Empress 55

Chapter 55: The Champagne Remains Refreshingly Cool

Roland's tone was gentle and composed, his posture elegant, and his gaze kind, fully embodying the calm demeanor expected of a gentleman.

In comparison to Calvinson, whose face was flushed like a pig's liver, Roland had already won significantly in terms of demeanor.

Now he seized on Calvinson's mistakes, pursuing victory and firmly taking control.

Even the most critical Teacher Mary would have smiled with satisfaction at Roland's handling.

Although Roland's response was not friendly, no one felt he was being excessive.

He was not the one who provoked, nor the one who apologized insincerely; the fault lay entirely with Calvinson, so why should Roland be accused of being aggressive?

Too arrogant.

That was the bystanders' judgment of Calvinson.

William Macbeth, the elder patriarch of the Macbeth Clan, held a prestigious position in the literary world, almost single-handedly changing the global stereotype of the Sussex literary world as crude and vulgar.

His masterpiece was the epic saga "Macbeth."

To commemorate this classic that allowed him to reach the seventh level of transcendence, he even changed his family's surname to Macbeth.

In recognition of Old Macbeth's contributions to Sussex's cultural endeavors, the Emperor conferred upon him the title of Count and granted him a Platinum Exemption Certificate.

With the Platinum Exemption Certificate, one could escape the death penalty once, as long as it was not for treason or rebellion.

This was an acknowledgment of Old Macbeth's contributions, but no one expected this honor to make the Macbeth Clan particularly arrogant.

They looked down on rising stars in the literary world and political elites, always believing that the Sussex literary world was saved by them.

This was also the confidence behind Calvinson's bold provocation of Roland.

Others might be unwilling to confront the Macbeth Clan head-on, but Roland was different.

William Macbeth, the old schemer, pretended to be dead to deceive others, and Roland was also a potential victim. Plus, with Calvinson's provocation, he wouldn't tolerate this poor behavior.

If you dare to provoke, be prepared to be counterattacked.

it was a pity that deep down, Calvinson looked down on someone like Roland, who rose to power through women.

In his script, a pretty boy like Roland would tremble in fear at the mention of the Macbeth Clan's prestige.

Just a useless person who got ahead by licking the Empress's delicate feet, how could he stand against a top family with a Platinum Exemption Certificate?

However, Roland's reaction was beyond his expectations.

He vaguely sensed something was amiss, but there was no turning back.

If he didn’t kill Roland, he would forever become a laughingstock.

Only blood could wash away his shame!

He didn’t care if Her Majesty the Empress would be enraged. Let alone a mere puppet, even a powerful Empress couldn’t necessarily move the Macbeth Clan.

Forcing him to apologize publicly, fine.

He only lost vanity.

Roland, on the other hand, would lose his life.

Calvinson took a deep breath, his fingertips trembling slightly as he placed them on his chest and bowed deeply to Roland.

"Honorable Lord Roland, I spoke offensively with disdain for you earlier, please forgive me."

The entire audience fell silent.

Even those who hadn’t noticed the change earlier gathered around.

Something interesting was about to happen!

Empress Sylph nervously pinched her skirt, the large hem stopping her steps; she couldn’t get closer.

She only appeared anxious; inwardly she was quite composed.

She knew Roland well, and he would never suffer a loss.

The last fool who schemed against him had already gone to the Netherworld, and his family went to the Northern Territory to herd sheep.

The Macbeth Clan, is it? The Platinum Exemption Certificate, is it?

We'll need to find a way to make them commit treason so they can be legitimately dealt with.

As Sylph pondered, Roland responded with a smile.

"Calvinson, although your apology lacks sincerity, I don't want to be overly aggressive here. I accept your apology, but not the offense. I challenge you to a duel of honor!"

Calvinson stared at Roland, utterly unbelieving his ears.

Wait, what did Roland just say?

Challenge him to a duel of honor?!

That wasn't even his line.

Roland had stolen his line, what should he say?

This moment not only confused him, but other onlookers were also stunned.

No way, what pretty boy thinks he can win a duel against an extraordinary Knight professional?

Amidst the crowd, Sylph was slightly nervous but still confident.

She had fought alongside Roland and knew his strength and versatile combat style well.

As the grand captain, there would inevitably be dissent, and when he needed to assert authority, someone volunteered to step up, which was perfect.

