Empress 441

Chapter 441: Since We're Here_2

Thinking that Sister Lisa is also twenty-six years old this year, Roland couldn't help but feel a bit emotional.

Roland knew well what Lisa was waiting for.

After the wedding with Sif, he would confess and ask her to accept Lisa.

Given Roland's understanding of Sif, she probably wouldn't refuse.

Sif was born into the Imperial Family and had seen many such things, so accepting it wouldn't be a psychological burden for her.

Back then, in order to win over Roland, she even thought of buying him beautiful maidservants to accompany him at night, but he sternly refused.

For politicians, whether it's marriage or a romantic relationship, it is often a political transaction.

But this might make Sif feel hurt.

Thinking of the intimacy shared with Sif in the hot spring, Roland could only sigh inwardly.

What girl doesn't long for exclusive love?

Sif's ability to accept it doesn't mean her heart would remain untroubled.

The sweet whispers by the ear in the hot spring would sound like a joke after the advent of an affair.

Just as Roland was lost in his thoughts, Alina suddenly coughed up blood, staining the white snow red.

Startled, Roland quickly grabbed Alina’s hand, the milky white light from his palm enveloping her body.

His secondary profession was Holy Knight.

Though the Holy Knight’s healing ability wasn’t as good as that of a Priest or Druid, it was better than nothing.

Gasping, Alina felt the warmth from Roland’s palm, didn’t resist, and simply closed her eyes to recover her strength.

She had suffered a backlash again, and it was still because of Roland, but this time the reason was a bit hard to speak of.

During the Angel Card divination, because Roland had no defenses, she inadvertently sensed thoughts from Roland’s mind.

This information beyond the divination itself distracted her, and it was no surprise she suffered a backlash.

Fortunately, before the backlash, she had already seen the results of the divination.

"Don’t push yourself. Exploring the ruins is time-consuming and labor-intensive, and the risk factor is high. There’s no need to force it even if you see it."

"I saw it clearly!" Alina raised her voice, protesting loudly.

She didn’t want to say that she was backfired because she accidentally glimpsed Roland’s thoughts, nor did she want her abilities to be questioned by Roland, so she naturally opposed it adamantly.

"About seventy-five meters below us, there’s a mysterious ancient ruin, and it is estimated to be at least fifty thousand years old."

"Fifty thousand years?" Roland’s surprise was undeniable.

This timeline was already the Fifth Era, the Nirvana Era.

The Alamanni Empire military arsenal discovered during the Battle of Helensburg changed the game, sparking Roland’s interest in the technology of the Nirvana Era.

"Shall we take a look?" he probed.

"Of course, we should, but without professional digging tools..." Alina’s words were cut short as Roland pulled out two shovels from the Moonlit Silver Armor, handing one to her.

She took the Little Ao Steel Shovel with a smile and started digging without another word.

The soil beneath the snow mountain was as hard as rock, but to the Aurum Steel Shovel and the strength of a Transcendent, it was no different from soft mud.

Alina’s digging speed was very fast.

The strength and stamina of a Transcendent far surpassed ordinary human imagination, and the speed of digging was beyond expectation.

In less than half a day, she had dug down over seventy meters and, following the guidance of the divination, found the ruins of the Fifth Era.

Standing at the entrance of the ruins, Roland could clearly feel the weight of time.

This place looked like a professional laboratory.

To be exact, it wasn't just similar; it actually was one.

The Alamanni Language and Odin Language were of the same origin, with few reading barriers.

The metal sign on the entrance of the laboratory was rusty, but the words [Browning Province Life Laboratory] were still barely discernible.

Roland felt slightly disappointed.

If it were a weapons lab or even another scientific laboratory, it would be useful; only the life laboratory held the least value.

The reason was simple: could any life survive for fifty thousand years?

Even the most hunger-resistant turtle would have turned into turtle jerky by now.

The life forms used for experiments were long gone, and the achievements of the experiments back then were likely useless.

With each end of an era comes a biological extinction, and creatures of the new era differed vastly from those of the Ancient Era.

Although he didn't hold much hope that there would be treasures inside, since they were already there, not going in to have a look would be impolite. Roland and Alina exchanged a glance and made a simultaneous decision.

To go in and see.

The lab door hadn't been closed, and the access control system had long since failed, so Roland and Alina entered without encountering any obstacles.

Roland walked in the front, Alina holding a short sword in her left hand and a pistol in her right, followed behind.

Though the chance of enemies was slim, maintaining vigilance was a good habit.

What if there was an unexpected situation?

Just as Roland glanced around, the unexpected still happened.

He saw a dust-covered robot in the corner slowly come to life.

"Hello, Mechanical Assistant Ham-1 at your service. Unable to confirm identity, please verify identity."

Meanwhile, the robot had already locked onto Roland’s face, scanning the information.

Perhaps due to the passage of time, the scanning device malfunctioned and the scan failed.

The humanoid mechanical assistant paused in silence, making a new judgment based on its underlying logic.

"Warning! Verification failed! No access!"

"Warning! Verification failed! No access!"

Roland remained on guard, staring at Mechanical Assistant Ham.

Darn, as expected, it’s one of those idiotic robots that becomes aggressive if it can’t recognize someone.

Although the mechanical assistant didn’t seem like a combat robot, Roland didn’t dare to slack off.

He raised his scepter, ready to give the robot a hard blow.

Chapter 442: Since We’re Here_3

The internal structure of the robots is exquisite, and blunt instruments are highly effective against them.

However, the mechanical assistant’s reaction left him somewhat puzzled.

The mechanical assistant did not initiate a combat operation but instead flexibly provided alternative options.

"Unable to verify identity, you may tour the laboratory as a guest."

Tour the laboratory?

Roland breathed a sigh of relief and asked with a smile, "All areas?"

"Yes, all areas."

The mechanical assistant didn’t explain much further; after all, there were things it didn’t know either. It only knew that guest permissions in this laboratory were very high.

