Empress 44

Chapter 44: Roland Also Wants to Make Progress

Roland's etiquette class was over.

It was required by Empress Sylph.

Since it was decided to set sail, the outcome of the salon party wasn't that important anymore.

Lori was dead, and those who wanted to find fault with Roland during the salon would not be too rampant.

Implying the Empress with written submissions to sway the narrative was also overshadowed by Roland with an even more sensational story.

Thus, continuing with etiquette lessons would have been somewhat time-wasting.

After all, Roland's time was very precious.

Of course, since Teacher Mary was asked for help, she couldn't leave empty-handed, so Sylph simply asked Teacher Mary to conduct special training for Miss Lisa.

It was apparent that this girl held a special position in Roland's heart, and with the idea that it was better to treat a person's family well than try directly to befriend them, Sylph sent an invitation to Lisa, asking her to attend as a female guest.

To be a special guest of the Empress, one couldn't behave rudely.

Special training had to be arranged, and it had to be rigorous!

Thus, Lisa received Roland's torment with mixed feelings of joy and pain.

Roland, though now free, wasn't truly idle.

He was feverishly writing.

Apart from providing articles for The Sun and minstrels, there was a more important task.

He was writing a political tutorial that the Empress could understand without any prior knowledge.

It needed to be vivid and straightforward.

Such a bizarre request was the first in Sussex's seven hundred year history.

This book was both difficult and easy to write.

Starting from zero is not the worst, at least it's better than treating garbage as gospel with negative points.

Since it was a blank page, Roland naturally painted with utmost care.

He made slight changes to classic cases and historical stories he had seen before crossing over, changed the names, and used them as material to start compiling the textbook.

According to Sylph, the Empress enjoyed his novels, so Roland wrote these cases in a novella format.

In this novel, nearly all officials exploited the Empress's name for personal gain.

Roland hid in the post office, racking his brains to finish the first story, then handed it to Sylph for evaluation.

She knew the Empress best and had the most say in whether such a writing style would be accepted by the Empress.

Opening the manuscript that still smelled of ink, looking at the flowing handwriting and the novel story, Sylph had a good reading experience.

However, her good mood was shattered after just a few minutes.

She clenched her fist, her knuckles turning slightly white from the tension.

Seeing Sylph’s indignation, Roland faintly sensed something was amiss, and almost swallowed his reminder of "we’re also claiming benefits under the Empress’s name" back down.

After quickly finishing the first story that Roland wrote, Sylph took several deep breaths to forcibly calm her emotions before softly asking:

"Does this book have a title?"

Roland smiled casually, "Sorry, I have a hard time coming up with names, I haven’t thought of one yet. Why don’t you help me think of one?"

He was just saying it casually and didn’t expect Sylph to help, but her eyes sparkled with an unusual gleam as she slowly spoke a name that lit up Roland’s eyes.

"Since everyone is exploiting the Empress’s name, how about ’In the Name of the Empress’?"

Roland softly repeated it twice, suddenly feeling that the title was extremely fitting.

Indeed, everyone is leveraging the Empress’s name for their own benefit.

Don’t ask, the answer will always be Loyalty! Honor!

But who truly cares about the Empress?

Roland glanced at Sylph out of the corner of his eye, observing the fire in her eyes, deep in thought.

Sylph had not yet been stained by the cruelty of political struggles; she sympathized with the pitiable Empress.

Though he had never met the Empress in person, recalling that she at least pardoned his offense, Roland felt a touch of reluctance in his heart.

"Her Majesty is not without allies, at the very least, she still has Mr. Wald, and us."

Sylph really wanted to ask Roland, are you loyal too?

But that question could never be asked.

Roland was not Sylph’s subject, disloyalty was only natural.

He helped under the guise of friendship and couldn’t be demanded too much.

However, the identity of ’friend’ was ultimately too hollow, making Sylph feel insecure.

She needed to find a way to give him a sense of belonging!

