

In the Name of Empress

Chapter 3: Chapter 3: No Guilt Due to Objective-Subjective Inconsistency

The future literary giant, face full of anxiety, rushed into the editor's office, trying to appear calm as he asked the editor:

"Sir Byron, I'd like to withdraw that immature manuscript."

The editor adjusted his gold-rimmed glasses resting on his nose and replied with a smile:

"There are many submissions for the writing competition, which one are you referring to?"

"The one I wrote."

Roland lowered his voice, leaning in closer as he spoke.

The office had more than one editor, and there was no need for walls; everyone was an ear, and he didn't want the title of his book to be leaked out.

"Oh, the one you wrote, ah, let me find it."

Editor Byron heaved his slightly plump body, struggling to retrieve a notebook from the desk drawer, carefully flipping through it for a while, and then adjusted his sliding glasses, raising his voice a bit.

"Found it! It's the submission titled 'Oh My God, the Empress is Pregnant, Who Did It?'"

Roland held his forehead, couldn't you have said that a little quieter?

All the editors in the office craned their eyes and ears.

Being good at gossip is an editor's superpower, and liking gossip is an occupational disease for editors.

The Empress pregnant?!

Oh my God, who wrote that, playing with such thrills?

Byron patted his shoulder, smiling as he consoled:

"Roland, don't worry too much, Her Majesty the Empress just inherited the throne and is busy with affairs, most likely unable to bother with such trivial matters. The rank should be decided by the Minister of Internal Affairs."

"Go home and wait for the news. Don't forget to treat me to a meal if you win the grand prize."

Others in the editorial office also started to join in the teasing, "If I were you, I'd go to Belphar Street to pick out a house now."

"Stop teasing, can't you see Roland is feeling down?"

"Actually, there is no need for him to worry, when he submitted it, Her Majesty was still a princess, it wasn't intentional."

"Easy for you to say, if you were Her Majesty, how would you feel seeing this submission?"

"Exactly, exactly, after all, the Empress is a young girl, easily emotional."

...

The editors were loudly discussing, without even caring that Roland was right there.

Roland barely maintained a smile, said goodbye to Byron, and left.

Perhaps he really should look for a place, but not a house, a cemetery.

Walking on the road, Roland's mind went blank.

He hadn't expected things to turn out this way.

It was unreasonable. Other people's time-traveling journeys often ended up winning the writing competition, receiving invitations to royal literary salons, encountering fair-skinned noble girls, why is it all reversed for him?

How could he have known the old Emperor would suddenly pass away, who can he blame?

In this feudal autocracy more vicious than the evil capitalist society, openly insulting the newly crowned young unmarried Empress, even a dignified death is a luxury.

Escape?

Where to run?

The land beneath his feet is called the Sussex Continent. With millions of square kilometers, there's only one country, the Sussex Empire.

The Imperial Navy is number one in the world, no escape by sea.

The Imperial Army is very strong, no escape by land.

Imperial Magic has reached the pinnacle, nowhere to hide.

The Imperial Intelligence Agency... they indeed are a bunch of incompetents, far behind.

A glimmer of hope flashed in Roland's mind; maybe he could seek political asylum in another country?

The only ones who would dare to accommodate political refugees under Sussex's pressure are a few powerful countries across the sea.

With a slight frown, Roland fell into deep thought, what united front value does he have to seek political asylum?

A young liberal artist oppressed by a tyrannical government? Dude, that's too progressive a version.

Before he knew it, Roland found himself by the dock, with no escape route in sight.

Looking at the surface calm, yet with undercurrents and powerful sea monsters submerged in the depths, he sensibly abandoned the insane plan of swimming across hundreds of miles of sea straits.

He was a human, not Superman.

Sitting on the dock railing, with sword-like eyebrows slightly furrowed, he didn't notice the bright light that burst in the eyes of a girl drawing when she looked at him.

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"Your Majesty, these are the nominated works for this writing competition."

The steady voice of the Minister of Internal Affairs rose.

"Lord Wald, I haven't officially ascended the throne, you should address me as Princess Sylph."

From behind a half-transparent gauze curtain, a gentle voice with a hint of fatigue responded.

"As you command, Your Majesty!"

The Minister of Internal Affairs respectfully responded.

Without quibbling about titles, curious Sylph softly asked, "What is this writing competition you mentioned?"

"Before the late Emperor sailed, he held a writing competition with a grand prize of five hundred pounds. The entries had to revolve around the themes of 'Gods, the Imperial Family, Mystery, Suspense, and Gender', and the shorter the better."

Sylph was silent for a moment, softly sighing, "Teacher, I'm very busy right now, you can decide these minor things."

"Your Majesty, it was the last writing competition held during the late Emperor's reign. I consider it very important not only for you to personally decide the rankings but also to publicize it widely."

After a moment of silence, the voice behind the curtain calmed gradually.

"Thank you for the reminder, Teacher, you are right."

"With your professional eye, which essay should win?"