After obtaining the permission to tour, Roland and Alina were finally able to relax.

They looked at the hardly recognizable signage and floor plan on the wall, identifying the different zones of the laboratory.

The first stop was the specimen storage zone.

Although they were surely all deceased, looking at the fossils wasn’t a bad idea.

To satisfy their curiosity, the two first went to the storage zone.

As Roland expected, the storage zone had quite a few animal skeletons. From the twisted shapes of many skeletons, one could tell how much they didn’t want to die.

Facing these skeletal specimens from a previous era, Roland paused, maintaining a long silence.

These specimens indeed differed significantly from the mainstream creatures of this era.

After the tour, Roland and Alina left the storage zone, exchanging their opinions.

"Alina, did you notice? Some of the life forms looked strange. If we infer from their skeletal structures, I fear it’s..."

"Life fusion experiments," Alina said calmly.

"You noticed too?" Roland greatly appreciated Alina’s insight.

Alina nonchalantly said, "My father he..."

She didn’t finish her sentence, but Roland already understood.

Mr. Carlo most likely also acquired knowledge from the Fifth Era and conducted experiments in the Jin Yuan Kingdom.

Having some knowledge of alchemy, Roland was internally very resistant to life fusion experiments.

In his view, higher life forms are basically the cream of the crop surviving through nature’s competition.

They have their evolutionary traits, and forced fusion isn’t a good idea; it can easily spiral out of control.

The specimens in this laboratory include large gorillas and other primates.

Clearly, this laboratory has attempted the fusion of primates with other species.

If it can be done with primates, then it can continue with humans.

Roland felt inexplicably uncomfortable and headed to the archive zone first.

This area stored various experimental data and achievements of the laboratory.

With the speed of quantum reading, Roland skimmed the books and indeed found similar data.

He delegated the task of collecting books to Alina while he continued searching.

He quickly found his target, a lengthy scientific paper, "Life Fusion Altered Human Evolution."

Well, this must be the main subject.

Opening the cover page, Roland casually flipped through it, indifferent to these life fusion experiments.

This book had no value.

Roland made a professional judgment and planned to put the book away.

Just as he was organizing the books, he suddenly saw a metal note fall out.

"Anomalies occurred during directional life fusion; through the Blood Soul Link, warriors with similar strength can be linked together. Unless the linked ones run out of life force, they will not die..."

Roland’s eyes lit up.

This is good.

As long as he mastered the Soul Blood Link ability, he could link his life with Sif and Lisa, allowing them to share damage and enjoy shared benefits.

Overall, this was a good thing.

Chapter 443: Let’s Go Stargazing Together

With this note, Roland quickly found the relevant materials and understood why the tourists had the highest clearance.

This laboratory was a secret laboratory sponsored by the military at the time.

The primary task of the laboratory was to conduct forbidden biological experiments.

From various fierce beasts to humanoid apes, their range of experiments was extensive.

Going through the available materials, Roland even found a plan for human-animal fusion.

Unfortunately, before the plan could be executed, the laboratory accidentally sank underground, and all the staff died in a short time.

If given more time, they might have conducted even more extraordinary experiments.

The research findings they left behind are quite rich, but aside from broadening knowledge, they hold little significance.

Learning the art of slaying dragons is useless when there are no Giant Dragons in the world.

The vast majority of life from the Fifth Era went extinct or evolved in the long course of natural evolution, rendering the fusion experiment data of those years useless.

If not for discovering the Soul Blood Link, this journey would have been a complete loss.

Fortunately, while the God of Destiny closes all doors, he leaves a small window open.

The Soul Blood Link does not belong to any known Magic System nor to Extraordinary Abilities; it is closer to Witchcraft.

Upon hearing this name, Roland was mentally alert.

The detailed records of Witchcraft have long disappeared in the river of history. The accessible information on Witchcraft now is very simple and subjective.

In the records of the Magic Empire and the modern nations of the world, Witchcraft is depicted as an evil and powerful, eerie Spell.

Even the researchers of the Fifth Era had an innate aversion to Witchcraft like the Soul Blood Link.

Researchers writing papers evaluated this Witchcraft as having stringent usage conditions and significant side effects, not recommended for use.

Roland, driven by curiosity, continued reading the papers, almost unable to suppress his laughter.

This is considered a side effect?

The Soul Blood Link must have one person as the core, becoming the cornerstone of the link.

This person must be strong and robust, able to withstand the various backlashes of the Soul Blood Link.

The cornerstone will suffer the most damage and gain the most benefits, and Roland felt there was no need to be modest about taking on this cornerstone responsibility.

Once established, the Soul Blood Link also has the side effect that, unless there is a special method, it cannot be undone.

Apart from these drawbacks, the participants in the link should have roughly similar strength, with no significant differences.

With so many drawbacks, its advantages are naturally outstanding as well.

The Soul Blood Link can directly enhance the vitality and soul strength of its participants and establish a communication method among them that transcends language.

In emergencies, participants can directly convey information to other members.

In Roland's view, this ability is much more important than directly enhancing attributes.

It's like opening a voice channel for a team strategy session in a dungeon instance.

Though simple, this function has already far surpassed this primitive era.

Sofia always operated solo, never fearing being besieged. While there are many downsides to fighting alone, it eliminates the need to communicate with teammates, allowing her full combat prowess.

All previous attempts to besiege Sofia failed because the attackers couldn't communicate properly, unable to exert their full combat strength.

With the Soul Blood Link, at least they could unleash their full might. If that still wasn’t enough, it was a matter of skill, surrendering to their superior.

Stored alongside the materials was the medium to activate the Soul Blood Link, an unnamed ring.

Feeling the ring’s intense bloody aura and murderous intent, Roland was secretly startled, yet amidst his alarm, he also felt a hint of delight.

Caressing the restless ring, Roland silently made a wish to it.

"Dear ring, if you have any wisdom, please calm down. I will certainly find a suitable person to use the Soul Blood Link."