Sylph’s mind raced, starting to think about Teacher Wald’s teachings.

A blank slate.

After all, she wasn’t the Crown Prince, and her teacher’s teachings did not include this.

Just as she was feeling a bit discouraged, she suddenly remembered a passage from the Chronicles of the Powerful Ministers where a powerful treacherous minister said:

"If someone is actively doing things, they must be pursuing advancement. Fame, money, power, and pleasure—men’s pursuits can never escape these."

Fame? Roland certainly doesn’t care about that.

If he cared about reputation, he wouldn’t have traded the writing contest’s first prize for money.

Although it was a strategy, it was clear he truly didn’t care.

Wealth? Certainly some, but not much.

Power? If he valued power, what he should be doing most is finding ways to approach the Empress and demonstrate his ability and achievements to her, instead of escorting her "Little Earl" around.

Pleasure? Thinking of Roland’s firm refusal of her offer of a maid, this one probably isn’t it either.

Not fond of fame, wealth, power, or pleasure?

Sylph felt exceedingly anxious. Who does good deeds without expecting returns, he must have demands!

What exactly does he want?

While Sylph was lost in wild thoughts, Roland packed up the manuscript, making a rather "serious" gesture of invitation.

"Miss Sif, it’s time to have an audience with Her Majesty the Empress."

"Huh? You, you want to see her?" While her mind was in turmoil, Sylph almost blurted out instinctively.

Roland’s eyes grew more baffled.

Lord Count, wasn’t this your scheduled itinerary yesterday, are you alright?

Sylph quickly regained her composure and swiftly covered up:

"Roland, what I mean is, Her Majesty needs you now, if you take this opportunity to make a request, she will definitely do her best to fulfill it, have you thought it through?"

Roland nodded.

"Give me an official status. When working for Her Majesty, it’s better to have a status."

Really?

Sylph breathed a sigh of relief, recalling what the powerful traitor had said, "Grasp power, and the other three benefits will follow. You must seize power and never let go."

So Roland’s thinking coincided with that powerful minister’s.

At this thought, Sylph’s heart skipped a beat, and the sigh she just let out was drawn back again.

"What official position and title do you want?"

"The official position is unnecessary. As for the title, I'd like a title; can that be arranged?"

Roland teased with a half-joking tone.

Without accomplishments, being granted a title purely through favor requires dual approval from both the Noble House and the House of Commons.

This matter could be very difficult, or just a matter of words.

With Empress Sylph's current prestige and political resources, accomplishing this is about as hard as swimming across a channel with a small mountain on your back.

Sylph felt a bit dejected, and her tone lost some confidence.

"It's a bit difficult."

Just a bit difficult? It's practically impossible! Unless a price far greater than the title is paid in exchange.

Roland said calmly: "Her Majesty the Empress can certainly do it, but the price is too high, completely unnecessary. I want the title of Imperial Knight."

Imperial Knight?

Sylph was stunned for a long time before recalling this almost discarded term.

During the era when knights prevailed, the Imperial Family also established the Imperial Knight Order.

At that time, knights, as the backbone of the second class, held a crucial position.

The Captain of the Imperial Knight Order's status was in no way inferior to that of a Cabinet Minister or Grand General, and controlled nearly ten thousand elite knights.

After the era of knights ended, the Imperial Family could not maintain the extensive expenses of the Knight Order, leading to a gradual decrease in its numbers.

Today, the Imperial Knight Order has fewer than two hundred serving members, and even the title of Imperial Knight has gradually evolved into an honorary designation, representing a close relationship with the Imperial Family.

Does this purely honorary title still hold value?

Of course, it does!

Precisely because no one competes for it, securing this title is very simple.

Imperial Knight?

Captain of the Imperial Knight Order!

The previous Knight Order Leader accompanied Emperor Father to sea and is now sunk to the seafloor.

Since Roland is so eager to progress, naturally he is the ideal candidate.