Empress 451

Chapter 451: I Will Spread the Rumors Myself

"And this powerful existence does not wish for us to face Sofia in our best state."

Roland picked up after Alina, smiling as he spoke, "In other words, our chances of winning might not be high, but they are certainly not zero."

Alina’s eyes immediately turned fiery.

"It’s so good to have you. If it were just me, I would definitely have been deceived."

"You’re entangled in the situation, while I’m a clear observer." Roland enjoyed Alina’s praise but remained modest.

"Even though as an observer you see clearly, most others couldn’t see through it." Alina wasn’t simply flattering him; it was a truth she admitted she couldn’t manage herself.

If she couldn’t manage it, then the short-sighted officials in the Jin Yuan Kingdom would be even more oblivious.

If only our Jin Yuan Kingdom had a wise man like Roland...

Suddenly, Alina shivered with a revelation and excitement as she stood up, realizing the blind spot.

To perform an accurate divination, she asked Roland many questions, including the real reason for his tour with the Sif Empire.

Roland did not hide anything.

Their lives were linked together, already passengers on the same boat, so apart from his identity as a Transmigrator, there was no need to hide other matters.

Alina tentatively proposed, "Roland, are you interested in coming to our country for a speaking tour and temporarily acting as our Prime Minister?"

"Huh?" Roland was stunned.

A speaking tour was certainly no problem; spreading knowledge in the Jin Yuan Kingdom was only beneficial to him. Acting as Prime Minister would increase his control over the Jin Yuan Kingdom, which was also advantageous.

But he was, after all, a foreigner; was it feasible?

"Is it appropriate?"

Seeing Roland not refusing but merely hesitating, Alina couldn't help but laugh.

"Appropriate, it's way too appropriate! We have a legend in the Jin Yuan Kingdom that only with foreign and female leadership is it a true Jin Yuan Kingdom."

"You're the foreigner, and I'm the woman, so..."

Seeing Alina almost about to pounce, Roland knew that hesitating any further would be unreasonable.

This was inherently a mutually beneficial arrangement, so why decline?

"Alright, I'll go back and discuss it with Sif and find a suitable time..."

Alina couldn't help but give Roland a disdainful glance, "Don't discuss it anymore, everyone knows Sif only listens to you. Why put on an act? Besides, do we have much time?"

Roland didn’t particularly like the first part of Alina’s comment, but the latter part was truth.

Time was their greatest enemy.

"Alright."

"Let’s go, I can’t wait any longer. Let’s set out now, return to Xidai in three days, and I’ll pick a fief without an owner for you. You’ll become Count Leon. This way, no one will dare to oppose you being Prime Minister."

Before he could react, Alina tightly gripped his hand as if afraid he would immediately run away.

Roland chuckled and shook his head, "Even if we’re in a hurry, I should at least write a letter to my family. Besides, if you just make me a Count, what will others think?"

"Alright then, we’ll set off tomorrow, and I’ll send someone to deliver the letter."

Alina smiled as radiantly as a flower, looking at the dimming candlelight and Roland, who shone softly like a pearl in the dim light, feeling particularly delighted.

In response to Roland’s final doubt, she softly said, "I have a way to silence others. No one understands Jin Yuan better than me. You should focus on being a good Prime Minister."

From despair to hope, it only takes one day.

Who dares to say Roland cannot create miracles?

No matter how formidable Sofia is, she is still flesh and blood. At the same tier, even if invincible, she cannot withstand the soul blood link uniting the four of us.

The sacred link binds our flesh and soul.

There is nothing to fear; let's go!

That night, Alina was too excited to sleep.

Roland, however, was troubled about how to explain to Sif.

He knew Sif was understanding and would surely empathize, which made him feel all the more guilty.

He had promised to visit a friend before leaving, but after setting off, ended up going to another country for a speaking tour and even taking an official position; it was quite a large difference.

Think as he might, all he could offer was sincerity.

From Alina's prophecy to seeing through the false prophecy, he did not hide anything.

To protect Alina's dignity, Roland was considerate enough not to mention her hysterical moments.

Not that it was concealment, but it was better not to say things that would harm unity.

Dawn awoke the snow-capped mountains.

Everything was as before, except the avalanche-altered mountains seemed to be narrating something.

The letter was tied to the pigeon's leg and flew northward towards the Empress's Palace.

Roland and Alina rode magnificent white horses, heading north, changing steeds in key cities along the way, traveling non-stop for two days and nights to return to Xidai.

In the West Palace, Alina arranged for several maids to attend to Roland’s bath and rest, hastily summoned Romeo before he’d even caught his breath.

After hearing Alina’s arrangements, Romeo hesitated, unsure of how to voice his concerns.

Seeing his conflicted expression, Alina could guess his thoughts and solemnly asked:

"Do you have any objections?"

"Of course not. Governor Roland has already proven his governance capabilities in the Sussex Empire; he will definitely be up to the task."

Romeo knew that Alina had already made her decision, and opposing her directly would only breed antipathy or even rebellion in her heart.

He could only follow Alina’s plan and later find a way to detect potential pitfalls.

Hearing Romeo’s endorsement, Alina’s stern face softened.

"Romeo, please mind your address; you must call him Count or Prime Minister in the future. Don’t let others mock our Jin Yuan people’s hospitality."

Inwardly, Romeo ranted.

With Count and Prime Minister titles, plus your complete trust, does this guest not have more power than the host? Is he really a guest?

Romeo had witnessed Alina’s growth process, understood her rebellious nature, and knew that direct advice would only make her more resolved, so he had to tactfully broach:

"Alina, have you considered that others might criticize you?"

"Sparrows chirping won’t stop the wheat from growing." Alina replied with a well-known Jin Yuan saying.

"I’m not saying they will directly question your decision, but rumors will definitely spread."

"What kind of rumors?" Alina asked nonchalantly.

Romeo bit his lip, hesitated for a while, and finally chose to speak directly as a reminder.

"Do you remember the rumors about Roland and Empress Sylph? Back then, his assistance to the yet-to-rule Empress sparked countless rumors. Our Jin Yuan people’s love for gossip and tabloid news is second to none."

Alina scoffed dismissively, her disdainful eyes showing a hint of contempt: "Not just on par, but even more exaggerated."

"As long as you know that, so how do you plan to dispel the rumors?"

"Why dispel them?"

Alina laughed disdainfully, "I won’t even give them a chance to start rumors. Rumors are stopped by the wise, and can just as easily start with them."

"Instead of letting them speculate, I’ll write a few rumors myself and submit them, even earn some manuscript fees."

Romeo stared at Alina, dumbfounded, speechless for a long time.

Was this a do-or-die approach, or was it a reverse strategy?

His brain worked rapidly, almost overheating yet still unable to comprehend.

Alina had no inclination to explain to him and waved her hand to end the conversation.

Romeo still wanted to persuade her, but Alina preemptively cut him off: "My future and destiny are inseparable from Roland now; there’s no need to say more."

Romeo left, crestfallen.

He sighed, pondering a dreadful possibility.

If the person involved spreads the rumors, is it still a rumor?

