Empress 681

Chapter 681: Stay Out of Big Shots’ Business

"Since your strategic level is not as good as Kromi's, how could he not see through the issue? If you push him too hard, he might even turn against us."

"I'm sorry, I was reckless." Aivir bowed her head in admission.

Roland looked at her dejected expression and couldn't help but remind her, "Are all the Wise Men of my race dead?"

Aivir trembled slightly, hurriedly knelt on one knee, and raised her hands above her head.

"Please, Wise Man, grant me strength and wisdom."

That's how it should be.

Roland solemnly lifted the scepter, gently tapped her palm three times, and then placed a magic ring stored in his private space into her hand.

"This contains an energy storage array equivalent to thirty percent of my attack power. Just input magic power to activate it."

Aivir respectfully accepted Roland's gift and expressed her gratitude.

Though her attitude was respectful, she was somewhat indifferent inside.

Roland's strength was indeed formidable, but it leaned toward a defensive comprehensive class, and a ring with only thirty percent of his attack power was quite limited in its lethality.

Despite her internal criticisms, she dared not go against the only Wise Man of their time.

Aivir's thoughts were simple, and although she was hundreds of years old, she was much like a young girl, with her likes and dislikes clearly written on her face.

Seeing her little expression, Roland certainly knew what she was struggling with, so he restrained his smile and calmly added a sentence.

"It can be used at least fifteen times."

Aivir's spirit was lifted; this was truly remarkable.

An important enemy leader can defend once or twice, but who would expect this thing to kill with fifteen consecutive bursts?

Is this the wisdom of a Wise Man? Truly impressive.

"Killing the enemy is protecting my people, Great Sage, I understand."

Although her understanding was somewhat peculiar, Roland completely agreed with Aivir's conclusion. He solemnly looked at Aivir, the Grand General, his eyes flashing with a peculiar light.

"The enmity between the Earth Spirits and Elves ended with the conclusion of the Third Era. It is forbidden to mention it again or to pass it down to future generations. Do you understand my meaning?"

"I obey!" Aivir accepted the command without hesitation.

As Roland said, the enmity between the Earth Spirits and Elves ended with the apocalyptic battle of the Divine Punishment Legion.

The descendants of both races today were almost entirely uninvolved in the brutal war of the past.

If that's the case, why carry the heavy burden that can only be relieved by an apocalypse?

"Great Sage, under your leadership, my race will surely be revitalized!" Aivir, feeling good, seldom used flattery, lavishly praising Roland.

Roland, however, did not echo her smile but seriously corrected, "Remember, it is the race under Her Majesty the Empress's wise leadership that is on the path to revival."

After all, Sif was his wife, and the glory could be completely shared. He had to establish Sif's powerful and regal image in Aivir's heart.

Roland stayed in the Elf Race's settlement for more than ten days, personally seeing them off on their journey north, before continuing south with ease of mind.

On his way further south, he encountered two ambushes and three assassination attempts.

The Yehu, upon learning that Roland not only invaded their territory but also rescued the Elf descendants they considered their own, hated him to the bone.

In their eyes, Roland was being overly confident, almost suicidal.

Even if Roland could defeat an army on his own, he was still just one person.

Does he intend to single-handedly flatten the South Continent?

The Yehu were infuriated by Roland's bold maneuvers, and the Commanders of Yehu's upper echelon gathered to decide on intercepting Roland.

While the lower Yehu were foolish, greedy, and cruel, their upper echelon was entirely different. These Yehu had relatively less surface hair and lighter skin tone, making them almost indistinguishable from humans if not closely observed.

Their main difference from the lower Yehu was their cunning, greed, and cruelty.

The Commanders were convinced that Roland would pay for his carelessness with his life, yet after several failed assassination attempts, they realized Roland's extraordinary nature.

This guy's defensive ability was simply too strong; no matter how powerful the attack, it was like a mosquito tickling an elephant to him.

After several ambushes failed, the Yehu Commanders got serious and organized a force of over three thousand troops to intercept Roland on his inevitable path.

Since Roland had the ability to defeat an army, they sent out a more formidable force.

There was no more logical arrangement than this; the Commanders were convinced of Roland's death and even opened Blood Monkey Wine before the army set out.

This was a special fruit wine brewed from Blood Monkey Fruit, similar in status to Milan Champagne.

But they never imagined that Roland had not taken the route they had planned for him.

After lying in ambush for two days, Roland brazenly appeared in a market near the southernmost tip of the continent. According to intelligence personnel, Roland not only feasted at the best tavern in town but even ordered several bottles of Blood Monkey Wine.

"Obviously, this is provocation!"

Yehu Alliance's Chief High Tier Commander Sanders let out an angry roar, clenching his fist and pounding heavily on the table, creating a large pit in the granite stone slab.

"The damned Colonial Empire Governor dares to roam unabashedly in our homeland, and even openly mocks us. What do you say we do?"

"Kill him!"

"Kill him!"

The Commanders' roars rose and fell.

They naturally had reasons to be angry and to intercept Roland.

After all, they were no longer an unorganized, scattered group, nor did they engage in mutual slaughter.

Milones's appearance brought a glimmer of hope to them.

The prestigious figures of the Dark Race brought astounding strength and civilization, along with the good news that the Demon Emperor was about to descend.

Compared to the low profile of the Dark Race, the Yehu were quicker to celebrate with Blood Monkey Wine.

Internally, they had even begun referring to the Demon Emperor as the Dark Great Demon God and had established a religion, building altars to accumulate power for the Great Demon God in hopes of welcoming him sooner.

...

The few long-distance straight roads on the South Continent were constructed by the Prudon Kingdom.

They weren't doing it out of goodwill, simply to maintain control.

Unlike other colonizers who looted and plundered, eager to squeeze the colonies dry on the spot, the Prudon Kingdom extended overseas colonization relatively late, and the prime colonies had already been divided up.

The remote territories they could acquire were all leftovers.

The only exception was their territory at the southernmost tip of the South Continent.

This was a necessary route for circumnavigation and the key development area for the Prudon Kingdom.

They spared no effort in promoting colonial education, striving to eradicate local cultural influences, and winning hearts and minds by building roads, schools, hospitals, and other means.

After Roland reached an agreement with the Dark Race to withdraw from the South Continent, the Prudon Kingdom deliberated for a long time and reluctantly released most of the colonies, except for the southernmost Skyrim Province.

They quickly passed a law declaring Skyrim Province a direct overseas province of the kingdom, with complete political equality to the mainland.

The people of Skyrim Province even theoretically had the eligibility to become the Prime Minister of the country.

But that's only in theory.

At the Skyrim Province border checkpoint, a special carriage was being inspected.

This carriage seemed ordinary at first glance, but its passengers were anything but ordinary.

Even though they used magic to conceal their features, they were unaware that the checkpoint was equipped with special prism-like magic equipment.

This Prism Eye had only one simple function: to see through disguises and reveal the true face of the one being checked.

Limited to the face only.

The squad captain responsible for inspection stared at Roland's true appearance, stunned and unsure of what to do.

He first ruled out the possibility that this traveler, who bore a strong resemblance to Roland, was indeed Roland.

What a joke; Roland was currently the plaything of the Vladimir Empire's Empress, and who on the Rodinia Continent wasn't aware of it?

He was even obliged to stay and attend to that cold and old woman rather than go home to his wife.

Since it seemed impossible that the visitor was Roland himself, the squad captain's assumption was challenged.

"But..." the Guard Captain tried to explain, but was interrupted again.

"Just obey the order."

"Yes, sir!" The Guard Captain snapped to attention, saluted, and allowed the carriage to proceed.