Roland didn’t know whether the ring truly possessed a spirit or it was mere coincidence, but after making his wish, the ring gradually calmed down.

After storing away the Soul Blood Ring, Roland and Alina took another lap around the laboratory, searching for more spoils.

With mechanized assistance, they found all the research findings and data.

These are "precious materials" that would have caused a worldwide sensation in the Fifth Era but leave people silent in the Sixth Era.

Excellent research results, yet unfortunately obsolete.

If humans of the 21st century discovered the dinosaur martial arts from the Jurassic in an archaeological find, they might be just as speechless.

After a moment of silence, Roland gathered his thoughts and gently comforted Alina, who appeared slightly dejected:

"Don’t be disheartened; we’ve gained so much. It’s time to leave."

Alina, knowing the value of that Soul Blood Ring, seeing Roland accepting it was no longer pretentious and nodded, changing the topic.

"Alright, it’s time for us to go. Maybe we should borrow a few more shovels from the mechanized assistant."

"Dear visitor, please don’t worry. It’s our duty to send guests out," a mechanical voice sounded in their ears.

With someone to handle it, Roland and Alina naturally did not need to toil.

The mechanized assistant awakened a few labor bots to clear the path for their departure.

The mechanical efficiency far exceeded that of humans, and with the help of the excavation robots, the tunnel, hundreds of meters long, was quickly completed.

When Roland and Alina exited the tunnel, they were surprised to find the exit was actually in the observatory’s backyard.

It was approaching midnight, the sky filled with an abundance of stars, and tonight the Blue Moon and accompanying satellite were not particularly bright, making it a good time for stargazing.

Alina’s gaze fell on the snow trail on the hillside, looking at the remnants of the violent avalanche and couldn’t help but teasingly say:

"Mr. Avalanche probably didn’t expect the two tiny humans buried below to escape underground only to return again."

Chapter 444: Let’s Go Stargazing Together (Part 2)

Roland spread his hands and laughed along.

"Perhaps, Mr. Earth couldn’t have imagined that just a snow avalanche would be enough to dig a tunnel hundreds of meters long in him."

The two exchanged a glance and burst into hearty laughter simultaneously.

If they were ordinary people, this avalanche might have claimed their lives.

Unfortunately, they were Transcendents, not burying beneath the avalanche. Thus they could not feel the thrill of surviving a disaster.

The night was very long, especially at the deserted observatory.

Tonight, they experienced too much and weren’t in the mood for rest.

Alina decided to invite Roland to gaze at the stars using the astronomical telescope together.

Faced with such a warm invitation, Roland certainly wouldn’t refuse.

He was also curious about how advanced the astronomical telescope of this era could be. Could it clearly see the craters on the Blue Moon’s surface?

With immense curiosity, Roland walked into the observatory’s star-gazing platform.

The gigantic astronomical telescope was the primary facility of the star-gazing platform.

Looking at this telescope, Roland’s astonishment was evident. Was this the black technology from 1795? It was evidently a high-definition astronomical telescope.

The telescope’s mirror diameter was close to two meters, even in modern society, it was a super telescope.

Seeing Roland’s amazed expression, Alina knew he hadn’t seen such a thing before, lightly smiled and introduced the origin of the telescope to Roland.

"You should know, my father is very interested in archaeology. He once led an official archaeological team into various site excavations. After losing quite a few team members, he finally opened more than a dozen sites."

Thinking of these sites, Alina’s originally bright smile gradually dimmed.

Seeing her melancholic expression, Roland knew she was reminiscing about her father.

Such things can’t be comforted. Not saying anything would be better; saying more might make Alina cry.

He had no choice but to bring out a classic story to cheer her up.

"Alina, I’ve heard a romantic legend, that after people die, they turn into stars in the sky. Your father might have already become a star, so why don’t we try to find him?"

Roland’s story was moving, and Alina’s eyes became slightly wet upon hearing him, she wiped the faint tears with the back of her hand and said softly:

"Thank you, Roland."

After a few seconds of pause, she wiped away her tears, slowly looked up, and sighed.

"The story is nice, but I’m not a child anymore. People will go to the Netherworld after death, only less than ten percent have a chance of reincarnating, being reborn."

"But regardless of reincarnation, people cannot become stars. Stars are formed by the aggregation of cosmic nebulae and dust, gradually evolving into stars, planets, and satellites. The Theia Planet where we are is a satellite orbiting the main star."

Perhaps feeling her explanation was too profound, Alina looked at Roland uncertainly and muttered softly:

"If you don’t know these things, I can slowly teach you."

"Thank you, Teacher Alina, I appreciate your kindness. I am, after all, an Inheritor; can you respect my knowledge reserve a bit?"

Roland’s tone sounded tough, but he was actually just joking.

He would not believe that Alina looked down on him.

From Alina’s perspective, Roland, though a knowledgeable person, was a Literary Scholar. His understanding of history, culture, and the arts was not surprising.

But it’s quite common for humanities students of this era to not understand natural sciences.

Even if Roland was a renowned scholar, not knowing astronomy was normal.

Faced with Roland’s "questioning," Alina simply smiled, gently dissolving the situation.

Who would be angry with a smiling super beauty.

Moreover, she truly had no malicious intent.

"That’s good, I can save a lot of time. Student Roland, let’s start star-gazing."

Roland dared to call her Teacher Alina; she had no reason not to agree. Ignoring such diligence would be somewhat impolite.

After this verbal sparring, Roland and Alina’s mood improved quite a bit.

With Alina’s help, Roland gradually mastered how to use the astronomical telescope, finding the Blue Moon and accompanying satellite.

The satellite on the Theia Plane is larger than the moon. Due to geological reasons, it reflects a faint blue hue of a star’s light, similar to the color of Uranus.

Star-gazing without moon-viewing always feels like something’s missing.

Naturally, Roland wanted to carefully observe these two satellites.