Chapter 452: The Valley-Style Answer

Champselle Avenue No. 97, the grand and ancient complex of buildings, is the location of the Civil Affairs Bureau of the Jin Yuan Kingdom.

This is the political center of the Jin Yuan Kingdom.

Yet, in recent years, it has been particularly chaotic.

The ruler here was once the Emperor of the Old Empire, then the Liberator Carlo, followed by President Marco, and now replaced by Romeo, this echo chamber issuing orders on behalf of the new Liberator Alina.

The ministers all know that although Romeo is loyal, he is just an unqualified politician, lacking the ability to serve as the head of a major nation.

The true ruler of the Jin Yuan Kingdom is Alina, who doesn’t quite like living in the West Palace and often goes to Mont Blanc to stargaze.

Many ministers are discontent with Romeo, but no one dares to defy Alina.

Everyone knows that Marco is the source of terror, and Alina is more formidable than Marco.

Recently, two rumors have been circulating in the elite circles of West City's high society.

The first concerns a scandal between Miss Alina and Mr. Roland.

The elite of high society just exchange knowing glances and smiles, not taking this scandal seriously.

In the romantic and free-spirited Jin Yuan Kingdom, is such a scandal even considered a matter?

Not to mention that Miss Alina is unmarried. Even if she were married, she would still have the freedom to pursue love, and her husband according to custom would have to bless her finding true love.

People are just slightly worried about Mr. Roland's real wife's anger.

But they won't be worried for long.

Empress Sylph, too, is from the Imperial Family and is well accustomed to the separation of marriage and love in high society, she might be unhappy but surely can accept it.

Even if she doesn't accept it, it's their triangular relationship, unrelated to others.

The elite didn't take this scandal seriously until the largest local newspaper published an anonymous story, spreading the news, and they started to sense something was off.

Even more surprising was Alina's ambiguous attitude, neither explaining nor acknowledging, suggesting a flavor of letting them gossip while she just listens.

Some are confused, while others taste something out of these unusual moves.

Linking this with the long-vacant government head position, shrewd political elites likely anticipated what was coming next.

The wise have already conceded from vying for the head of the government, while the ignorant still dream of becoming the new Prime Minister.

After Alina seized power, she abolished the presidential system to show a completely different style from Marco's government and reverted to the Prime Ministerial cabinet system.

In recent years, the Jin Yuan people have grown accustomed to policy unpredictability, they are used to it by now.

People are only curious about one thing, who will be the new Prime Minister?

Today is the day of the new Prime Minister's announcement, and cabinet ministers have arrived at the Civil Affairs Bureau early, waiting eagerly.

Soon, as their stretched necks start to ache, a carriage arrives slowly.

The ministers move forward to greet, only to be disappointed to find it is a Civil Affairs Bureau carriage.

As the carriage curtain is lifted, sure enough, it's Romeo who gets off.

Some couldn't help but gripe, this guy is just an interim stand-in, does he really think he's the Prime Minister? If not for Miss Alina appreciating his loyalty, he wouldn't even qualify to enter the cabinet, yet he's here flaunting his status.

No matter who the new Prime Minister is, it will not be Romeo.

This is probably his last time going to work as the Acting Head of the Civil Affairs Bureau, let him put on airs.

Someone looks at Romeo with a gaze of pity.

Loyalty is important, but Miss Alina is a pragmatist and won't esteem Romeo highly just for his loyalty.

Over the past few months, he has comprehensively proven his incapability to head the government.

It's time to put an end to all this!

Romeo walks down from the carriage and heads toward the Civil Affairs Bureau as usual.

He smiles and nods to his colleagues.

A few of them approach to greet him, while some ministers pretend not to see or only nod slightly as a greeting.

Romeo sees all this, keeping it in mind.

Am I barely gone, and they're already taking my cup away?

Roland was right, this is the perfect opportunity to observe the character of cabinet ministers.

Looking at those ministers with mocking, sympathetic, or even schadenfreude expressions towards him, Romeo slightly lowers his head, fearing he might burst into laughter.

You laugh at me for not being able to be Prime Minister, yet fail to realize you can't even keep your positions as cabinet ministers.

He knows well that Roland and Alina are in a nearby small building watching the drama unfold at the Civil Affairs Bureau entrance with binoculars.

Who is the clown will soon be revealed.

As the cabinet ministers wait anxiously, in a nearby small building, two young people are hidden behind a curtain, observing the cabinet ministers.

A young and beautiful girl takes out a list and hands it to the young man.

Through the window, the young girl introduces the cabinet ministers, smilingly asking:

"It seems this list needs a major revision."

"No, no need for changes."

The young man shakes his head slowly, his tone remarkably calm, "This list is the result of your comprehensive assessment, I trust your judgment, Alina."

Called Alina, the young girl stares somewhat puzzlingly toward the young man, her brows slightly furrowed, "If you're not planning changes, then why..."

Her words are unfinished, but the meaning is obvious.

If there's no plan to change people, what's the point of these small maneuvers?

The young man, with a serious expression, corrects her, "I said there won't be changes in the short term. Once the situation stabilizes, some people will have to go."

The performance without an audience is the truest.

Though some people have abilities, they're doing stupid things that harm unity.

To purify the team, those people must leave, but not now.

Chapter 453: The Ambiguous Answer (Part 2)

Roland had just taken office and promptly replaced many Cabinet Ministers, causing widespread unease.

Without these people’s support, not to mention the reform plans, even the daily tasks would be difficult to manage.

New officials should not rush to make changes immediately; instead, they should observe more and maintain an aloof attitude.

"Let’s go, it’s time to take office."

Roland put away the telescope and casually threw the list into the fireplace, turning it into ashes.

Alina hurried to keep up, walking alongside him.

The carriage had been waiting outside for a long time; it was indeed time to set off.

When their carriage entered the Civil Affairs Bureau, the Cabinet Ministers recognized the emblem on the side and promptly lined up to welcome them.

Pale purple background, iris pattern, crossed sword and shield, representing Alina’s family.

This was an emblem no one dared to impersonate.

The curtain lifted, and surprisingly, the first to step out wasn’t Alina, but Roland.

Roland’s appearance left most of those present bewildered.

Just as they speculated about what identity Roland appeared in, he lifted the curtain again.

Alina stepped lightly onto the ground in her military dress uniform and exquisite deer skin combat boots.

Her slender, delicate hand rested on Roland’s palm as she elegantly stood on the ground, her smile amiable and bright.

Ordinary people would secretly applaud her heroic demeanor, but the ministers’ faces subtly changed.

They weren’t foolish, and linking it to recent rumors, they instantly smelled a conspiracy.

Could it be...

A terrifying thought surged in their minds.

Alina cast a hint of approval towards Romeo, who stood at the back of the line.

Though Romeo’s political ability was mediocre and he lacked foresight, his execution ability and loyalty were unquestionable.

He completed the fish bombing task well.

"Your Excellency the Liberator, it’s been a long time since you visited the Civil Affairs Bureau. It’s great to have you here," the Minister of Internal Affairs laughed heartily.

Unfortunately for him, Alina had clearly noticed his earlier gloating expression towards Romeo.

Alina’s assessment of him was simple.

