Empress 98

Chapter 98: This Is My Stage

The crisp footsteps stopped at the door and turned into a knock.

"Roland, can I come in?"

It was Sif’s voice.

Alina stood unsteadily, whispering softly, "I, I should hide."

Roland glanced at her in annoyance, picked up the glasses on the table, helped her put them on, and then went to open the door for Sif.

"Roland, I need to talk..."

She stared blankly at Alina, her voice slightly cold, "Miss Alina, what are you doing here?"

"I invited her over for a cup of tea."

Roland smiled with a brief explanation, then motioned for Alina to leave first.

With the glasses on, Alina finally regained some courage.

Although still a bit nervous, she managed to smile and greet Sif before leaving.

After watching Alina leave, Sif stood there, speechless.

Her beautiful eyes seemed to speak, sending a big question mark towards Roland.

"Sit."

Roland gestured for Sif to sit down, cleared his throat, and recounted today's events, from meeting Alina to bringing her here to observe Warden and Stanley.

And the incident that just happened.

"She used Angel Card divination, the results were good, according to her, there's a big chance of breaking through to Tier Eight."

Sif was the most excellent listener.

Although she had a significant opinion of Alina, she was always listening, not interrupting from start to finish.

Roland's mouth was dry from speaking, seeing Sif remain silent, he had to take the initiative to ask, "Hey, after listening for so long, would you at least hum?"

"Hum." Sif softly responded.

Roland spread his hands, "Sif, I hope you can completely trust me. Although the story just now sounded a bit strange, it's all true."

"Of course, I trust you."

Sif's lips slightly curled up, she lightly teased, "Did you think I'd cry and scream loudly, demanding you to break off relations with her?"

"Only classical novels from hundreds of years ago would write like that."

Sif casually said, "I have Insight, although I don’t want to use it on you actively, its effects still exist. If you lie, there’ll be a blue light on your head."

Roland: "..."

Sif stood up, smiling as she said, "I’m just joking with you, Insight is indeed useful, but what I mastered is early level Insight, the effect isn’t that good."

"We are friends now, Insight can no longer be used on you."

Roland breathed a sigh of relief.

Fortunately, it can’t see through completely, or else it’d be quite stressful.

But it also means the inability to use Insight signifies a lack of malice towards me.

Sif silently thought.

She cleared her throat, softly saying, "I know you’re approaching Alina just to build a relationship with her, to gain more information and help, right?"

Roland nodded vigorously.

Absolutely right, Sif!

Long live understanding!

Roland was about to say something when Sif restrained her smile, her expression becoming somewhat serious.

"Roland, there’s a matter that might be quite troublesome."

"What’s the matter?" If it could trouble Sif, it mustn’t be a small issue.

Roland also became a bit nervous.

Sif went to lock the door, softly saying, "In more than half a month, it will be Radiant Day. Radiant Day, Descent Day, and the Festival of Fengrao are the three major traditional festivals in our country, of which Radiant Day is the most important."

"I know that. I believe I’ve experienced one more Radiant Day than you." Roland teased with a smile.

"I’m not talking about those. Every year’s Radiant Celebration includes grand artistic performances and various lively celebration activities. The artistic performance often lasts for three days."

Sif bit her lip and said, "But this year is different from previous years, the Minister of Culture and Education has decided to hold public performances in Monarch Square upon public request. The performance will feature new works from the literary world."

"Many well-known playwrights and writers will bring their latest works to the performances. This year, the best work of the Radiant Celebration will be decided."

"Oh, that’s a good thing; it’s lively. Don’t you like celebrations?" Roland laughed.

"It’s not just that. They will also invite the champion of the latest essay competition to present their new work at the performance. That champion is you."

Roland’s expression gradually became serious.

He understood.

This performance is designed to target him.

Targeting him isn’t the goal, it’s also meant to shake the empress’s authority.

The essay competition champion appointed by Her Majesty the Empress ends up failing to produce a decent work, tarnishing the empress’s reputation.

Previously, Roland wouldn’t have cared much.

But now that Sif is the Empress, he must care.

After a few seconds of silence, Roland suddenly raised his head, begrudgingly asking:

"Have you already assumed I’ve lost?"

"No, not at all. In my heart, no one can match your talent." Sif quickly replied.

Roland gently slapped the table, his gaze filled with confidence, "In that case, this is the best stage for me to showcase my talent; you should be happy for me."

"Huh?"

Sif saw Roland’s overconfidence and quickly explained, "Wait, Roland. I know you’re an excellent writer of popular novels, but this performance is a stage play; your works aren’t suitable for adaptation."

"The best at adapting stage plays is Finley Macbeth of the Macbeth Clan. He is also recognized as the foremost in our country’s literary circle."

"Many believe his creative ability has surpassed his great-great-grandfather, Old Macbeth. He just needs a public platform to showcase his talent."

Sif gently reminded him, "If it were writing novels, I would certainly root for you. But you aren't adept in the area of stage plays."

"I need to think of a way to have you assigned to an external duty at that time, so you won't have to participate. How about using the reason of capturing the Knight Order's deserters?"

She had never seen Roland write a script; saying this was already very considerate of his feelings.

Otherwise, she couldn't outright say he's not even a match.

Faced with Sif's worry, Roland remained full of confidence.

He smiled and said, "You don't need to be concerned with what I create; just tell me the selection rules."

"Avoidance is not a solution. Regardless of how many excuses we find, if we're absent on Radiant Day, it will be widely publicized as shirking. Fighting offers a chance; fleeing guarantees failure."

Even though Roland's inexplicable confidence puzzled her, Roland was right.

Surrender means total defeat.

Only fighting matters.

Roland's situation mirrored hers facing Sofia.

She smiled with understanding and introduced the rules to Roland.

Simply put, writers create scripts, and Minstrels perform them at the Radiant Day celebration venue, with the audience voting to decide the champion.

Sif was somewhat troubled as she said, "If judged by authoritative figures and the nobility, I could still find ways to influence the judges, but now it’s public voting, with full citizen participation. What should we do?"

Public voting? Then it’s manageable!

Roland’s mind overflowed with numerous classic plays proven by time.

He was only puzzled about which one to choose.

He slapped the table hard, confidently saying, "Good, we are bound to win."