Empress 169

Chapter 169: An Even More Influential Figure_2

The Earth Spirits exhausted their resources to build the Floating Fortress.

Their movements were somewhat large, attracting the attention of the True God, and divine punishment descended.

A gigantic asteroid struck the Theia Plane, and the divine punishment army arrived unexpectedly.

And their fate was even worse than that of the Magic Empire.

The Magic Empire at least left behind a spark; the Elves and Earth Spirits left only legends.

If the glory of the Elves could be reconstructed, Sofia would not be invincible; unfortunately, it was not possible.

Roland withdrew from the fantasy.

Sif folded her arms.

They returned to reality.

"Roland, all the officials who attended the meeting that day have submitted confessions and their extra earnings from these years."

"Oh, what did you do with them?" Roland’s lips curled slightly as he recalled past events.

Sif’s immaculate conduct almost turned Alben into an enemy.

Seeing Roland’s half-smiling expression, Sif felt a bit embarrassed and murmured softly:

"What does Empress Sylph’s foolishness have to do with Count Tyrone?"

"I burned the confessions, accepted the money they submitted, and rewarded part of it as an honesty award. How many points can I score this time?"

Seeing the expectant look in Sif’s eyes, Roland smiled and nodded.

"Full marks."

Not only for the operation but also for the speed of progress.

Thinking of the illicit money submitted by these officials, Sif’s smile gradually faded, and she spoke softly:

"I really didn’t expect these guys to have embezzled so much money."

"How much?"

"I kept seventy percent, about seven hundred ninety thousand pounds." Thinking of how she sold jewelry and even estates to raise less than three hundred thousand pounds, Sif was not in a cheerful mood.

"Not enough, far from enough," Roland said sternly.

"Are you saying they lied and we need to continue settling accounts?" Sif’s tone gradually turned cold.

"There’s no need for that. You are the Empress, and what you say must count. Since you have granted forgiveness, you can’t go back on your word."

"Alright, you're right. Hmph, these guys better restrain themselves, or if they dare to repeat..."

"Punish severely and harshly," Roland finished the sentence for her.

"What I meant by not enough is not referring to their hidden assets, but rather that the potential of the Three Provinces has not been tapped. Do you remember the strategy I talked about before we set out?"

Sif's eyes gleamed with spirit, "I remember, let them mess with the Imperial Capital while we create a new world overseas. Without comparison, there is no harm. Anyone with eyes would know whom to choose."

"This is an overt strategy. If the three provinces against thirty provinces plus the special administrative zone of the Imperial Capital still result in us winning, the outcome is self-evident."

Sif asked softly, "What should we do? These days, while organizing information on the Three Provinces and contemplating development plans, I always feel a bit at a loss."

"Before planning, just one last confirmation, three years or one year?" Roland asked.

"Three years," Sif's attitude was resolute.

"Very good," Roland smiled and nodded.

Sif went to sea publicly for reasons including inspecting territories and investigating the disappearance of the Late Emperor.

If confirmed that the Late Emperor has passed, she could formally ascend the throne in the Imperial Capital once she becomes of age.

Ascending the throne means laying cards on the table.

Three years means insisting the Late Emperor is missing, delaying the time to lay cards on the table, and accumulating more strength.

If she chose one year, she would have to take a bold step, bolstering strength.

If she chose three years, it allows for long-term planning with a greater grasp.

Sif chose three years.

This shows her breadth of spirit.

Roland thought silently; although Sif is immature, she already has the bearing of a wise ruler, with a promising future.

Sif’s peripheral vision glanced at Roland, silently thinking, giving Roland two more years would ease his pressure.

After confirming the overall framework, Roland took out Plan A.

"Then let’s start with recruiting talent."

"And then?"

"Develop industry and commerce and trade."

"And then?"

"Train the army to new standards, forging an iron army."

"And then?"

"Then it’s time to draw the sword," Roland said calmly.

Sif nodded with satisfaction; she just loved seeing Roland confidently directing the country.

No matter the amount of difficulty, it’s all so simple in front of him.

Thankfully, there was Roland, or she really wouldn’t know what to do.

Her composure, at least more than half of it, was feigned.

Seeing Sif’s complete trust in his eyes, Roland also felt a bit uneasy.

In truth, he had never governed a country.

His political experience was only limited to keyboard politics, and serving as Governor in Sussex was his first practical experience.

But he has to stand strong.

His confidence is Sif’s courage.

He must appear composed, even if more than half is just for show.

...

The large-scale talent recruitment event personally organized by the Empress has begun.

