

Royal Secret: I'm A Princess!

Chapter 117

WHEN THE ROSE-COLORED GLASSES BREAK

‘NEOMA saw a black crow with red eyes in her dream while she was trapped in a demon’s territory,’ Nikolai announced to Glenn and Kyle who both looked shocked by what he said. ‘In that dream, apparently, the black crow watched her as she was dying.’

Right now, he was in his office to start his day with work.

Saint Zavaroni was resting in the room that he lent him. It was a room with its own bathroom for his privacy. The only servants that he sent to assist His Holiness were Alphen and Stephanie, the head butler and head maid of Neoma’s residence. It was rude to only send two attendants for someone with such a high status as the saint. But it couldn’t be helped.

After all, the other servants shouldn’t know that the saint was still in Yule Palace.

‘It was the symbol of that cult, wasn’t it?’ Glenn asked, then he nervously looked at Kyle’s side. ‘But we already wiped them out.’

Kyle remained silent, but the bloodlust leaking out of him was evidence that he was angry.

After all, the cult was the reason why the count lost his mother.

‘As of now, we don’t have evidence that the cult is still around,’ he said to the knight and the count. ‘But the saint and I can’t just dismiss the dream that Neoma had. After all, she’s also a Roseheart.’ He clenched his fists when he remembered one of the abilities of his former lover. ‘Mona saw visions in the past, too.’

Visions that she never told him about.

He had always felt helpless every time Mona would distant herself from him because of the visions that she had seen.

‘Your Majesty, I’m waiting for your orders,’ Glenn said. ‘I will investigate if there are surviving members of the cult. I will also look into the civilians who once have been linked to them.’

He nodded carefully in agreement. 'Do that, Glenn. But do it as discreetly as possible.'

The knight bowed to him. 'As you wish, Your Majesty.'

'Do you think it's really the same cult back then, Your Majesty?' Kyle asked in a hesitant voice. 'Do you think that the Crow survived?'

'I don't think so,' he said confidently. 'But the cult had influenced a lot of people from all walks of life. I wouldn't be surprised if some believers want to rebuild the cult. Even without the Crow, we can't let people like that live.'

The count nodded firmly.

'For now, our top priority is to keep Neoma's identity a secret,' Nikolai said firmly. 'Make sure that everyone who knows about the royal princess will never speak of it to anyone.'

Glenn and Kyle both bowed to him. 'As you wish, Your Majesty.'

‘NERO doesn’t want to see me?’ Neoma asked Trevor when she got over her shock. ‘No way. You’re just saying that to annoy me, aren’t you?’

‘Nope,’ Trevor said bluntly. ‘Prince Nero kicked me out of the room and told me to not let anyone in— not even you, Princess Neoma.’

‘I still want to talk to my brother,’ she said with clenched hands. ‘Lewis, break the door.’

Lewis just silently nodded before he stepped forward.

But when Trevor snapped his fingers, her son suddenly went stiff. The annoyance on his face told her that he couldn’t move his body.

‘What are you doing to Lewis?’ she confronted the talking book. ‘Do you really want me to hit you?’

‘I’m just saving your precious son, my princess,’ the demon boy said. ‘Two of His Majesty’s Soul Beasts are guarding Prince Nero inside. If they felt even an ounce of hostility from a person, they would immediately attack and shred them into pieces.’

Okay, that sounded scary.

She knew how strong her Papa Boss's Soul Beasts were. Plus, she wouldn't put Lewis in that kind of danger.

'Lewis, stay put,' she ordered her son. 'And calm down.'

Lewis remained scowling but he nodded.

When Trevor snapped his fingers again, her son was able to move again. Lewis then glared at the demon boy who just smirked.

I don't want to admit this but Trevor seems to be stronger than Lewis.

'Move,' she told the talking book.

Trevor just shrugged, then he stepped aside to let her through.

She walked towards the door and knocked. When she didn't get a response from Nero, she talked in the most cheerful tone that she could muster at the moment.

'Brother Nero, Neoma is here,' she said in a cutesy tone that almost made her vomit. Gosh, the things she does to survive. 'Can I come in, Brother?'

'No,' Nero answered from the other side of the door.

Gosh, this scene was very familiar to her.

‘Nero, do you want to build a snowman?’

She felt Trevor’s questioning look on her but she ignored it. Lewis, on the other hand, remained still. Ah, her son was probably used to her quirks by now.

‘It’s not yet winter,’ Nero said bluntly. ‘Go away, Neoma.’

