

Chapter 3 Part 4



After saying goodbye to Elria at the student dormitory, Reid waited alone in the classroom for someone to arrive. With a loud creak, the door opened, and he slowly raised his head.

"Sorry for making you wait. Elise's lecturing was so long..."

said Alma apologetically while scratching her head with a smile.

However, Reid did not change his expression.

"So, I can assume that you came here with the intention of talking."

Reid is treating Alma as a 'foe' to be wary of, rather than as a teacher.

His birthplace, Altein, no longer exists. Its existence has disappeared from the history of later generations. And yet, Alma was raising its military flag on her own magic equipment.

"I'll ask you again, why are you waving around the military flag of Altein?"

Reid asked Alma the exact same question again.

However, Alma looked puzzled.

"From the way you talk... 'Altein' is the name of a country, right?"

"Don't try to play dumb now, after waving it on your magic equipment."

"I'm speaking honestly. In fact... what's been bothering me is that you called that piece of cloth a 'military flag'."

Seeing Reid's vigilance, Alma sighed conspicuously.

"Now it's my turn. Why did you call that cloth a 'military flag'?"

"Are you asking because it's not normal for someone to recognize it as a 'military flag' just by looking at it?"

"That's right. As you said, what I have attached to my magic equipment is undoubtedly a 'military flag'. But... only those who have inherited the name of Kanos should know about it."

This time, Alma directed her caution toward Reid.

"Answer me — Who are you?"

As Reid stared at Alma, he remained silent while contemplating.

Even though Alma did not react to the word 'Altein', she knew it was a 'military flag'.

This situation was something that should not have been possible.

However, Reid had already experienced things that were considered impossible.

In a world a thousand years later, the 'Sage' and the 'Hero' were reincarnated once again —

This feeling of discomfort was definitely related to Reid and Elria's reincarnation.

That is why... Reid nodded greatly.

"I'm sorry, but I can't answer that."

"Hmm, are you going to play dumb about that now, too?"

"No, on the contrary, I'll answer anything else. I won't reveal anything about myself, but you're free to deduce my identity from my answers."

"...I see. You thought this out well, didn't you?"

Alma smiled, perhaps realizing Reid's intentions.

Questions... in other words, the choice of information to give and withhold is up to Alma, and if she can answer something that only a limited number of people would know, it would be possible to deduce Reid's true identity.

On the other hand, Reid can make Alma speak unilaterally and deduce her trustworthiness without revealing his own identity.

"Go ahead, ask whatever you like. I've been doing all the asking until now."

"Okay then... what do you think of the 'moon' shining in the sky?"

"I think it's beautiful except during night raids. But that's just my personal opinion."

"That's fine. Next question... what do you think of someone meticulous?"

"They're serious and diligent, inflexible but not a bad person. If I had to choose subordinates, I think that kind of person would work well."

"I see. Then how about —"

Without a clear direction, they repeated the question-and-answer session while trying to probe each other's intentions.

They asked multiple questions, such as responses upon waking from a nap or reactions upon seeing the sea, to specific ones like dealing with someone who broke the rules or important considerations on the battlefield.

As they continued, Alma's expression began to change.

Her tense expression softened, and she began to speak with a calm smile on her face. It was as if she was flipping through the pages of an album filled with memories.

Eventually, Alma slowly nodded.

"Well then, let's make the next question the last one."

"What, is it already over?"

"Yeah. You... no, I'm sure you can answer it."

Before hearing those words, Reid already knew what he would be asked.

The questions Alma had been asking until now were things that only one person would know.

Although their relationship lasted only a few years, Reid remembered that person well.

That person was a meticulous individual who accompanied Reid in his final years on the battlefield, listening intently to every conversation and casual chat and taking notes at every opportunity.

"— Do you remember 'Me', 'Your Excellency'?"

In response to those words, Reid replied with a smile.

"There was only one guy who called me 'Your Excellency' instead of General."

The man who belonged to the Altein Army, and remained by Reid's side as a dedicated flag-bearer for the 'Hero'.

The man who also mourned the death of the 'Sage' alongside Reid and shed tears at their farewell.

"Yeah — 'Lyatt'."

Reid called out his former subordinate's name, superimposing his image with that of Alma's.

Upon hearing that, Alma breathed quietly, with her head down.

"...You're the 'Your Excellency' mentioned in the notes."

With tears in her golden eyes, Alma muttered quietly.

"Just to confirm, are you related to Lyatt?"

"That's the name of my ancestor. He was the one who left behind the notes that were passed down to the Kanos family, and he was also the man who served as the flag-bearer of 'Your Excellency'."

Lyatt not only served as a flag-bearer, but also assisted Reid during peacetime.

He looked at the aged Reid with envy and respect, and was such a serious and meticulous person that even the small conversations they had on that day were recorded in his notes.

"Haa... He's really a meticulous guy, leaving behind his notes for a thousand years."

"Perhaps my ancestor admired 'Your Excellency' that much."

A thousand years is not a short time.