Under the "monster-revealing mirror" effect of the high-power astronomical telescope, the beautiful Blue Moon revealed its true colors.

Where was the serenely beautiful moon? All there were, were various pits and craters.

The moonlight Blue Moon, as if the beauty effect was turned off, makeup switched to plain face; an unpretty woman without the use of Photoshop, was exposed nakedly in front of Roland.

Roland surprisingly discovered shadows moving on the Blue Moon.

"That is..."

"Humans." Alina answered briskly.

Roland’s mind was a bit overloaded; the data he had didn’t include this saying.

A flash of inspiration struck him, he suddenly recalled an event, and asked softly:

"Is it the Divine Punishment Legion?"

The Divine Punishment Legion comes to the Material Plane to carry out missions for God; after completing their mission, they also find it difficult to return directly to the Divine Domain, often lingering long on the Material Plane.

Since then, most of the previously failed missions of the Divine Punishment Legion reside on the Material Plane or surrounding satellites, waiting for an opportunity to act again.

This explains it perfectly.

However, with just one sentence, Alina ended the conversation, "No, it’s not the Divine Punishment Legion; it’s the Judges."

"Judges?" Roland squinted, puzzled.

Having referees in sports or variety shows is normal, but what’s up with Judges appearing on the Blue Moon?

Chapter 445: Let’s Go Stargazing Together (Part 3)

Seeing Roland deep in thought but without any results, Alina knew he was probably not in a good mood. She resisted the urge to tease him and directly explained:

"Yes, the judges. Think about it, as the Return Day approaches, if everyone above Tier Five has Sofia’s current combat power, without judges to limit them, can the Theia Plane withstand it?"

Of course it can’t withstand it.

Forget about higher levels, just Sofia alone can plunge this world into a cold Hell. If everyone were like Sofia, the Theia Plane simply couldn’t withstand it.

Recalling the influence Anthony showed him, Roland had a strange idea.

The existence of the judges is to turn conflicts that could destroy the plane into localized skirmishes.

"They are not human, but judges born directly from the universe's origin, responsible for maintaining order and executing the universe's original instructions!" Roland's eyes lit up as he spoke casually.

Alina's body trembled slightly, and she lowered her head and said quietly:

"This is the result of years of research by my father, how do you know?"

Ah, was it a lucky guess?

Roland cleared his throat, intending to say a few words, but then he saw Alina's eyes, clear as water.

He retracted his playful words and said very honestly, "I guessed."

Was it a guess? To guess it so accurately?

Alina instinctively did not want to believe it, but looking into Roland's clear eyes, she couldn't say anything.

She continued to share her father's research outcomes.

The cosmic judges are adjudicators condensed by the universe's original power and laws.

They follow the will of the universe's origin, supervising the competition of the many powerhouses within limited frameworks after the Return Day arrives.

Besides following the will of the universe's origin, they do not interfere with the affairs of the native life forms on the plane.

They are absolutely just, absolutely rational, after all, they have been removed from human society for so long that they don’t even know who God is when someone exclaims ’Oh my God’.

They only supervise the competition on this plane.

Pausing for a moment in slight stupor, Roland realized that he was at a disadvantage in this conversation.

To restore his image as a Wise Man in Alina’s eyes, Roland decided to drop an even heavier bombshell.

"I have a bold guess, after the Sixth Return Day, it’s not Tier Six that will be unlocked, but Tier Six and Tier Five, maybe even a Tier Four super stronghold."

"Is there any basis for this?" Alina widened her eyes, waiting for Roland to perform.

Roland certainly wouldn’t disappoint her, and directly raised his first finger.

"If it’s a gradual return step by step, is there really a need for so many judges?"

These words can be taken as evidence, or as a story, but they aren’t concrete proof.

Facing Alina’s skeptical gaze, Roland threw out even more compelling evidence.

"With Sofia’s strength, even if there is only one person in the world who can advance to Tier Six, it would definitely be her."

With her strength, there’s simply no need to run around, not to mention having fights with others.

She could do nothing, lie there, and it would naturally lead to her becoming Tier Six.

Very few people do things outside their interests, Sofia, no matter how strong, is still human, so she must have other plans.

By pressuring Sif to quickly grow and then using Sif as a sacrifice.

Sofia did so many things that could be delegated to her subordinates that it made her look less like a peerless master.

So what she wants can only be more.

For instance, to directly soar to Tier Four.

Is this your plot, Sofia? The smile on Roland’s lips gradually hardened.

Yet another reason to go head-to-head against Sofia until the end.

Chapter 446: The Price of Peering into Fate

Roland used the astronomical telescope of this world to watch the starry sky for the first time.

Facing the vast starry sky and the endless universe always makes one feel small.

He was no exception.

Alina was indeed an excellent astrologer, making the dull astrology come alive, sparking Roland’s interest who was originally just listening out of courtesy.

As he kept asking "And then?" the night gradually faded away, and the east revealed the first light of dawn.

The last star also disappeared in the approaching sunlight.

"This is the secret of the astrologer," Alina said with a slightly weary voice.

Over the past twenty-four hours, she had been through too much and spent the whole night stargazing with Roland, which indeed left her tired.

Although exhausted, she hadn’t forgotten the ultimate purpose of inviting Roland.

"I want to observe your destiny’s path again, is that okay?"

There was seventy percent anticipation and thirty percent apprehension in Alina’s eyes.

She had a feeling that she must face the challenge, otherwise, she could never kill the devil in her heart and would always be dominated by the feeling of being a "failure".

Some things must be done no matter how difficult they are.

Roland didn’t respond but rather gazed at Alina, and when she started feeling a bit uneasy, he calmly asked:

"If there’s backlash, will it be fatal?"

Alina didn’t speak, just slightly lowered her head. Sometimes silence is also an answer.

Roland naturally knew the answer, it would be fatal.

Even under the pressure of death, Alina still adhered to her own opinion.

