Empress 69

Chapter 69: Where Did You Learn That?

Warden was momentarily stunned.

He never dreamed that Roland would open up without any warning.

He panicked.

Every accusation Roland made was true.

Even if the evidence was incomplete, it would eventually be gathered.

He never doubted this, he just couldn't figure out why Roland dared?

Did this pretty boy not know the entire Knight Order was under his control?

A terrifying thought flashed through Warden's mind.

Could it be that Her Majesty wanted to deal with him, clearing the way for her paramour?

Thinking it over, it was the only possibility.

Confess?

Warden almost laughed out loud.

His crimes were too severe, begging for forgiveness wouldn't change his inevitable death.

If confessing was useless, then don't confess!

Narrowing his eyes to observe the Imperial Private Soldiers guarding the training ground’s exits, Warden felt a chill in his heart.

It seemed premeditated.

Since Roland was prepared, legal defense held no meaning.

Warden drew his sword, pointed it at Roland, and roared loudly:

"Roland! You’re just a pretty boy who climbed up through connections, daring to falsely accuse a meritorious minister who bled for the Empire and made contributions to the Late Emperor!"

"This is an insult to me, I challenge you to an honor duel!"

Warden straightforwardly slashed at Roland’s midsection.

If Roland accepted the honor duel, he could kill Roland with his own hands.

If Roland did not accept, it meant he was guilty and lacked confidence.

Even if Roland suppressed the Knight Order with the Imperial Guard, in the hearts of the knights, he would still be a coward.

Warden looked at Roland with contempt, his provocative roar echoing throughout the field.

The training ground was silent, only Warden’s roar resounded in the air.

Everyone knew Warden was guilty, and the evidence was conclusive, but he initiated an honor duel before the trial began, changing the nature of things.

The prosecutor and officials of the Heraldry Institute simultaneously turned their gaze to Roland.

They didn’t speak, merely watched.

Everyone knew Roland leaned on the Empress to rise to power, and had no good impression of him.

They even wanted to see him make a fool of himself.

Warden didn’t think he would lose.

He heard Calvinson died at Roland’s hands, but not due to combat skills, rather due to underestimating and firearms.

In a fair fight, what was Roland?

His idea wasn’t wrong.

If it were a fair duel for close combat, he’d have fifty-fifty odds with Roland at best.

But the concept of a fair duel never existed in Roland’s mind.

If an enemy fought you fairly, it was you with the problem.

Just as he awaited Roland’s response, a crisp yet furious voice rang out.

"Warden, you’ve sullied the knightly honor, disappointed Her Majesty’s expectations, but indeed you made contributions to the Empire, deserving the right to defend your dignity with force. I accept your challenge on behalf of Her Majesty the Empress."

Sif accepted the challenge with neither arrogance nor humility.

And the reasoning was sound.

It was her battlefield.

Warden's heinous crimes must be dealt with personally to be avenged.

If Warden wanted a head-on battle, then she'd stab him with a lance.

If he wanted to play dirty, a pistol would naturally decide it.

The audience was stunned.

Nobody expected the delicate female knight to fight in Roland's stead.

The title of pretty boy was further cemented.

Only the old official from the Heraldry Institute turned pale with fright.

Being a servant to the Imperial Family, he knew Sif's identity.

Just as he was stunned, Sif glanced back at him.

The meaning was clear.

Silence.

Sif walked down the elevated platform with steady steps.

As she walked, she assembled a segmented lance.

The most orthodox knight’s duel was naturally with lances.

Warden indeed had fallen, but he too bled for the Empire and the Imperial Family.

If he didn’t want to stand trial, then at least die with some dignity.

Sif expressionlessly assembled her lance, the tip pointing at Warden.

Under the gray sky, the White Rose Knight looked particularly petite next to the massive figure of Warden.

Warden looked at Sif in astonishment, and said in a deep voice, "Are you sure?"

