

In the Name of Empress

Chapter 8: Chapter 8: Who Is Roland?

Even after a hundred years, the Sussex literary world will not forget October 11, 1791, of the Magic Era New Calendar.

Initially, people thought it was just an ordinary day when the results of the Royal Micro-Novel Writing Contest were announced.

The contest had a generous prize, and the Empress herself awarded the champion. Winning would bring both fame and fortune.

There was even a chance to meet noblewomen who admired talent and to reach the pinnacle of life.

Although writers were generally lofty and arrogant, what the Imperial Family offered was simply too much.

The champion's prize could buy four separate courtyards in the core area of the Imperial Capital.

Faced with such a huge prize, literary titans held nothing back, and new talents in the literary world were desperately showcasing their talent and inspiration.

Within the framework of themes such as God, the Imperial Family, mystery, and gender relations, they exhausted their minds, writing vigorously to create magnificent epics worthy of song and tears.

They were confident about achieving good results.

After the Empress ascended to the throne, those writers who excelled at tearing apart beautiful things to earn noblewomen's tears all smiled.

No one knew better than they did how to extract tears.

Her Majesty the Empress had lived a carefree life since childhood, never experiencing any troubles.

The troubles of her father's and brother's simultaneous misfortune?

This was a fucking joke for trouble? Not popping champagne and revelry till dawn was already restrained.

In the face of imperial authority, family ties were just a joke.

In the history of the Sussex Empire, there was an old tale of three brothers brawling over the throne in front of the Triumph Arch, resulting in two deaths and one injury on the spot.

Her Majesty the Empress not laughing publicly was already giving face to her father and brother.

In such joyful times, a sentimental tragedy novel could well adjust the mood, perhaps even help Her Majesty squeeze out a few tears.

Would this still not win a prize?

However, at the moment the champion was announced, all the literary titans exploded.

They ran around asking, all discussing the same question.

"Who is Roland?"

Writers have their circles.

The top-ranking writers of Sussex's literary world had long frequented the art salons hosted by the nobility, holding considerable social status, and most of them knew each other.

Without their introductions, ordinary writers, no matter how talented, would find it difficult to succeed.

Beneath the top ranks, there were more struggling small writers, fighting for their dreams and livelihoods.

Every day, they busily converted inspiration into work, submitted it to the editorial department, got rejected, and then continued to battle life.

Once they managed a brief respite from life's pressures, they would once again pursue their dreams.

They desperately wanted to win the championship to change their fate.

Even if they couldn't win the championship, the prizes for the top eight or sixteen could save them from having to endure the pungent smells in the Alchemy Workshop or the miserable task of hauling sacks at the docks.

Upon hearing the champion's name, they exploded instantly.

The reaction of the small writers was even more intense than that of the literary titans.

"We're all unknown small writers, why do you get to win?"

A scandal, an absolute scandal!

Their anger wasn't surprising; people aren't envious of the Phoenix soaring, but they can't tolerate other sparrows climbing high.

With some intentional or unintentional hints from a few literary titans, young people with literary dreams directed their anger at Collins Publishers, the specific administrators of the contest.

The Imperial Family were the sponsors, and they were the implementers.

It must be these sour turnips accepting bribes, promoting their own students/locals/relatives/illegitimate children to win the huge prize.

A scandal, a blatant scandal!

The young people's anger was completely ignited.

Their anger wasn't just for losing the prize, but also for the unfairness!

Under someone's instigation, dozens of young people charged towards Collins Publishers aggressively.

The editors spreading various gossip in the office had never seen such a scene, and they were a bit dumbfounded by the young people's questioning.

"Who the hell is Roland?"

"Which noble's illegitimate child is he?"

"What is his background?"

"This is blatant manipulation, and Her Majesty will surely flay you alive!"

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Amid the relentless scolding, Chief Editor Byron, seeing the situation going wrong, struggled to maneuver his fat body, retreating behind the other editors, and began to shout.

"Everyone, stop arguing, I can't decide the final rankings of this contest!"

"We only found out the results after receiving notification from the Minister of Internal Affairs."

"If you don't believe it, you can go to the Imperial Post Office and ask Roland face-to-face!"

Although leaking author information violated professional ethics, Byron couldn't care less.

Unethical is just unethical, it isn't illegal!

As long as you actively remove the shackle of morality, you won't be hijacked by it!

The one who decided was Her Majesty the Empress, and Roland was the one who benefited. Why should he be the scapegoat to block the disaster?

The small writers' agitated emotions became even more frenzied. Promised by Chief Editor Byron's oath of professional ethics, they had no choice but to believe.

They came fast, and they went fast, rushing towards the Imperial Post Office aggressively.

Leaving behind a ravaged publishing house editorial office.

"Who the hell stole my pen?"

"I got kicked several times, who should I complain to?"

"Where is the Chief Editor, Sir Byron, aren't you dead yet, say something!"

"Don't say more; Chief Editor got the most beatings, his eyes are probably still swollen now."

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Although the young authors accepted Chief Editor Byron's explanation, it didn't mean he was safe.

Thinking about the usual resentment of arrogant rejections, the young authors, with a mindset of 'now that we're here, let's trample once more', "accidentally" knocked down Chief Editor Byron, and then "accidentally" stepped on Sir Byron's fat face.

Even if the rankings were decided by the Imperial Family, that damned fat man was not a good thing.

The list of candidates was recommended by him!

If he hadn't recommended Roland, none of this would have happened!

Scandal, still a scandal!

In this era, the chance to read and write was very rare. Most of these young authors were not from wealthy families, and being able to study was a stroke of luck.

Some of them attended Church School as auditors, some were reading companions or playmates for noble scions, and that was how they secretly read books.

They barely had an opportunity to stand out in the writing contest, yet it was destroyed by a scandal – how could they not be angry?

Cutting off one's future was like killing one's parents.

Being this courteous to the killer of their 'father' was already very restrained.

But they weren't so courteous towards Roland.

The angry young authors surrounded the Imperial Post Office, blocking the clerk's office door, pelting it with worn-out shoes, stones, and rotten eggs as if they were free.

The furious cursing was endless, and the sound of pounding on the door was even more chilling.

Trapped inside, Lisa was scared pale, anxiously looking at Roland.

Her voice was trembling.

"Roland, they're terrifying. Have you thought of what to explain?"

"Explain?"

Roland casually put down his teacup, raised a finger.

"The Imperial Post Office is part of the state's organs of authority. We are state employees, working for the Empire. Violent assault on an organ of state authority is a serious crime; let me think, the organizer would face at least three years in prison, and accomplices would also have six months of labor."

Lisa was dumbfounded, watching Roland raise a second finger.

"This contest was specially appointed by Her Majesty the Empress, opposing the results is questioning Her Majesty's wisdom. This matter can be both big and small; if the Empress needs to assert authority, the organizer's head would be displayed at Monarch Square."

"Explain? What obligation do I have to explain to a bunch of criminals?"

Roland put down the teacup, walked to the office door, placed another chair against the door, and stretched lazily with a relaxed expression.

"Sister, pour some tea, let's watch."