The slogan "Not concerned with origins, only with talent" has attracted countless attention.

Especially since even nationality is not restricted, it effectively recruits talent from the entire Rodinia Continent and even the more distant South Continent.

The mature and cautious Mr. Ados attempted to dissuade the Empress, hoping she would not be so confident.

Heaven knows how many of those so-called talents are foreign spies.

But Sif politely declined his suggestion.

It's not that Mr. Ados's advice was bad, but Sif possessed an ability beyond his imagination.

[Insight].

Although her profession changed to [Elf Princess], the power of [Insight] was surprisingly retained, though its effect was considerably weakened.

Sif may not be able to identify all foreign spies, but she can roughly discern who is loyal and who is treacherous.

Some people with strong inner defenses are hard to read, but she can still roughly determine if malice is present.

As long as there is basic loyalty and goodwill, what does it matter if they are foreigners?

Since the Empress insisted, Ados could not say much.

He could only open his eyes wide, helping the Empress in vetting.

After the "loyal" Ados left, Sif let out a soft sigh as she watched his departing figure.

Mr. Ados's loyalty was very thin.

He was more inclined to be loyal to his own interests, not much different from other officials.

Although this was reasonable, compared to his appearance of "utter loyalty", Sif still felt a bit disappointed.

She somewhat detested the presence of [Insight].

Roland was right; knowing too much isn't necessarily a good thing. Touching on human nature only leads to seeing the filth beneath.

Is there really not a single person from the Three Provinces who is completely loyal to her?

Sif felt dejected and dispirited.

Knowing full well the impure loyalty of these people, she still had to rely on them for work and maintain a harmonious ruler-subject relationship with them.

It was truly tiring.

Sif turned her gaze to Roland, biting her lip slightly.

Unable to discern loyalty and treachery, but feeling full of goodwill.

Sif's dejection instantly vanished.

Luckily, there's still Roland.

After the recruitment decree was issued, the initial response was not strong. Although many responded, more chose to watch and wait.

Although everyone was full of expectations for the Empress, she was, after all, young—was it really okay to rush to her side?

Even if the Empress was wise, everyone was well aware of the character of the Three Provinces' officials.

Truly talented people might not be willing to associate with such scum.

The abilities of the Three Provinces' officials were not to be underestimated, but their conduct was difficult to impress.

The talent the Empress wanted to recruit covered multiple fields, including economics, politics, military, education, and special categories.

As long as there is talent, the more the better, with all being welcome.

Roland and Sif went to the recruitment site every day to see if there were any outstanding talents.

Time passed quickly.

A week later, a total of over three hundred people were recruited through the talent event.

According to Roland's standards, the majority of these people were considered D-level talents.

Those able to basically fulfill roles akin to grassroots office workers with some ability in a certain field are considered D-level.

C-level talents are comparable to those who can manage township or department-level work.

B-level talents are equivalent to division-level personnel.

A-level talents can hold positions in bureaus or departments and possess very strong special skills.

S-level talents are naturally super-talents eligible for ministry-level positions.

Top talents would be absorbed into the Governor’s Mansion and cultivated as future Cabinet members.

Adhering to the principle of "better less than subpar", only five people were rated as B-level talents, and three as C-level, with none higher.

Just when Roland and Sif were somewhat disappointed and about to leave, a heavyweight appeared.

"A freelance merchant hoping to serve the Governor and Lord Count."

The mysterious merchant removed his hat, revealing a somewhat somber smile.

Roland squinted his eyes, and Sif’s hand was directly on the pistol, ready for action at any moment.

This mysterious applicant was none other than the former deputy head of the Knight Order, the pardoned Stanley.

"The Empress issued a pardon; I am now a free man. May I apply?"

Roland and Sif exchanged glances, passing the decision to Sif.

Sif squinted her eyes, finding she could not see through Stanley, who was also a Transcendent.

She couldn’t use any cheat, relying solely on her own ability to judge.

After a moment of silence, Sif smiled and asked, "Sir, what position do you wish to apply for? If it’s the Knight Order, forget it."

"Is Lord Count joking? I am a merchant, naturally applying for a commercial position."

"Then come with me, let me see your skills."

Sif smiled slightly, leading the way to the Governor’s Mansion.

Roland stared intently at Stanley, following along.

To become a true Great Emperor, one must have the capacity to embrace the world.

Sif demonstrated sufficient capacity, so naturally, he wouldn’t be petty.

As long as there is talent, the doors of the Governor’s Mansion remain open.