Disloyal, dishonest, inconsistent inside and out, deceives superiors and subordinates, insidious and cunning, a classic double-dealer.

He can serve as a transitional figure for now, but he should not be heavily employed.

In the past, Alina might have struggled to hide her aversion, but the trial she went through had long made her more than the naive girl she once was.

She greeted the Minister of Internal Affairs with a smile, greeting each minister, and her gentle smile made everyone feel like a breath of spring breeze.

The ministers surrounded her and Roland as they headed towards the Civil Affairs Bureau office building.

Alina did not introduce Roland, nor did the ministers ask tactfully.

If the leader brings someone over without introducing them, even if they are familiar, one shouldn't go up and greet them.

Random greetings would disrupt the leader's arrangements, akin to flattering oneself in the wrong way.

The officials present had all survived the terrifying rule of Marco, and some were seasoned veterans from the Old Empire through Carlo, Marco, and Alina's four dynasties.

They were well aware of such matters.

Seeing their proficient actions and expressions, Alina said nothing and quietly pondered to herself.

She didn't like these professional politicians.

The marks of the old era were too deeply embedded in them, and most of their energy was spent on figuring out their superiors' intentions and seeking advancement.

Though it was typical of officials in this era, it was an extraordinary time now, and she had no use for such slick old politicians.

With a side-glance at Roland's composed profile, Alina's heart inexplicably raced a bit faster.

This was her first time observing Roland from this angle closely.

A man focused on his work indeed looked handsome.

Thinking of the gossip she personally penned to steer the narrative, her cheeks slightly reddened.

The officials present must already know she was Roland's "lover," right?

This way, she didn't need to bother explaining why she wanted Roland to be the Prime Minister.

Some might criticize, but it didn't matter.

Who would dare oppose?

Just because the guillotine is put away doesn't mean the death penalty is abolished.

Reform always demands blood; should they spill their own instead of cutting away the decaying old forces?

Amidst the crowd's embrace, Alina nonchalantly placed her slightly damp hand into Roland's and strode into the governmental hall.

Anyone who wasn’t blind could see that Alina and Roland had an unusual relationship.

Not a single affair, but countless ones.

The ministers finally caught on, vaguely guessing the Prime Minister candidate.

Some were astonished, some lamented, and others accepted reality, preparing to foster good relations with Alina’s lover, the future Prime Minister.

Some even had wild ideas.

Such a major matter, shouldn’t Empress Sylph be informed?

Some secretly calculated how to be the good person in this situation.

In the midst of ministers with hidden motives, Alina ascended the throne one step at a time and turned to gaze at the Cabinet Ministers.

At that moment, the ministers also saw the weapon she held in her other hand.

The Dark Gold Short Sword, symbolizing supreme power.

Alina raised the short sword, her voice solemn and majestic.

"The national institutions cannot be without a helmsman. Recently, Mr. Romeo was temporarily acting as Prime Minister, and he did a great job, but he has repeatedly confided in me, saying he cannot fulfill the role."

"I cannot force him, so I’ve been searching for a suitable candidate during this time."

"At Mont Blanc, I peered into the flow of the river of fate and saw the flourishing future of our country and the captain leading us to a new course."

The corners of the ministers' mouths twitched subtly, their expressions complex.

If Alina directly appointed Roland as Prime Minister, they would at least have reasons to persuade against it.

Roland's identity and position alone were enough to warrant questioning.

Chapter 454: The Ambiguous Answer (Part 3)

But when Alina presents the results of the divination, anyone who dares to doubt is questioning the fate she foresaw, even doubting the Divine Oracle of the God of Destiny.

Alina's actions may be somewhat unreasonable, but they were hard pressed to respond.

The ministers exchanged glances, each showing a hint of helplessness.

Sweeping her gaze slowly across the hall, observing the ministers' micro-expressions and comparing them to their earlier behaviors, Alina could easily discern what they were thinking.

She raised the Dark Gold Short Sword above her head, her voice growing increasingly solemn.

"A prophecy left by our sage says that in chaotic times, only women and outsiders can lead us on the right path."

"That person is Roland."

Even though they knew this was the result, the formal announcement still left many unable to conceal their disappointment.

The ministers looked up, eyes blank.

Alina was uninterested in what they thought, she held the Dark Gold Short Sword with both hands, signaling Roland to take the sword.

Under the watchful eyes of all present, Roland, in formal attire, strode steadily to the throne.

Before the seat of the former emperor, he approached Alina.

Roland was about to follow the feudal lord’s ritual, but was halted by Alina’s gaze.

"Roland, we in the Jin Yuan Kingdom have no emperor, there’s no need for that."

Since Alina did not insist, Roland certainly would not be pretentious.

He gave a slight bow to Alina and took the Dark Gold Short Sword with both hands, then turned to stand one step below Alina, standing together with her.

Alina’s voice suddenly rose, resonant and resonant.

"The Dark Gold Sword represents my will, it represents the highest authority of the state. From this moment on, Count Roland Leon is our new Prime Minister, and you must obey his orders as you respect mine."

"If anyone is unwilling to work with him, they may resign now. Anyone who disobeys orders after today will join Marco."

Alina’s attitude left the ministers a bit stunned.

They had considered Roland as Prime Minister, but did not expect his power to be this great.

Heh, that’s a woman for you, willing to hand the Dark Gold Sword to a foreigner just to elevate her lover.

Though they harbored countless grievances internally, the ministers dared not express them openly.

No wonder they were seasoned actors; the ministers quickly adjusted their mindsets, all showing smiles, congratulating Alina and Roland.

The appointment ceremony for the Prime Minister concluded in a harmonious atmosphere.

No voices of opposition, no rhetoric detrimental to unity.

Uninformed onlookers witnessing this scene would inevitably be struck by the unity of the Jin Yuan Government.

However, standing before the throne, Alina clearly saw through the ministers’ careful thoughts.

Just as a teacher stands at the podium, clearly seeing students’ small actions below.

Amid the applause, Roland naturally began his inaugural speech.

He made a generous speech, first introducing the long and splendid history of the Jin Yuan Kingdom, then reviewing the traditional friendship between the Sussex Empire and the Jin Yuan Kingdom.

Of course, the intermittent three hundred years of war between the two countries was glossed over with a historical pen.

"Although there have been brief unpleasantness between the two countries, overall relations have been improving, and now they are at the best level in nearly a thousand years."

"Since Miss Alina trusts me, I will naturally give my all for the freedom of the Jin Yuan Kingdom."

Freedom is ingrained in the bones of the Jin Yuan people, and hearing Roland from the Despot Empire stand on stage speaking of freedom, finally someone couldn’t hold back.

Chief Prosecutor Desmonds couldn’t help but stand out and question.

"Mr. Roland, there is something I’ve been holding back that I must say. If it offends you, I am willing to resign afterward."

"Mr. Desmonds, you are the Chief Prosecutor, and your duty is to oversee officials. That is your responsibility; how could it be an offense? Please speak freely."

The Chief Prosecutor only addressed him as Mr. Roland rather than Prime Minister, indicating he internally had not accepted Roland.

Of course, Roland understood this underlying meaning, but he didn’t mind.