In fact, from the first meeting, Alina had tried more than once to glimpse the destiny path of him, the "unpredictable man".

Without exception, she failed, and even suffered severe backlash.

Even with indirect methods of peeking, she could only see hazy distant prospects.

This seemingly visible yet ultimately unreachable feeling was extremely uncomfortable.

Roland completely understood Alina’s feelings.

He did not persuade Alina to give up; this was the path she chose to become stronger, and he had no right to interfere.

Seeing Roland remain silent, Alina gave a self-deprecating smile, using a gesture of playing with her hair tips to conceal the slightly awkward atmosphere and softly said:

"Do you want to laugh at me?"

"Of course not, I just wanted to ask how strong the backlash you endured was."

Alina thought for a moment and softly said, "Since it’s your destiny I’m peeking into, the backlash received is slightly above the threshold that can be lethal to you."

"Your life-saving ability is much stronger than mine, so I definitely can’t withstand the backlash. I must avoid the backlash and precisely predict all the crossroads in the river of your destiny."

Thinking of this, Alina couldn’t help but laugh at herself, "I don’t know much about you, and the divination process is fraught with dangers, with a very high chance of being killed by backlash."

"Even so, you insist?" Roland’s eyes showed a hint of curiosity and respect.

"You know, Return Day is approaching, and I don’t want to be a pawn unable to control my own destiny."

Alina’s reasoning was quite adequate, and her attitude was more determined than ever.

"I would rather die than wait like mud for fate’s judgment."

Roland nodded to show understanding, shrugged his shoulders, and calmly said, "We are friends, friends who can entrust life and death, I will fully support you. I want to know what you plan to do."

"I need detailed information about you, including..."

Alina’s words were cut off midway by Roland, "Alina, I’m sorry, there are some secrets I intend to take to the grave, and I won’t share them with anyone."

"Including Sif?"

"Yes, everyone has secrets that they can’t bear to share, can you understand that?"

Roland certainly wouldn’t share the secret of him being a transmigrator with others.

It’s not a matter of trust, but everyone has secrets that belong only to themselves.

Roland’s attitude was very frank, Alina sighed inwardly and nodded to indicate understanding.

Not only Roland, but everyone is like this; there are always things that cannot be shared.

Even for her, there were past events she didn’t wish to bring up with Roland.

This wasn’t malicious concealment, but a matter of dignity and the lines one can’t cross.

"Looks like I can only pin my hopes on the blessing of fate."

"That won’t do."

Roland firmly disagreed, his reasoning was simple, "Peeking into the [unpredictable one] is likely to be abhorred by the God of Destiny, the failure rate is very high, even approaching a hundred percent, right?"

Alina nodded.

"You’re very likely to die, and after your death, would the Jin Yuan Kingdom fall into turmoil again, right?"

Roland’s question stabbed Alina’s throat like a sharp blade, making her breathless, yet she defiantly retorted, "After I die, what does a rupture in the earth matter to me?"

This was a famous saying from a tyrant during the Magic Empire era.

Although many criticized it on the surface, in actuality, they all acted this way.

If I die, does this world still have meaning to me?

Roland slowly shook his head, "It matters to me, and I disagree."

"You!" Alina was truly somewhat angry this time.

She stared at Roland without backing down, and after a long time, she turned her face away, sulking as she closed her eyes and slipped into a mode of self-abandonment.

"It’s your life that you saved, and the revenge for my father that you avenged. I owe you too much, and I can’t repay, whatever you want me to do, just say it."

As she spoke, tears involuntarily rolled down Alina’s cheeks.

Of course, she was not sad because of Roland’s refusal.

She... Well, she was indeed sad because of Roland’s ruthless refusal.

She certainly didn’t want to repay a favor using the most cliche means; she longed to break through barriers and become a strong person who could stand shoulder to shoulder with Roland.

Chapter 447: The Price of Peering into Fate (Part 2)

The hope was faint, but worth a try; however, Roland gave her no chance at all.

From Roland’s standpoint, having Alina alive to coordinate the strength of the Jin Yuan Kingdom as support was indeed the most prudent choice, but it forsook any possibility of Alina breaking through.

Perhaps in his heart, her attempt was doomed to fail.

Being underestimated by the person she trusted the most, Alina suddenly felt disheartened, and her once flowing hair gradually wilted, no longer fluttering.

She would do anything Roland required as long as he needed it.

After repaying her debt, she felt no attachment to this world whatsoever.

Watching Alina’s childlike frustration, Roland could easily guess her little thoughts.

Though a girl’s thoughts were hard to discern, Alina was now a child who had given up on herself.

A child’s mind is simple and still relatively easy to guess.

"Alina, in your eyes, am I really the kind of person who would go to such lengths, help you conceal your identity, assist in your return to Xidai, and even risk my life on the battlefield?"

Alina slowly opened her eyes, her lips trembling as if wanting to retort but holding back.

Could it be that Roland had another plan?

"I will fully cooperate; besides the secrets I can’t reveal, you can know anything you want. But before the divination begins, you must promise me one thing."

"Tell me, I will agree to anything," Alina’s voice trembled slightly.

Though she expected Roland to pose stringent conditions, she only hoped he would support her divination.

This was her perfect chance to master the divination skill, possibly her only chance, and she didn’t want to miss it.

An astrologer who doesn’t want to be a prophet is not a good captain; of course, she wanted to improve.

"Establish a Soul Blood Link with me." Roland’s expression was calm, as if discussing what to have for lunch today.

Alina turned abruptly to stare at Roland, hardly daring to believe her eyes.

She couldn’t quite understand why Roland would make such a sacrifice.

The backlash’s power was so fierce that, though customarily, it would only slightly surpass the threshold to kill Roland; through the Soul Blood Link, the damage could be mitigated, and both would survive.

But that was just customary. What if the backlash’s force was stronger?

What if the backlash’s force was just enough to take them out?

