Empress 129

Chapter 129: Saintess Fuchou (Part 2)

That is not something that can be solved with just one or two million Livre coins.

Dilas gritted his teeth and said, "The maximum amount I can authorize is one hundred thousand Livres, anything beyond that requires Congress' approval."

"Are you trying to brush me off like a beggar?"

William said dismissively, "I am preparing a diplomatic note and hope your country can give ours a satisfactory response."

Dilas broke out in a cold sweat and, although he wanted to argue further, quickly capitulated under William's penetrating gaze.

Don't expect to get from negotiations what you can't win on the battlefield.

Even though he wasn't knowledgeable about military matters, he understood the basic principles of war.

Now, the Jin Yuan Kingdom is undergoing an internal reckoning, and its national strength and military power are much weaker than they appear on paper.

Even if it takes another three years, he would not be this apprehensive.

But not now.

If a war breaks out due to a clash of tempers, the consequences would be unimaginable.

Dilas' veins bulged, his face turned ashen, and he was at his wit's end.

After intense bargaining, Dilas and William finally reached an agreement.

Dilas would personally compensate forty thousand gold coins to the Sussex Empire, which promised to keep the matter quiet.

Simply put, it was a case of spending money to avoid disaster.

William firmly refused Dilas' request to bring Alina's body back to his country.

"According to our country's laws, foreign citizens committing crimes within our borders are subject to our legal processes, just like criminals killed in the act."

"While there are extradition treaties between your country and mine, they only apply to the living. Furthermore, you mentioned your country has declared Alina a traitor and stripped her of her nationality, giving you even less reason to claim the body."

William's righteous refusal left Dilas indignant yet helpless.

Moments ago, to shirk responsibility, he falsely claimed Alina had been stripped of her nationality, which William used against him.

If Alina isn't a citizen of his country, on what grounds could he demand her body?

This question left Dilas speechless.

Upon returning to the embassy, he angrily smashed several cups.

He was acutely aware that although he acted based on national interests, back home, amidst fervent nationalism, such behavior would be seen as capitulation.

Returning home would be akin to descending into hell.

Yet, he had no choice but to return.

He had a family.

As he watched Dilas and his party depart, William hesitated for a while, then sighed softly and said to Sif:

"Your Majesty, these forty thousand coins need not pass through the Treasury. They are at your disposal as a special fund for external affairs. Please exercise caution when traveling; if there's one Alina, there could be another."

After saying this, William shook his head and turned away.

Watching his somewhat hunched back, knowing he was only in his forties, Sif inexplicably felt a bit distressed.

Roland was right; the world is never black and white.

Some Cabinet ministers have personal agendas, while others work for the public good.

Though William is a staunch advocate for limiting imperial authority, he is unambiguous when it comes to national interests.

She could somewhat understand his and the anti-imperial faction's political stance.

No one can guarantee whether an emperor is wise, tyrannical, or incompetent; delegating some power to the Cabinet is beneficial for the country's long-term development...

But who can guarantee that all Cabinet ministers are competent and loyal?

If the Cabinet were full of people like William, Wald, and Roland, she wouldn’t bother vying for power.

Her brief wavering quickly vanished, and Sif’s gaze gradually firmed.

She silently walked into the room where the "body" was kept.

Alina still lay there quietly, with Roland guarding the Crystal Coffin beside her.

"Alina, you can revive now."

Alina slowly opened her eyes and sat up.

Her chaotic consciousness gradually cleared, and her memories returned to her body.

She looked silently at Roland and Sif and softly said, "Thank you both. From now on, Alina is dead. I am a hidden avenger in the dark."

"I will help you establish an intelligence network. I think you’ll need it."

Roland’s eyes brightened. It was precisely what he needed. "Since the name can’t be used, let’s use a codename."

"Saintess Fuchou," Alina said calmly.

An unremarkable yet very fitting codename.

Roland didn’t object and softly said, "Alright, Miss Saintess. How do you plan to disguise yourself?"

Alina slightly bowed her head, covered her face with her hand, and after a few seconds, when she raised her head again, Roland no longer recognized her.

