**Empress 175**

Chapter 175: Roland’s Untainted Sanctuary

Roland walked up to Alina, familiarly patted her on the shoulder, and teased softly:

"Why thank me? I should be thanking you."

"Although most of these tens of thousands are the elderly, women, and children, they are not burdens."

"The elderly have rich experience, women can proliferate the population, and children are the hope of the future. They are all useful people."

Roland wasn’t just comforting Alina.

At any time, population is the most precious resource.

Although some resources cannot be monetized immediately, they can be long-term investments.

Even if it was just to have Alina’s wholehearted dedication, he would take these people in.

Besides, among these people, there were many disciples of old masters.

These are all scarce talents.

As for the shock of friendly nations, Roland didn’t care at all.

Once he got a firm foothold, he would escort Alina to the Freedom City of Avestra to reclaim power.

He was set on offending the Jin Yuan Kingdom.

He didn’t think the Jin Yuan Kingdom would go to war with Sussex over such a small matter.

After reclaiming power, the most important thing is, of course, to consolidate power, not to go to war with the world’s strongest country.

They might condemn, protest, and issue diplomatic notices, but they wouldn’t go to war.

Diplomatic notices from unfriendly countries?

Just throw them in the trash.

Roland could comfort himself, but Alina knew that only Roland would accept these poor people; they were unwelcome elsewhere.

The Val City State had already issued an ultimatum to these people, requiring them to leave the country within ten days, or be forcibly expelled.

The Val City State is a small country, with less than eight thousand troops nationwide, and they dare not offend the Jin Yuan Kingdom.

As a buffer zone between great powers, maintaining neutrality is the best way to survive.

But even such a small country has enough force to expel her father’s followers.

The situation was urgent to the extent that Alina couldn’t avoid improprieties.

She fantasized about Roland helping her, yet considering that Roland is now the Governor and needs to consider various factors, she didn’t hold much hope.

In her view, it would be good enough if Roland accepted healthy young men and women; he was unlikely to accept the elderly and children. Even if he accepted them reluctantly, he would force her to accept more stringent compromises.

For example, making these people his slaves forever.

However, Roland surprised her.

Roland was willing to accept the refugees, with no additional conditions.

Alina could no longer hold back, tears rolling down her cheeks.

Roland approached her, placing his right hand on her shoulder, and said gently:

"Alina, we are friends. If you are willing to do something for me in some situations, likewise, I am willing to help you."

"Don’t do anything to taint our friendship."

As he was about to leave the office, Roland stopped and softly said:

"Even for me, there is a sacred place in my heart that cannot be sullied."

"Be prepared, we set off tomorrow."

There wasn’t much for Alina to prepare, just not crying too much so that she wouldn’t be out of spirits the next day, but Roland was busy.

First, he had to assemble a well-conditioned mobile unit.

This was simple, just leave it to Brigadier General Dailong.

Secondly, to prepare hundreds of transport ships and escort river gunboats.

This was also simple.

The light destroyers of the Fourth Fleet could trace back several hundred kilometers along the river, just passing by the Val City State.

Light destroyers might not fare well in naval battles, but they can rule the inland rivers.

To ensure safety, Roland mobilized over three thousand troops, over a hundred transport ships, and four warships.

These individuals were all in a state of readiness, available for use at any time.

Hearing that the Governor needed people, General Dailong volunteered to lead the team personally, his eyes gleaming with a desire for merit.

According to the usual practice, entering another country's territory with troops requires prior communication and requesting military passage rights, but there was no time.

Fortunately, the Val City State was very weak, cannons, firearms, and bayonets were the best pass.

In emergency situations, power takes precedence over diplomacy, so Roland had to use force as courtesy.

He aimed to help the other side solve a problem and hoped they wouldn't be ignorant.

If the Val City State was really unruly, they had to be taught to behave.

To ensure nothing went wrong, reinforcements from places like Hansa continued to gather at the border, exerting pressure on the Val City State.

