Empress 51

Chapter 51: No Lying Allowed

"My stance is unwavering, but the term ’Imperial Faction’ has been stigmatized."

Roland will solve this problem.

He calmly locked eyes with Rupert, his voice gentle yet unwavering.

"Loyalty is a fundamental professional ethic for officials. They once knelt on one knee to swear an oath to God, yet secretly they engage in shameful acts."

"Because they are afraid, they stigmatize loyalty, using terms like ’Imperial Faction’ to vilify the loyal ones!"

Roland spoke with fervor, without a hint of shame.

Indeed, he had no reason to be ashamed.

Though he also rushed about for personal interests, he was not a vassal to the Empress, nor had he sworn allegiance.

He was guilt-free.

Looking at Roland’s face full of righteous loyalty, almost everyone would be moved.

But not Rupert.

He had a network of intelligence, far superior to that of the incompetent bunch at the Military Intelligence Bureau.

So he understood Roland.

In his mind, Roland's original score was only slightly higher than that of the staunch traitors, but now, seeing Roland's clear eyes, he was unsure.

A few seconds later, he suddenly realized he had fallen into a misconception.

Roland indeed was loyal, a staunch Imperialist, but he also sought personal gain.

This did not conflict.

Seeking personal gain while surrounding the Empress is better than scheming to seize the Empress's power for personal gain all day long.

Rupert chuckled relievedly.

He too needed to maintain family interests, which did not contradict being the Empire's foremost loyalist.

He showed an understanding gaze and said with a smile:

"Roland, what you said makes sense. Loyalty to Her Majesty the Empress is loyalty to the nation, and fulfilling the oath is a matter of course. Yet, some treacherous officials stigmatize righteous actions, which deserves condemnation."

"It seems The Sun will have to revise its editorial standards from now on."

Roland merely smiled without responding.

Some words do not require a response, and some cannot be responded to.

Though knowing Rupert’s stance as a staunch Imperialist, not understanding his purpose made Roland hesitant to speak recklessly.

He picked up the tea cup, using the action of drinking tea to stall for time.

Just wait a moment, the salon will start, and Rupert would have no reason to keep him here.

Seeing Roland remain still like a little fox, Rupert was not surprised.

His intelligence was accurate, and he had anticipated it early.

If the mountain does not come to him, he certainly can take the initiative to climb the mountain.

"Roland, I heard your appointment as the Imperial Knight Order Leader has completed the procedures at the Heraldry Institute. Her Majesty should announce it tonight, congratulations to you."

"Thank you, it’s not exactly an easy post," Roland said calmly.

This wasn’t him bragging. At present, few dare to take on the Knight Order’s mess.

Rupert concealed his smile and seriously said:

"Roland, rebuilding the Knight Order is not easy. If you need help with funding or personnel, feel free to come to me. Although I am not presently the decision-maker for my family, I still have a say in such matters."

Indeed, an enticing offer, but Roland refused without a moment’s hesitation.

Military units in the feudal era had a notable characteristic: whoever paid their salaries commanded them.

Taking money from the Duke of Jinquehua Dynasty while wanting to maintain independence was a bit impolite.

He politely yet firmly refused: "Mr. Rupert, thank you for your kind offer, but since I am the Knight Order Leader, I must demonstrate the ability to be loyal to Her Majesty the Empress."

"Wouldn’t you also think I climbed the ranks through nepotism?"

Roland decidedly spoke the unpleasant words first, blocking Rupert’s mouth.

Even if Rupert genuinely believed this, he couldn’t hint at anything further.

Unexpectedly, Roland refused so firmly, which surprised Rupert.

He quickly adopted a professional, courteous smile, and calmly said: "Captain Roland is indeed a person of ambition, I was presumptuous. But my stance remains unchanged. If you encounter difficulties, you can always come to me."

"It’s about time, we should head inside."

This statement was not a dismissal, but it had a similar effect.

Obviously, Roland’s answer exceeded Rupert’s expectations, leaving him somewhat unhappy.

Perhaps in his expectations, Roland’s flexibility could lead to trading his own execution rope, and his misjudgment left Rupert a bit disappointed.

Regardless, it was a harmonious yet fruitless conversation.

Watching Mr. Rupert’s slowly departing carriage, he felt sentimental.

Though they were both staunch Imperialists, they supported different Emperors.

Sylph and Sif were ultimately two different people.

Factional struggles within the Imperial Faction were normal.

Roland had even read the history of the Southern Ming Dynasty, nearly fainting with rage.

Compared to that period, this was nothing.

Within a party, without factions, it would be bizarre. The Imperial Faction had internal factions, and the rebels were not a single piece either.

Mr. Rupert ultimately somewhat underestimated him.

Though he was flexible with his bottom line, some things were not for sale.

Roland maintained a smile, returned to the carriage, and signaled for the driver to drive.

The salon would start in ten minutes; it was time for him to go inside.

As the carriage started, Lisa, who had been silently waiting, suddenly asked softly, "Roland, what did you talk about with Mr. Rupert? He seems somewhat displeased."

"Nothing, we just discussed the upcoming manuscript..."

Halfway through his words, Lisa pressed her slender fingers against his lips, stopping him.

"Roland, I’m not foolish."

Lisa lowered her head slightly and said softly, "I know, the people you interact with now are different from before. Previously, those you could interact with were partners from impoverished areas, colleagues at work, guests coming and going."

"Now, those who converse and laugh with you are Countess, foreign envoys, cabinet ministers, and even Her Majesty the Empress."

Lisa sighed softly, yet the corners of her mouth curled into a beautiful curve, "Roland, I’m truly happy you can enter the circles of the upper class, but a thick barrier has gradually formed between us."

"In the past half month, you’ve lied more than in the previous ten years."

"I don’t like it."

The fingers left his lips, and Roland fell silent.

The moment the soft touch departed, his heart trembled.

Maybe sensing the atmosphere was somewhat oppressive, Lisa smiled, "Roland, perhaps I cannot understand, but I will certainly support you. Hence, please no more lies, okay?"

"Sister, everyone has secrets, there are things I cannot say, but I won’t lie anymore."

Roland placed his right hand on his chest, saying earnestly, "I don’t like oaths; this is a promise."

Seeing Roland’s eyes sparkle like night stars, Lisa slightly tilted her head and nodded.

"Thank you."

The voice was soft, not typical of her carefree personality.

Saying those words earlier had already exhausted her courage.

She was truly afraid Roland would respond with cold indifference or even more lies.

People invariably change, especially after a drastic shift in status.

Fortunately, Roland hadn’t.

Whether grateful for Roland’s promise or his unchanged heart, only she knew.

In any case, she was very happy.

This banquet had made her jittery, even looking at the brightly lit Sheffield Palace made her palms sweat.

But she was no longer afraid.

Beside her was a knight who would never deceive her or abandon her.

Lisa put on the pink lace gloves, smiling as she placed her hand into Roland’s outstretched palm.

Now, they would go to challenge a cave filled with unknown monsters.