Having watched Roland swagger into Skyrim Province, the official who had just issued the order to let him pass quietly left.

New Bodenburg in the Sky.

The name of this city is a tribute to Bodenburg, the birthplace of the Prudon Kingdom, and signifies the importance the Prudon Kingdom places on this overseas province.

The provincial officials here are not just governors, but provincial chiefs.

Not only that, but according to the military system of the Prudon Kingdom, an army is stationed here based on the strategic importance of the province, with a field army, a garrison division, and an independent brigade directly under the royal family, totaling more than 68,000 troops, led by an experienced Lieutenant General.

Even by Roland's strict standards, this army is a standard elite force.

To conquer a province guarded by such an elite force, Roland estimates it would require more than 150,000 main troops from the major Rodinia Continent nations.

Such strong military power can dominate the South Continent.

Even if only a third of the military force is used to defend Skyrim Province, it would be sufficient.

Nearly 70,000 native elites stationed here clearly shows the ambition of the Prudon Kingdom.

Upon entering Skyrim Province, Roland was even more convinced of this.

The Prudon Kingdom doesn't aim to just hold on to Skyrim Province, but rather to expand its influence while other major countries retreat from the South Continent, an unprecedented opportunity.

According to the map, Rama Town, where Roland is staying tonight, is about 170 miles from the Skyrim Province border.

But now this place is a border city of Skyrim Province.

According to Roland's observations, this place is not set up with defenses like a border city.

On the contrary, it is developed as a transportation hub and trade node.

Obviously, this is not the end point of expansion, but a forward base.

The ambition of the Prudon Kingdom is vividly reflected in this small town.

Since it's the territory of an alliance partner country, Roland didn't have to sneak into the city like a thief.

He openly presented the identity used to conceal his real identity.

This wasn't a fake identity; he even issued himself official appointment documents.

After all, being a central minister of the Empire, no one dares to oppose, and Sofia won't care.

"Viscount Dorothy of the Vladimir Empire requests a reception befitting his status."

Roland raised his head, looking down at the Garrison Captain of the small town with a hint of disdain.

The Garrison Captain only glanced roughly at Roland's noble badge without inspecting it closely.

Pretending to belong to a major country's nobility in the Rodinia Continent? The last person who did that had his entire family erased from the household register.

Pretending to another country's title results in an abstract death, while pretending to a title from the Vladimir Empire, death is almost merciful.

The demeanor and arrogance of this Viscount before him was the perfect noble template, the Garrison Captain dared not question it.

He quickly had Roland escorted to the City Hall, providing reception according to the highest standard for a Viscount.

Of course, the revered Viscount need not pay the bills himself; he only needed to sign.

Roland signed his name in exquisitely beautiful calligraphy.

He didn't even bother using a pseudonym, just changed his surname suffix.

After all, the small-town officials had no idea what he had written.

As expected, the Garrison Captain left with the bill, nodding and bowing, without the slightest suspicion.

Since the esteemed Viscount was on an official mission, the bill would naturally be settled by the Vladimir Empire.

The Garrison Captain only needed to send the bill back home, and the foreign affairs department would naturally handle it.

He truly had no time to waste on what was obviously a playboy Viscount; he had to prepare various supplies, food, and weaponry to support the arriving forces in the next couple of days.

Viscount Dorothy's stay in the top floor of the City Hall was merely a small interlude.

Rama Town continued to bustle, its pace unaffected by a certain playboy and his beautiful wife.

"That playboy's wife is really beautiful."

"Yeah, alright, enough chatter, get back to work!"

Garrison Captain Hamos harshly scolded his subordinate, suddenly finding the playboy they were talking about appear before him.

Although he felt sorry for the playboy's beautiful wife, Hamos was an official who clearly separated work from personal matters; in fact, most Prudon Kingdom officials were like this.

He quickly stood straight and saluted Roland, "Roland Sofia Dorothy Viscount, do you need anything from me? As you can see, it's a bit chaotic here."

His words were very polite, but using Roland's full name was a clear indication of distancing.

Moreover, his words subtly suggested to Roland that they were busy with serious matters, and not to bother if it wasn't important.

Roland simply smiled slightly, although he could earn respect through his strength, most of the time, people defaulted to his charming appearance.

Sylph Empress's boy toy, Jin Yuan Empress's secret lover, Sofia Empress's late-night confidant, the future Magic Empire Empress's beloved relative.

Overall, this was the default image in many people's minds.

Hamos's attitude didn't surprise him, he even considered it a compliment.

Only those without prowess would feel offended by being praised for their handsome appearance; Roland was competent and liked hearing such comments.

"Hamos Lieutenant Colonel, is it? I have a bit of personal acquaintance with your country's Duke Reinhardt. Since I'm on your nation's territory, I wouldn't mind helping resolve some troubles for the Duke."

"If needed, I have some understanding of swordsmanship, perhaps I can be of assistance."

Roland smiled slightly, inadvertently revealing his muscular arms.

Seeing Roland's display of muscles, Hamos was somewhat speechless.

Chapter 683: Suspected Minority Language_2

Slightly versed in swordsmanship?

Ah yes, yes, yes, that's what the nobility always say. They love playing with fencing, even distinguishing between foil, heavy sword, saber, and other variations.

Hamos never denies that fencing is a very fashionable and noble sport, but he also never believes that swordsmanship can play any role on the battlefield in this era.

In front of firearms and cannons, swordsmanship is meaningless.

Those nobles who fancy themselves as swordsmanship masters will choose firearms and spears as their weapons when on the battlefield.

Swordsmanship masters all understand that attack range is the most prioritized attribute of a weapon.

Hamos unhesitatingly regards Roland as a young noble with no practical experience, but very good at putting on an empty show.

Compared to playboys, this type of self-important guy is more headache-inducing.

Hamos was silent for a moment and saluted Roland very politely.

"Esteemed Viscount Dorothy, the Prudon Kingdom has the ability to protect its citizens, as well as citizens of friendly countries."

"Alright, I believe you. But my promise remains unchanged. If there's a need..."

"Then I will trouble you, Viscount, when I return." Hamos politely interjected.

Roland nodded, turned around, and left.

Watching his graceful departing figure, Hamos heaved a sigh of relief, paying no further mind.

He became more convinced that Roland was just another gilded youth abroad in the South Continent.

To pave the way for his quest for power, he needs some grassroots work experience.

Like "representing the nation on a diplomatic mission to the South Continent to solve XX issue for an ally" sort of resume.

Hamos was not surprised at this kind of behavior, even in the Prudon Kingdom, which was in an ascending phase and whose officialdom was still considered clean, such actions were not uncommon. How could the heavily corrupt Vladimir Empire escape unscathed?

He was even pondering how to provide Viscount Dorothy an opportunity to shine so that glorious achievements could be recorded in his resume.

Perhaps they could find a way to annihilate the nearby Yehu tribe and invite Viscount Dorothy to guide in person.

Since the request has been made, it wouldn't do to let him leave empty-handed.

Lieutenant Colonel Hamos merely entertained the thought for a while before his attention was drawn to his busier work, no longer thinking about this matter.

While he continued to be busy, Roland returned to the suite at the top floor of the town hall.

As a nobility on a diplomatic mission representing the nation, he indeed had the privilege to receive official receptions, and he could righteously enjoy all of this.

Although the conditions here were almost rural compared to the Winter Palace and Eden back home, Hamos still adhered to the highest standards of hospitality.

"The stereotype of the Prudon middle-level officials, possessing the potential to become an army Vice Admiral or even higher."

This was Roland's objective evaluation of Hamos.

Putting down the book in hand, Lisa stood up with a smile, took Roland's coat, and hung it on the unvarnished, smooth coat rack next to them.