Since he didn’t want to fight, he needed to prepare according to the standards of war.

In addition, he had to prepare camps to receive these people, various logistical supplies, and so on, all sorts of complex tasks needed his decision.

Until the middle of the night, he finally managed to rest a little, but sleep was elusive. He could only go to the balcony to feel the sea breeze to calm himself down.

As he closed his eyes to face the wind, he heard barely audible footsteps behind him.

Roland didn’t turn around but knew who it was.

"Sister Lisa, not sleeping so late?"

"It’s you who isn’t sleeping. I already had a nap, just woke up."

Lisa came beside Roland, standing shoulder to shoulder, and sighed softly, "I know you’re busy, but you must eat and rest. I just checked the dining room, and the supper prepared for you went cold."

"Really? I thought I had eaten it."

Roland shrugged, smilingly teasing.

"I’m not joking with you. You are everyone’s pillar and cannot collapse. You’re young now, but if you don’t eat and rest well, you’ll regret it when you’re old and fraught with illnesses."

Facing Lisa’s caring gaze, Roland raised his hands and surrendered.

"Alright, it’s my fault. I’ll eat and rest now."

"That’s more like it." Lisa tried to maintain a serious expression but couldn’t help but smile.

She linked her arm with Roland’s, walking side by side with him.

"Preparing this much, are you going to war? Be careful."

"Not going to war, just going to fetch people."

Roland succinctly said, "Alina’s followers are trapped in the Val City State, and I have to bring them over."

"Can’t this be done by subordinates?" Lisa was somewhat puzzled.

"This involves the Val City State and the Jin Yuan Kingdom, making the situation very complex, so I don’t feel assured letting others handle it."

Roland left out a half-sentence.

His luck was erratic but would always run into things.

This was probably a wolf-attracting trait exclusive to transmigrators.

If the Jin Yuan Kingdom intervened, his subordinates might not withstand the pressure.

These tens of thousands of people were crucial.

They were the basis for Alina’s future power reclamation, and even could form an exiled government as key members when necessary.

This matter couldn’t afford any errors; he had to attend to it personally.

Lisa didn’t say much, merely smiled slightly, "Alright, you know better than me about these matters. But you have to listen to me when it comes to eating."

In the dining room, Roland saw the steaming hot dishes on the table and instantly understood, these weren’t reheated leftovers from last night, but freshly made.

Lisa was also busy during the day, and had just worked overtime with Roland.

Busy preparing supplies, she didn’t even have time to ask who they were fighting.

She had just used the excuse of going to rest but then ran back to cook for him.

Roland sighed softly, and gently said, "Sister, you are now a senior official too, leave cooking to the Chef."

"Sure, but I am the Chef."

She was not only a chef but an extraordinary profession chef.

"When you eat happily, my culinary skills will soar; this is also a way to grow stronger."

Ah, is that so?

Given that, Roland didn’t insist, he took the knife and fork, speared a plump shrimp, and put it into his mouth.

Sweet and refreshing, with nothing but a hint of fragrance and the shrimp’s original taste.

"Originally, I thought this dish’s garnish was difficult to find, but unexpectedly, there was an unforeseen discovery."

"Folded ears coriander?" Roland asked in surprise.

"Yes, in a valley twenty kilometers south of Hansa City. I originally wanted to find some pine nuts, but I didn’t expect green vegetables in mid-winter." Lisa smilingly said.

The recipe for this seasoning was very clear, and she discovered it by chance, perfectly recreating the essence of this dish.

"So, how is it, delicious?"

"Ten out of ten, perfect." Roland speared a second shrimp, quickly chewing and swallowing, using actions to testify his opinion.

He was somewhat curious, according to the encyclopedia, folded ears coriander never appeared in the Magic Era, and went extinct after the Third Era.

Unexpectedly, it still existed.

This valley was excellent; he must visit if there’s a chance.

Roland finished the dinner and dutifully went back to the bedroom to catch up on sleep under Lisa’s supervision.