She had to bite her lower lip to stop herself from laughing because of Nero’s ‘Elsa-ish’ response to her ‘Anna-ish’ question a while ago.

‘I’m not going away, Brother,’ she said, activating her ‘actress mode.’ When she spoke again, her voice already cracked from crying. Yes, it was easy for her to cry on cue. After all, she already lived twice and died a lame death in both times. She had a lot of awful memories to cry about if she wanted to. ‘Brother, do you hate Neoma now?’

Eww to herself.

She hated talking in third person but Nero liked it.

From the corner of her eye, she saw Trevor give her performance a slow clap. Tsk, so the demon boy knew that she was only acting, huh?

‘I don’t hate you, Neoma,’ Nero said in a hesitant voice. ‘But I don’t want to see you for the meantime.’

‘So, you really hate Neoma,’ she said between sobs. This time, she cried harder. ‘Neoma is sorry, Brother. Please don’t hate Neoma.’

It seemed like her acting affected Lewis because he turned to her with a worried look on his face. The glow in his golden eyes told her that he was ready to break down the door and fight Nero for making her ‘cry.’

Gosh, Nero. Just open the door before Lewis goes on a rampage.

But she was glad that Lewis was acting that way. It only meant that her acting skills were still on point.

Her prayer was answered when the door finally cracked open.

She took it as an invitation to come in. But before she went in, she turned to Trevor and Lewis first.

‘Stay here. Brother Nero and I need privacy,’ she told Trevor and Lewis. The demon boy just smiled and waved at her. But her poor son looked sad to be separated from her. ‘Please try not to kill each other, okay?’

She entered the room without waiting for the two to respond.

When the door behind her closed, the room darkened just a little bit. Thanks to the shining shimmering aura of the Soul Beasts on either side of the bed, the room remained well-lit.

Gosh, Tteokbokki, look at them. They look intimidating unlike you. How can a tiger and a tortoise look scarier than a red dragon?

Tteokbokki growled in her mind. Shut it, thug princess.

But she wasn't merely bullying her Soul Beast.

The White Tiger on the left side of the bed was just lying lazily on the floor. Even though it looked sleepy, she just knew that once she moved to attack Nero, the tiger wouldn't hesitate to eat her in one bite.

Anyway...

The Black Tortoise that saved her from the pond a few years ago was on the right side of the bed. It was sleeping, and so was the small black serpent on top of its shell.

No wonder Nero doesn't need Sir Glenn to guard him 24/7.

'Why are you crying?' Nero, who was seated on the edge of the bed, asked her with a blank look on his face. 'Why do you care whether I hate you or not?'

Woah, woah, woah.

Where did the tantrum come from?

'Brother, why are you asking that?' she asked in a cracked voice. 'Of course Neoma doesn't want you to hate her.'

'Really?' he asked her bitterly. 'But it seems like I'm not as important to you as you are to me.'

'What are you saying, Brother?'

'You risked your life for His Majesty,' he reminded her coldly. 'I feel betrayed, Neoma. Is our father the most important person in your life now?'

Oh.

That was the problem?

To be honest, she thought Nero didn't want to see her because he felt guilty that he almost killed her. She was

surprised to know that he was bitter because she saved their father.

Gosh, he's really a child.

'Neoma just doesn't want you to be a murderer, Brother,' she said with a puppy dog eyes look on her face. 'If you killed His Majesty, you would have been sentenced to death due to treason.'

Her brother just gave her a cold look.

Ah, it looked like she had to work hard to suck up to Nero—

'His Majesty isn't a part of our family, Neoma,' Nero reminded her coldly. 'Don't ever try to sacrifice your life for our father again. Just endure for a little longer. Once I'm completely healed, I will return and take care of you properly.' He stood up and walked towards her. Then, he cupped her face between his hands. 'Neoma, listen to me. All you need is me, okay? So please distant yourself from His Majesty.'

She raised her head and looked at her brother straight in the eye.

To be honest, she wanted to keep their sibling relationship the way that it was right now. But Nero was

starting to become toxic. And she had no room for toxic people in her life. If her twin brother continued behaving this way, his possessiveness might just be the end of her in this lifetime.

Well, it's my fault. I made Nero believe that I'm a weak, dependent child who needs other people to survive. I'm partially responsible for this controlling behavior of his.

Maybe it was time to show her twin brother the real her.

'Nero,' she said in a serious, mature tone that seemed to surprise her twin. 'It's true that I need you— but you're not the only person that I need in my life.'

'Neoma... ?'

