Empress 47

Chapter 47: No One Knows Velvet Better Than I Do

Why let Sif wait and see?

Because Roland only has a rough idea and no specific measures, he still needs to go back and research more materials.

Some are born to fight wars, but he is definitely not included.

It's well known that even organizing a few hundred people for a picnic without issues is already an ability beyond average.

Roland can access all military literature from Sun Tzu's Art of War to Qi Jiguang's Training Methods and modern Western military theories, but that doesn't mean he understands military affairs.

His limit in command skills was organizing a campus soccer league as the student council president in university.

Seeing Roland's confident expression, Sif felt slightly relieved.

She believed Roland could create miracles, just like when facing difficulties in the past.

The only regret was that there were too few members in the Knight Order.

Seeing Sif's reassuringly trusting gaze, Roland's inner fire was also ignited.

Of course, he believed he could do it, just like when facing difficulties in the past.

Fortunately, there were few people in the Knight Order.

Only a handful of people, so there wasn’t much to consider.

Roland did not ask the camp manager questions.

He hasn’t officially taken office yet, his position is not justified.

Instead of asking old knights who have lost their enthusiasm, he might as well chat with the children.

After mentioning to Sif, Roland donned a sunny smile and walked towards the area where the children were playing.

He found a spot next to the children and chatted with them casually.

He often helped neighbors with children in the slum area, so he’s quite familiar with it.

Sif watched Roland in astonishment, hesitating whether to follow him.

The children were playing wildly, covered with dirt and mud, so she really didn’t want to get close. But wanting to hear what Roland was saying to the kids, she reluctantly went over.

Fortunately, she wasn’t wearing a long dress today but casual clothes, making it easier to move.

Her tiptoe walking soon caught the children’s attention.

"Big brother, look, it’s the pretty noble lady."

Roland smiled and nodded, the little ones sure had sharp eyes.

Not only noble but also part of the Imperial Family.

Roland casually took off his coat, placed it on a wooden stump, and indicated Sif could sit there.

Expecting the delicate Imperial Family girl to mingle with the children was unrealistic, her coming over to listen was already great.

Engaging with the people needs to happen gradually, it can’t be rushed.

After Sif sat down, the previously cheerful kids became somewhat restrained, even too shy to laugh randomly.

After sitting for a short while, she frustratedly realized she was somewhat superfluous and considered leaving.

Luckily, Roland gave her an opening.

"Sif, the kids love stories. How about you tell them one?"

Sif was a bit confused, wondering how she could tell a story.

Roland softly reminded, "Tell them the story of the Princess."

What’s there to tell about the Princess?

Sif didn’t really want to talk about it, but it’s a good way to get closer to the children, so she didn’t refuse.

"I’ll just tell something casually then."

Seeing the beautiful noble sister about to tell a story, the kids were thrilled and quickly gathered around to sit properly.

Sif cleared her throat and began talking about the day-to-day life of the Princess.

Honestly speaking, what she was saying was somewhat dull.

At least that's what Roland thought.

Suppressing the urge to yawn, he looked around and noticed the kids listening intently with eyes full of expectation and wonder.

Hey, what's going on with you little ones?

Isn't it just about the daily life of a royal princess? It's all about strict teachers, distant family relationships, luxurious living, and complex rules.

But he quickly realized.

He's been online and read books, but kids don't have such access.

Their knowledge of the Imperial Family mainly comes from minstrels and their parents' biases.

Although they weren't sure about Sif's true identity, children have a unique instinct to discern her noble status, so they believed what she said.

Roland considered that maybe the kids were not interested in the story itself, but in Sif.

Listening to the beautiful noble lady using a gentle, clear voice to tell a story, such an experience is rare.

Kids are genuine.

They may not love the story, but they love gathering around the beautiful noble lady.

Glancing at Sif’s statuesque profile, Roland suddenly realized he still had a childlike heart.

After the dull story ended, the children were still yearning, one of them bravely asked:

"Sif sister, I heard Adam the minstrel tell the story of the Pea Princess. He said a real princess can feel a pea even through twenty layers of mattresses, is that true?"

"It’s not that exaggerated."

Sif smiled and continued, "Most court-supplied velvet mattresses are very thin, and some princesses soak in hot milk baths every day, making their skin naturally tender, but not that exaggerated."

She used her fair fingers to roughly outline the thickness and thought for a moment before slowly saying, "The thinnest mattresses, if separated by three to five layers, can be felt. More than that, it’s impossible."

With such a firm explanation, the kids wouldn’t doubt it.

They all showed expressions of envy.

Whether or not their envy was directed at the Princess who got to sleep on five layers of velvet every night, Roland envied the velvet mattresses.

Sif’s story was good, but the children still felt a bit regretful.

"Is the story of the Pea Princess false then?"

Seeing the kids were a bit disappointed, Sif thought for a moment and softly said:

"In the ancient Delan Kingdom, there was a princess living in luxury, she ordered the velvet mattresses to be made as thin as handkerchiefs, and she indeed could feel the pea beneath twenty layers."

"And then what happened?" the children asked eagerly.

Sif sighed softly and said warmly, "The twenty-layer ultra-thin velvet was just a glimpse of the princess's luxurious life, she lived in far greater luxury than that."

"What happened next?" the children were even more curious.

Sif calmly said, "The princess was so extravagant, so one can imagine the luxury of the King and Queen. As the aristocrats followed suit, none wanted to be left behind. Even before the princess could succeed the throne, Delan Kingdom was ruined."

No one expected such an ending, the children were a bit dumbfounded.

Sif set aside her airs, using the story to draw them closer, although they still felt a distance because of her status, they started enthusiastically chatting with Miss Sif, leaving Roland aside.

The story-telling big brother could be seen every night at Monarch Square, even telling better stories than Roland.

But they've never seen a story-telling noble sister.

The children focus on the present and naturally gathered around Sif.

This was Sif's first time surrounded by so many kids, after some surprise and restraint, she gradually adapted to the feeling of being surrounded by the little ones.

She casually asked about the Knight Order.

Through the children's chaotic narratives, she gradually pieced together some context.

The Knight Order had only been paying three months' salary each year for three consecutive years, prompting many knights to venture out and earn a living due to insufficient funds.

Those playing here were family members of the remaining knights.

Not every knight can lower themselves to go out and earn money.

Since childhood, they had learned knightly skills, suddenly transitioning to other professions, they could only engage in battle-related jobs.

These jobs often conflicted with knightly codes, which many couldn't accept.

In summary, although less than three hundred knights remained, most were not stationed, and life was tough.

Roland and Sif exchanged glances, their expressions both grave.

Despite having expected the condition of the Knight Order to be bad, being on site revealed things were even worse than anticipated.

As the sun started to set, the children smelled the aroma of food from the direction of the camp and reluctantly bade farewell to Sif, following the scent of home.

Watching them leave, Sif's expression grew exceedingly serious, as she solemnly said:

"Roland, I plan to sell some unused items to provide back pay for these loyal knights. Her Majesty the Empress should also be generous."

"Back pay? In whose name?" Roland asked nonchalantly.

Truthful words sometimes slip out unintentionally.

If Sif casually said she'd pay in her name, Roland might deduce her thoughts.

If she said it'd be in the Empress's name, it would show loyalty still prevails.

However, Sif's answer surprised him.

"Of course in your name, you're the Knight Order Leader!"