"The reason stereotypes form is not because of individual cases, but because of common traits."

Lisa said softly.

This was something Roland himself had said, and she was using his own words to remind him not to mind other people's business.

Roland did not continue this topic and only said lightly, "Other matters can be ignored, but the Prudon Kingdom is an important member of the Alliance, and Duke Reinhardt is the special mobile force commander. I can't just watch them suffer."

"Are you feeling guilty for leading the enemy southward?" Lisa was a bit surprised, could such a feeling as guilt appear in Roland?

Roland couldn't help but pinch her soft, full cheek and said sternly:

"Is this the kind of image I have in your mind?"

"It's not guilt, but I don't want a flaw left in my mentality. It is a fact that I went south to help the tribe draw Yehu's attention, and it's also true that they are attacking the Prudon Kingdom."

"Alright, then I'll accompany you." Lisa closed her eyes, enjoying Roland's seemingly rough yet actually gentle kneading.

Heading south does not have a destination but only one goal: to find traces of the previous generations of the Divine Punishment Legion.

The Divine Punishment Legion won't vanish into thin air; they must still exist.

Not only do they exist, but they have even developed and grown, preparing to respond to the Goddess's call at the critical moment to give the disobedient tribes a severe blow.

Skyrim Province might very well hold useful clues.

So Skyrim Province must be under the Alliance's control.

Roland might not like the Prudon Kingdom, but he will certainly protect them.

"Unfortunately, that fool Hamos doesn't understand your good intentions at all."

Roland shook his head with a smile, without saying a word.

People can never imagine things beyond their comprehension. Lieutenant Colonel Hamos might have heard of the famed strike of Sofia White Mountain, might have heard stories of a city destroyed by war machines.

But his instincts cannot accept these.

Even if he could accept them, he couldn't accept that a playboy could be such a formidable person.

Roland picked up Lisa and moved towards the bedroom.

Sister Lisa is the most beautiful color in this somewhat dull journey.

It's easy to move from frugality to luxury, but hard to go from luxury to frugality. Roland, long accustomed to top-level enjoyment, finds it hard to endure the hardships of living in the open.

He needs Eden, more so the gentle embrace within Eden.

...

While Roland was working late into the night, Hamos, who was busy until late as well, still hadn't rested.

He was pondering as he went through the documents at hand.

The recent work has been relatively smooth, with only one matter leaving him vaguely uneasy.

The four scouts he sent north haven't returned.

The last carrier pigeon they sent was three days ago.

The sentries discovered a large gathering of Yehu a hundred miles away in a valley.

Clearly, the expansion route of the Prudon Kingdom was something these Yehu could not accept.

They have united, preparing to fight against the Kingdom to the end.

To this, Lieutenant Colonel Hamos could only feel like laughing.

If these Yehu scattered and harassed, they might cause trouble for the Kingdom Army, but confronting them head-on is pure suicide, isn't it?

According to the sentries' observations, this army is the elite among the Yehu.

They wear leather armor, and the arrowheads of their bows are iron, and can even form simple formations.

Truly... elite indeed.

If these guys went back to the early Odin Empire, perhaps they would have a chance to create a miracle like annihilating the Imperial Legion in the Black Forest battle.

But not now.

The Prudon Kingdom has recently created brilliant achievements in the field of technological archaeology.

Although they don't dare to excavate the war machines, they have replicated the production line for breech-loading rifles, and even used this technology to exchange for significant resources from the Alliance.

The Skyrim Province garrison is equipped with 13,000 breech-loading rifles with standard rifling, and the bullet range exceeds 300 meters, with a terrifying loading speed of one round every two seconds.

Just one battalion, no, one company of elite infantry, can defeat tens of thousands of Yehu.

This was Lieutenant Colonel Hamos's estimation.

In fact, his estimation was considered conservative in the army. The radicals even believed that one battalion charging could demolish tens of thousands of Yehu.

This is the charm of archaeology, even more so the crushing power of Alamanni technology.

How could the Prudon Kingdom fear mere Yehu?

Hamos yawned, packed away the documents in front of him, and returned to his bedroom.

He quickly entered dreamland, beginning to fantasize about getting promoted by a level or even gaining an additional silver star (Brigadier General) after the Skyrim Province campaign.

Carrying beautiful visions of the future, he slept soundly.

He was even forcibly awakened by the deputy officer who burst in his bedroom door.

"Lieutenant Colonel, something bad has happened!"

Hamos glared at the deputy officer, muttering under his breath: "Lieutenant Colonel is not so good indeed, anyone dragged out of bed wouldn't feel great."

"My apologies, Lieutenant Colonel, that wasn't what I meant."

The deputy officer's face flushed, "The Yehu have intruded, they used explosives to blow open the North Gate and have already stormed into the Northern Avenue."

Yehu, explosives, breach...

Hamos was not unfamiliar with these words, but together they sounded like a foreign dialect, perhaps Odin Language, to him.

He recognized every word, but couldn't understand the sentence.

Fuguang realized Hamos was dumbfounded, shook his head vigorously, and bellowed:

"Lieutenant Colonel, Rama Town cannot hold! Hurry, go! I will try my utmost to buy you time to break through and retreat!"

Hamos slapped himself hard, finally awakening from the nightmare.

He remained silent for a moment, coldly ordered the deputy officer, "You immediately lead the cavalry to break through and inform the General of this bad news."

"Lieutenant Colonel, what about you?" The deputy officer was anxious.

"You excel in riding, and only you can handle this task, hurry, it's an order!"

Hamos gave the deputy officer a kick, sending him flying several meters away.

Looking at the flames rising outside the window, Hamos shakily opened the drawer, took out a Brownie pistol, and pointed it at his temple.

"Farewell, this worl..."

Wait, he might still have a sliver of hope, though not much, not entirely impossible.

Viscount Dorothy was still upstairs, calm and composed.

To be this calm, either he's an idiot, or he's a hidden powerhouse.

Hamos prayed silently, hoping heaven favored him.

Chapter 684: The Art of Passing the Buck

The night raid of the Yehu army was indeed well-prepared.

Perhaps the combination of the term "army" and Yehu was already somewhat niche.

The largest regular army Yehu could organize before was only a few thousand strong, which was the limit of their intelligence.

Beyond ten thousand, without waiting for the enemy to attack, they would collapse on their own.

Faced with the overwhelming forty thousand troops of Yehu, Rama Town, which bore the brunt (without mistake), indeed struggled to hold out.

Although the governor of Skyrim Province placed great importance on this forward base, he could not have predicted that Yehu could organize such a large-scale attack.

The defenders of Rama Town consisted of only a reinforced regiment and a reinforced battalion, totaling more than two thousand three hundred soldiers.

Although these were the elite of the Kingdom Army, the disadvantage in numbers was evident here, and combined with the complacency and underestimation of the enemy, the defensive lines of Rama Town were quickly breached.

As the night raid seemed destined to turn into a one-sided massacre, and this small human town would become spoils under the savage onslaught of Yehu, the sky suddenly lit up.

It was not the sun that illuminated the sky but a super fireball able to scorch everyone's eyes.

Roland adjusted the onyx sunglasses perched on his nose, listening to the screams coming from below, feeling somewhat sympathetic for the enemy's misery.

Even if they were organized and disciplined, the grassroots soldiers could not comprehend the terror of magic.

On this journey south, Lisa's raw strength was also continuously rising.

Her ability to manipulate and use fire had long surpassed the level she had in Lazio of the Eternal City.

The truths learned on paper required the test of practice, and combat skills needed the trial of actual combat.

The super fireball descended, instantly burning hundreds of Yehu in black armor who were charging en masse and injuring many more around them.

