**Empress 161**

Chapter 161: Damn Double Standard_2

The establishment of an intelligence network isn't easy. It takes at least one or two years to see results.

The training of professional agents, expanding channels for intelligence collection, and spending money to directly purchase intelligence all require funds.

She needs trustworthy people, and her father's old subordinates are the best targets.

But she can't take risks for the time being.

After all, she can't determine what these people are thinking.

...

Governor's Mansion.

The Governor and the Vice Governor sat facing each other, in conversation.

Staff passing by the door would often silently speculate that Lord Roland and Count Sif were definitely planning the development blueprint for the Three Overseas Provinces.

However, they were actually discussing a simple question: sister or younger sister?

Two interrogation reports lay in front of Sif.

She knew this was an important test, and she didn't dare to slack off, reading every word and phrase carefully and pondering deeply.

Roland wasn't in a hurry, patiently waiting.

He had already handed Munina over to Boen and Munina to Nana.

Munina had more to disclose, but less credibility; Munina had less intelligence but was more reliable.

Let’s make the torturer suffer a bit, increase the intensity of the questioning.

Can the Sea Demon sisters not endure it? This era doesn’t yet have the Geneva Convention, and Roland has already treated them quite well as captives.

Switch to another feudal lord, and the beautiful Miss Siren would probably have been taken to satisfy curiosity, or even be stupefied by cream puffs.

Let them suffer a bit too, to work hard to recover their memories.

Sif pondered for a long time and then asked, with a hint of reversal, "What would you choose?"

"I’m asking you," Roland chuckled, amused at Sif.

"Alright, why isn’t there an option to have it all?" Sif asked softly.

Roland picked up a Large Gold Coin engraved with Edward’s portrait worth five pounds, placing it on the table.

"Getting the face side means losing the emblem side, which makes sense."

Sif took the coin and, smiling brightly, stood it up. Before she could speak, the coin wobbled and fell over.

"I understand, having it all requires excellent balancing skills. Both sisters wish for the other's death, unable to balance no matter what."

"Let's write down our answers on paper and compare them later," Sif suggested with a smile.

"Alright." Playing the answer comparison game is a fun segment of dull teaching, and Roland wouldn't refuse.

The two of them took paper and pens and wrote down their answers separately.

Roland was about to open the note to compare answers when Sif held his hand, "Wait, let's exchange notes to see the answers."

"Younger sister." This was Roland's answer.

"Idiot." This was Sif's answer.

They looked up at each other and laughed simultaneously.

The answers were fine, but what about the reasoning?

Sif cleared her throat and began to explain.

"Actually, I didn't think that much, but that Munina makes me uncomfortable, always feeling as if there's a viper hiding behind her gaze."

"Munina may be a bit silly and less talented, but easier to control. In my view, Munina has cleverness without great wisdom, while Munina is more foolish but knows her limits."

"Though she doesn't hide her desire to kill her sister, that's still because the sister went too far. Munina's character is somewhat better."

"On that rainy night, she didn’t step beyond the camp gate, showing a sense of reverence, so I chose her."

After reporting her answer, Sif anxiously looked towards Roland.

Her choice had a mix of benefit consideration, but also personal emotions.

She was puzzled, curious about the basis on which Roland made his decision.

"Benefits."

Seeing the curiosity brimming in her eyes, Roland calmly explained:

"Choosing Munina is the path to maximum benefit."

"On the surface, Munina, who controls the Second Movement: Chaos, seems to have higher value than Munina, but she overlooked one point; their role is not of a thousand-mile horse, but of horse bones."

"Since they are horse bones, who runs faster is not important."

Munina’s confession revealed critical information. Beneath the deep sea, there is not only civilization but also a powerful mysterious organization.

The title of Ocean General indeed sounds high-ranking, but it’s likely not the top.

Above the Ocean General, there should be the Grand General or even the Sea Emperor.

The Graham Sea Demon is the future bridge to communicate with deep-sea civilization.

Since it is a bridge, Munina, who has fewer personal thoughts, is better than the restless Munina.

