

Chapter 1 Part 6



After Tiana left, Chris regained consciousness as if nothing had happened. It seemed like she had not heard the conversation up until then, but it appeared as though she had heard from Tiana that there was some conversation going on. Curiously, she asked, "*Oh, is the conversation over?*".

Later that night—

"—It's been a while since I've had a sleepover with Elria~~!!"

Chris was happily swinging her pillow around on the bed.

"The last sleepover was over a thousand days ago, so we should announce it as a national holiday and share the joy with the people, don't you think!?"

"Chris, we shouldn't create national holidays without good reason."

In contrast to Chris's excitement, Elria shook her head while hugging a pillow.

For some reason, Chris wanted to turn their personal event into a holiday. Right now, as a princess, it was just silly talk, but if she ascended the throne, she might end up creating a holiday for every single day.

"But, I was surprised to hear that you knew Tiana."

"I guess calling it 'knowing her' is a strange way to put it... To me, she's like another personality that has been with me since childhood. I never thought she would turn out to be one of my great ancestors."

Chris smiled with a troubled look.

"Moreover, she understood and supported all my ideas and thoughts about Elria. It felt more like talking to another part of myself rather than a separate personality."

"...Yeah, I really think you two are very similar."

Chris not only had a similar magic power presence, but she also behaved similarly to Tiana. She always cared about Elria and had a tendency to look after her like an older sister. That is why Elria did not see her as a complete stranger. She could naturally accept and interact with her as someone she knew.

"The only difference is your manner of speech."

"Oh, that's just part of my character."

"I didn't expect that answer..."

"Because if I were a *'quirky'* princess with an odd way of speaking, people wouldn't mind if I said weird things while talking to Tiana-sama, right?"

After explaining her reasoning, Chris let out a deep sigh.

"Father and Mother never believed me when I told them I was talking to my 'other self', and I was so sick and tired of being referred to doctors every day."

Elria could understand those feelings. When she asked her parents to search for Reid, they were quick to call for a doctor.

She can now understand that it was a natural reaction, but as a result, Elria became more reserved and started pondering about the present era while searching for Reid's whereabouts on her own.

For Chris, it seemed to be a way of *'changing her manner of speech'*.

"Nowadays, even if I do something strange, everyone perceives it as 'usual'. Not only within the castle but also the people of the royal capital adore me as a cheerful princess. And even after ascending to the throne, I will have solid popularity among the people, ensuring the stability of the monarchy."

"It was a surprisingly well-thought-out strategy."

"As a member of the royal family, if I were to be complacent, the country would decline. It is my duty to protect the country that my ancestors have passed down through generations and as the one standing at its pinnacle, I must make efforts."

Chris proudly straightened her back while speaking. Despite her eccentric behavior, her earnestness is reflected in her policies, and that is why she is admired by many.

As Elria gazed absentmindedly at Chris, her cheek was suddenly pinched.

"Wh-What is it?"

"...You seem a bit down, don't you?"

"Mm... Is that so?"

"When someone like me, who has been watching Elria for eighteen years, says so, it must be true."

"Being watched even before I was born..."

"Jokes aside, was there something during your conversation with Tiana-sama that bothers you?"

"...Yes. There was something that caught my attention."

It was—of course, about the circumstances of her death. Elria does not remember how she died. She only remembered doing her magic research, taking a break to relax, sipping on her favorite lukewarm milk tea, and then getting up to continue her work.

Her memory ended there, but she did not pay much attention to it. She thought she had pushed herself too hard with her research and unknowingly accumulated fatigue, which led to her collapsing and dying. However... it turned out to be different in reality.

It is not normal for all magic power to be lost. If the amount of magic power drops to a level that affects bodily functions, the body would prioritize the recovery of magic power and enter a state of dormancy, cutting off consciousness. In other words, even if one were to take actions that consume an enormous amount of magic power, they would lose consciousness before being able to activate magic.

Furthermore, it is unlikely that someone else took away her magic power under the circumstances. Elria remembers the state of security at that time and has the confidence to say that not only was it difficult to break in unnoticed, but even if she was fatigued, she would not be easily overtaken. While the cause of her death has been determined, the motive remains unknown.

As Elria ponders over these thoughts, Chris pinches her cheek again.

"See, if you make such a difficult face, it ruins your cuteness, you know?"

".....Nya."

After gently loosening Elria's cheeks, Chris changes her expression.

"I won't ask more than what Tiana-sama has told me. I have a position as a princess to think about, and if I were to learn too much, I'd have to change my attitude."

Though Tiana said she only told her the bare minimum, Chris probably knows the truth about Elria's true identity. If Chris were to hear it directly from Elria, she would not be able to remain as a 'friend' as she has been until now.

That's why Chris embraces Elria without asking anything.

"No matter what happens, I will continue to be your friend. Even in your toughest times... I'll always be by your side as your ally."

Since childhood, Chris has always embraced Elria like this. Even when she was reincarnated into a world a thousand years later where nobody knew her, in a lonely world where no one could understand her... Chris showed her support by embracing her, assuring her that she had at least one ally.

It was as if— —

"— — Truly, the two of you are so alike."

The image of her apprentice, who was always by her side, overlapped in Elria's mind.