In war, inflicting severe injuries on the enemy sometimes causes more damage than killing on the spot.

After all, the dead lie quietly there, while wounded soldiers let out the most horrific screams of their lives.

Fortunately, this didn't trouble the Yehu, as in their concept, there was no tradition of rescuing wounded soldiers.

Once wounded on the battlefield, it was as good as death; when to execute the death sentence was entirely up to the whims of the heavens.

This was the tradition of the Yehu.

Watching the subsequent Yehu soldiers trample over their injured comrades to continue the charge, Lisa, floating in the air, flushed suddenly.

Literal redness.

In her understanding, people must have things they revere.

Such as lovers, partners, and family, or perhaps law and morality.

If even the lives of wounded comrades are disregarded, what difference is there with the barbaric Yehu?

Uh, they really are Yehu.

Since that's the case, there's no need to grant them the mercy reserved for human compatriots.

Lisa's delicate face instantly turned the color of a Firebird, her crimson wings unfurled, transforming into a Firebird and flying into the midst of Yehu.

This time, she held nothing back, directly entering massacre mode.

The even hotter flames roasted the enemies, making the entire world seem to tremble in fire.

This time, Yehu did not let out any screams, nor did they leave behind any intact corpses.

Lisa was too lazy to use any advanced magic, instead executing the Yehu with Blazing Inferno for maximum destruction.

Standing in shock on the third floor of the town hall, Hamos stared at the fiery hell before him, utterly dumbfounded.

After a brief moment of distraction, he reacted swiftly, immediately ordering the near-defeated soldiers to regroup using the Fire Wall as cover.

On the other side of the Fire Wall, Yehu were walking to their deaths; behind the Fire Wall, human soldiers were gaining a chance to catch their breath.

This is what a Transcendent is, a super being capable of turning the tide of battle alone.

When Lisa exhausted her magic power and returned to the top floor to rest, not a single living Yehu could be found within three kilometers of Rama Town.

Roland embraced Lisa, giving her an encouraging kiss.

Lisa beamed and snuggled back into the bed to rest.

Most mages preferred to use meditation as a means to recover their magic power, but Lisa was different.

She was not a pure mage; many of her abilities came from the Power of Star Path. Quality sleep not only helped in recovering magic power but also quickly restored physical strength.

Besides, sleeping with Roland was the ultimate enjoyment.

Roland did not intervene.

He was, after all, the foremost Scholar of the Star Path in the present world, the last Great Sage of the Elf Race; if he could have someone else act, why should he?

Furthermore, a Scholar and Holy Knight competing with a mage in mass-killing spells carried a touch of humor.

His single-target damage and defensive capability surpassed Lisa's, but in the area of mowing down enemies, a mage's spell was more professional.

Let the right person do the right thing, that's called wisdom.

Roland silently thought, helping Lisa cover herself with a blanket, and walked out of the room.

Outside the room, Hamos and the mayor of Rama Town stood respectfully in the corridor, seeing Roland walk out, Hamos was not surprised.

This is what nobility is, hiding in the back during battles, but standing at the center when receiving military honors.

The merits of the subordinates belong to the nobles; the mistakes of the subordinates belong to the individuals.

Hamos had seen it too many times.

He had seen much, but the mayor had not seen as much. This rigid official in his thirties could not completely hide his disdain for the "cling-to-wife" noble.

In the face of the mayor's disdain, Roland proudly puffed out his chest.

Jealous? With such a formidable wife, am I not allowed to be proud?

Suppressing his disdain, the mayor cleared his throat, quickly reporting to Roland.

Although Roland was an envoy from the Vladimir Empire and not his direct superior, it was currently the honeymoon period for the formation of the Rodinia Alliance. All countries had issued orders requiring officials to show respect to high-ranking officials from other countries.

Chapter 685: The Art of Passing the Buck (Part 2)

The allies were enraged; this was a diplomatic incident.

Dare to disrespect Roland, you'd be dismissed and investigated in minutes.

Although the mayor's eyesight wasn't too great, his ability to handle affairs was quite decent. He quickly clarified the entire process of the attack that night, recording the achievements and losses.

No exaggeration, no personal emotions mixed in.

Perfectly fitting the stereotype of a Prudon grassroots official.

This is the Prudon people, always weighing ingredients with balances and beakers when cooking.

Roland couldn't be bothered to complain; after all, this was just a not-so-important stop on his journey.

After all, they fought side by side once, and he couldn't bear to see these guys die in vain, so he sincerely proposed a suggestion to the mayor and the sheriff.

"In the name of the special envoy of the Vladimir Empire, I very seriously suggest to you, immediately cover the evacuation of unarmed personnel, and then withdraw."

"Your window of retreat is only a few days."

The mayor was stunned, Yehu had just left behind thousands of charred bodies, why retreat?

Hamos, however, understood. He briefly explained to the mayor: "Mr. Hails, if Mr. Dorothy and his wife did not act tonight, Rama Town would have already fallen. But Mr. Dorothy has other missions and cannot stay here long, so Rama Town cannot be defended."

Mayor Hails' expression darkened. After a long sigh, he hesitated, looking deeply at Roland, and asked probingly: "Can Mr. Dorothy stay here a few more days? Reinforcements can arrive in three to five days at most."

"What if there's no reinforcements? What if the reinforcements are delayed? What if Rama Town is used as a pawn to block the enemy?" Roland retorted.

He and Lisa could of course fend off Yehu's attack, but at considerable cost. If the enemy arranged for assassins to strike at that moment, the danger level would increase exponentially.

A wise gentleman would not stand under a precarious wall.

Roland was indeed buying the elves and earth spirits space to move north, but he had no intention of sacrificing his life for others.

Not even just bearing the risk.

Facing the speechless Hails, Roland decisively said, "This place is dangerous. If you intend to retreat, I can stay for three days. If you intend to die defending, I will head south as soon as possible and relay your death to the officials in New Bodenburg."

Without waiting for the mayor to speak, Roland coldly added, "If you dare to deceive me, I will personally kill you before Yehu arrives."

"Viscount Dorothy, I must consider such an important matter seriously; could you give us some time?" The mayor's attitude was humble.

"Five hours."

Roland straightforwardly stated, "You must decide before the first ray of dawn in the east appears."

His attitude was somewhat domineering, but the mayor and sheriff didn't dare utter a word, quickly taking their leave to go out and discuss countermeasures.

Returning to the town hall office, Hails couldn't help but erupt at Roland.

"Damn pretty boy, trembling under his wife's skirt, yet so arrogant."

"But he has a good wife."

Hamos mercilessly interrupted Hails' complaints, directly asking, "Mr. Hails, you are the town's chief executive. Whether to stay or leave, please make a decision soon."

This did not sit well with Hails. He snorted lightly, retorting in annoyance, "Hamos, according to the kingdom's law, it is wartime now. You are the highest official."

"But the battle is over."

"The conflict is only over when it's confirmed there won't be ongoing conflict." Hails' understanding of the law evidently surpassed that of Hamos, who is purely a military man.

Seeing Hamos sweating profusely, Hails' tone gradually softened.

"Hamos, my old friend, you should be very aware of the consequences of making a retreat decision without authorization."

"If Viscount Dorothy could give us a retreat order, it would be better." Hamos shook his head and sighed with some helplessness.

"Old buddy, did you drink three barrels of black beer? What nonsense are you talking?" Hails glared at Hamos unhappily.

In fact, everyone knew that retreat was the best choice, but who would make the decision, and who would dare to sign off? No one wanted to take responsibility, so whom to blame afterwards?

People in the officialdom are smart, even the seemingly stubborn Prudon officials.

After looking at each other for a long time, they could only come up with a compromise plan.