Though the onlookers were all high society elites, the human nature of enjoying a spectacle wouldn’t change with one’s status.

Upon hearing Roland challenge to a duel, some even started to egg him on.

Only Lisa almost fainted.

She knew Roland’s Extraordinary Ability was [Writer], not suitable for battle, so she was naturally anxious.

But she was tripped up by high heels and a trailing evening gown, unable to squeeze through.

Just as she took off her shoes and was about to charge forward, Sylph appeared in front of her.

"Don’t worry, Roland will win."

Lisa wanted to retort with ’how do you know’, but all doubts vanished in the Empress’ determined gaze.

She even had an illusion that Sylph understood Roland better than she did.

Sylph knew what he could do, what he should do.

Lisa looked up at Sylph, biting her lip as she adjusted her steps and put her high heels back on, trying to be about the same height as the Empress.

She pinched the hem of her dress and saluted the Empress, silently turning her attention to the center of the crowd.

Although Roland had robbed all his lines, which made Calvinson very displeased, Roland's willingness to present himself made his mood greatly improved.

He readily agreed to Roland's additional dueling requirements.

They would determine victory, and also life and death, with no restrictions, fighting to the death.

The duel location was beside the small woods outside the side gate of the Imperial Palace, with no one allowed to spectate.

These were all reasonable demands, and Calvinson, confident of victory, certainly would not refuse.

Of course, dueling outside the Imperial Palace was necessary; it wouldn't be proper to dirty the Palace carpets with filthy blood.

Before leaving the banquet hall, Roland glanced around and with a smile asked, "Which guest can lend me a pistol? I left in a hurry and forgot to bring one."

Of course, no guest brought a gun; carrying firearms to a royal literary salon was a death wish, wasn't it?

The only one who could provide a firearm was Empress Sylph.

She carried a silver-grey pistol in her right hand and a champagne glass in her left as she walked towards Roland.

She almost whispered in his ear, "This is my sidearm, with three rounds loaded, the first is a solid lead bullet, the second an Alchemy Acid Erosion Bullet, and the third a Magic Burst Bomb."

In the envious eyes of the crowd, Her Majesty the Empress raised the champagne in her hand and said with a smile:

"Drink to the toast of victory, bottoms up."

Milan Champagne was a wine of celebration; she made no effort to hide which side she favored.

The onlookers silently watched this scene, seemingly lost in thought.

Roland accepted the pistol but did not take the champagne, instead making a downward pressing gesture with his hand.

"Save it for later, we'll drink it when I return!"

No champagne can be opened lightly.

This was a belief upheld by Milan fans.

In the gentle gaze of Sylph, he strode toward the duel location.

Unlike the brightly lit banquet hall, there it was all pitch-black, like a ferocious beast ready to devour someone.

Sylph's face was calm, holding the high-stemmed glass, elegantly like a quietly blossoming White Rose.

Standing not far from her, Lisa keenly noticed that Her Majesty the Empress's hand holding the wine glass was trembling slightly.

The semi-transparent wine in the glass rippled slightly.

Just like Lisa and Sylph’s current mood.

"Bang!"

A gunshot rang out.

Lisa’s heart felt as if it had been pounded by a heavy hammer, and her hands trembled involuntarily.

She had never been so nervous in her life.

The corner of her eye glanced at the Empress.

The champagne in the glass shook more violently.

It turned out she was worried too.

Lisa bit her lip, closed her eyes, carefully capturing the slight sounds carried by the air.

Shouts, explosions, roars, kept coming.

Then came the second gunshot, the third gunshot.

Each shot hit her heart, making it hard for her to stand steadily.

Looking through the corner of her eye, the Empress could no longer hold the wine glass steadily, having to clutch it tightly with both hands.

The gunshots ceased, and all was calm again.

Everyone held their breath, awaiting the result.

After a breathless wait, a figure appeared at the entrance to the banquet hall.

Handsome features, a gentle smile, it was Roland.

He walked unhurriedly to the Empress, first giving Lisa a reassuring glance, then handing the slightly warm pistol back to Sylph.

"Thank you, Your Majesty, for bestowing upon me the Bane of Victory."

Under everyone’s astonished gaze, he casually took the trembling champagne from Sylph’s hand and drank it all in one go.

Milan Champagne, still refreshing as ever.