Sif didn’t speak, but threw the prepared glove at him.

Warden caught it, a shadow crossed his face.

He knew Sif was from the Imperial Family, an even a Count.

Under normal circumstances, he’d never dare offend such a person, but now trapped in desperation, he naturally didn’t care about such things.

He laughed wildly, retrieved a lance from beside the saddle, and prepared for battle.

The purpose-built lance was not as convenient for ground duels as a regular spear, but it would do.

Pretty boy or shameless imperial girl, they'd both accompany him to the grave!

He had already decided that even if he died, he'd take down the two who ruined him.

Without any more words, the duel began.

The clash between lance and spear sparked bursts of flames.

Roland maintained a calm expression, his palms slightly sweating as he watched the battlefield.

Before finalizing the duelists, Roland and Sif had sparred.

Sif's combat talent was unmatched.

Though Roland held a Knight side profession, his mastery wasn't yet proficient. To win, he'd have to rely on a combination of Smoke Bomb, darts, and Alchemy Tools.

In pure combat technique and mobility, Sif had the edge.

Warden and Stanley had to die, but there was room to win over other knights.

This duel had to be won in a righteous manner.

Though a bit tense, Roland wasn't too worried.

Sif didn't just have overwhelming combat skills, her equipment was top-notch.

She wore battle armor inherited from the Imperial Family, middle-layer Secret Silver Lock Armor, lined with Velvet Armor; a three-layer defense even a rifle couldn't penetrate.

The Masked Armor thoughtfully shielded her delicate face.

Sif advanced methodically and secured the upper hand, forcing Warden to retreat continuously.

Warden’s lance couldn’t touch Sif, but her lance tip grazed him twice.

He underestimated her.

To keep agile, he wore Lightweight Chain Armor, unable to withstand direct thrusts from the lance tip.

He evaded clumsily, retreating repeatedly.

The Imperial Guard erupted in jubilant cheers, rallying for Sif.

A one-sided and dull duel.

The officials from the Heraldry Institute breathed a sigh of relief, taking out handkerchiefs to wipe their brows.

Only Roland kept a tight watch on Warden.

He couldn’t believe Warden would die so easily.

Just as Warden was about to retreat to the corner of the training ground with no way out, Roland saw something black in his palm and shouted in warning:

"Right hand!"

Sif instantly sensed danger, accurately piercing Warden’s wrist with her lance, leaving a bloody hole.

As everyone believed the outcome was decided, Warden suddenly drew a short sword with his left hand, lunging at Sif like lightning.

Few knew his killer move was the left-handed sword.

Fighting left-handed weapon users differed entirely from right-handed ones; incredibly hard to defend against.

Even tightly fitted armor had weak spots at the joints.

The Enchanted Short Sword could easily sever joints, turning the tables.

Warden closed in instantly, and the three-meter lance in Sif’s hand became cumbersome, unable to defend.

He showed a bloodthirsty, brutal smile.

"Damn woman, accompany me in death!"

He stared intently at Sif’s Masked Armor, wanting to see her panic through the gap.

Watching the enemy’s scared expression before death brought him the greatest joy.

He clearly saw Sif’s eyes.

Calm and indifferent, like looking at a corpse.

"Bang!"

A gunshot rang out.

Pellets flew out like a celestial maiden scattering flowers, shattering Warden’s face to a pulp.

A harrowing scream echoed.

Sif took half a step back, coldly giving the Imperial Guard an order, "Take him away!"

A live Warden was more useful than a dead one.

In the lance duel, she had to go all out, leaving it hard to spare a life.

It was Warden who first violated the duel’s rules, so drawing her gun for self-defense wasn’t against the knight’s spirit.

A pleasant surprise.

Sif walked back towards Roland, lifted her Masked Armor, and winked confidently.

Roland almost couldn’t hold back his laughter.

The speed of that draw was indeed fast. Who did she learn it from?

Excellent, truly excellent!