Immediately call for a meeting of all officials and let everyone vote to decide.

If everybody thinks retreating is okay, at least others will share the responsibility. Even if there's no hope for a political career, at least a safe landing.

Just as said, Hails demonstrated high work efficiency, gathering all the officials for an emergency meeting in just three hours.

He didn't even give these people a chance to speak and discuss, but instead brought out the emergency-printed ballots.

"Please choose to agree or disagree with the retreat and sign your name!"

Hails distributed the right to sign to each person, also spreading the responsibility among everyone.

What are you looking at, you also signed!

This is the effect that Hails wanted.

The officials naturally were reluctant, argued intensely, and some feigned ignorance, expressing a firm commitment to execute the wise decisions of the mayor and sheriff, but personally lacking the ability, hence not participating in the vote.

Hails thoroughly understood these people, and prepared with a strategy, ready to shift the blame.

He took out the emergency decision law, displaying the corresponding legal texts to everyone.

When key officials encounter emergencies beyond their handling capacity and authority, they must convene all officials at the level for collective decision-making.

Faced with legal texts, the officials went silent.

They had no choice but to state their positions.

After five minutes of tense voting, the evacuation decision was finally passed with thirteen votes in favor, one against, and one abstention.

Looking at the person who voted against, Hails was infuriated.

So you think you're smart, huh?

That bastard was just too sly. Since the evacuation decision would definitely pass, he could "reluctantly" accept the collective decision.

If there were accountability afterward, he would be praised for strongly opposing.

While everyone was figuring out a coping strategy, you were playing petty tricks?

With a grim face, Hails issued the retreat order and assigned the only person who voted against to cover the rear.

"Mr. Shara, I fully respect your opinion; I'll give you a chance to showcase, the evacuation must be orderly, and please take full responsibility for the rear arrangements, Mr. Shara."

"Mr. Hails, I..."

"I'm not discussing with you; that's an order!" Hails coldly interrupted Shara's protests.

Shara was silent for a moment, then could only reluctantly accept the order.

In the Prudon Kingdom, publicly opposing the royal family at most leads to imprisonment, but disobeying orders and causing severe consequences results in a death penalty.

As the first ray of dawn appeared, the Eden carriage started right on time.

Just as Roland was about to leave, Hails appeared breathlessly in front of the carriage, not having time to wipe his sweat, he held up the joint meeting's decision, shouting loudly.

"Viscount Dorothy, we decided to evacuate, please help us."

Drawing back the curtain, the familiar handsome face was not there; instead, it was Lisa, with hair gradually turning fiery red.

"Mr. Hails, you won't regret this decision. Please arrange the evacuation immediately."

Lowering the curtain, Lisa's smile gradually disappeared, simply sighing softly, "Roland, are you really planning to fight tens of thousands of Yehu alone?"

"Sister Lisa, what are you talking about? How could I do it alone, you have to help me."

"You rascal!"

Lisa pinched Roland's earlobe, yet murmured softly, "Since you already decided, let's stay and see what Yehu's strength is."

Roland nodded slightly, lifting the curtain to look at the already evacuating crowd, silently giving thumbs-up to the efficiency of the Prudon Kingdom officials.

Truly a most uncompromising country; though not good at adaptation, the execution is strong.

Putting down the curtain, Roland smiled as he pointed north.

"Let's go, sister, we're heading to the northern city to set up traps, giving the Yehu a tiny surprise."

Chapter 686: He Has Arrived

After the Battle of White Mountain, Sofia established rules for human Transcendents, forbidding them from slaughtering ordinary people on a large scale or engaging in extensive city destruction.

Besides humans, other powerful beings appearing in human territories must also abide by this rule.

Anyone daring to violate it would be personally dealt with by her.

The main objects of Sofia's protection are the humans of the Rodinia Continent.

At this moment, Roland and Lisa are using Extraordinary Abilities and Magic to slaughter the Yehu natives of the South Continent.

No matter how compassionate Sofia is, she cannot protect the ignorant natives far away on the South Continent, especially since her intersection with the concept of compassion is almost null.

The term 'compassion' does appear in Roland's dictionary, but it does not include the Yehu as a target audience.

A day ago.

The evacuation of Rama Town proceeded quickly; Hails and Hamos were selected development officials of the Prudon Kingdom, and their abilities were undoubtedly assured.

After unifying thoughts, the two coordinated seamlessly, and other officials also cooperated actively, organizing the evacuation so swiftly that even Roland was greatly impressed.

Roland also had to praise the Yehu's swiftness in action.

Unlike before, with the aid of mysterious forces, their attack speed is comparable to human elites.

Although their overall combat power and weaponry are far inferior to the human army, their efficient action compensates well for this gap.

Facing more than fifty thousand Yehu sweeping over like a tide, almost engulfing the Prudon Kingdom Army already in the open field, Roland could only look for the right moment to act.

Compared to Lisa, an Extraordinary Mage, he is indeed not proficient at mass killing, as his mass-killing ability is the standard one-time deal.

Under the radiance of the Holy Light, all beings are equal, but the Holy Light comes and goes quickly. If the enemy is smart enough to enter the battlefield in batches, Roland's Holy Light showcase would be much less effective.

However, the Yehu did not know Roland had this ability.

They firmly believed that the human Mages were exhausted, and a swarm assault at this time would guarantee victory.

The Commanders supervised the front lines, and the tribal Witch Doctors rhythmically beat war drums, resounding in everyone's heart.

The Yehu, inspired by the drumming, were emotionally stirred, and howling, they launched a fearless charge.

Prudon soldiers, however, were dispirited under the interference of the drumbeats.

Before the popularization of advanced modern communication and control methods, drums and bugles were the best choice for commanding the army.

As long as the army had a strong execution power and combat power, the sounded bugle could scare the enemy senseless.

Each major nation in Rodinia had its own set of drum and bugle usage methods, and although the levels of the command systems varied across countries, they were generally pre-modern in grade.

Yehu?

Playing with such tactics was overly advanced for their intellect.

This was the consensus in the military sphere of the major nations in Rodinia.

The mainstream command system was too complex for these unrefined, furry natives.

Yet now, Yehu's use of drums to distinguish between attack, advance, and charge commands could be clearly discerned.

Their weaponry remained outdated, and their individual combat power was still weak, but an organized army could compensate with numbers and courage.

The emergence of drums made up for the Yehu's organizational shortcomings, allowing them to touch the threshold of near-modern armies.

An organized Yehu will surely become a calamity in the future.

But this was not something Hails and Hamos should be worrying about as they stood pale-faced against the tidal Yehu army.

Facing something beyond their comprehension, they could do nothing but remain bewildered.

Fortunately, Hamos's deputy remained clear-headed; with quick reflexes, he snatched the signal flare from Hamos's hand and fired it at top speed.

Hamos also finally snapped out of his daze; he quickly issued orders for the army to stop advancing and defend on the spot.

They could only hope for Roland, who was playing the role of Viscount Dorothy, and his wife to save them.

Of course, the emphasis was on his wife.

No one had much hope for the playboy.

Seeing the Prudon Kingdom Army halt, the Yehu weren't impatient; they swiftly completed the encirclement with reinforcements arriving ceaselessly.

Under the command of the Commanders, the Yehu didn't initiate an attack but continued to gather.

Encircled on a small hill, the morale of the Prudon Kingdom's soldiers plummeted. The soldiers numbly loaded bullets, polished bayonets, and dug trenches, faces etched with despair.

If the enemy numbered only a few thousand, they could laugh and fight; if there were ten to twenty thousand, they would have to sit up and fight seriously.