Even if they weren’t killed by the backlash, they would certainly be severely injured, perhaps even left with aftereffects.

"Why?"

"Less nonsense. Without your help, facing Sofia would likely mean throwing my life away. Although this most likely binds you and me to die together, I hope you won’t refuse."

Roland stared earnestly at Alina, his attitude resolute.

Alina: "..."

Roland was right; the Soul Blood Link could be established but not undone. Now Roland was saving her, sharing the risk with her; in the future, she and Roland would be bound to face Sofia together.

They could face death twice hand in hand.

Alina’s romantic gene, typical of the Jin Yuan People, was activated. In her twenties and never having been in love, her heart suddenly began to race.

Is this a commitment unto death?

"I am willing!"

Alina's cheeks blushed, she bowed her head and whispered, not daring to meet Roland's eyes.

Images of how she met Roland flashed through her mind.

She met Roland even before Sif, just a bit later than Lisa. Upon first meeting, she couldn't see through Roland's fate, and though she didn't know what strengths Roland had, she felt he was a talent worth befriending.

This is how she got the old ticket to Jin Yuan, leading to the ensuing story.

Because of this ticket and its value, Roland was willing to take significant risks to shelter her.

He gambled little for the greatest benefit.

She didn't know what feelings Roland harbored for her, but in her time of greatest need, Roland had reached out to her with a warm hand in the darkness.

Maybe it was because she felt their days were numbered after forming the Soul Blood Link, or perhaps she recalled long-buried memories, but Alina suddenly felt much more cheerful.

Given that life probably only had a few months left, why hold back?

When alive, we should be bolder. Even if timid, we have to face death when it's time, so why not act recklessly once?

Raising her head to look at Roland, Alina's heart raced like a drunken deer, chaotic and hasty.

The Soul Blood Link ceremony wasn't lengthy but demanded much from the participants.

Fortunately, Alina was skilled and sincere, so there was no issue.

Both bit their fingertips, using their fingers to paint bizarre symbols on each other's faces, chanting lengthy and strange spells.

Because they were so close, they could feel each other's breath, heartbeat, and warmth.

As the blood continually seeped into their skin, their cheeks grew hotter and hotter.

As the two sweated profusely, the ceremony finally concluded.

No time for celebration, they could already sense the warning of the Soul Blood Link.

From now on, they would share life, soul, and longevity.

They would die together or live together.

Roland felt like laughing; he had never imagined his first Soul Blood Link would be with Alina.

But time was tight, and he had no choice.

He had to hurry and help Alina complete her final breakthrough, accumulating enough power to break through Tier Six, perhaps even higher.

Alina was a crucial piece in the confrontation against Sofia; she couldn't go wrong.

She couldn't wait any longer; the coming days marked the perigee of the Ham Comet. Influenced by the comet, the current Power of Stars was strong and stable, ideal for divination.

If they missed this window, the next time the Ham Comet returned would be in seventy-six years.

By then, their graves would be covered in grass meters tall.

Since no alternatives existed, Roland simply accepted without hesitation.

Chapter 448: The Price of Peering into Fate (Part 3)

Establishing the Soul Blood Link may seem like a small disadvantage for Roland now, but in the long run, Alina bears more, though it doesn't matter.

They even share life itself; there's no distinction between them.

No time to ponder over the end of the Soul Blood Link ceremony, they promptly moved on to the Destiny Divination while the iron was hot.

"I need to understand you more deeply; next, I'll ask some rather private questions, please answer truthfully."

Alina's eyes burned with fiery flames.

This fire made Roland's scalp tingle slightly.

Fortunately, with the Soul Blood Link, Alina couldn't harm him, which gave Roland some peace of mind.

"Ask away."

"Which girl do you like the most?" Alina's eyes sparkled with the soul of gossip.

"And how does this relate to Destiny Divination... Well, it's Sif." Roland didn't specify whether it was Elf Sylph or his wife, Empress Sif.

He didn't plan to let Alina know about Elf Sylph's existence.

Even if they are all future targets of the Soul Blood Link, there are differences in closeness.

Sif is his wife, naturally, she’s the most important.

Lisa is his sister, and her importance is no less than Sif.

Alina is his best friend, important, but not as much as Sif and Lisa.

"What about Miss Lisa?"

"No less important than Sif," Roland said seriously.

Alina nodded. She knew very well, Lisa’s weight is slightly lower than Sif. When a man says your status is no less than someone’s, it often means slightly less.

If truly equal, they would say you mean much more than her.

Alina slightly bowed her head, softly asking, "Then what about Miss Christine?"

"She’s the Saintess; I completely respect her choices, I have no thoughts between men and women towards her. She’s not a target of the Soul Blood Link."

Roland frowned slightly but still answered.

This was his true thought.

Christine’s future as the formal Saintess, as the Pope, is a friend whose life and death he can entrust, but no more than that.

Not every Saintess is pure outside but lustful inside.

He understood Christine, apart from believing in the Goddess and killing, she was uninterested in other things.

Considering his poor relationship with the Goddess of Light, they might even be enemies in the future.

Thinking of this, Roland couldn’t help but feel a bit sad.

He really couldn’t imagine the scene of raising a blade against Christine.

"Did you really think about going to Jin Yuan with me then?"

"I really did." Roland didn’t hide it, he had even prepared Sister Lisa’s thoughts, but then the situation developed too quickly, and plans couldn’t keep up with changes.

Roland’s answer was somewhat unexpected, Alina was suddenly stunned, and her thoughts wandered.

If Roland had accompanied her back to the country, what would the future be like?

Alina’s fantasy was quickly shattered.

Most likely, they would be caught in one net by that rebel Marco and all killed.

The romance in her heart vanished instantly, replaced by a stern demeanor.

Alina’s questions gradually became normal.

With questions and answers continuing for over an hour, Alina had gained a very deep understanding of Roland.

Just as Roland was unwilling to answer any more questions, she stood up and bowed to Roland.