"This is..." Roland was somewhat surprised at her disguise ability, akin to demon techniques.

"While asleep, I happened to break through to Tier Eight. I didn’t choose Astrologer or Traveler but became a [Faceless]."

A profession unheard of, it seemed to be a hidden occupation.

Roland didn’t inquire about what kind of profession Faceless was.

Everyone has secrets.

Since he regarded Alina as a friend, boundaries were necessary.

Sif, who had remained silent, shivered slightly upon hearing "Faceless," as if she had made up her mind.

"Alina, I will allocate forty thousand pounds for you to build an intelligence network. There’s no rush; let’s talk more when we go overseas."

Roland looked at Sif with some surprise, not expecting her to reveal this.

Sif smiled at a somewhat startled Alina and softly said, "That was the last time I’ll call you Alina. Let’s not dwell on the past; from now on, we are partners."

She extended her soft, slender hand with a bright smile.

Alina hesitated, then reached out, placing her hand in Sif’s palm.

Sif turned her gaze toward Roland, and seeing no reaction from him, simply reached over and grasped his large hand, linking the three hands together.

They felt each other's warmth and pulse.

No oaths were needed, as their interests were already intertwined.

After disguising and disguising herself, Alina was temporarily arranged to stay in the Imperial Palace.

According to Roland's deductions, Dilas would not be willing to accept it, and might even suspect there was something fishy about Alina's death.

He would definitely trigger the intelligence network investigation.

Even if he racked his brains, he'd never guess that Alina was hiding in the Imperial Palace.

Here it was absolutely safe.

Besides safety, Alina could also protect the Magic Mirror while in the palace.

The Magic Mirror could perfectly imitate Sif, but its combat ability was limited. In case of an emergency, Alina could directly take the Magic Mirror and flee.

Once Alina was settled, Sif and Roland returned to the small study in the mansion and began to review the day's events.

After contemplating for a moment, Sif recounted William's earlier performance to Roland.

Roland nodded, casually commenting, "Sif, William is different from the other ministers. He cherishes his reputation, is shrewd and capable. If the monarch is wise, he's a competent minister; if the monarch is ineffectual, he's a power minister."

"He’s not an enemy, but a wild horse that can be tamed."

Sif’s lips curled slightly, smiling as she said, "Indeed, I think the same. Once we reclaim power, I’ll keep him in the Cabinet, but you’re still more suited to be Chief Minister."

Roland looked at Sif with exasperation and flatly refused.

"Don’t joke around, I could never fulfill the role of Chief Minister. Look at Mr. William, he’s clearly only in his forties but looks sixty. Do you want me to age prematurely?"

"Alright, never mind then."

Imagining Roland in twenty years looking like William shocked Sif. She hurriedly shook her head.

Seeing her cute expression, Roland laughed and said, "You mentioned giving Alina forty thousand gold coins in operating funds. Do you really have that much secret stash?"

"I don’t have money. That was the compensation William got from Dilas."

Sif laughed as she recounted to Roland, who had avoided the situation earlier, how William intimidated Dilas.

Listening, Roland’s expression suddenly changed.

"No, we need to leave immediately!"

"Huh?" Sif was a bit confused.

"The sooner the better, preferably before those forty thousand coins are delivered!"

Sif was taken aback by Roland’s sudden change.

She asked in disbelief, "Why, why? Was William acting?"

"I’m not sure, but I’m certain something has spun out of control, beyond the planned scope."

Roland paced back and forth, suddenly clapped his hands, and whispered:

"I get it, the uncontrolled element is you!"

"Me? What did I do wrong again?" Sif’s mind raced, still at a loss.

"In the eyes of the Cabinet, you are now an unstable factor. Your unpredictability disrupts their peace of mind. If this continues, they won’t be able to handle it."

Understanding this, Roland decisively said, "The compensation from Jin Yuan Kingdom will take some time to deliver, let’s leave immediately!"

It was a matter of exploiting people’s habitual thinking.

Who would expect Sif to leave without even taking the forty thousand gold coins?

This unexpected action was the best timing gap.