

## Chapter 2 Part 10

### 10

Born as a prince in the Kingdom of Reshfeld, I never had any expectations for this life. My brothers, who share my blood, are all selfish. They just continue to behave arrogantly within the castle simply because they are princes. My father and mother are only interested in my two older brothers. They have not even spoken to me, the fourth prince, in a long time.

"...Haa, how boring."

I spend my days waiting for time to pass in this cramped room. I practice swordsmanship and study culture just enough to achieve mediocre results, making sure not to stand out.

—What meaning can I find in this kind of life?

Since the day I began to harbor such doubts, I have wanted to abandon my position as a prince.

A fourth prince who can never become king. An oppressive, boring life with no merit whatsoever.

"Perhaps it wouldn't be so bad to defect to the Valugan Empire... Living as a commoner might be nice."

These muttered words were merely a joke.

I do not seriously wish for that, but at least it seems more attractive than maintaining the status quo.

I genuinely want to see the outside world freely and live my life for myself.

"Your Royal Highness, a guest has arrived."

I heard the maid's voice from outside the room.

People who visit me are almost always eccentric because buttering up a failed prince like me is pointless. Normally, they would try to deepen their relationship with my older brothers. That would certainly be more advantageous for them.

"Who is it?"

"That's... um, it's a bit difficult to explain who it is..."

I can tell from her voice that the maid is flustered.

She continues to mumble indecisively.

— I became slightly interested.

"Well, it's fine. Where is this guest?"

I cut off the maid's reply and made my decision.

"The guest is in the adjacent guest room, but um, Your Royal Highness..."

"Let's meet them."

"Eh?"

"I said I want to meet this guest."

I opened the door of my room.

The maid, who looked surprised, was standing there frozen, but I looked around without paying her any particular attention.

The hallway is as quiet as ever, and I cannot even hear the voice of the guest in the next room. I do not see any servants, just the usual desolation.

"Your Royal Highness, are you sure you want to meet this guest?"

In response to the maid's question, I replied immediately.

"Yes, I want to see the face of someone who would want to meet me, this failure of a prince."

"Is that so... but the relationship between Your Royal Highness and this guest is a bit... complicated."

The maid seems reluctant to let me meet this guest.

"Would it be a problem if I meet this person?"

"N-No, I don't think there would be any issue..."

"Then it's fine. Call them immediately."

— I am a little excited for the first time in a while.

Who is this person that even the maid seems so reluctant to introduce?

Who would waste their time to meet someone like me...? I stand in front of the door of the adjacent room.

"Now, let's see who is the person bored enough to visit me..."

I slowly opened the door.

When I step into the room, I sense a change in the atmosphere.

A harmonious atmosphere... combined with a tense air.

".....You are—"

The person inside was someone familiar.

Not just the royalty and nobles, everyone knows about her.

Because she is the person who served as the bridge between the Kingdom and the Empire.

"Good day, Prince Ixion."

"Sister Valtrune...?"

The person standing there was Valtrune von Felsdorf, the Imperial Princess and the fiancée of my older brother.

"Why...?"

Doubts fill my mind. I had always thought that she would not waste her time on someone like me.

Whatever her motive might be, showing her any disrespect is unforgivable. It could escalate into a diplomatic issue.

I quickly hid my previously curious attitude.

Feeling cold sweat, I moved further into the room.

How much time has passed since I was taken aback?

Facing me, who was frozen in place, Princess Valtrune, with a smile, blinked and patiently waited for me to speak.

Her expression seemed much more mature than the last time I saw her. And her melancholic eyes, as if she sees through everything, paired with her smile, felt unnatural.

"Um, why... are you here, Sister Valtrune?"

The words squeezed from my throat were laced with vague suspicions. Despite my incoherent speech, she seemed to understand my intention clearly and began to answer my question.

"I came to see you, Prince Ixion."

said the Princess.

...I still do not understand. Why would she want to see me?

We barely exchanged pleasantries before. Yet now, she seems to have a keen interest in me. What has changed in her heart?

She soon revealed the answer.

"And, let me correct one thing... I'm no longer your sister."

It was as if she could see right through my heart, making my chest tighten.

*What is this?*

Like the calm before the storm, I felt a premonition that something tremendous would happen soon, something beyond imagination.

"Prince Ixion... I have called off my engagement with Prince Yuri. So, you don't need to call me sister anymore."

Princess Valtrune spoke fluently, her expression very calm.

However, my emotions were turbulent. And the man beside her... the black-haired escort, has drawn my attention since earlier.

A dangerous vibe was emanating from him.

It was not that I felt threatened by him. And yet, chills ran down my spine, warning me not to provoke him.

This is not a mere hunch. The fact that she trusts him completely is evident. It was unusual for an Imperial Princess to have just one escort.

"....."

The man did not say anything, but his occasional gestures towards her seemed like they were communicating something.

*'I can't escape now,'* naturally popped into my head.

I have never felt anything like this before.

No matter what I say, everything seems futile before these two, and they appear to be a different breed from the common lot who would be pleased with empty words.

Prolonging the discussion would probably be meaningless.

In that case, let's get down to business and have them leave as soon as possible.

For me, the atmosphere was suffocating.

"So, what is Sister Valtrune's true purpose for being here?"

The Princess, known for her intelligence, wouldn't have come all this way just to make a trivial joke by saying she wanted to see me.

Upon hearing my words, Princess Valtrune's expression changed abruptly.

"Right... feeling each other out is a waste of time. You're a very wise person."

*What does she know about me?*

She continued to assess me with her eyes.

*Is she bringing something into my life?*

Where would it lead me? I do not know, but undoubtedly, my fate will be heavily affected if I listen to her.

She grinned wickedly and leaned forward.

"Prince Ixion... have you ever thought about becoming the ruler of this country?"

Now, in front of me was an enormous bomb that seemed like it could explode at the slightest touch.

Am I prepared for this dangerous deal? I need to decide now.