

Loyal to Myself

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Explanation

I have imagined a happier, kind of fairy tale life for Elisabeth. In this story her sister is the empress, she is “just” a countess. Probably her mother would have chosen another husband for her, and not allow her to marry a count, but as in real life Elisabeth helped Helene to stay with her husband in this story Helene helped Elisabeth. I really wanted to show how close they were and their support for each other.

The story is set in July 1859 when Austria actually was at war, but since this is an imaginary world I left the war out of my writing. The timing was important. I wished Elisabeth to already be a mother at the time when the story is set, and as it’s written in the story as well she got married two years before, at the age of 19. Three years later than in real life. At that age she would have been more able to become a wife, and later a mother. Here she is 21 years old, and already a grown, responsible woman.

Her favourite hobbies just like poems (I rewrote one of her poems to fit in my story) or horse riding appeared in the writing, as well her beauty or her difficult relationship with Archduchess Sophie. I even included a little connection to Hungary.

In reality Elisabeth and Franz Joseph loved each other, but had totally different personalities. In the story they get on well with each other, but they’re not super close, partly because of them being so different. But still, I wished to include this relationship.

In this story Elisabeth is most close to her sister and her husband. As I mentioned, I wanted this to be a fairy tale. Elisabeth found two things in this marriage that I put emphasis on: freedom and love. She got both from Friedrich. She is happy with her life: living in a castle with her family close to her childhood home, helping the people living around them and trying to do something good - just as any other countesses would do. This role needs responsibility as well, but still this is something that would have fitted her more in my opinion.

I wrote her character to be like what I imagine the real Elisabeth was like. Not liking to be in the centre of attention or to be surrounded by so many rules, but still caring about those closest to her, and being loyal to herself - I think it was important for her to act as she wished, not as others wanted. I have seen and read opinions saying that she wasn’t a good person. I don’t agree with this. I believe that after learning about her for more than seven years I can say that I don’t see her as a bad person. In my mind, she will always live as a kind lady, and nothing can change that.