

## Chapter 2 Part 9

### 9

*War is a great calamity that throws everything into chaos.*

*It is a foolish act that threatens people's peace.*

*A spark of conflict that no one desires.*

*Nevertheless, quelling the chaos of war is not an easy task.*

*Once set in motion, it accelerates and continues to move forward until it exhausts itself.*

"Aldia, let's move on to the next operation."

The detestable age of war is unavoidable.

Rather than avoiding causing wars, Princess Valtrune was planning to take her next step to control the overall situation and put it in her favor.

"Your Imperial Highness, the next operation? I thought you were just going to return to the Empire."

"The formal annulment of my engagement with Prince Yuri was a blow that led to a decline in my status within the Empire. However, it was necessary for me to move forward. You understand, don't you?"

"Yes, of course."

Maintaining a connection with the Kingdom will have long-term consequences.

There was no point in continuing an ambiguous relationship. It was the right decision to sever ties with the Prince immediately, once she had decided to do so. With that in mind, she poses the next question.

"So, what is necessary for me to get closer to becoming the empress next?"

"....."

From my point of view, she is nearly flawless.

She has the ability to become an empress as she is.

"In that case, securing talented individuals... perhaps?"

"You're on the right track. The lack of talented generals was one of the reasons the Empire lost to the Kingdom. Recruiting and developing capable people is essential for us."

She nods in agreement with my thoughts but interrupts with, "*However,*" making it clear that I am not entirely correct.

"Your Imperial Highness, what do you intend to do?"

When asked, she leans in close to my ear and whispers in a crystal-clear voice.

"I will win over a significant figure within this kingdom... a prince."

"A prince...?"

"Yes, that's right."

I was utterly shocked for a moment, but upon further thought, what she was trying to say became clear.

"In other words, you aim to draw in a prince other than Prince Yuri, correct?"

"Exactly. I have no lingering attachment to Prince Yuri, but I'd prefer not to sever all ties with the royal family."

There are five princes in the Kingdom of Reshfeld.

Only the first and second princes are typically involved in the succession to the throne. The third prince and below have almost zero chance. In a harsh expression, they are the reserves in case something happens to the first two princes.

Naturally, the princes would also be treated differently.

—If that's the case, the prince that Princess Valtrune wants to bring into her fold would be the third prince or lower. It means a prince with a low chance of becoming the ultimate authority.

"Your Imperial Highness, who are you targeting?"

She's probably not thinking of winning over multiple princes. The reason she's trying to win the favor of a prince to get closer to the emperor is solely to strengthen her influence within the Empire.

"I rule out the First Prince Sein and the Second Prince Yuri. There's little benefit for them to get close to me, as they are involved in the succession to the throne, and I don't wish to either."

Mixing facts with her own feelings, Princess Valtrune speaks calmly.

"As for the Third Prince Blois, he's no good. Like the first and second prince, he has a personality problem and is not particularly talented. He's hard to handle and useless."

She harshly evaluates the third prince and also states she has no intention of involving the fifth prince simply because *'he is too young'*.

By this point, it is clear who her target is: *the Fourth Prince, Ixion Leto Reshfeld*.

He is known as the 'Ghost Prince', an unremarkable presence among the five princes.

"Your Imperial Highness, why Prince Ixion?"

"That's because he's extremely talented, much like you."

"I see. If you say so, Your Imperial Highness, there is no doubt about it."

I understand everything from her meaningful phrasing.

That is, Prince Ixion is only pretending to be an *'incompetent prince'*.