

The Fox 14

Chapter 14: The Plan

"Well, my dear brother, since you've made such a judgment, you must have further plans, right? The French Revolution is a significant event, and I can't believe you intend to sit idly by. You must have more plans in mind," Napoleon inquired.

"This is a French affair," Joseph replied. "I don't want to get deeply involved. I plan to seize some advantages opportunistically. Do you understand what a revolution signifies?"

"Massive internal strife, much like what happened in England," Napoleon responded.

"No, it's not just that. France's issues are much more significant than England's, and its people are much angrier. Moreover, France is a continental power. In a way, it's the heart of the entire European continent. Any change in France will set off a chain reaction in Europe. If the French crown were to fall, it might take many other crowns with it on the European continent. War will persist for a long time, and the flames of battle may spread throughout Europe.

Countless people, regardless of their nobility or commonness, will be crushed. Like insects in front of a rolling carriage wheel, whether it's a tiny beetle or a mantis that preys on it, they will all be equally pulverized. Death is the great equalizer, don't you think, Napoleon? As for me, I want to stay away from that wheel, wait until it has passed, and then come to feast on the corpses of those crushed, like vultures or hyenas."

"Ah, my dear brother, that's truly you!" Napoleon said with a disdainful expression. "You have the eyelashes that can brush away the dust of time and eyes that see through the fog of society, but you lack the courageous heart to control the currents of your era. I'm different; I want to jump onto that chariot, steer it, and make it move according to my will."

"You're like the foolish son of Helios, my naive brother," Joseph retorted. "You aspire to ride your father's blazing sun chariot into the sky, but have you ever considered if you possess such power? You're a wretched creature subject to life's uncertainties and woes. Have you forgotten the Delphic maxim 'Know yourself'? Oh, how unfortunate I am to have a brother as foolish as you. I must always be ready to catch you when you fall after overturning the sun chariot from the heavens, just like a vulture or a hyena."

Napoleon found amusement in Joseph's words because he had compared him to the ancient Greek hero Phaethon, the son of Helios. This hero, without proper authorization, tried to drive his father's sun chariot and caused a severe crash, ultimately costing him his life. Nevertheless, he was an extraordinary and daring hero.

"Arrogant brother of mine, you also need to 'know yourself.' When the sun chariot plummets, you actually think you can catch it. Who do you think you are, Zeus?" Napoleon chuckled. "But, my dear hyena, let's get back to the specifics of your plan."

"Whatever we do in the future, it will require some material preparations. So, I intend to amass some wealth when the revolution arrives," Joseph explained.

"Well, if you can accurately judge the timing of the revolution and war, you can indeed make a substantial profit. Many things become scarce after the outbreak of war," Napoleon remarked.

"However, it's like Archimedes trying to move the Earth; you need a long lever and a fulcrum. Until

that opportunity arises, the more money you have in hand, the more you'll reap. How do you plan to obtain your lever and fulcrum?"

"That's indeed a big question," Joseph furrowed his brow. In pre-revolutionary France, it was extremely difficult for a poor person to amass wealth, even if they were a time traveler. Besides, if a poor person could earn money based on their skills, why would they want to engage in a revolution? Revolution occurred because the current French system had blocked the path to a good life for many.

"True, if getting rich were easy, there would be no need for a revolution," Napoleon concurred. "So, you won't have a very long lever or a sturdy fulcrum. You'll continue to eat black bread without butter, maybe a lamb chop once a month."

"Just relying on that won't be enough," Joseph shook his head.

"The Academy of Sciences is offering prizes for research papers recently," Napoleon suddenly suggested. "The rewards are quite handsome. I plan to write one. Joseph, you should consider it too."