"I cannot make a ruling for Your Majesty, but I privately believe these three works stand out."

Minister of Internal Affairs Wald handed the selected three submitted works to the maid, who then passed it to Sylph.

Sylph was his student, but even more so, his liege.

He must strive to forget that he had taught her.

Accepting the three shortlisted works, Sylph casually flipped through them, placing the first one aside after a moment, and picking up the second.

The story was good, but Sylph was in no mood now; she merely skimmed through it without offering any comment.

If anyone's gaze could pierce through the sheer curtains, they would surely notice the indelible worry etched between the brows of the new Empress.

The subjects she studied encompassed everything from astronomy and geography to literature and art, and even military history, yet excluded governance.

Since she was not the Crown Prince, learning everything would only harm her.

Instead of falling out with siblings, it was better to stay informed and sensible.

She was very obedient, never making a public appearance, simply unwilling to compete with her imperial brother.

However, now she especially wished she had not been so obedient in the past.

Even reading a few more days of "Monarch's Biography," "Chronicles of the Powerful Ministers," and "Great Emperor Grelinn's War Chronicles" would be better than having a blank mind.

Unfortunately, there is no regret medicine in this world.

The new Empress sighed and casually picked up the third candidate work.

After just one glance, her delicate eyelashes began to tremble.

She bit her lip, clutching the infuriating manuscript tightly.

"Teacher, who wrote this manuscript, 'My God, the Empress is Pregnant, Who Did It?' Help me find out!"

"Do you intend to award him first place?"

"First place?"

Sylph's lips slightly curled, with not a hint of a smile in her eyes, "He indeed deserves first place, in the contest for courting death."

"The new monarch has just ascended, and someone is already challenging the dignity of the Imperial Family. If not severely punished, many will probably emulate this."

The Minister of Internal Affairs softly asked, "What does Your Majesty intend to do with him?"

"According to Imperial law, death penalty."

This was the cost of challenging imperial authority.

Confronting the "reasonable" demand of the monarch-cum-student, Minister Wald did not agree but rather said solemnly:

"Your Majesty, please reconsider."

"The law stipulates this; did I remember incorrectly?"

"Your Majesty did not remember incorrectly, but used it wrongly."

Although rebuffed, Sylph always admired her teacher's wisdom and thus asked in a gentle tone:

"I do not quite understand, please guide me, teacher."

Since Sylph viewed herself as a student, Wald, the teacher, naturally should guide.

He smiled and asked, "Your Majesty has not yet been married, yet a madman claims you are pregnant. This is a grave offense to you, so you plan to bring this madman to justice, correct?"

"Does the teacher think it is incorrect?"

"Both correct and incorrect."

Wald calmly said, "If the Empress were reigning and someone slanders the Imperial Family like this, it would undoubtedly be a death sentence."

"But this was a competition hosted by the Late Emperor. At the time of submission, you were not yet the Empress, so..."

Wald did not finish his sentence, but the meaning was clear.

At the time of submission, Sylph was a princess, and the author had already avoided direct offense.

The ignorant are blameless, so it does not constitute an offense.

Roland wrote such an absurd article, which objectively offended the Empress's dignity but subjectively did not err.

"Subjective and objective discordance does not establish criminal responsibility, as per your teaching, teacher."

Wald calmly said, "Sylph, you can execute him, after all, you are the most powerful monarch in the world, a single word from you can decide the fate of millions."

"But you must remember, executing him is not because of the law, but because of the Monarch's Fury."

Sylph murmured, "Can the Monarch's Fury indeed kill?"

As soon as the words fell, she herself laughed first.

The wrath of a monarch can more than just kill; it can lead to thousand deaths, countless families in grief and tears.

After a long silence, Sylph slowly said:

"Imperial dignity is not to be infringed upon; even inadvertent offense can warrant a hanging sentence."

Wald's expression remained unchanged.

He had no intention of stopping Sylph.

He merely hoped Sylph would understand the weight of imperial authority, that every word she uttered could alter countless lives.

Imperial authority is like a prison, it must be used judiciously.

If she insists, sentencing to death indeed has a basis.

But a catch-all offense can only capture people, not convince the public.

Just as he sighed inwardly, Sylph's voice gradually softened.

"However, the right to life of a Sussex citizen outweighs the Emperor's dignity."

"You have said that imperial authority cannot override the nation, nor trample upon the people."

"Since it was an unintentional offense, I forgive him."

Wald suddenly looked up, peering through the curtains at the new Empress, only to find the dainty princess student somewhat obscure.

It was as if he was meeting her for the first time.

"Who is the author of this article?"

"An employee at the Imperial Post Office, Roland." Wald added quickly.

Sylph hesitated for a moment, then softly said, "Teacher, the champion of the essay competition will be invited to attend a literary salon hosted by the Imperial Family. If he lacks solid literary grounding and it is merely a coincidence, I fear we cannot issue him an invitation."

"I must meet him first."