Empress 49

Chapter 49: You’re Not Ready Yet

Although Roland didn’t quite understand how he came up with so many tricks, Sif believed that this "Knight’s" combat power would surely undergo a qualitative leap.

Even if honor had to be abandoned, if it didn’t lead to a leap in combat power, wouldn’t it be a vain sacrifice?

Of course, from Roland’s perspective, sending knights to the battlefield was still a last resort.

Knights and cavalry are ultimately different.

On the battlefield, they undertook similar tasks, but their identities and statuses were entirely different.

Knights are the direct vassals of the Emperor, with loyalty as their core advantage.

The complete formation of the Imperial Knight Order consists of a thousand knights and nine thousand cavalry.

After the decline of the Knight Order, all ordinary cavalry were disbanded, yet nearly three hundred knights chose to remain steadfast.

Loyalty flows in their veins as if it were blood.

Roland was unwilling to use these loyal men as mere consumables.

Skilled in close combat techniques and with a considerable overall strength, they were more suited to transformation into special operations units for this era.

Especially in urban street and alley battles or court power struggles, elite knights clad in full enchanted armor, versed in various firearm tactics, and adept at using alchemy tools, would be a crushing force against ordinary troops.

Most importantly, they were loyal, they had faith! Bathed in the glory of the Empress, they could fight to the very last moment, without fear of collapsing morale.

This was virtually a weapon for quelling rebellion, a cutting edge to suppress traitors!

Roland patiently explained to Sif the concept and detailed operations of the new Knight Order, while Sif listened eagerly, resting her chin on her hand.

When Roland finished his second cup of tea and was nearly hoarse, she finally provided her feedback.

"The delayed salaries will be in place by the time you take office, and everything else will be done as you said, I trust you!"

Roland: "..."

Even though Sif clearly couldn't grasp his military strategy, leaving him somewhat dejected, such unwavering trust was enough to offset everything.

Out of habit, he saluted Sif with a knight's greeting.

Sif quickly removed her gloves and returned the bow to Roland.

Perhaps the scene resembled too closely a knight and a lord exchanging salutes, she promptly reminded:

"Roland, we're all working for the Empress, there's no need for formalities in private."

"As you wish!"

Roland responded exaggeratedly on purpose, causing a slight blush on Sif’s cheeks, a bit embarrassed.

"Never mind that, the cultural salon is starting the night after tomorrow. This salon is of a high standard, inviting the upper aristocracy of the Imperial Capital, cabinet ministers, the Grand General, generals from major military branches, as well as well-known figures in the literary world. Are you ready?"

"I’m not worried; even if I don’t understand something, there’s still you." Roland said with a smile.

"That’s not possible, I can’t accompany you the night after tomorrow." Sif shook her head with a smile.

"Huh, why?"

"I have another important task."

She waved, gesturing for Roland to come closer, then whispered in his ear: "Her Majesty the Empress has been unwell these past few days and cannot attend the dinner. However, not attending would be quite impolite, so I’ll be impersonating her."

Oh, uh?

Roland looked at Sif in surprise, pondering the thought.

The role Sif played was indeed akin to a shadow warrior, substituting for the Empress when she was inconvenient to appear.

If necessary, she might even be pushed out as a scapegoat.

Thinking of this, Roland felt somewhat displeased.

Sif was his friend, the Empress was just a stranger; he didn’t want Sif to be harmed.

Seeing Roland’s conflicted expression, Sif reassured him with a smile:

"I know what you’re worried about, don’t worry. I’m very familiar with impersonating the Empress. I can even do it better than she can herself."

Chaplin himself finishing second in a Chaplin impersonation contest?

This joke wasn’t very funny.

Roland was stumped. Was that what he was worried about?

Seeing Sif’s clear eyes, he had a thought and half-jokingly reminded her:

"In the future, you’ll definitely have plenty of opportunities to impersonate her. Better get it right."

Of course, Sif "understood" Roland’s meaning. The Imperial Knight Order served the Empress, but she couldn’t leave the Imperial Palace as she wished. It all fell to Sif to handle.

She nodded with a smile, full of confidence in her words.

"Rest assured, there’s no one in this world who understands Empress Sylph better than I do."

After discussing some other issues, Sif left first.

There was no need for her to prepare for impersonating the Empress, but selecting which jewelry and gems to sell required her attention.

What could fetch a good price, and what couldn’t be sold temporarily—she alone knew.

After all, she understood the Empress best, and how much the Empress's treasure chest could sell for was up to her.

She would surely give Roland a surprise.

Soon they would set sail, and what could be sold needed to be sold quickly to raise funds.

But not everything could be sold.

Jewelry with distinct royal marks couldn't be sold, real estate couldn't be sold, horses and pets couldn't be sold.

Selling these would be a blatant declaration that they were planning to escape.

Compared to impersonating the Empress, this matter was even trickier.

Selling the family assets wasn't easy, but she wouldn't complain to Roland.

Everyone had things they must accomplish, and Roland was already very busy; she didn't want to add to his burdens.

Likewise, Lisa also didn't want to burden Roland.

She was trying on the dress she would wear the night after tomorrow.

Teacher Margaret was very strict, making demands of her these days that were incredibly harsh.

But she had no time for grievances.

A single sentence from Teacher Mary could kill all her complaints.

"If you don’t perform well, it’s not your own face you’re losing, but that of Mr. Roland and Her Majesty the Empress."

It was a fact; no one cared who Lisa was, people only knew she was Roland’s sister, a guest specially invited by the Empress.

If she behaved at the banquet like a girl from the rural-urban fringes, it would be quite embarrassing.

Others wouldn’t ridicule her, but Roland and the Empress would become laughingstocks.

This sentence worked like an adrenaline shot: no matter how exhausted Lisa was, a jab would fully rejuvenate her.

When the thoroughly exhausted Lisa donned the crimson evening dress and stood before the full-length mirror, she was stunned.

The girl in the mirror had a curvaceous figure, not particularly tall, yet with the help of crystal high heels, she exuded a proud aura.

The most noticeable change was in her temperament.

Before the special training, despite her striking features and captivating figure, her speech and demeanor always carried an air of someone from the countryside trying to make a living in the Imperial Capital.

Now, she resembled a bright and passionate red tulip.

Even in the Imperial Garden, she could hold her place.

The inferiority that came with a humble background was swept away, replaced by a radiant smile.

Though born in poverty and not even an Imperial citizen, she was now a Transcendent, eligible to soar among the clouds.

She didn’t want to be a burden to Roland, nor was she a burden.

The night after tomorrow, she would fully blossom.

While Lisa was filled with confidence anticipating the day after tomorrow, Alina, in a residence on Belphar Street, adjusted her glasses and furrowed her brow.

She was somewhat curious about what exactly Roland’s identity was, to be able to cause so much offense.

Thinking it over, she crumpled the paper with the written names into a ball, replaced it with another sheet, then switched the pen to her left hand and casually wrote a sentence.

"Dear author, more people love tragedies, don’t forget."

She didn’t want to play the enigmatic person, but as a special envoy of the Jin Yuan Kingdom, she couldn’t be too capricious.

She could help friends but had no authority to bring trouble to her country.

This note, even if it fell into the hands of others, wouldn’t reveal any information.

But she believed Roland could understand.

After all, he was a cultured man.