The Paris Royal Academy of Sciences, founded by Cardinal Richelieu during the reign of Louis XIII, was the highest academic institution in France. The prizes they offered for research papers were generous, up to six hundred francs. Moreover, winning such a prize would bring great honor. To someone like Napoleon, the latter might be even more appealing. In his eyes, it might be a symbol of heroism, much like an Olympic crown in ancient Greece. Joseph also found this to be a good idea. As a time traveler, he possessed a wealth of scientific knowledge far surpassing this era, which he could use to secure funding and enhance his reputation, benefiting him in the future.

"However, considering the scientific foundation of this era, it's challenging to create something both groundbreaking and without extensive preliminary work," Joseph couldn't help but ponder. "What if I prematurely present the famous double-slit diffraction experiment in the history of physics to baffle them?"

In the debate over the nature of light, there had long been two opposing theories represented by British scientist Robert Hooke's wave theory and Sir Isaac Newton's particle theory. Due to Sir Isaac Newton's immense influence, his theory held sway for a long time until the double-slit diffraction experiment, a monstrous challenge to the entire field of physics, was conducted more than once several decades later.

The first person to release this monstrous experiment and challenge the prevailing particle theory was British scientist Thomas Young in 1801. However, he faced resistance due to his nationality. Despite Sir Isaac Newton having passed away more than seventy years prior, his reputation had only grown. Challenging Newton's theories was considered "absurd" and "illogical." Additionally, Young failed to provide a comprehensive mathematical explanation, as he mistakenly treated light as a longitudinal wave, resulting in a series of inexplicable problems. Consequently, this monstrous challenge in physics was ignored by the British scientific community.

It wasn't until more than a decade later that French scientist Augustin-Jean Fresnel, building on Huygens' principle and the principle of interference, treated light as a transverse wave and established a new quantitative formulation. He used this method to tackle the double-slit experiment, challenging the prevailing particle theory. Nevertheless, Fresnel, who was French, faced resistance as well, primarily because of Newton's enduring reputation in Britain.

"Executing this experiment isn't difficult from a technical perspective," Joseph reasoned. "In fact, in the future, it's a common experiment in high school laboratories. As for Fresnel's proofs, the necessary preparatory work is relatively minimal. Of course, there's still some preparation, mainly in mathematics, but it's not insurmountable. I could even throw in the Poisson spot experiment to further confound them."

Thinking about it, Joseph chuckled, "My foolish brother, you actually came up with a good idea. It seems that even a fool can generate a brilliant idea after a thousand times of contemplation."

"My arrogant brother, you know, I've been preparing for this for some time. I believe my chances of winning are much greater," Napoleon responded.

"Alright, then let's each prepare a research paper and see whose paper demonstrates higher proficiency," Joseph suggested.

"Agreed," Napoleon said, but he quickly realized and remarked, "Wait a minute, Joseph, your words are suspicious. You said we'd see whose paper shows higher proficiency, not who wins. My dear brother, your words leave room for debate regarding the quality of the paper. So, even if I win, you could easily claim that your paper was far superior, and it was only because those old fogies at the Academy had no vision. Then you wouldn't have to admit defeat. Are you planning something like that, Joseph?"

Joseph took a step back, looking at Napoleon, and shook his head with a tone of deep sadness, saying, "Oh, Napoleon, how could you suspect me like that? You disappoint me so. And..." He adopted a melancholic tone as if he were Medea abandoned by Jason. However, he suddenly changed his tone, saying, "You know, in the Academy of Sciences and any other place, there are plenty of fools. The likelihood of them misunderstanding your foolish paper while completely failing to grasp my paper is high. Their judgment cannot be the standard for evaluation."

"But, my brother, how about this, you can be the judge of whether my paper is more proficient than yours. Even though you're a foolish fellow, you wouldn't stoop to speaking untruths in such matters," Joseph said with a sorrowful tone.

Napoleon paused for a moment, then retorted, "I'm the judge, but I sense a trap in your words, Joseph. You want to trap me into admitting that your paper is better in terms of proficiency, right? Well, let's go on this scientific journey, my dear brother."