'Yes, I am Neoma,' she confirmed with a nod. 'I'm capable of protecting myself. But of course, I still need to rely on other people.'

Hurt crossed his eyes as he pulled his hand away from her face, then he took a step backwards as if he couldn't believe that she was the Neoma that he knew and loved.

'Are you throwing me away because I'm useless to you until I'm fully recovered ?'

‘No, that’s just all in your head,’ she denied in a clear voice. ‘Nero, I’m sorry but to be honest, I’ve been working for His Majesty since I was five years old. That’s why I can’t and don’t want to follow your order regarding distancing myself from our father. We may not have a good father-daughter relationship. But we have a beneficial boss-employee relationship.’

Her poor twin brother looked very confused. ‘I don’t understand, Neoma...’

‘I made a deal with His Majesty,’ she confessed, clenching her hands tight. It was hard for her to confess this. Even her big brain wasn’t sure if she was doing the right thing. But she was sure of this: she didn’t want Nero to end up as a psychotic, possessive person like he did in her first life. And she didn’t want to take Dahlia’s place as her twin brother’s object of obsession. ‘Nero, in exchange of taking your place, he will give me back my freedom once you returned.’

He looked shocked by his confession. ‘You’ll leaving the palace...?’

‘His Majesty will give me a duchess title along with a small dukedom,’ she added with a nod. ‘My real goal is to become a lady of leisure.’

‘Where am I in that plan, Neoma?’

She smiled sadly because she knew her answer would hurt him even more. ‘Nero, I will root for you to become the next emperor.’

‘No,’ he whispered in disbelief. He looked so hurt and betrayed. It was as if she stabbed him in the chest with her hurtful words. ‘Neoma, please tell me you’re lying.’

‘I’m not,’ she deadpanned. ‘You can even ask His Majesty for the copy of the contract that we made if you want.’

Once again, he looked shocked.

But this time, he got over it almost instantly. It seemed like it finally sank in that she was showing him her true self.

‘Leave,’ Nero said coldly. ‘This time, I really don’t want to see you.’

‘I understand,’ Neoma said firmly. She didn’t expect that to be the receiving end of Nero’s anger would hurt— but

it did. Maybe she loved him twin brother more than she'd like to admit. 'But please visit Hanna,' she said before she turned her back on her twin brother. 'She saved your life so you owe her a thank you, Nero.'

'YOUR MAJESTY, may I know where the Lynx Ring is kept?' Dominic Zavaroni asked Emperor Nikolai while they were walking in the hallway leading to the room where Prince Nero was. 'I didn't see Princess Neoma wear it a while ago.'

'All the items that Neoma received from the crowning ceremony were stored in the Royal Treasury Room,' Emperor Nikolai said, then he turned to him. 'Why? Are you going to take it back?'

'No, of course not,' he said while shaking his head. Then, he stopped walking. When he did, His Majesty also halted to face him. Even Sir Glenn, who walked behind them, stopped in his tracks. 'Your Majesty, I just want to make it clear that the Lynx Ring is a gift to Princess Neoma and not Prince Nero.'

His Majesty looked surprised by that. 'Why are you giving Neoma a precious item that's supposed to be for

the future ruler of the empire? The Astello Church only gives presents to either the crown prince or the emperor.'

'That's an old custom that I want to change now,' he said firmly. 'Your Majesty, as the leader of the Astello Church, I was forced to choose your side during your fight with Princess Nichole in the past. I chose and supported you because you were the crown prince back then, and a royal princess is nothing but a mere source of life force for the royal family.' He clenched his fists tight. 'I never stopped regretting my choice back then.'

'You don't have to choose again,' the emperor said. 'Nero and Neoma aren't fighting for the throne.'

'I know and I'm glad that it's the case for the young royal twins,' he said genuinely. 'But I want you to know in advance that if Princess Neoma's life is in danger, be it because of the cult or the harsh treatment of the empire to royal princesses, I will break the laws of the empire and the temple to save her.'

'Are you saying that you're willing to commit treason for Neoma?' Emperor Nikolai asked in a low, angry tone. 'My daughter is different from Princess Nichole, Your Holiness.'

‘I know that. And I’m not saying that I will commit treason. All I’m saying is I will do everything and anything to protect Her Royal Highness. I will never let the young royal princess go through the same pain that Princess Nichole experienced,’ Dominic said, then he smiled at the emperor. ‘Your Majesty, if you don’t want to lose me as the saint of the empire, please make sure that Princess Neoma will be safe from both the cult and your family.’

Hi. You may now send GIFTs to our Neoma. Thank you~