Desmonds had served as Chief Prosecutor for more than a decade, holding a position in the legal world comparable to Alben of the Sussex Empire.

However, he was a man of integrity, with a character far superior to Alben.

The prosecutor’s students and subordinates were scattered throughout the Jin Yuan Kingdom’s legal system. Without his recognition, one would be rejected by the entire legal and prosecutorial system.

People are different.

Desmonds was someone Roland planned to win over, so naturally, his attitude was amiable.

Seeing Roland’s calm demeanor, Desmonds couldn’t be overly aggressive, so he coughed softly and asked:

"Mr. Roland, in your heart, do you consider yourself Sussex or Jin Yuan?"

This statement threw the entire hall into silence, quiet enough to hear a pin drop.

Alina narrowed her eyes, a bit dissatisfied.

Old guy looking for trouble, is this a question to be asked in public?

She was just about to step forward on Roland's behalf when Roland stopped her with a sidelong glance.

Roland smiled at Desmonds, observing his reaction.

This question was good, very pointed; if unprepared, he would likely be sweating profusely.

Fortunately, Roland was well-prepared.

He wanted to see Desmonds' expression.

Even if the old prosecutor had a hint of ill intent, it would not escape Roland's careful observation.

Yet there was none.

Desmonds looked steadily into Roland's eyes, his gaze calm and unwavering.

This was his bottom line.

He could accept a foreigner as Prime Minister, after all, there was the prophecy known to the entire nation; he couldn't find a reason to oppose it.

But the premise of accepting a foreigner as Prime Minister is that the foreigner is willing to keep Jin Yuan in his heart, rather than treating it as a stepping stone or tool.

He questioned with righteous dignity, completely selfless, and even if Alina refuted him, he would not back down.

Desmonds' question resonated with the Cabinet Ministers.

They did not aggressively voice their questioning in unison but still expressed their stance through their gaze.

They needed an explanation; the Jin Yuan people needed an attitude.

If Roland evaded with diplomatic language and official rhetoric, revealing his true thoughts, they would have grounds to oppose him.

"This would harm national interests; we cannot accept a foreigner with ulterior motives."

Roland had to respond directly, giving a satisfactory answer, or he would lose the Cabinet's support, becoming a lame Prime Minister, unable to accomplish anything.

Seeing Alina's anxious gaze in the corner of his eye, Roland comforted her with a reassuring look that said, "Trust me to handle it."

Quite honestly, this was a trick question.

If Roland candidly stated that in his heart, Sussex holds a higher status than Jin Yuan, it would be the truth, but the Cabinet would have ample reason to oppose him.

Evading would lead to the same result.

If he said Jin Yuan holds a higher status than Sussex in his heart, regardless of the truth, if this reached the Sussex Empire, what would Empress Sylph think?

In short, it was a trap on either side.

If Roland were a local, he would likely be sweating profusely, but he wasn't.

This question had a diplomatically clever standard answer.

"In Jin Yuan, I am a Jin Yuan person; in Sussex, I am a Sussex person."

Roland's expression was calm, his response resounding and assured.

Chapter 455: She Is the Commander in Chief?

Words and deeds can never be viewed in isolation from the historical context.

If Roland were to say such words in his homeland during the age of the internet, he would be immediately branded a traitor and harshly criticized.

But this is the Otherworld, the late eighteenth century, when the industrial age is just beginning.

Such words not only wouldn't offend, but even convey sincerity.

At least Desmonds accepted his statement.

The stern face of the old prosecutor gradually softened, and a smile began to form.

Whether Roland claimed Jin Yuan was higher than Sussex or Sussex higher than Jin Yuan, it would cause resentment.

However, he cleverly avoided this fatal choice.

As long as he is in Jin Yuan, it is enough to be a Jin Yuan person.

Desmonds didn’t speak, but responded with rhythmic applause.

During Marco’s chaotic governance, he maintained the last dignity of the law under enormous pressure, saving many lives and earning considerable prestige in the Cabinet.

His stance represented the attitude of many neutrals.

They did not care who became Prime Minister or who was the Supreme Leader, as long as they were willing to serve Jin Yuan and could lead Jin Yuan out of its plight.

Some ministers still harbored hostility toward Roland, but under Alina’s powerful authority and the overwhelming trend of public opinion, they could only join in the applause reluctantly.

After Desmonds, other Cabinet ministers also raised some questions.

Most of them were about Roland’s plans for the future of the Jin Yuan Kingdom and how he viewed the relationship between Jin Yuan and Sussex.

Roland, of course, was prepared.

"The Jin Yuan Kingdom is vast and resource-rich, with a large population and abundant talent. As long as it follows the right path, it will inevitably become a powerful nation no less than any other country."

Roland began with lavish praise.

In fact, he was not lying.

Jin Yuan’s foundation is even stronger than that of Sussex.

Historically, they have achieved the feat of warring against two continents, taking on half of Rodinia alone.

Which of the current great powers hasn’t been defeated by Jin Yuan?

Roland’s identity is very subtle; he is both a "local" of Jin Yuan and an outsider from the contemporary strong nation of Sussex.

His reasonable commendation is more easily accepted.

Whether they liked Roland or not, how could they resist such sincere praise?

Applause resounded once more.

Roland gestured for silence, and the applause ceased as he continued his impassioned speech.

"To set Jin Yuan on the right track, enlightened and fair laws and systems are needed, as well as talent, and more importantly, a safe and stable external environment."

"This is why Alina invited me."

Upon hearing Roland’s words, the middle ground and Alina’s supporters frequently nodded.

No one doubted Roland’s ability.

With Sylph, he fled to the Three Overseas Provinces under difficult circumstances and regained power in just two years, showcasing his political acumen.

Moreover, he demonstrated his military prowess through the war with the Oden Kingdom and exhibited his determination and personal strength by expelling Angelina.

The Jin Yuan people are inherently proud.

They can accept walking with the Sussex Empire because they are not the same kind of people.

The bottom line for Jin Yuan people is not allowing anyone on land to challenge their authority.

The ocean is vast, and they can share it with others, but they refuse to share the glory of being the King of the Continent.

Roland’s stance stood right at the edge of their boundary.

The rise of the Vladimir Empire and Sofia primarily threatened not Sussex but the interests and dignity of the Jin Yuan people.

After several late-night talks with Alina, Roland understood their mentality well and naturally knew how to respond.

"Sussex and Jin Yuan have a traditional friendship and shared interests. Their future development paths differ, and no fundamental contradictions exist that cannot be reconciled."

"More importantly, we have a common enemy."

Without hesitation, Roland openly named and praised Sofia.

"The barbaric Rurik people and their cold-blooded Empress are our common enemy."

"We can converse and cooperate, but she only shreds all enemies, leaving those willing to crawl at her feet as slaves."

"Do you wish to be slaves?"

Roland didn’t raise his voice in a grandiose manner but rather issued a gentle and profound soul-searching query.

"No!"

The shout almost lifted the roof of the administrative hall.

This response came as no surprise to Roland.

A country with such a long history as Jin Yuan has never lacked a sense of national pride and belonging.

The Jin Yuan people are inherently stubborn and strive for strength all their lives.

