Empress 180

Chapter 180: Unequal Treaty

The sin that caused the deaths of tens of thousands.

If this were a civilized era of enlightenment, such an accusation would be extremely serious. However, this is the era where monarchy and theocracy run rampant.

Deaths during migrations are easy to explain.

They can even be justified as the cost of pursuing faith.

This level of crime has been committed by all three major religious organizations and several major empires.

Blackthorn slightly cleared his throat, just about to speak, when Christine had already started speaking.

"In your country's history, bloody migrations have caused at least hundreds of thousands of deaths, with migrations resulting in tens of thousands of losses being too numerous to count. What right do you have to stand on the moral high ground and accuse me?"

"I will do my utmost to ensure food and lodging during the migration, personally provide treatment to the injured and sick, and have Temple Warriors ensure safety."

"I will do everything I can. If someone unfortunately passes away on the way, I will pray and conduct redemption prayers for them, so their souls may find salvation."

"Everything comes with a price. As long as there's a heart yearning for the light, these difficulties can be conquered."

She met Sif's gaze unflinchingly, with not a trace of fear.

Her meaning was clear.

Your Sussex has done it too!

Everyone’s a crow, don’t laugh at who’s blacker.

The Sussex Empire has a history spanning over seven hundred years. Such a long history, it’s not surprising a few tyrants and foolish rulers emerged.

In the barbaric times when commoners weren’t counted as human, everyone partook in such things.

If you really want to expose the past, none are clean.

Christine’s words, though unpleasant, were also facts.

Roland silently mocked, this is a typical fanatic’s thinking: as long as the belief is unwavering, nothing is insurmountable; failure implies faith was not steadfast.

He didn’t speak, wanting to see how Sif would respond.

Sif wasn’t angered by Christine’s words; she even smiled slightly.

"You’re not wrong, this tragedy has played out countless times in the past."

"We shouldn’t repeat the past’s tragedies, so I brought over a hundred transport ships. I can provide the best migration and settlement conditions, something your hollow slogans can’t replace."

Sif, righteous and vehemently opposing.

Indeed, she had the right to speak out loud.

Belief can’t be eaten; don’t scare people with this nonsense.

It is transaction time, don’t pretend to be a saint.

Seeing Christine choked to silence, Sif coldly said: "This is my greatest concession; you conduct the ceremony, I take the people, and the costs are split between us."

Christine took a deep breath and asked in a low voice: "Why split the costs?"

"Roland, you say."

"With so many people cooperating with your performance, it must be accounted for. We’re helping you solve such a huge hassle, that should be accounted for. We’re not extorting you, fork out one hundred and fifty thousand pounds, and we’ll cooperate happily."

Christine almost fainted.

This doesn’t count as extortion?

The annual revenue of her West District in the Wende Empire was just about this amount.

She bit her lip and said, "This indeed isn’t extortion, it’s outright blackmail!"

Sif didn’t like hearing this, blocking Roland, she coldly glanced at Christine’s chest and disdainfully said:

"Say what you will, do you have the right to refuse?"

Christine’s face changed.

With her current strength, conflicting with Roland and Sif, it was already good not to have complete annihilation.

Blackthorn kept giving her looks, signaling her to stop speaking and accept quickly, fearing harsher terms if she continued.

Christine bit her lip, pondered for a moment, and slowly said:

"Sif, I want to debate the canon with you. If I win, I take the people."

"And if you lose?" Sif asked curiously.

"Then I'll release the people, and cover all the migration and settlement costs," Christine decisively said.

Sif was a bit curious; where did she get such confidence?

Debating the canon in such matters, within the same religious sect it's a war of words, across faiths it's a battle of strength.

Whoever wins the fight wins the debate.

Never heard of the Divine Court of Light having a Tier Eight Saintess, is she courting death?

Sif was about to accept, but Roland pulled her back behind him.

"Miss Christine, if you don't accept the terms, you can return to the ship and prepare for war. Empire soldiers must fight when encountering an enemy!"

"You!"

Christine was enraged; what was this, not even accepting a fair duel?

Roland calmly said, "We are not of the same faith, we are heretics to each other, there is no extra responsibility for killing each other. Done appropriately, there could even be merit; you should understand this."

Christine’s face turned as pale as paper.

Roland was indeed shameless.

Roland was no ordinary person; even if conflict arose, the Divine Court of Light was unlikely to make Roland pay dearly.

Even if Roland truly paid a price, she wouldn’t live to see it.

Given the current balance of power, avoiding total annihilation would be difficult.

This is, after all, a water battle; the Sussex Navy can sail across the seas, why fear a riverine artillery battle?

Blackthorn saw the situation about to spiral out of control and quickly stepped out to intervene.

"Christine, control your anger!"

"Governor Roland, this favor of yours, I have taken note. Offending the entire Divine Court of Light for these thirty thousand refugees is truly unwise."

Roland chuckled lightly and said calmly, "Bishop Blackthorn is quite the joker. I brought over a hundred ships and thousands of men to receive people, with thousands more prepared to assist, yet you want me to return empty-handed? You’re the one offending me, not the other way around."

Blackthorn was so angry he couldn’t speak.

He stared intently at Roland, the harsh words stuck in his throat.

Harsh words unsupported by strength are just jokes; better not to speak them.

He exhaled deeply and slowly said, "Very well, very well, I, Blackthorn, solemnly swear..."

Before he finished swearing, Roland was already shaking his head slowly, "I don’t trust the vows of clergy."

"Then what do you want?" Blackthorn couldn’t hide his anger.

"Sign a treaty, clearly defining all the execution details, so no one can shirk."

Blackthorn was silent for a moment, then slowly asked, "Aren’t you afraid I’ll just default on the agreement?"

"You can try."

Roland said calmly, "When I come to collect, you’ll have to pay a fine."

Blackthorn was infuriated by Roland, but he could not refute.

The situation was stronger than him.

Roland took out pen and paper, carefully writing the treaty in the language of the Magic Empire.

The Magic Empire had been extinct for many years, their language no longer evolving, nearly dead.

But the good thing about the Magic Empire's language is that since it's dead, it wouldn't produce new ambiguous changes.

This precise language was often used for formal treaty signing.

With a dark face, Blackthorn signed what was destined to become a historical unequal treaty with Roland.

The treaty clearly stipulated the obligations and rights of both parties, the payment methods and deadlines for compensation, and the penalties for non-payment.

Staring at the huge penalty set by Roland, Blackthorn felt as if he was having a heart attack.

With a cold face, Candidate Saintess Christine bit her lip fiercely after signing the treaty, to stop herself from speaking out.

She feared she wouldn't be able to hold back from cursing.