Empress 76

Chapter 76: The Empress's Fury

When Roland and Sif opened the door to the conference hall, it was just noon.

Sunlight broke through the clouds, dyeing the earth in gold.

This was the long-lost bright sunshine of Sussex.

But to Roland, no sunshine was as bright as Sif's smile.

In the conference hall, he and Sif opened their hearts to each other, clearing up all misunderstandings.

Regarding the private arrangement with Alina, Sif smiled and said she didn't mind.

Roland, of course, wouldn't mind Sif's distress over not daring to reveal her identity.

Sif also didn't mind Roland's ambition to seize power.

After all, he was helping her.

He didn't even know that Sif was Sylph.

Moreover, the idea of playing a simulated game of usurpation seemed thrilling.

Sif's fair face turned a bright red at the thought of seizing the throne through her own abilities, filled with eager excitement.

Roland didn't escort Sif home as he had other matters to attend to.

He could only see Sif off to the carriage.

Reorganizing the Knight Order allowed no room for error.

Watching Sif's carriage fade into the distance, Roland's lips curled into an almost imperceptible smile.

Count Sif or Empress Sylph?

This question did trouble him, but now it wasn't an issue.

Count Sif was Empress Sylph.

In trying to help Sif seize power, his greatest fear was Sif's sentimental ties with her sister, unwilling to usurp the Emperor's throne from Sylph.

Therefore, he never explicitly stated his goals, instead quietly making arrangements.

If Sif proved overly kind-hearted, his position would become awkward; he'd have to find a way out without prospering.

Fortunately, the biggest hidden concern was eliminated.

Not only that, but he also took the opportunity to make clear the past efforts to escape and the friendship formed with Alina.

Sif, with a heart as broad as a generous curve, didn't mind it at all, even suggesting they invite Miss Alina for a meal together sometime.

Since Miss Sif was so understanding, Roland as the little usurpation assistant couldn't idle either.

The recreation of the Knight Order's glory would start today.

Roland strode towards the Red Copper Knight base.

He took down all the vice-captains; the Golden Knight dared not speak, and the Silver Knights were divided and dissolved. Up next, he needed to win support from the lower-level Red Copper Knights.

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Sitting in the carriage on her way home, Sif's smile gradually disappeared, replaced by a chilling killing intent.

Of course, she wasn't angry about Roland's previous choices, nor did she harbor grudges about Roland wanting to help her usurp the throne; she fully understood Lisa and Roland's pure familial bond, despite no blood relation.

She only felt happy about Roland's honesty.

But she wasn't without temper, at least she couldn't forgive one person.

And that was Alina.

Masquerading under the title of envoy to engage in espionage was certainly detestable, but since this era's so-called diplomatic envoys all did such things, she couldn't be bothered.

What she couldn't tolerate was Alina's attempt to lure Roland to the Jin Yuan Kingdom.

An unpardonable sin beyond redemption!

Once she seized power, she would uproot these damnable foreign spies for sure.

She was furious, but she knew anger was meaningless; she needed strength.

She hadn't come into power yet, and the Sussex Military Intelligence Bureau was an international joke.

She had to find a way to establish a concise and efficient intelligence agency.

Thinking of Roland's proposed simulated usurpation game, Sif felt a bit complex.

Her gaze shifted to the window; the sun that just emerged had disappeared somewhere again, and the sky, shrouded with mist, turned gray and murky.

Between black and white, there is also gray.

She didn't like gray, but she had to learn to adapt.

The weather in Sussex was always so awful.

For the first time, this familiar city made her feel suffocated.

It was time for her to step out.

She heard Brook's sunlit beaches and tulips were beautiful; she really wanted to see them.

...

Just as Sif returned to the mansion, Roland was consoling the Red Copper Knights who had missed the meeting at the Knight Camp.

"Her Majesty the Empress hasn’t forgotten about you!" he announced loudly.

The knights were moved to tears, crying tears of joy, and spontaneously shouted "Long live the Empress."

"But Her Majesty is very busy, so she has entrusted me and the Chief Instructor to look after you!"

The knights dried their tears, stunned and anxious.

Roland’s handling of Warden and Stanley left them in awe.

Although it wasn’t directed at them, they couldn’t help but feel uneasy inside.

Seeing the knights stammering, Roland seized the moment to go over what was discussed in the meeting again.

"The reform of the Knight Order is urgent."

"Knights of the past had fiefs and were the cornerstone of the nobility because they could expand territories for the nation and deserve rewards."

"If knights cannot expand territories outwardly nor protect the emperor inwardly, they will naturally be neglected."

The knights stared at Roland, dumbfounded.

They once wondered why, despite sticking to knightly traditions of loyalty and bravery, they were abandoned by the emperor.

But they weren’t willing to think along those lines.

"If you say so, what’s the difference between us and merchants?"

The young knight questioned indignantly.

"Of course there’s a difference, merchants have no homeland, we have."

Roland said resolutely, "Merchants who cannot make money in Sussex would go to Talia, Jin Yuan, or Lisenburg; they have no roots, where there’s money, there they are."

"We are different, our roots are in Sussex, we must contribute to the nation to enjoy good treatment. You need not worry about your meritorious deeds being overlooked. I am a confidant of the Empress; I will fairly report your achievements to Her Majesty."

"Wealth and status are rewards for loyally fearless and meritorious service!"

These words were music to the knights’ ears.

Captain Roland is Her Majesty’s lover, no, the beloved partner.

His words would undoubtedly be heard by the Empress.

Since the Captain says reform is necessary, then reform must happen!

Red Copper Knights had no social status; the idea of knightly fiefs was something they dared not dream of in the past.

Roland gave them hope.

In the pitch-dark night, they saw the dawn.

Now was no time to hesitate; how could they bear the hardships and sufferings all these years otherwise?

Someone, and it wasn’t clear who started, shouted the slogan "Long live the Empress" loudly, desperately expressing their desire to progress.

Once one did, the second followed, then the third, until they all joined in.

Seized by the fervent atmosphere, the Red Copper Knights were roused, eager to mount their steeds at once in devotion to Her Majesty.

Roland was pleased with their enthusiasm, but he still had to pour some cold water.

Raising his right hand, the noisy scene instantly quieted.

"It’s not enough."

"I feel your passion, but it’s far from enough."

The knights’ faces flushed, they clamored loudly.

Roland drew his pistol, and the knights fell silent at once.

Roland calmly asked, "Among you, how many know magic? How many are adept with alchemy tools? How many are skilled marksmen?"

The knights kept silent.

They were not satisfied.

They hadn’t learned; of course, they wouldn’t know.

Seeing the knights utterly silent, Roland knew it was time to reward after the metaphorical slap.

He smiled and said, "It’s okay if you don’t know; you can learn. Do you have the confidence to learn?"

Quietly changing "will you learn advanced combat techniques" to "can you master advanced combat techniques" was not subtle but very effective.

The knights responded in unison, "Yes!"

Great, morale is usable.

The Knight Order can still be saved.