In the heyday of the Magic Empire, while other "barbarian" tribes sought the citizenship of the Magic Empire, only they picked up axes to fight against the Magic Empire.

They kept fighting despite defeats, persisting in their struggle.

The Jin Yuan people’s nature is romantic, filled with a spirit of rebellion, and they have never feared confrontation.

However, under Marco’s ravages, many spirited Jin Yuan people perished, and many also sought to preserve their own lives.

Roland was just reminding them not to fantasize, to pick up arms and prepare for battle.

With a unified direction, the rest will be easier to manage.

Roland laid out short-term plans and long-term development outlines, using the simplest language to draw a grand vision of simultaneous industrial and agricultural progress, and a dual focus on maritime and territorial power for everyone present.

Under the influence of his charismatic and persuasive voice, even those who initially didn't support him were inspired by his ambition.

More and more ministers recognized Roland's sincerity and competence.

They were willing to believe that Roland genuinely wanted to work for the Jin Yuan Kingdom and gradually accepted his statement that in Jin Yuan, he was indeed a Jin Yuan person.

Chapter 456: She's the Commander in Chief? (Part 2)

He may certainly be a high official of the Sussex, but he is also our Prime Minister and Count Leon.

Some people secretly rejoice, fortunately, Miss Alina has tied Roland's legs, allowing him to stay in Jin Yuan, hence not missing out.

A few ministers unwilling to accept Roland feel even worse.

The better Roland performs, the fewer opportunities they have to seize power.

After Roland brought out long-term planning, they became even more despairing.

Through legitimate means, they can no longer deal with Roland; they can only think of outside moves.

After arousing the desires of the ministers present, Roland began to dash their hopes.

"All of you are experienced and capable ministers, even if you don’t follow my plan, as long as you can develop steadily, the future may not be worse than my plan."

"Unfortunately, while we want peace, some may not be willing."

This is what Roland most wants to say today.

He needs to gain the support of the pro-war faction and the centrists.

In a major country like Jin Yuan, having internal factions is normal; being uniformly solid would be an anomaly.

Beyond the pro-war faction and centrists, there is also the compromise faction.

The thinking of the compromise faction largely aligns with the appeasement policy rhetoric.

The Vladimir Empire and Jin Yuan Kingdom are the farthest apart, with the longest supply line; even if they wanted to, they could not annex Jin Yuan.

Historically, Jin Yuan Kingdom once achieved the brilliant feat of attacking Saint Rurik Palace, but it was soon shattered by the long supply line and General Dong’s combined efforts.

The Jin Yuan People couldn’t get past, and the Rurik People naturally couldn’t come over either.

This is the entrenched perception of many people.

After Roland proposed the rhetoric of fully preparing for war, the compromise faction could no longer hold back and jumped out.

"Prime Minister, are you really standing from Jin Yuan’s perspective?"

"Of course. General Vichy, do you have any questions?"

Roland’s face remained calm.

The change in the address denotes acknowledgment, and the questioning signifies partial recognition.

Changing the entrenched perception of the Jin Yuan People is not easy.

Looking at the old general dressed in an Army General uniform, Roland couldn’t help but furrow his brow slightly.

He could accept the existence of the compromise faction, but the presence of the dove faction in the military made it hard for him to accept.

The military is the last place where the dove faction should exist. If the military wants to compromise, what future does the nation have?

But he didn’t directly refute; instead, he waited for the other’s high opinion.

Old General Vichy walked to the center of the hall, not directly presenting his argument but rather pointing at the floor tiles beneath his feet, descending into silence.

After a moment, he slowly said, "Right here, four Army Generals, eleven Lieutenant Generals, and even more Vice Admirals were declared sentenced and executed by the traitor Marco."

"Marco executed a large number of senior officers to ensure absolute control over the military and replaced them with his own people. After Miss Alina set things right, in order to restore order, she also..."

"Adding the losses from the previous civil war, our nation lost over a hundred outstanding generals in the past three years."

"I don’t want to blame anyone, but I must point out that our nation’s military system is severely damaged. Without these battle-hardened brilliant leaders, even more troops will be a scattered mob."

"Furthermore, the proportion of veterans in our military is very low, with a large number of newly-enlisted recruits, the overall combat power of the army is highly questionable."

"May I ask, how can these issues be resolved?"

The old General straightened his stance and looked at Roland without arrogance or humility.

Though the truth is hard to hear, it is an unavoidable reality.

Roland can ask the Jin Yuan People to fight, but sending an unformed combat force into battle is unacceptable.

All the ministers turned their gaze to Roland, waiting for his answer.

This question is not easy to answer.

If Roland responds with empty words without proposing practical solutions, he will lose the support of the military.

Therefore, he must present something real.

Facing General Vichy’s gentle tone yet sharp content of inquiry, Roland did not rush to answer but presented another question.

"Let’s look from another angle; if Jin Yuan Kingdom remains neutral, or uses other nations as a shield to buy itself time, what would the outcome be."

Vichy hadn’t expected Roland to use this perspective for analysis, hesitated for a moment but then bravely replied:

"With Wende Empire and Sussex Empire standing in front, our nation has at least three to five years to regroup and prepare for war, at which time we will have the capability to aid them."

"There’s not that much time; if Jin Yuan Kingdom is not proactive, the Vladimir Empire’s army will be at the doorstep in no more than six months." Roland mercilessly dashed Vichy’s hopes with cold reality.

"How is that possible, they are two empires!" Vichy widened his eyes.

"According to reliable information, the most outstanding military general of Wende Empire has already died in battle, and their veteran losses have also exceeded 30%, with the army’s combat power rapidly declining."

Roland calmly said, "Their Imperial Family must either choose to surrender or flee overseas, or else face liquidation. Even in the most optimistic view, the Wende Empire can’t make it past spring."

Vichy was obviously taken aback by the deteriorating situation to such an extent, somewhat dazed, but still stood firm.

"Even if Wende Empire is incompetent, surely Sussex Empire won’t fall within a few months."

Roland chuckled lightly, his lips curving into a slight derisive smirk, "The Sussex Empire is an ocean nation; even if they exert all efforts, they cannot defeat the Vladimir Empire on land alone."

"Moreover, the Three Overseas Provinces have no natural defenses; whether willing or not, the optimal solution is to resist briefly and withdraw from the continent. At that time, Jin Yuan will face the great northern bear that has annexed most of Rodinia alone."

"May I ask if General Vichy has confidence in convincing Sofia to provide you with three years to prepare for war?"

This sentence made General Vichy’s face darken, unable to speak for a long time.

One can be stubborn but not unreasonable.

Convince Sofia? What an international joke.

Yet, he still unwillingly argued, "Is the Sussex Empire willing to give up the continent?"

"Of course not willingly, so they will expand their market overseas, gather resources, and use their powerful industry and trade to lock the Vladimir Empire on land."

"Even if Sofia is strong, she can’t cross a hundred miles of strait in a bathtub; at most, she can maintain an undefeated situation, but the Jin Yuan Kingdom won’t have such luck."

Vichy’s face looked very grim.

He thought of using the Sussex Empire as a meat shield but forgot one thing: no one understands selling allies better than the Sussex people.