But the enemy's numbers clearly exceeded a hundred thousand; even if loading the breech guns quickly, they still had to consider the negative impact of overheated barrels.

If they formed a firepower web to suppress the enemy, they couldn't sustain with ammo reserves and barrels; if they aimed and shot, there wasn't enough time, and they could at most kill a few thousand before the position would be breached.

They found themselves in theoretical desperation.

If they weren't dealing with the savage Yehu, they might even consider surrendering.

Unable to fight back, incapable of holding the line, unable to surrender, with no place to flee, the soldiers' sense of despair was palpable.

In desperation, some found their fighting spirit ignited; warriors from the Kingdom's north even stripped to fight bare-chested, ready to engage in close combat with blades when ammunition ran out.

Hamos and Hails stood atop the small hill, silently observing the battle situation.

After an unknowable length of time, Hails couldn't help but sigh and ask, "What are they waiting for?"

"Waiting for nightfall."

Hamos looked at the setting sun and the enemy making final preparations before moving into attack position, his voice hoarse and weary.

He could understand Hails's mindset; the oppressive atmosphere of despair would spread in silence, so rather than waiting for death, it was better to think of ways to struggle, even if only to seize a bit more time.

Chapter 687: He Has Arrived (Part 2)

If one can live, who would wish to die?

He mocked himself with a smile, calmly saying, "At least a thousand soldiers and more than five thousand residents have been evacuated to safety. Guess what honorary title we'll be posthumously awarded?"

"No chance at all? Viscount Dorothy promised..."

Hails couldn't help but laugh halfway through his sentence.

If promises were useful, the world would have already become a harmonious paradise.

Promises are only fulfilled when there's profit to be made.

Viscount Dorothy came to gild himself, not seek death.

Even if he doesn't fulfill his promise, can anyone crawl up from Hell to settle accounts with him?

Moreover, under such circumstances, no one can accuse him. Being unable to fulfill a promise due to force majeure isn't breaking one's word, just helplessness.

"Looks like we won't see tomorrow's sun."

Hails greedily gazed at the last glow of the sunset, softly murmuring, "So beautiful. As long as we remember the sun's brilliance, we won't feel darkness even in Hell."

Hamos didn't understand the romanticism of cultured people, but he also watched the sunset.

He simply felt that tonight's sunset was beautiful, with clouds like burning flames.

No matter how long the day is, nightfall will eventually come.

As night fell, the battlefield was engulfed in deathly silence.

Hamos leaned against a large rock, eyes closed, gathering strength.

This was his final battle; he had to kill a few more monkeys to show the Prudon soldiers' spirit.

Beside him, Hails was wiping his bayonet.

He hadn't received formal military training and didn't even have bullets in his gun, so he had to use the rifle's bayonet as a spear.

"Maybe I should add another grip to the gun handle; that way, I could attack from further away." Hails finally found some humor.

"That won't work. The gun barrel would be too long for you, and the extra grip might fall off." Hamos said seriously.

Hails shook his head; this is the Prudon people, the humorless Prudon people. Does professionalism really matter at this point?

He gripped the gun handle tightly, eyes focused on the pitch-black night sky, his heartbeat gradually accelerating.

Yehu had arrived.

They launched their attack under the cover of night.

The long and piercing sound of the horn tore through the silent night, starting tonight's bloody slaughter.

Yehu's attack was well-structured, launched from multiple directions in waves, maximizing their forces while avoiding being swiftly torn apart by firepower.

The enemy commander was a cold-blooded genius.

Hamos thought silently.

He truly couldn't do it, neither so cold-blooded nor so efficient.

Such a level of commander, even in the star-studded and famed Prudon Kingdom, could rank as an Army General.

He didn't lose unjustly.

Gunfire erupted, the whistling bullets hitting the front line of charging long-haired Yehu.

Unlucky Yehu fell with a scream, dying quickly.

Some Yehu didn't even have time to scream as they were trampled to death by soldiers from behind.

No one paused for fallen, severely injured comrades.

Seeing this, Hamos felt even more burdened.

He couldn't understand how Yehu could become such an organized and disciplined army in a short time, given their previous, somewhat humorous performances.

The Kingdom might have provoked something that shouldn't be provoked.

"Long live the Kingdom! Open fire!"

The frontline captain roared furiously, and the gunfire rang out again.

This round of volley was evidently sparse; bullets flew out one after another, failing to deliver a shocking effect to topple an entire battle line in one go.

Although the total damage was about the same, the visual effect was completely different.

Dozens of Yehu falling one after another hardly affected the situation and even incited Yehu's ferocity.

They howled and accelerated their charge.

"Hails, my friend, we have to say goodbye."

"Where will we meet again?" Hails mocked with a smile.

"If possible, at the Juniper Bar in Pine Forest City." Hamos revealed a rare smile.

The Juniper Bar was a top bar in the capital, Pine Forest City, with luxury and prestige unmatched by its name.

The people who could afford to spend there were either wealthy or distinguished, and there were reportedly beauties from all over the continent. With enough gold coins, one could be their groom for the night.

From any angle, the Juniper Bar was the most ambiguous starlight under Pine Forest City's night sky, an untouchable tender desire for low-level officials like them.

"You've finally understood humor."

Hails took a deep breath, glanced at Hamos out of the corner of his eye, and kept his eyes fixed on the gradually approaching Yehu.

He could even see the hair and blood-red eyes on the faces of the front line Yehu.

That was a...

Puzzled gaze?

Hails was slightly stunned. He couldn't imagine that the gaze of a daring fool charging forward could be so confused, as if it weren't themselves charging.

A terrifying thought emerged in Hails' mind.

"They are being controlled, not afraid of death!"

"Yes, that's not a bad thing; at least their adaptability would be very poor." Hamos calmly pulled the trigger, shooting the leading Yehu squad leader in the head.

He skillfully worked the bolt, continuing to shoot.

When Yehu was less than five meters away, he fired the last bullet, raised his rifle, and charged into the group of Yehu.

Before charging, he smiled and reminded Hails once more.

"Remember, Juniper Bar, I'll be waiting for you."

He truly didn't understand humor but was seriously inviting.

Although the chance of survival was slim, he remembered that a bishop had said half a year ago that his destiny was peculiar, fraught with calamity but always with some light to avert danger.

Since fate has already made arrangements, he didn't need to think much; just hold the rifle well during the charge.

Hails obviously didn't know what Hamos was thinking, and could only admire.

Facing death with calmness, this was a true warrior.

Hamos lived up to the name of a warrior.

...With force, he randomly stabbed and killed an enemy. Hamos stepped back, dodging Yehu's stone spear, and counterattacked to stab the enemy before him to death.

Does the dawn of hope really exist?

He couldn't help but look up.

At the moment he looked up, his eyes were almost blinded by sudden, dazzling light.

The pitch-black night instantly turned into daylight.

Yehu looked up blankly, then screamed, covering their eyes.

Some cunning human soldiers didn't rush to look up but killed the enemies in front.

Solders who did look up almost all had their eyes burned by the light, including the bloodthirsty and exhausted Hamos.

At the moment he saw the dawn, his final strength was exhausted, and he fainted.

Before losing consciousness, his last awareness also gradually blurred.

"Is it angels coming to guide me into the Celestial Kingdom?"

Of course not, it was just the reinforcements arriving.

Although the reinforcements were only Roland and Lisa, it was enough.

Lisa's magic power was greatly consumed, and continuing to employ large-scale magic might cause irreversible damage.

Roland certainly wouldn't let her take risks and directly issued a magic usage ban.

Prudon people certainly needed saving; he would take action.

If he couldn't save them, they were just unlucky; he did his best.

Roland indeed did his best.