Munina doesn’t know that her seemingly brilliant performance is full of loopholes in Roland’s eyes.

Willing to go to Endless Purgatory for her sister?

Then go.

After explaining to Sif, Roland gave her a score.

Negative score.

Sif, of course, was not convinced. Her answer was correct, and even if the deduction process wasn’t perfect, at most, it would only deduct one or two points. How could it be a negative score?

In the past, the worst choice was just zero points.

"Sif, you included emotional factors in your decision, and even though you hit the correct answer, it’s more dangerous than directly making the wrong choice. If you’re wrong, you’d reflect and correct. If you blindly get the right answer, you may even develop a misleading confidence."

Sif felt very aggrieved.

She longed for Roland’s recognition, not this kind of evaluation.

Even as a politician, there are inevitably personal emotions involved.

Seeing Sif lowering her head without speaking, visibly aggrieved, Roland felt a bit distressed.

But he had to say it, despite the reluctance.

"Sif, before I asked you, I asked Lisa and Alina the same question."

"So... what did they say?"

"Their answers were the same as yours, just with different reasons." Roland briefly explained Lisa and Alina’s reasons for their choices.

"It seems only Alina can get full marks, and both Lisa and I have negative scores?" Hearing that Lisa’s reasoning was even more emotional than hers, Sif felt a bit better.

No fear of low scores, just fear of the deskmate scoring high.

Since there’s someone more impulsive, she’s not at the bottom.

"No, only you got a negative score."

Roland calmly stated, "Alina analyzed from the perspective of intelligence without mixing personal emotions, so her score isn’t low. Lisa was driven by personal emotions, but she’s just a chef."

Sif’s smile instantly stiffened.

Her breathing became somewhat erratic, and her small fists clenched and unclenched repeatedly, barely controlling her emotions after a long while.

"Why don’t you hold Lisa to the same standard as you do to me?"

The words were on the tip of her tongue but she couldn’t say them, for she could guess what Roland would say.

She is the Empress, a politician, and must be held to a higher standard.

The more she thought about it, the more aggrieved she felt since Lisa is also an officer in the logistics department.

This is clearly a double standard!

Lisa's impulsive actions don't matter, but her mixing personal emotions results in a negative score. How is that possible?

Seeing that Sif had no intention of reflecting, Roland put on a stern face, ready to lecture her harshly like Mr. Wald, explaining the dangers of political leaders' decisions being affected by personal emotions.

Then he noticed the small golden teardrops trembling at the corners of Sif's eyes, on the verge of falling.

Roland's heart softened.

Sif was just a teenage girl, and these past months, she'd lost her father, forcibly seated on the throne, facing various powerful ministers and enemies.

She was already doing very well.

Roland could give her a 9, not fearing it would make her complacent.

But that woman was there, quietly watching them.

A score of 9 or 0 made no difference; the result was death.

Saying 9 was also a negative score wasn't being harsh.

Roland was indeed applying double standards, putting pressure on Sif, but he had to do so.

With more and more hidden forces coming to light, their enemies were numerous and strong.

A 9 is high, but not sufficient.

Roland’s hand, reaching towards Sif’s cheek, slowly rose and then quietly retracted.

He turned and left, leaving Sif to reflect.

Seeing Roland not comforting her and instead turning to leave, Sif’s heart was instantly overwhelmed with grievance, and the golden teardrops poured down.

She bit her lip, drawing back her raised hand forcefully, covering her mouth tightly; although tears fell, no sobs were heard.

"Your opponents are politicians; you must be stronger than them and not act on emotions..."

"Your enemy is Sofia; will she show mercy?"

"If you bring emotions into work, every mistake will cost thousands of lives!"

...

Teacher Wald’s teachings echoed like a demonic chant in her ears.

With slender hands pressed to her chest, Sif stared blankly out the window, her eyes red-rimmed.

She knew Roland was right.

But her chest was terribly stifled.

Clearly, Roland often scolded her in the past, so why did it hurt so much this time?

She didn’t understand.