He dares to sell teammates, the Sussex Empire would dare to turn back and sell him out.

Don’t expect the Sussex people to pave the way for the Jin Yuan people with their own blood.

Facing Roland’s somewhat aggressive stance, Vichy finally couldn’t help but play his last card.

"If your country withdraws from the continent, we will have no choice but to sign a contract with the Vladimir Empire."

"Are you planning to surrender?" Roland looked at Vichy with a half-smiling expression.

"Prime Minister, please mind your words, that’s not surrender, but a peace exchange for some benefits." Vichy blushed and responded hesitantly.

Roland did not continue to mock but instead asked, "If Sofia’s condition for granting peace is to station troops in Jin Yuan, control Jin Yuan’s finances and military, and take everything except basic living supplies, how is that different from surrender?"

Vichy’s lips turned pale with anger, and his hands trembled.

He wanted to refute but couldn’t find a reason.

If Sofia indeed comes up with such conditions, by then, without allies and with an army that hasn’t recovered combat effectiveness, what would the Jin Yuan people use to resist?

Roland’s words shattered Vichy’s last stubbornness; he dejectedly hung his head, speechless.

After a long time, he finally chose to concede, "Prime Minister, what do you think we should do?"

"Union, a genuine union."

Roland had been waiting for this sentence, and he calmly said, "The Sussex Overseas Corps has many junior officers and non-commissioned officers who received formal military training, and the Holy Hall of Light has numerous excellent commanders. As long as personnel are supplemented, the forces can be expanded rapidly to form combat effectiveness."

"I suggest the two countries form a coalition army and establish a general staff to coordinate various affairs. The military structure should be mixed as needed to fully utilize combat effectiveness."

Vichy’s face changed dramatically.

Roland, this little fox, finally revealed his cunning intentions; he wants to seize sole control over the military and political powers of both countries.

Considering that the Queen of Sussex is his wife, and the Liberator of Jin Yuan is his lover, he even has a chance to jointly rule two countries and become the emperor of a new super empire.

His ambition is too large.

Upon hearing Roland’s conception, even the neutral faction felt fear.

If Roland establishes a new empire, what will they do?

It’s easy to imagine, they are not Roland’s trusted allies nor part of his plan. In Roland’s new blueprint, they can only play one role.

Cannon fodder.

No matter how grand Roland’s plan is, they cannot accept the fate of being cannon fodder.

An elder with a white beard stood out, "Mr. Roland, I’m sorry, I wish to know whether you want to take the opportunity to jointly rule two countries, I hope you can swear to the Goddess you believe in."

His questioning was somewhat impolite, but given such a situation, he had no choice.

"I have no interest in secular power."

Roland shrugged, spread his hands, and mockingly said, "Mr. Xiafei, you should know, I am a Transcendent, secular power holds little significance for me. After the Sixth Return Day, I will gradually retreat from the political arena and embark on the path to the pinnacle of power."

"Sofia, Sylph, Alina, they are the same."

"Jin Yuan people and Sussex people are completely different in language, culture, and bloodline; they are two different peoples, uniting them under one country is a delusion."

"I hereby solemnly swear to the Goddess of Light that I have no intention to merge the Sussex and Jin Yuan countries to become the Supreme Leader of a new country. Should I violate this oath, I will be forsaken by the Light and become the enemy of the Goddess."

Roland's vow was both heavy and light.

In the eyes of others, he is a Knight of Light, swearing to the Goddess of Light is reasonable. If he violates his oath, the Goddess will surely mete out divine punishment.

But to Roland, this vow had no binding force on him.

He was already watched by the Goddess of Light; if given the chance, the Goddess would certainly mete out divine punishment to kill him.

His vow and statement allowed the ministers present to breathe a sigh of relief.

With a consensus on a principle issue, the following details were easier to handle.

Roland proposed the establishment of the Rodinia Alliance, forming a coalition army, with the purpose of defending freedom and peace and protecting the territorial integrity of contracting states.

Although the alliance required the provision of more troops, this agreement was more beneficial than harmful to the Jin Yuan Kingdom.

There was something Roland didn't explicitly say, but all the ministers present could hear it.

If the Jin Yuan Kingdom disagrees with the alliance, he would not hesitate to take the overseas corps and leave, returning to Sussex's mainland to manage the ocean, abandoning the continent.

The loss would be significant, but the Jin Yuan Kingdom couldn’t bear the consequences even more.

It seemed like a threat, and in fact, it was a threat.

Roland’s attitude was clear that if the Jin Yuan Kingdom could give up part of its autonomy and join the alliance, Roland would take full responsibility for them.

If unwilling, then let there be mutual harm.

In the face of the threat, the ministers of the Jin Yuan Kingdom dared not speak out, despite their anger.

The Jin Yuan Kingdom was at its most vulnerable moment in history, unable to face top powers alone, yet unwilling to give up the posture of a top power.

Chapter 458: She’s the Commander in Chief?_4

Roland’s suggestion just touched their bottom line.

Not one bit more, not one bit less.

Either sacrifice some autonomy to secure an unbreakable alliance, or face the giant bear alone.

Thinking of the formidable and invincible Sofia of the Rurik People, they all felt a bit frightened.

When people fall into the water, they instinctively grasp at anything they can touch, even if it’s just a straw that can’t save them.

They could only hope that Roland was not a straw but a life buoy.

In any case, they had no choice.

Although there was no choice, the old general Vichy still held some ground.

Although the Jin Yuan Kingdom had lost many generals, their tradition in the army far exceeded that of the Sussex Empire.

At least they could compete for the actual command of the allied forces.

He was very clear that Roland would focus his energy on personal strength enhancement and global control, delegating specific military command to capable generals.

Sussex was not lacking excellent naval officers, but there were no famous army generals, at least none of his level.

He believed Roland would make the right choice.

However, even when asking for power, one couldn’t say it directly, it had to be gentle.

General Vichy gave a light cough, smiled, and said, "Prime Minister, you are the only candidate for the Allied Commander-in-Chief, but you have many things to take care of. I suggest selecting an eminent and experienced veteran as your deputy. What do you think?"

"General Vichy, you are correct."

Roland saw through Vichy’s little plan at once, indeed needing a commander, but not Vichy.

Vichy’s abilities were unquestionable, but he had a major flaw in his character.

Timid.

In decisive moments that require confrontation, a timid character would lead him to conservative choices.

In a head-on encounter, the brave win; the duel with Sofia was one of victory and survival, with no room to retreat.

Vichy was certainly not suitable.

But the Sussex Empire had no suitable candidates.

If the war broke out ten years later, people like Delong might grow strong enough for the task.

Unfortunately, there was no time.

Fortunately, Roland was prepared.

"General Vichy, you reminded me. We must find a highly capable general with experience in commanding large armies, one who is resolute and decisive to take charge of unified command."

Each of Roland’s words made Vichy’s chest rise a bit.

Resolute and decisive?

Vichy believed he was.

In favorable conditions, he was indeed as resolute as steel, daring to fight and kill; when the situation was unfavorable, he retreated decisively.

He completely met the requirements.

The old general’s face glowed with expectation, waiting for this honor to descend.

