

Chapter 2 Part 5

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"Well then, I'm heading to the Empire on my own dragon mount. Princess, Al, see you again in the Empire!"

As Mia ran off into the distance, we were finally alone. I glanced around once more, just to be sure, but there was no one else in sight.

Mia's presence itself was an irregularity.

From now on, when discussing our life before regression, I'll need to ensure there's no one around.

"She's gone, isn't she?"

"...Yes, that's right."

There is no such thing as a sigh of relief.

Princess Valtrune and I quickly turned our attention to our next course of action.

"So, Your Imperial Highness. What are you going to do now?"

"You're perceptive. It's something very important... The move I'm about to make should change the world situation into something greatly different from before."

What is she planning at this time when the war has not even started yet?

"Hey, Aldia. Why do you think the Kingdom and the Empire started the war?"

I found myself at a loss for words in the face of this unexpected question. Her specific intent eluded me.

"Because Prince Yuri broke off the engagement with Your Imperial Highness... right?"

With my existing knowledge, I can only come up with this answer.

Surely, she wanted to hear something other than this clichéd response.

"Well, considering everything so far, it would lead to such a thought."

—So, it was not the answer, after all?

It was undeniable that the annulment of the engagement between Princess Valtrune and the Prince triggered the war. However, she was hinting that the real reason for the full-scale confrontation between the Kingdom and the Empire was something else.

"I'll tell you. The direct cause of the war between the Kingdom and the Empire was—because the Kingdom invaded the Empire's territory, under the misguided pretext of '*reclaiming the Holy Land for the Saintess Lexia*'."

Her words were tied to my compelling motive to defeat the Kingdom utterly. I never knew that the root cause of the war lay with the Kingdom.

The war commenced following a declaration of war from the Empire's side. That's what I always believed. However, she claimed the truth was different.

"...Is that true?"

"Are you surprised?"

"I was, because I had no prior knowledge of this."

—But why?

If the Kingdom initiated the conflict, why did the entire world believe the Empire was responsible for starting the war? As the divide between the Kingdom and the Empire widened and skirmishes broke out, countries around the world declared their hostility towards the Empire. However, in retrospect, it all seemed too conspicuous. It's as if there was an underlying scheme in motion.

"I always believed the Empire was the one to start the war."

Princess Valtrune neither denied nor confirmed my words. She simply smiled, her expression fleeting.

"It's only natural that you would think that way. From an external perspective, it would appear as though the Empire abruptly declared war on the Kingdom."

'From an external perspective', huh...?

Could that mean there was no evidence of the Kingdom's invasion?

No, if that were true, the fact might have come to light from the very beginning.

If she had been aware, she could have made it public. Nevertheless, the war was perceived as the Empire's initiation, painting them as the aggressor.

"...Will you tell me the details?"

Ignorance is truly frightening.

When you lack knowledge, even lies can easily deceive you under the guise of truth.

"...Alright. I've been wanting to have a proper conversation with you about it, Aldia. I'll tell you all about it—the root cause of this war and the direction I must strive for."