Empress 86

Chapter 86: Striving to Be as Outstanding as Captain Roland

Knight Order Headquarters, small meeting room.

High-level meeting.

Besides Roland, Sif, and Lisa, there was an additional attendee today.

Raikkonen, the reconnaissance captain.

He was highly efficient, having found the owner of Little Pudding Alchemy Workshop, Norton Thomas.

He didn’t directly contact Norton, instead learning from neighbors and Norton’s daughter, Shanina, about the truth of the old man’s expulsion from the Alchemy Alliance.

Although old Norton believed that a price increase would harm all alchemy practitioners in the long run, he didn’t explicitly oppose the price alliance.

He always knew how to adapt to circumstances.

But someone didn’t want him to continue in this industry.

Opposing the price increase was just an excuse.

During the internal discussion on price-setting, Norton didn’t even have a chance to speak.

He was directly labeled as "opposing everyone’s chance to make more money," expelled from the alliance, and forced to sign a non-compete agreement.

In return, he could receive compensation of about two hundred and fifty pounds.

What could two hundred and fifty pounds do?

Enough to buy two houses in the Belphar District of the Imperial Capital and cover several years of living expenses.

This was a standard insulting offer.

With Mr. Norton’s abilities, he could earn more than two hundred and fifty pounds in a year.

After reporting the collected intelligence, he threw out a startling conclusion, "I suspect Norton’s departure is related to the Minister of Finance, Simson."

Roland’s eyes lit up, and he asked softly, "How certain are you?"

"At least seventy percent."

Raikkonen stated with certainty, "Norton’s daughter, Miss Shanina, is a renowned beauty, known as the most beautiful alchemist."

"How does she compare to Miss Elizabeth of the Baker Street Workshop?" Lisa’s curiosity was piqued.

"Chief Logistics Officer, I’m talking about the most beautiful alchemist." Raikkonen’s stance was firm.

He thought for a moment, smiled, and said, "Although she can’t compare with the Chief Instructor and Chief Logistics Officer, Miss Shanina is indeed very pretty."

This not only clarified Shanina’s true beauty but also subtly flattered Lisa and Sif, making the two vice-regimental-level leaders feel comfortable.

Even Roland couldn't help but smile; this guy certainly knew how to talk, as expected of someone who had worked in a newspaper.

Raikkonen continued his report, based on information he tracked a few months ago, Miss Shanina once had a romantic relationship with the Minister of Finance's youngest son, Simson, but it ended without a conclusion.

The Minister of Finance arranged a political marriage for Simson, and the in-laws were an ancient Count's family.

Such things are common, supposedly nothing unusual; a breakup is a breakup.

But the Minister of Finance's son made a beautiful mistake, remaining entangled with Shanina.

Eventually, the proper wife didn't get pregnant, but the mistress outside did.

This nearly caused a fallout between the Minister of Finance and the in-laws.

To express his apology, the Minister of Finance had to deal with the troubling issue.

Resolve it at the source.

His son, no matter how worthless, was still his own; he couldn't bear to punish him too harshly.

Thus, he found ways to pressure Norton to take his daughter and get as far away as possible.

To expedite Norton's departure, an industry alliance meeting was convened.

Everything seemed both straightforward and ridiculous, much like a cooked-up story from The Sun.

"But this is true."

Raikkonen assured with great conviction.

Roland nodded, smiling, and said, "Such a ridiculous story isn’t something just anyone can make up. You did well, go rest first."

Raikkonen knew Roland wanted to discuss with Sif and Lisa, so he quickly took his leave.

He hadn’t glanced at Sif and Lisa from beginning to end.

Some things, even if known, should be feigned unknown.

He increasingly realized that the article he had casually written for traffic might not have been a rumor.

Even if it was before, it might not be in the future.

As an excellent paparazzo, he guessed Sif’s true identity.

Seeing Sif following Roland’s words so closely, Raikkonen felt more and more guilty.

Fortunately, Her Majesty the Empress didn’t know he wrote that article.

No, he had to make contributions, more contributions, so he could absolve himself in the future.

Thinking back to the article written out of curiosity and fun, he regretted it.

So naive in youth!

No, no, he’s about to turn seventeen, no longer a child.

He’s now a Silver Knight, a middle-ranking leader in the Knight Order, at least a legitimate public official, and he must act more maturely in the future.

Leaving the meeting room, Raikkonen decided to change from scratch.

First, he would tidy his hair, then dress in neatly pressed attire like an adult, walking with a steady pace.

He had a ready learning template right in front of him.

Captain Roland was the epitome of a successful man; just learn from him!

After seeing Raikkonen off, Roland locked the door and, after sorting out the findings from the Magic Association, relayed them to the two girls.

Lisa listened intently, as she always enjoyed Roland’s stories.

After Roland finished, she asked with a smile, "This story is good, do you plan to publish it?"

Roland was somewhat speechless.

Did what he tell sound so unbelievable?

Lisa didn’t understand the Magic Empire, but Sif had heard of it.

Her expression was very serious; the terms "return day" and "Magic Empire" made her extremely nervous.

Looking at Roland’s questioning gaze, Sif sighed lightly and said in a soft tone:

"The Imperial Library holds many original manuscripts from the Magic Empire era to this day. You should know that my ancestors contributed greatly to overthrowing the Magic Empire in the war."

Of course, advancing while looting along the way.

Roland silently retorted in his mind.

Sif continued softly:

"Actually, there have been three return days before. After the War of Divine Punishment, the Plane Wall was precarious, and any extraordinary power or magic could cause the plane to collapse."

"But the supreme rule is that plane stability overrides everything, so the surviving strong from the War of Divine Punishment lost their powers. As the Plane Wall stabilized, extraordinary power and magic gradually returned."

"Due to the depletion of Magic Crystal Stones, the recovery speed of magic civilization was slower, turning them into the secondary characters of the Magic New Calendar. Had it not been for the sanctuary of the underground cities left by the Magic Empire, they would have perished."

What Sif said was true.

Roland had personally toured the underground cities.

Though the distance of over three thousand meters kept the descendants of the Magic Empire away from surface civilization, it also made it impossible for modern civilization to annihilate them.

Sif sighed lightly, her voice slightly trembling, "The previous three return days allowed humans to regain powers from Tier Nine to Tier Seven. However, each return also came with the fall of mighty nations."

"It was during the Seventh Return Day that our Sussex rose. I..."

"No need to be afraid."

Roland said calmly, "Fear is useless. We just do our best, and leave the rest to fate."

He took out the prepared magic equipment, distributing it to Sif and Lisa.

He didn’t reveal his connection with the Magic Association, nor did he proceed with the premature idea of returning the Wordless Book.

The Magic Association needed him as a link to ally with Sussex, and he needed the Magic Association’s backup.

Winter was very cold, and they were all like frostbitten porcupines.

They had to keep a distance, yet couldn’t be too far apart.