He couldn’t think of any other choice.

Although Roland was internally more inclined towards Sussex, he wouldn’t act emotionally at such a time.

If he could take the position of commander, joining the alliance would be very beneficial for Jin Yuan.

Looking at Vichy’s expectant gaze, Roland smiled and added:

"General Vichy, I do not intend to hold the position of Allied Commander-in-Chief. To ensure smooth military orders, a true commander should take over."

Vichy’s fingers trembled slightly, his eyes filled with surprise and joy.

He tried to maintain his posture, taking deep breaths to adjust his mood.

"Prime Minister, only you as commander can..."

"There’s no need to say more, the army cannot have two commanders. I have always trusted in those I appoint. I will not interfere in the commander’s orders, only provide full support."

Vichy thought of Roland’s decisive delegation in previous wars and felt an increased esteem for him.

Originally, he only wanted the position of a deputy commander with real power, but unexpectedly could become the true commander, truly...

Hahaha.

"The Prime Minister is wise." this time his compliment was truly from the heart.

However, Roland’s next sentence stole all his joy.

"I've decided, the Allied Commander-in-Chief will be the Holy Daughter of Light, Christine."

Vichy's vision went dark, barely supporting himself on the nearby sofa, after which he did not hear a single word of Roland's speech.

Christine? Christine!

Haha, he was simply a clown, having forgotten that Roland had a lover.

Chapter 459: Star Spirit

Choosing Christine as the Allied Commander-in-Chief may seem absurd, but it's actually a decision without controversy.

Vichy does have experience commanding nearly a hundred thousand soldiers in battle, but he falls far short compared to Christine.

Christine is a highly trained military talent cultivated by the Divine Court of Light. She has commanded various large-scale battles, such as the Wende Empire Civil War and the Battle of Helensburg, boasting solid military prowess and rich combat experience. She is a renowned general across the Rodinia Continent.

Compared to her, Vichy has no advantages aside from his age.

She also has an incomparable advantage—her transcendent identity and neutral stance.

Choosing a commander from either the Sussex Empire or the Jin Yuan Kingdom would leave the other nation feeling uneasy. Christine is a High Tier Sanctuary of the Divine Court, unaffiliated with any country.

Vichy sighed lightly and did not continue to argue.

In such a setting, to persist was meaningless as everyone was of high social standing.

Once consensus was reached, the subsequent steps became much easier.

Within the framework prescribed by Roland, the ministers spoke one by one, offering constructive advice.

Though they might not like Roland, they couldn’t resist showing their abilities in front of Alina.

In summary, this was a successful meeting.

The meeting set the direction for the Jin Yuan Kingdom’s future development, illuminating its prospects.

After the meeting ended, besides a few with ulterior motives, most people pondered how to find their place on the soon-to-set-sail big ship.

They also desired progress.

As everyone dispersed, it was already very late.

This lengthy meeting had stretched from morning until night. Even a Transcendent could find it draining.

Watching Roland sitting on the sofa with a slightly weary face, lost in thought, Alina sat opposite him, murmuring softly, which nearly made Roland jump.

"Who would’ve thought even the Saintess of the Divine Court of Light is your secret lover."

"What nonsense are you talking about?"

Roland felt powerless to retort, casting a displeased glance at her and grumbling in defense: "If rumors were credible, you should be my lover by now too."

"If during your time in the Jin Yuan you find the nights lonely and need someone to warm your bed, I can be that person." Alina smiled like a fox.

Roland refused without hesitation.

Alina was not like ordinary women; she was now the ruler of the Jin Yuan Kingdom.

Sylph could allow Roland to find a few maids to satisfy his needs while abroad, but not Alina.

Alina was not one to be casually discarded after an encounter.

There was a responsibility that came after.

Staring at Alina, Roland said righteously, "We are friends, and I'm here to help. Such words are not conducive to unity, and I don't want to hear them again."

Alina quickly stood up and apologized to Roland.

Some jokes can be made, but some go too far, even among the closest of friends.

After discussing some details further, realizing it was getting late, Alina personally escorted Roland back to his residence before dragging her weary body back to the West Palace.

For discretion's sake, Roland stayed at Count Leon's Mansion, three kilometers away.

Standing at the highest window in the West Palace, one could just see the lights of Count Leon's Mansion.

Seeing the light still on in Roland's window, Alina knew he was still busy.

He was never this diligent even in his own country.

Alina, having long served as Roland's intelligence chief, knew all too well about him.

She knew Roland liked to pass tasks to his subordinates.

If he could delegate it, he would never do it himself.

Yet tonight, he was burning the midnight oil.

His diligence moved Alina to tears.

She didn't pick up binoculars to spy because a strong person dislikes being watched.

Roland was a strong person, and as her best friend, she certainly wouldn't overstep.

Despite being touched, Alina was a bit curious. Why was Roland working so late?

Little did she know, Roland was poring over the books in the Earl's Mansion.

Count Leon was an ancient title, absorbed by the state decades ago when no heirs were left, turning the land and mansion into state assets.

This time it was brought out and re-granted to win Roland over.

The Leon Earl's Domain wasn't particularly large; its area was even a bit smaller than Roland's Suyige Earl's Domain, but Leon Port was the third-ranked port in the Jin Yuan Kingdom. With thriving trade, abundant resources, and wealthy people, it was a coveted place.

The value of the Leon Earl’s Domain was no less than that of a medium province.

Alina was never stingy with friends. To show sincerity, she also gifted Roland the mansion’s collections and over seven thousand rare books.

Along with these came numerous royal art collections.

Sadly, Alina was batting her eyes at the wrong person this time.

Roland’s interest in those artworks and jewels was not non-existent, but he was at least apathetic.

What truly caught his eye were those seven thousand volumes of books.

Especially the over three hundred out-of-print books among them.

This was precisely what Roland wanted most.

In excellent spirits at the moment, Roland randomly picked up a miscellany to pass the long night.

It was "Scandalous Tales of the Jin Yuan Dynasty."

Upon opening the book and reading a few pages, Roland’s eyes lit up.

Wow, could he have stumbled upon an unexpected treasure?

This book was a peculiar kind of unofficial history, not necessarily factual, but its content was quite outlandish.

"Why didn’t the ancestors of the Buananaba Clan conceal their close relationship with the Iris Imperial Family..."

Whoa, that's really wild!

According to these scandalous tales, the history of the Buananaba Clan extends well beyond several centuries. They are descendants of an even more ancient lineage than commonly known.

It's said they possess the bloodline of Star Spirits, which makes mastering astrology easier for them.

Chapter 460: Star Spirit (Part 2)

Although the sparse records from the previous eras describe the Star Spirits in a simple manner, it's discernible that they were a powerful race, highly skilled at drawing power from the stars.

Why did such a powerful race disappear without a trace?

There's no need to guess; it must have been divine punishment.

If the records of this anecdotal history were true, then Alina's identity is quite extraordinary.

Descendant of the Star Spirits, astrologer, her race and profession are a perfect match.

Considering Alina's miraculous progress, advancing consecutively for three years after choosing to be an astrologer, Roland gained more confidence in this anecdote.