"Roland, although words of gratitude cannot express my feelings, I still have to say, thank you."

"Divination, begin now!"

The Angel Cards fell, the golden card representing the Son of Destiny landed steadily on the table.

As one card after another fell, Alina finally pierced through the fog, seeing familiar faces appear in the chaotic river of destiny.

Roland, Sif, and Lisa were all among them.

Roland’s face flashed by, but Alina had already captured his aura, easily locking onto it.

The river of destiny began to surge.

Alina’s soul was like a lone boat in the waves, wildly shaking.

She could be thrown out of the river of destiny at any moment, but she clung on tightly and did not let go.

This was the only opportunity; she would not miss it.

Don’t even think about escaping my pursuit!

Alina’s eyes turned crimson, and she grimly took off her glasses, determination added to her gaze.

Although art student Alina was timid, once fierce, she was fiercer than Captain Alina.

"Stop!"

With a crisp sound, Roland’s phantom in the river of destiny froze, and blocking him was Empress Sofia.

She slowly turned, her cold face appearing faintly, yet it filled Alina with despair.

She actually sensed an aura from Sofia similar to that of the three Goddesses.

Could Sofia actually Ascend to Divinity?

A successful general requires ten thousand bones, and for a True God to walk out of the mortal realm, the flesh and bones beneath her feet are more than tens of thousands.

It’s a blood-filled path of no return.

Are we all to become mere stepping stones for her Ascension to Divinity?

Alina was utterly despairing.

Chapter 449: I Will Spread the Rumors Myself

"Alina, Alina? What’s wrong with you?"

Roland frowned slightly, looking rather worried at the despondent, despairing Alina, and asked tentatively.

He didn’t dare to grab Alina and shake her vigorously, for fear of collapsing her last psychological defense.

When a normal person says something obviously abnormal, her mental state must be in a terrible condition.

Perhaps it’s because he, the person involved, was also present, the backlash of peeking at fate was not strong, easily defended against, and didn’t even need to activate the just-cooled Divine Protection skill.

By all accounts, the divination’s result was good, but Alina seemed to have seen a ghost.

What exactly did she see?

Alina stared blankly at Roland, countless past memories converging before her eyes.

Just as Roland was pondering how to soothe her agitation, she suddenly stretched out her hands and grabbed Roland’s arms fiercely, her eyes more hollow, whispering almost deliriously:

"Use your craziest means to possess me, now."

Roland: "..."

If there was just doubt earlier, he could now confirm that Miss Alina had probably lost her mind.

She was the proud leader of the Jin Yuan Kingdom, only a crown away from becoming the Empress, yet could say something so outrageous, indicating she had suffered a significant shock.

Facing the end of the world and still being an uninitiated maiden was indeed a regret, but it’s not to the point of despair, is it?

Roland wanted her to calm down, yet found no trace of rationale in Alina’s eyes.

Clearly, the only way to comfort the already frenzied Alina was to use extreme measures.

Of course, not by possessing her, as that would only ruin the friendship, and no longer be able to be friends once awake.

Something even more ruthless was needed.

He sighed, his palm like a knife, struck her neck hard, and then held her swan-like fair and smooth neck in an impeccable rear choke, helping Alina fall asleep like a baby within five seconds.

No matter how many troubles there are, sleeping can often alleviate them.

If even sleeping can't alleviate them, other methods probably wouldn't work either.

Holding the now soft Alina who fell into his embrace, Roland took her to the bedroom, covered her with a blanket, and went outside alone.

The maid responsible for Alina's daily life, upon hearing the commotion, came to check, ready to draw her weapon, but recognized Roland's identity.

The maid was somewhat puzzled, not understanding why Roland would appear here, but the voice coming from her subconscious reminded her that the person before her had no ill intentions.

Roland also recognized the Demonic Puppet Maid.

He had seen this maid the first time he visited Alina's home.

"Prepare red wine and dinner, I'll have a few drinks with Alina when she wakes up."

Sleep can calm a person's emotions, alcohol can help speak the truth, and steak can replenish energy after emotional outburst.

He was always the most considerate good partner.

But he still underestimated the power of being mentally stimulated and then sent into dreamland with a rear choke.

It was indeed dinner, but on the evening of the next day.

The next day, Alina who had slept all day finally awoke from her slumber.

She struggled to sit up, her limp body without any strength, her memories before sleeping blurred as if from a past life.

While she was still groggy, she noticed the faint glow of candlelight from the adjacent room.

She struggled to support herself toward the door, seeing in the outer room the dining table filled with covered warmers of delicacies, with a delicate candelabrum casting a gentle light on the table.

In the soft yellow candlelight, Roland’s silhouette was just on the boundary of light and shadow, and Alina tried hard to open her eyes, but still couldn’t see clearly.

She approached Roland as if sleepwalking, watching him lift the cover of a warmer, and gesturing for her to sit.

"Dear Miss Alina, please."

"What nonsense are you saying?" Alina’s cheeks blushed slightly, her vitality somewhat restored.

The term "dear" was quite common in the Jin Yuan Kingdom, even among ordinary friends, they could call each other "my dear friend," but in the Sussex Empire, it was exclusive to lovers.

Roland was not a Jin Yuan person, so naturally, it wasn’t used in the Jin Yuan way.

This was clearly flirting, or at least teasing!

Alina’s expression was somewhat unnatural, but she still sat down opposite him.

She was really hungry. The tantalizing aroma of tender steak and foie gras left her no time to correct Roland’s misuse of words.

She carefully forked a piece of tenderloin into her mouth, making a rare effort to somewhat elegantly combine rapid eating and elegance.

Her graceful demeanor left Roland in awe.

After Alina finished the steak in front of her, she realized Roland was watching her, and bashfully pursed her lips and lowered her head slightly.

"What are you looking at?"

"Looking at food." Roland was honest.

Of course, the food he referred to wasn’t the steak, but the more tender and juicy youthful beauty.