Nevertheless, Lyatt continued to pass down his notes to future generations.

He left behind the figure of the 'Hero' he admired, who had been by his side.

"As promised, I won't ask you in detail about yourself. Like why a human from a thousand years ago is still alive."

"Thank you. To be honest, I don't know either, and that's why I talked to you."

"...I see. In that case, I'll tell you what I know. Otherwise, my ancestor might get angry."

"Yeah, he was really scary when he got angry."

They both chuckled, and Reid's expression changed.

"Still, let me ask you again. You don't know anything about 'Altein', do you?"

"No. I've never heard of that country's name, and as for the military flag, it was passed down to me with the notes, but the name has never appeared in it."

It was not impossible.

Lyatt admired Reid, but shed tears of disappointment at the country's decision to march after the death of the sage.

In that case, it is possible that the name of the country, 'Altein', was deliberately erased.

However, not only Altein, but another word also did not come up.

"Do you have any memory of the names 'Hero' and 'Reid Frieden'?"

"I do have some knowledge of them. I'm researching magic, so I've also looked into archaeology and magic history and researched elves' oral traditions and legends in the process."

"But they didn't appear in the notes at all?"

"Yeah, personally, I've been thinking that there might be something..."

One essential aspect of discussing Reid is the title 'Hero'. Although Lyatt often called Reid 'Your Excellency', he occasionally used the title 'Hero', too. So, it is impossible to imagine him not using that word even once in his notes.

In other words — —

"— Someone deliberately erased the existence of the 'Hero'."

Upon hearing those words, Alma furrowed her brows slightly.

"But... those are personal notes, you know? While it might be possible to erase something from official records, it seems unlikely that someone could erase something written by an individual. And if the notes were tampered with, wouldn't there be evidence left behind?"

"Common sense would say it's impossible. But... in the current situation, impossible things are happening too often."

The same could be said about the Kingdom of Altein. It was understandable that they would erase the name of the Hero who had lost the war from history. That was why Reid did not pay much attention to it.

However, after reuniting with Elria, that suspicion resurfaced.

If Altein was a great superpower that had once ruled over half the continent and had been defeated, it would not be surprising if its name had been recorded in the history of Vegalta even after its fall.

To confirm this, he read multiple history books at the Caldwen family's mansion. But from all those books, the name of Altein had disappeared. This changed his suspicion into a conviction.

"Moreover, it's strange that among the elves, the existence of the 'Hero' and my name is known. If they were erasing information, they would erase everything all at once, right?"

"...Well, maybe in the case of the elves, it was passed down by word of mouth."

Alma speculates, placing her hand on her chin.

"Because the elves are immortal, they have a history of passing down exclusive information and techniques orally, without leaving any records behind. I've heard that stories about the 'Sage' and the 'Hero' are based on tales passed down orally."

"...I see. Then it's understandable that it only remained among the elves."

Elves have a lifespan of almost three times that of humans, and it was common for them to live for nearly three hundred years.

Assuming that the concealed information only pertains to books and writings and cannot erase even the 'memories' of that time, it was understandable that it was only passed down among the elves.

"I don't think the barrier between the races would disappear in a few decades. If we consider that it was important enough for those people at the time to pass it down orally, they wouldn't have casually shared it with humans. It's likely that those people are no longer of this world, and the oral tradition was spread as a fairy tale."

"At the time, the existence of the Sage was likely integral to the foundation of the country, and even if there were facts or legends about someone that stood on equal footing with the Sage, it would be inconvenient for the country, so they wouldn't acknowledge it."

That's why both the 'Hero' and Altein were wiped out of existence.

And then —— something happened after Reid died.

However, there is not enough information currently available to speculate.

"Well, it's fine. If you notice anything else, please let me know. If you were researching history, you're definitely more knowledgeable than me."

"I don't mind, but... you're already addressing me casually and trying to order a special rank mage around... you got some guts, don't you...?"

"Can't I? I'm *'Your Excellency'* that your ancestor respected, after all."

"You don't have to answer this, but is it the same for Elria-chan?"

"I'll leave that to your imagination."

"Wow... so did I just pick a fight with the real 'Sage'? I said we would have a rematch after she has graduated from the academy, but if she gets serious, won't I be turned into ashes?"

Alma looked up with a pale face, seemingly realizing Elria's true identity.

No one would have guessed that the opponent she fought against, in an attempt to teach an impudent student a lesson, turned out to be the very 'Sage' who had created magic.

"Well, at that time, you will have to brace yourself and get beat up."

"At least help your subordinate's cute descendant."

"I'm just an incompetent person who can't even use magic, unlike 'Sensei', who is a special rank mage."

"Hahaha... How impudent for a 'student'...!"

Ignoring Alma's words, Reid calmly stood up from his seat.

"We're done talking. If anything happens, I'll rely on you."

After Reid said that, Alma also stood up.

"Yeah — Leave it to me, Lord Frieden."

While saluting as Reid's former subordinate did, Alma showed her teeth with a huge grin.