He even weighed the pros and cons of Holy Light Skills and chose the strategy with the maximum killing effect.

Using Prudon people as bait, he gathered the Yehu as much as possible, then used Holy Light to clean up the battlefield in one stroke.

To achieve his goal, he couldn't notify Hamos in advance, forcing Hamos to unleash his maximum potential in desperation, stalling for time.

He finally waited for the opportunity.

As casualties increased for the Prudon Army, Yehu's forces concentrated more.

Even though most Yehu were puppets, their innate habits wouldn't change.

They liked to cluster, fearing being alone.

Even on the battlefield.

Roland seized the moment to pour in Divine Energy all at once.

The sky turned bright as day, and the land was filled with Divine Energy.

Yehu jumped frantically as if their feet were burning, unable to attack at all.

Divine Energy fell like rain, and Yehu hit by it died without even making a sound.

Watching Yehu vaporize with a "sizzling" sound under Divine Energy, Roland certainly knew who was behind them.

The Dark Race.

They had arrived.

To claim the territory that belonged to them per the agreement.

Chapter 688: As Long as Skyrim Province Can Be Saved

Skyrim Province's capital, New Bodenburg.

In the government hall, Governor Rivers of Skyrim Province is receiving distinguished guests.

He never dreamed that the absurd sounding war report from the frontline at Rama Town was true.

Just two days ago, he received the war report from the front.

A hundred thousand Yehu forces attacked Rama Town; Mayor Hails and Sheriff cum Garrison Commander Hamos, under Viscount Dorothy's guidance, abandoned the town and evacuated the people to avoid major losses.

In the ensuing battle, they led the garrison in desperate resistance, inflicting damage on thousands of Yehu soldiers.

Just as the situation became critical, Viscount Dorothy stepped in, with Holy Light descending, and the entire Yehu army was annihilated.

Seeing this war report, Governor Rivers was furious, almost ordering the military police to arrest those two for false military reporting on the spot.

But he held back, only summoning them to return immediately to report.

It was utter nonsense; there are only a few people in the world capable of destroying nearly a hundred thousand Yehu, all of them apex power figures of influential races, impossible to appear in the barren land of Skyrim Province.

He could not imagine seeing formidable figures like Sofia, Roland in Skyrim Province.

Until the so-called "Viscount Dorothy" arrived in New Bodenburg.

With intense skepticism, Governor Rivers met Viscount Dorothy.

The moment he saw the Viscount, his knees weakened, and he kneeled on one knee.

"Chairman, why have you come?"

Looking at the sweaty Rivers, Roland smiled and gestured for him to stand.

"Why I came isn't important, you can even think of it as a vacation."

Permitted by Roland, Rivers cautiously stood up, inwardly somewhat dismissive.

A vacation?

Such nonsense might fool someone uninformed.

However, with tact, he did not refute but instead followed Roland's line, even recommending nearby tourist spots.

For instance...

After pondering for a moment, Rivers said somewhat dejectedly, "The city layout of New Bodenburg is quite similar to Bodenburg and Pine Forest City. With your discerning eye, I fear this might not seem like a good tourist destination."

"Not necessarily, I never thought visiting predesigned places was necessary for tourism. The greatest pleasure of travel is exploration and the unknown. If I planned it all beforehand, I might even feel there's no need to go," Roland said with a smile.

Rivers did not agree with Roland's viewpoint.

This is the South Continent, not the core zone of the Rodinia Continent.

Travelling in unplanned areas in the South Continent is likely to encounter danger.

Roland, being extraordinarily powerful, alone could shatter tens of thousands of Yehu, is unlikely to face danger, yet others following his style of travel sooner or later would be taught harsh lessons by savage cannibal natives.

Given that Viscount Dorothy is Roland, Rivers unraveled his prior doubts.

He certainly has the ability to shatter an entire Yehu army.

Hamos and Hails might have exaggerated the enemy casualties somewhat, but the progress of the war is reliable.

Confirming that they had not lied, Rivers did not feel the slightest relief; in fact, he became even more troubled.

"Chairman, you were on the battlefield, and I would like to understand the battlefield situation; is it convenient?"

"Of course, no problem. We are all part of the Rodinia Alliance, no need to be so formal."

Roland came to New Bodenburg to remind Governor Rivers and Skyrim Province's military and political officials to understand the severity of the situation and avoid misjudgment.

He described the day's battle situation in detail.

Rivers' face turned exceptionally grim; he dared not doubt Roland's words, but...

"Chairman, I completely trust your judgment yet find some aspects difficult to accept."

Seeing Rivers' expression change from proud to distressed, Roland understood his suffering well.

He would also feel troubled.

Originally planning to expand the Kingdom's territory and establish esteemed military accomplishments, yet now fearing even losing control of Skyrim Province, who wouldn't feel head-splitting?

And this wasn't even his personal fault.

Yet sympathy aside, Roland did not intend to deeply intervene in this matter.

This is, after all, an internal affair of the Prudon Kingdom. He holds no office in the Prudon Kingdom; interfering too much might not be appreciated by others; he also doesn't want to make an awkward situation.

If asked to handle matters, compensation must be made.

The cost of preserving Skyrim Province is not low.

Seeing Rivers silent for a long time, Roland deliberately changed the topic, smiling as he asked, "Mr. Rivers, how do you plan to respond?"

"Sir Roland, this is a domestic matter and should not burden you; since you wish to know, I will briefly report according to Alliance rules."

Rivers stood up, clearing his throat, and after organizing his thoughts, reported his handling approach to Roland.

Running away is not an option.

This is the southernmost part of the South Continent; if one wishes to return to the homeland by land, it implies passing through the territories of Yehu, Centaurs, and various barbarian races, posing a high risk.

Previously, logistics posed the greatest challenge on this path; now, someone is backing the barbarians, making free passage through their territories nearly impossible.

Taking this route almost ensures not returning home, with significant losses.

Before he reaches Pine Forest, the soldiers might rebel.

Land routes are blocked, and sea routes similarly pose danger.

The Prudon Kingdom's naval strength ranks lowest among the major countries of Rodinia, with each seafaring venture being an arduous test for the kingdom's navy.

The vessels they traveled to Skyrim Province were mostly leased from countries like Sussex, even secured through bribery to gain protection from Ocean Generals along the way.

Regardless, the shipping costs are high, and the cycle is long, making it almost impossible to withdraw.

With no escape route, only two roads remain: fighting to the end or surrendering.

Resistance without support is destined to be a dead end, and he would rather die than surrender to the Yehu.

Faced with dead ends in every direction, even Rivers, a seasoned official, couldn't help but look ashen.

Just as his brain was about to explode, he noticed Roland's smile out of the corner of his eye and could only wipe the sweat from his forehead and tentatively say:

"Mr. Chairman, the situation has developed beyond my ability and authority. My personal honor is not worth mentioning, but I implore you to make decisions for the safety of the province's 900,000 people and more than 70,000 soldiers."

Roland smiled at Rivers and lightly teased after his third sweep of sweat, "I thought you had the confidence to handle it alone."

Rivers breathed a sigh of relief, smiled wryly, and said, "You overestimate me. I just don't know how to start."

The Prudon officials are merely straightforward, not truly foolish.

He could understand Roland's position. Regardless of whether Roland was just passing by or had a specific purpose on the South Continent, he was indeed in the Skyrim Province during the Yehu invasion.

Roland could, of course, come and go freely, but if he abandoned the million soldiers and civilians in the Skyrim Province, the Rodinia Alliance would have no reason to exist.

If the spirit of the people is scattered, the team cannot be led.

Roland may not like to manage these messy affairs, but he must uphold the interests of each country in the Rodinia Alliance.