Alina detected the implication in Roland’s words, feeling three parts annoyed yet seven parts shy, her voice trembling slightly as she softly reminded, "Does your wife know how amorous you are outside?"

"Miss Alina, this was your request, have you forgotten?" Roland teased softly.

Alina looked somewhat bewildered, her initially blurred memories gradually becoming clear.

Upon recalling the nonsense she spoke in despair, the knife and fork in her hand slipped down, making a crisp sound.

Oh no, she was talking nonsense, but Roland took it seriously, what to do?

Her mind went blank, leaving her completely dumbfounded.

Eating felt great, but being treated as food felt not so great.

Although she had once considered using herself as part of a trade to tempt Roland in despair, and had spoken nonsense when out of her mind, she still panicked when the moment actually came.

Chapter 450: I Will Spread the Rumors Myself

She had never even enjoyed the beauty of love.

Roland was certainly an ideal partner, but he already had Sylph, and she didn't want to be a homewrecker.

She didn't reject Roland in her heart, but her upbringing didn't allow her to act that way.

Looking at Alina's distracted gaze, the corners of Roland's lips slightly curled up.

He guessed right; Alina must have been so shocked that she was speaking nonsense.

He had no intention of taking advantage of someone in such a vulnerable state.

He merely created an atmosphere making Alina think that he would, and then—

People are always willing to compromise. If you directly ask Alina to tell the truth, she might still resist, but if you let her now stay the night, she'd start thinking about how to articulate the results of the divination appropriately.

The Jin Yuan People also like to compromise.

As Alina’s gaze gradually sharpened, Roland felt a chill in his heart.

Is this guy really going to keep her promise?

That’s about enough; after all, he was a married man, and this joke was getting too big to handle.

He cleared his throat and said seriously, "Alina, I know you’ve seen something terrible. Let’s face it together. Our fates are already bound under the Soul Blood Link. I have the right to know!"

Alina let out a small gasp of surprise, slowly lifted her head, and looked into Roland’s clear eyes, instantly realizing that Roland never intended to take advantage of her vulnerability. He simply wanted to know the truth.

Seeing Roland being such a gentleman, she breathed a sigh of relief, her worried heart finally at ease.

Feeling relieved yet strangely perturbed.

Is my face and figure so unattractive that you didn’t even consider taking advantage?

She felt a bit inexplicably annoyed, and then a face more beautiful emerged in her vision, making her even angrier.

Empress Sylph was watching her in the void, with a mocking smile on her lips.

The fire of anger in Alina’s heart dissipated.

Yes, his wife is Sylph, the one who could challenge the feminine allure of the Ancient Era Elf Imperial Family.

Thinking of Sylph, Alina’s heart calmed down a lot.

Just like losing to Sofia wasn’t embarrassing, losing to Sylph in a competition of charm was also easy to accept.

When she looked up again, her expression had returned to calmness.

Seeing her swift changes of weather, Roland shrugged, once again firm in his belief.

The thoughts of a girl are beyond guessing, truly unfathomable.

After this ordeal, Alina had her fill, feeling calm at last, ready to start the storytelling phase.

She pondered for a moment and decided to be straightforward.

"I saw Sofia... ascend to divinity." Even though a whole day had passed, Alina’s voice still trembled slightly.

With a True God arising in the world, there’s no need to say what fate awaits her enemies.

Facing someone like Sofia openly, both Roland and herself were like mantises trying to stop the rolling wheel of history.

Foolish and overestimating themselves.

Roland’s expression wasn’t too surprised.

It must have been quite a shocking scene to render Alina senseless and to make her consider ending her maidenhood with a decent-looking man.

He just didn’t expect it to be that shocking.

Sofia’s ascension to divinity...

Even if it were true, it doesn’t mean he couldn’t do something about it, could he?

Last time during the Ascension to Divinity, there were Light, Feng Rao, and Nature, the three Goddesses. It’s quite plausible for more gods to ascend in this era’s final epoch.

Seeing Roland’s calm demeanor, Alina was shocked enough that she couldn’t close her open mouth, her pink lips slightly parted and closed, making her appear less sorrowful and more adorable, which strangely made Roland feel a bit hungry.

Although Alina couldn’t compare to Sylph, she was among those at the pinnacle of the world’s allure with a charm of her own.

Perhaps hearing the prophecy of Sofia’s ascension made Roland still act tough, but in his heart, he felt a bit of the same suffocation as Alina did yesterday.

Her successful ascension would make her enemies just stepping stones.

Roland was also contemplating how to die with dignity, how not to leave regrets in his final moments, possibly making Alina’s idea not seem so mad after all?

It wasn’t that his mind wasn’t strong enough; it’s just that Alina’s prophecy was too discouraging.

He asked somewhat unwillingly: "In your prophecy, what is our end?"

Alina shook her head in confusion.

"At this point, what’s there to hide from? I can handle it."

Roland tried to keep a determined smile, contemplating what rhetoric to use to offset Alina’s defeatist pessimism.

If Sofia truly ascended, Alina’s targets would include a newly ascended God and the unpredictable fate, it being accurate would be the real surprise.

Alina sighed and spoke softly: "I didn’t see our future, so we don’t have..."

"So we may not fail."

Roland cut off her defeatist view, firmly raising a finger to refute:

"Alina, the divination result was altered."

"Why?"

"Your divination targets include me, include Sofia, normally, the backlash could directly kill us."

Alina’s eyes brightened.

She had indeed been fooled.

When predicting the backlash, she only considered Roland, thus judged that there would be no backlash fatal enough to kill.

If Sofia did appear, even adding a few more people to the Soul Blood Link wouldn’t be enough for a family combo attack.

"I’m so dumb. If not for your reminder, I would’ve already despaired."

Alina laughed and shook her head, muttering self-deprecatingly: "Prophecies included someone who shouldn’t appear, making the prophecy result naturally false. It seems a powerful being intervened with the prophecy result."