Empress 89

Chapter 89: Night Banquet

The Minister of Finance's Mansion.

This is a luxurious residence located in the Kanabi District.

The fact that the Minister of Finance owns such a large mansion in the city center shows his immense wealth.

But today, Simson wasn't quite pleased.

A few days ago, he heard from his wife that the people sent to execute the purge task had failed.

Originally, he thought dealing with two people who had no power to resist would be enough, but unexpectedly, three assassins carrying firearms and poisoned flying knives failed the task.

What rotten luck.

Afterward, when people were sent to investigate, little information was obtained. All that was known is that a young man saved Norton.

Whether Norton lived or died didn't concern him at all, he was just a coward.

As long as Shanina was dead.

Upon confirming the news of Shanina's death, Simson finally felt a little relieved.

Just as his brow relaxed, the butler appeared at the door.

"Master, the banquet is about to start, Madame invites you to come out and greet the guests."

At the butler's reminder, Simson suddenly remembered that tonight he was holding a simple private banquet under the pretext of his fiftieth birthday to invite a few colleagues.

The people he invited were ministers in the cabinet with whom he had close relations, as well as important figures in the military realm and the Military Intelligence Bureau.

These were all radicals advocating for the weakening of imperial authority.

Their political stances were essentially identical.

People like the staunch imperialist Wald have no right to attend this dinner.

Simson perked up, fixed his appearance in the mirror, and went out with a smile to greet the guests.

As a seasoned politician, deftly switching expressions is basic skill.

Simson certainly wouldn't wear his emotions on his face.

The dinner took place in the small banquet hall in the backyard.

Although the number of people wasn't large, a formal buffet-style banquet was adopted, allowing everyone to move freely and seek out targets they wanted to approach.

Holding a wine glass, Simson keenly noticed that he wasn't the only one with a troubled brow.

Does he also have worries?

Simson noticed Alben drinking alone gloomily nearby and was intrigued.

He knew that Alben had once tried to get close to the Empress to gain more power, but the result was not as hoped.

Later, Alben contacted Roland, and it ended similarly dour.

Thinking of how this indecisive guy was rejected twice, Simson felt much better.

He picked up his glass and walked over to Alben, who was drinking alone in the corner.

"Old friend, you don’t look so well."

"I’m fine, it’s just that the recent security in the Imperial Capital hasn’t been great."

Does the security of the Imperial Capital need the attention of the Minister of Justice?

Isn’t that the job of the Police Department?

Obviously, Alben had something on his mind.

Simson tactfully didn’t poke at his wound and casually asked:

"Alben, what do you think of Her Majesty the Empress?"

"Old friend, I must correct your term. By law, she hasn’t formally ascended the throne yet, so she can’t be called the Empress; during His Majesty Edward’s disappearance, her accurate title should be Crown Prince and Acting Emperor."

"Does it take three years?" Simson feigned surprise, suddenly understanding and said: "In matters of law, you are the expert. Since His Majesty Edward is neither alive nor dead with no corpse, indeed he is missing."

Alben took a deep breath, somewhat helplessly said:

"Simson, we have known each other for many years, I won’t hide it from you. Some time ago she sought me to do something, and I also thought of gaining more power through her."

"Don’t look at me that way, would you pass up the opportunity if given to you?"

Simson answered candidly: "No, I wouldn’t."

He probed, asking: "So your choice is..."

Alben looked at Simson with a cold gaze, scoffed and said: "I didn’t choose, I was chosen. Don’t ask me this question again, I don’t want to answer."

Although his expression was calm, the flash of resentment in his eyes was precisely caught by Simson.

Simson breathed a sigh of relief.

He was indeed a bit worried that Alben might turn against the Empress.

Though they were not allies who shared the same risks, most of the time their interests aligned.

Although Alben was rejected by the Empress and fell out with Roland, and his performance showed no flaws, he still couldn’t be completely trusted.

After all, hatred is also a type of relationship.

Historically, there were famous assassins who, at the cost of their entire family being harmed and their limbs being crippled, got close to assassination targets, gaining full trust before slitting their throats with a single knife.

Alben’s performance was impeccable, but who knows if he was acting out a scheme.

Simson tentatively believed that Alben hadn’t joined the imperialist faction, but further observation was needed.

Fortunately, Alben too was a seasoned politician, and deals could still be made between them.

He lowered his voice, cautiously asking: "I have a friend who returned from Oak Town, heard that there was a murder case there..."

"Do you mean brave countrymen fighting bravely in a brawl that resulted in a death? You really don’t understand law, my old friend. There’s a sheriff in town, they can handle these things, there’s no need for a Cabinet Minister to worry."

Alben’s response put Simson somewhat at ease, and he said smiling, "I know, I just casually asked because a friend mentioned it."

After clinking glasses with Alben and taking a sip, Simson moved on to other colleagues.

As the host of the banquet, he was destined to be busy tonight.

Alben didn’t look up, but he knew what Simson was saying.

As the Minister of Justice, holding the judiciary and police systems nationwide, he possessed intelligence far more accurate and timely than most people.

He not only knew Simson had sent people to assassinate Shanina, but also knew Roland was present at the scene.

He even knew that Shanina wasn't dead and had left the next day with her father and Roland.

(Intelligence personnel from afar couldn't tell that Shanina had become a demonic puppet).

But none of this would be told to Simson.

Let this idiot make more mistakes.

Although Alben accumulated wealth, he definitely wasn't as foolish as Simson to openly trample on the boundaries of law, causing a homicide case.

In his view, a Cabinet Minister holding so many political resources, frantically competing with the owner of an alchemy workshop was already disgraceful enough. Ultimately sending assassins to resolve the problem was simply too foolish.

This was clearly handing a grasp onto political enemies.

At this moment, Simson was having a rosy conversation with Chief Minister William.

Seeing his smug look, it seemed he had no idea of the repercussions of this matter.

Her Majesty the Empress had a compulsion for cleanliness.

Not only in terms of hygiene but also in political matters.

Although such compulsions were somewhat naive.

If this was all, she wouldn't be much different from those simple-minded, incompetent monarchs, but she had Roland.

Sylph was responsible for playing the most beautiful white rose under the sun, while Roland was the black mandrake of death.

This was an unbeatable perfect combination.

Not making naive political mistakes while maintaining a flawless image.

Alben didn’t need to get close to Simson and William to guess what they were discussing.

He could clearly see what officials attending the banquet wanted and what they were doing.

But he couldn’t figure out Sylph and Roland.

He couldn’t understand how Roland could appear in Oak Town at just the right moment, turning the tide.

On one side were the old bureaucrats he could see through, on the other, a progressive young duo he couldn’t comprehend.

He even saw a reflection of his younger self in Roland.

But more cunning, more realistic than he was back then.

Is there even a need to think about such a choice?