He is the advocate and initiator of the Alliance, the spokesperson of it, and the representative of five of the six permanent chair countries.

If he doesn't manage things, who will?

After wiping away sweat for the fourth time, Rivers finally cleaned himself up and hurriedly spoke before Roland could ask anything:

"Honorable Chairman, as long as the lives of these million soldiers and civilians are preserved, I am willing to pay any price."

This is the necessary attitude.

Roland was giving his all to help him, and if he were still evasive and trying to negotiate, he would be a thankless bastard.

Since Rivers had a proper attitude and didn't harbor unrealistic fantasies, things were naturally easier.

"Mr. Rivers, before we discuss countermeasures, I must clarify something to you. Due to certain unspeakable reasons, the South Continent is already acknowledged as the sphere of influence of the Dark Race. At least, I cannot openly oppose their expansion here."

Noting Rivers' face turn pale instantly, Roland calmly stated, "But my duty is to protect the interests of the Alliance's countries, which is also the stance and reason I have for securing benefits for your country."

Rivers sighed in relief, wiping sweat for the fifth time.

Roland spoke subtly but clearly.

He could vaguely guess that Roland had some unspeakable and dirty dealing with the Dark Influence, but he naturally dared not accuse Roland of exchanging interests with them; this was not his concern.

He wasn't lying. Ever since the Yehu formed an organized military, the situation had spiraled out of control, beyond his ability and authority.

Roland had already surpassed Rivers' understanding by gathering the Yehu in a confined space and annihilating them all.

It seemed to him that a new era was unfolding, and he couldn't afford a ticket to the new era's vessel.

What else could he say?

As the captain of the old Skyline vessel, he had to land the passengers safely.

Then, maybe he'd have to retire.

Rivers thought silently.

At just forty-three years old, he had already risen to the ranks of a province-level official, with a previously limitless career path, yet losing the Skyrim Province meant the end of his career.

For the Sussex Empire, there are dozens of overseas territories like the Skyrim Province, but for the Prudon Kingdom, this was almost everything.

Losing ninety percent of the overseas territories, to bear such a stain and not be imprisoned is already fortunate, let alone further promotions.

Rivers, having given up his fantasies, had a rather good attitude; he had completely resigned himself, leaving everything to Roland's decision.

Following Roland's simple analysis of the stakes, he quickly and resolutely expressed his attitude.

"Mr. Chairman, I said any price. You don't have to worry about insignificant personal interests; just keep them safe."

Roland carefully examined Rivers, who was slightly plump, gaining a new understanding of this rigid official.

Rivers, male, born in Alheisen City, Prudon, with a father from lower nobility, although not inheritable, essentially of civilian origin. Served in the military until the age of thirty-three, accumulating merit and rising to the rank of colonel.

Seeing no future in the military, he retired and became a local official, gradually advancing to provincial governor.

Personality-wise, he was taciturn and fearfully obedient at home.

All this information came from the province-level official dossier compiled by Raikkonen across the Alliance.

Although he had accepted bribes of several thousand Gold Marks, kept three young girls, and even a Centaur girl in the Skyrim Province, Roland still believed he was morally and capable, worthy of reuse.

He had ability and responsibility; despite minor flaws in personal virtue, he held traditional family values, qualifying him as a fairly competent official in this era.

Recognizing that this guy would likely be dismissed upon returning home, Roland had already begun pondering what position to arrange for Rivers within the Alliance.

As the Alliance's spokesperson, he couldn't directly poach talents from other countries, but he didn't mind picking up discarded excellent officials.

Although in pre-travel times a soft-spoken man wasn't fit to be with a dog, in this era, treating one's wife and family well was definitely considered quality male.

Roland selectively overlooked Rivers' flaw of having three lovers in the Skyrim Province, not thinking it was a fatal defect.

Chapter 690: As Long as Skyrim Province Can Be Preserved (Part 3)

If Rivers holds great power in Skyrim Province yet remains chaste, Roland would ironically not dare to use him.

Being of saintly character doesn't necessarily mean one is strictly self-disciplined; more often, it could be mere performance.

Having already regarded Rivers as a crucial subordinate for the future, Roland naturally wanted to leave a good impression in front of future subordinates.

He calmly said, "I have some connections with the higher-ups of the Dark Influence. I can try to bridge the gap for you; you can negotiate with them, and I'll back you up."

Rivers quickly bowed to express his gratitude to Roland.

"On behalf of Skyrim Province's millions of soldiers and civilians, thank you for your kindness."

Roland's lips slightly curled up, increasing his fondness for Rivers.

Not only capable but also perceptive and sensible.

There are indeed some affairs that it's inconvenient for him to step directly into; if he negotiates with Milones himself and the talks break down, there would be no room for maneuver.

It's better to let Rivers go first and probe the other side's bottom line before proceeding.

Contacting Milones wasn't difficult. Roland easily found the intelligence liaison of the Dark Influence in New Bodenburg and had them help make the contact.

Milones' response was swift. He accepted Roland's peace request and agreed to negotiations.

Roland wasn't surprised by his response. After all, a record of the Holy Light wiping out nearly a hundred thousand Yehu was there for verification at any time. No matter how unwilling Milones was, he had to sit down and talk.

Though this guy accepted the negotiation as if it were a blessing, seemingly out of spite.

Three days later, the negotiations proceeded as scheduled, with the negotiation site being Rama Town on the northern border.

This small town was the final battlefield of the Yehu Invasion War.

Due to the devastation of war, this once lively town now resembled a ghost town.

It seemed entirely unsuitable for negotiations, yet Milones still chose this location.

Rivers didn't become the chief representative for the negotiation, which was Milones' demand.

He set a prerequisite for negotiations: Roland himself must attend.

He didn't want to waste words on small fry.

Roland accepted the arrangement.

After all, Milones was a professional diplomat, and such petty tricks had little effect on him.

Roland initially thought it would be a tough negotiation, but unexpectedly, Milones seemed somewhat distracted, handling the negotiation details with a very casual attitude.

The extent of casualness led Roland to momentarily think Milones was there just to amuse himself.

Upon confirming that Milones was seriously negotiating, Roland straightforwardly laid his cards on the table.

"How much would it cost to preserve Skyrim Province?"

Milones didn't answer directly but instead asked, "Skyrim Province is an overseas province of the Prudon Kingdom, and it seems your relationship with them isn't great. Why strive for their interests?"

"Because they are my allies; they are members of the Rodinia Alliance. As the head of the Alliance, I must do this."

Roland spoke very candidly, his gaze exceptionally calm, as if discussing what to have for breakfast.

Milones gazed at Roland with a complex expression and only slowly spoke after a long pause, "Skyrim Province is insignificant compared to the whole South Continent. Besides its strategic location, it doesn't hold much value."

"I'm a bit hesitant, as my demand far exceeds the value of Skyrim Province."

Roland responded with a smile, "Feel free to speak; we've already signed a peace agreement, which could also be seen as a certain level of alliance."

"I would like to ask for your help in dealing with the moving island, Lisenburg."

"Lisenburg?" Roland furrowed his brows.

He had heard of this mysterious moving island, known to house countless reclusive experts who could easily crush enemies whenever they took action. However, these were just folk tales, as formal history never recorded them.

What on earth is Lisenburg's mysterious origin?

"Lisenburg is the remnants of the Divine Punishment Legion. After completing their tasks in the 3456th era, the Divine Punishment Legion used Lisenburg as a base to form the Celestial Punishment Legion, preparing to cooperate with the Descent Goddess to destroy everything on the day of ultimate return."

So that's it.

The mysterious and long-lost Divine Punishment Legion.

The mysterious and unknown origin of the moving island.

Indeed, well hidden.