif a bit embarrassed.

She quietly murmured, "I'm sorry, I didn't know both your and her parents had an accident, I also lost my parents, I truly understand you."

Seeing Sif's quiet explanation, Roland instead was somewhat speechless.

Good heavens, could you find resonance in this sort of matter too?

Looking at Sif's slightly panicked eyes, Roland's tone also softened a bit.

"Sif, we are friends, no need to say sorry. We share common interests and should also have trust that transcends interest."

Roland's reassurance lifted Sif's spirits significantly.

Upon learning that Lisa's special ability was [Flame Control], her lips were filled with a harvest smile.

"That's great, Elemental Control is the Extraordinary Ability closest to magic. Miss Lisa's frontal combat ability is immeasurable."

"No, I won’t allow her on the battlefield, absolutely not!"

Normally easygoing, Roland suddenly became exceptionally stubborn.

"Miss Sif, if waving the Empress’s flag we still can’t build a formidable combat strength, then something’s wrong with the ideology, not the lack of a chef who can play with fire."

"I don’t want her near the battlefield, not even a bit of danger."

Remembering his ill-fated father, who had become one with the earth but was theoretically "missing," Roland’s tone carried a hint of rage.

He wouldn’t allow his close ones to get hurt, not even potential harm.

Roland’s attitude was almost brutish, not at all like the usual deference shown by commoners before nobles.

But Sif wasn’t angry, she was even a bit envious of Lisa being protected by Roland.

She lightly bit her lips and softly asked, "What about me? Are you willing to see me on the battlefield?"

"You are proficient in Imperial Swordsmanship; your combat power is crucial to both Her Majesty and the team."

Roland calmly stated, "If necessary, you indeed need to take action."

Sif’s rosy cheeks instantly turned pale.

To protect Lisa with care, but for her, it was a go ahead.

This double standard was too blatant, not even pretending to mask it?

In his eyes, supposed friends compared to a sister-like relation aren’t even worth a feather.

Quite disappointing, Roland!

Sif clenched her fists, striving to regulate her breathing, not wanting to lose composure.

Just as she was performing deep facial control, Roland’s voice gradually softened.

"When it truly comes time for you to act, the enemy must have gotten past my corpse, then I wouldn’t be able to protect you, and you can only pray to God for protection."

Sif’s tightly grasped fist gradually relaxed, her cheeks dyed by the morning sun to a late autumn maple leaf.