While he was perusing the book intently, the yellowing pages suddenly emitted a foul smell, with smoke billowing up.

Without hesitation, Roland picked up the cup beside him and poured its tea over it.

There would certainly be some loss, but saving part of the content is considered a victory.

The instant the tea contacted the yellowing pages, a loud bang sounded. By the time Roland detached his outer robe to wrap around the anecdotal history to save it, it was too late.

The book couldn't be saved, his robe was ruined, and any normal person would feel at least a bit upset, yet Roland was no ordinary person; his eyes lit up.

Only seeing something that shouldn't be seen would trigger a self-destruct protocol.

It seems the Star Spirits indeed existed, and this anecdotal history might have touched upon the truth.

Instead of lamenting over the destruction of an anecdotal history book, Roland immediately went to the library and quickly found a few more books related to Star Spirits.

Some described the basic situation of the Star Spirit race, while others depicted their customs and folkways when they still existed.

These books' records seemed extravagant; in fact, they were extravagant.

Normally Roland wouldn't believe such wild things, but these books all ended the same way, with spontaneous combustion and inextinguishable flames.

He couldn't help but believe it.

After gathering all the information regarding the Star Spirits, Roland could essentially confirm that Alina was a descendant of the Star Spirits, just without the awakened memory.

If she could awaken the inheritance memory within her about the Star Spirits, perhaps she would truly have a chance to master the Great Prophecy Skill.

In any case, it's all positive.

The self-destruction of information related to the Star Spirits didn’t discourage Roland. He took out a blank Wordless Book, channelled magic power into it, and the contents from his memory automatically surfaced, rapidly expanding across the blank Wordless Book at a speed imperceptible to the naked eye.

This was also the trait of his profession as an inheritor of extraordinary professions.

Endowed with an extraordinary eidetic memory, he could project his thoughts to materialize them, converting them into the contents of a book.

Simply put, Roland wasn’t merely copying books, nor writing them — he was "thinking" them.

Wherever his thoughts led, the book would follow.

An inheritor writing a book only confronts the challenge of imagination, not expression.

Roland quickly made a complete copy of the books just burned and then carried them to find Alina.

Even though it was late at night, he believed Alina hadn’t gone to sleep.

And even if she had, she must get up, for this matter was of utmost importance.

Roland rode a carriage to the West Palace and was stopped by guards at the Old Imperial Palace entrance.

His brows furrowed slightly but soon relaxed.

These soldiers probably weren’t deliberate; after all, he had just taken office during the day, so it was normal for frontline soldiers not to know him yet...

What a load of nonsense!

Indeed he assumed office just today, but he was the Prime Minister!

The State Secretary would definitely relay information about his appointment to relevant departments at the first opportunity, along with Roland's portrait for identification purposes.

If a dignified Prime Minister were continually denied entry, could this job even be done anymore?

Roland, with much interest, looked at the soldier asking for a pass, pointing anytime at the family insignia engraved on the carriage.

"This is Miss Alina's exclusive carriage; this should be enough to prove my identity, right? Please inform the Liberator, telling them Roland seeks an audience."

Roland also had a token in his possession, which allowed direct entrance to the Imperial Palace, but he didn't want to use such a precious item as a pass just yet.

This token was a ticket given to Roland by Alina back when she was still an international student at the Art Academy.

It had never been used and had since become a secret between Roland and Alina.

Even though he didn't want to reveal it, for convenience's sake in finding Alina quickly, he displayed the ticket.

Crafted with exquisite workmanship, this temporary ticket was sufficient to testify to Roland's notable identity, let alone, he merely wanted the soldier to relay a message, not necessarily enter directly.

By convention, at least a report should be made, yet today's palace gate guards seemed out of sorts, neither permitting entry nor willing to report, resolutely refusing.

Witnessing this guard's conduct, Roland secretly questioned; how could such a person be selected to guard the Old Imperial Palace's gates?

Possessing the finesse of a diplomatic approach is critical as a doorkeeper.

Thus, this palace gate soldier likely had issues.

Roland didn't want to waste words on them; if they wouldn't let him in at night, he'd look for Alina tomorrow.

He must remind Alina that although ministers could be replaced gradually, such an inept guard dog must be immediately dismissed.

Regardless of corruption or sheer incompetence, they held no qualification to safeguard the West Palace.

As Roland turned to leave, hurried footsteps resounded.

The burly captain of the Old Imperial Palace's guard force ran over.

He was gasping for breath, his legs trembling.

Having been plucked from a lady's arms, his body, drained by indulgence, felt empty; hearing the commotion outside jolted him to rush out, only to see Roland!

He was so frightened that he almost wanted to leap into the Netherworld.

Roland's prestige, he knew well, and staying unshaken would be indeed strange.

The captain hurriedly blocked Roland's path, explaining deferentially.

Seeing the captain so well-informed and tactful, Roland didn’t trouble him; after the report, he headed towards the Emperor’s bedroom.

Arriving at the Emperor’s bedroom, Roland found the sleepless girl gazing into the dark night.

Alina calmly looked at Roland, a bit curious.

"Roland, what’s so urgent that you find me in the middle of the night, even clashing with two guards?"

"Before we talk, you might want to take a glance at these books, just flip through briefly."

The books documenting the Star Spirits hadn’t self-combusted; Alina flipped through them casually, feeling increasingly uneasy.

These introductions about the Star Spirits didn’t seem like tales but rather felt like veritable realities.

Alina, in silence, finished the last book, raising her head to look at Roland.

"Do you think I’m a descendant of the Star Spirits?"

"Very likely," Roland chimed in.

"Then let’s let facts speak for themselves; a mark of the stars is hidden on the chest of the Star Spirit race, which can be made visible by concentrating their spirit."

Alina didn’t finish her sentence, but the implication was clear; she had no star mark, so she couldn’t possibly be a Star Spirit descendant.

She disdained the frivolous act of falsely claiming ancestry.

To put her mind at ease and reassure Roland, she opted to verify herself.

She glanced at her voluptuous curves, closed her eyes, and began focusing her spirit.

She suppressed distractions and focused her spirit at the window, feeling for any sensation from her chest...

Sure enough, no response occurred.

Verification went almost as expected; lack of a mark signified...

Alina opened her eyes, smiling as she lowered her gaze to her chest, utterly stunned.

"Impossible, absolutely impossible; I’m human, not some Star Spirit!"

Angrily, she stood, fuming fiercely, resolving nothing yet.

In helpless fury, Alina gradually calmed, sitting dazedly without speaking for a long while before laughing at herself.

For a sovereign of a nation to not be human but a Star Spirit, it was sheer parody.

With a touch of despair, Alina softly asked Roland, "If I were a Star Spirit, would you still treat me as before?"

"I wouldn’t," Roland replied calmly.

"I see..." Though expecting this answer, Alina still felt a trace of discomfort within.

"Since you must hide your identity as a Star Spirit, you'll surely need friends. I'll confide this secret with those close, deepening our friendship boundlessly, enduringly."

Alina sat silent for a while, slowly speaking, "Thank you, Roland. From today onwards, I'll change my family name to Bonaparte. I shall raise the banner, fighting alongside you until the end."