

Royal Secret: I'm A Princess!

Chapter 13 - LESSONS LEARNED THE HARD WAY

"PRINCESS," Lewis said, then he pointed a finger at her. "You."

"Yes," Neoma answered cheerfully. "Call me "Princess" when we're alone. Can you do that, Lewis?"

He slowly nodded his head as a response.

"Good boy," she said.

She tried to pat his head but for some reason, he suddenly backed away.

Then, much to her shock, he suddenly got down on his knees and bowed until his forehead touched the ground. She also noticed that his body was shaking.

"F-Forgive me, M-Master," Lewis said. "S-Sorry."

Her forehead knotted in confusion.

["Master?"]

That made her think that right now, Lewis was seeing another person instead of her. Was his trauma triggered because she tried to touch him? She wasn't sure because she never heard much from "Butler Lu" during her first life.

But she didn't need her memories of her past life to know that the poor boy was traumatized.

[Who was his former master again?]

She couldn't remember but she would find and punish them later.

"It's me, Lewis," Neoma said patiently. "I won't hurt you."

He still didn't budge.

She squatted down in front of him. "Lewis, I'm going to hug you."

It seemed like he understood that because he raised his head in surprise.

She used that as an opportunity to "attack" him with a hug. He didn't catch her though. Instead, he let himself fall until his back hit the ground. And so, she fell on top of him.

"Princess?"

[Ah, he's back to himself.]

"Yes, I'm your princess. Good job remembering my order," she told him. Then, she raised her head to look at him. Finally, he stopped shaking. "Are you okay now?"

He just nodded.

"I have a new order for you," she told him. "Forget about your old master."

He looked surprised by her order. "Forget?"

"Yes," she said firmly. "From now on, I'm your one and only master. If your bad memories start to pester you again, just remember my face."

"Princess? Face?"

She nodded eagerly. "Yes. I'm pretty, am I not?"

"Princess. Pretty."

"Very good," she said. "So whenever you feel sad, scared, lonely, or angry, just think about me. I'm sure my loveliness will make you feel okay."

"Princess," Lewis said. Then, his hand reached out to touch her face. "Lovely."

"Can I touch you, Lewis?"

Fear crossed his eyes for a while. But then, suddenly, it was replaced by determination. "Okay."

She slowly reached her hand to touch his hand on her face.

He closed his eyes as if he was trying hard not to react.

[Ah, he hates it.]

"Sorry," she said. Then, she let go of his hand and stood up. "It's okay now, Lewis. Stand up. We still have bullies to puni—" She stopped when she realized that the word "punish" might trigger Lewis's trauma. "I mean, we have children to teach a lesson."

Lewis opened his eyes. Then, he stood up and put his hands behind his back like a proper butler that he was. He just bowed to her as a response to what she just said.

"Let's go," Neoma said cheerfully to hype herself. "Let's teach some insolent kids a lesson they would never forget."

NEOMA smiled sweetly at Byron Thompson and Harry Alberts— the insolent children who mercilessly beat Lewis to a pulp.

[They're already twelve years old and yet, they still ganged up on a child?!]

She was so pissed but she had to control her emotion and show a charming smile.

Right now, she invited the two brats to an afternoon tea with her. Her palace prepared all the best pastries and snacks for children their age. Plus, she also asked the chef to put honey in their tea. Although she wasn't sure if the two boys were already used to drinking regular tea.

[Whatever.]

Anyway, at first she thought that the two dudes were twins.

Byron and Harry both had blonde hair and blue eyes. But then, she realized that almost every noble had light-colored hair and eyes like blue or green. It was rare to see people with dark hair and dark-colored eyes in their empire.

[Well, the setting of this empire reminds me of the Western countries I've been to back in my second life.]

"Hello, Lord Thompson and Lord Alberts," Neoma greeted them with a smile. "Do you know who I am?"

"You're the illegitimate son of His Majesty," Byron said haughtily.

[Wow, how blunt.]

"Everyone knows that Her Majesty didn't have a child before she died," Harry added.

That brat was talking about the empress, the woman that His Majesty married but never loved. She died of sickness a few years before she and Nero were born. According to the rumors, the emperor had never consummated his marriage with the poor empress.

So no one was happy when a lowly woman gave birth to the emperor's "son."

[Yes, that sc*mbag never acknowledged that he has a princess!]

Anyway, the two had the courage to talk to him that way because her attendants were standing a few meters away from them.

Lewis was the only guard standing right behind her.

"Your snotty attitude tells me that both of you are born with noble parents," Neoma started with a smile.

[Gosh, my face hurts from smiling too much.]

"Of course," Byron and Harry said in unison. "Both our parents are higher nobles."

She smiled and sipped her tea before she spoke. "So what?"

Byron and Harry looked confused by her arrogant tone.

[You're not the only one allowed to be arrogant here, brats. Learn from me.]

"My father is still a de Moonasterio," she continued with an arrogant smirk. Then, she elegantly placed the cup on the table before looking at them haughtily. "The royal family has the purest blood of all the families in the empire. WE are descendants of Yule, the Moon God. That means we are different from mere mortals like you. So even if my mother was a lowly woman, it doesn't change the fact that I am a de Moonasterio. The blood of a god is running through my veins and it's purer than the combined blood of simple nobles like your parents." Even without looking at her reflection, she knew her eyes turned red and glowed menacingly. She wasn't raising her voice but she could feel her anger in every fiber of her being. No wonder the two brats looked scared of her now. "The Soul Beast inside me is proof that I am a de Moonasterio. Anyone who says otherwise will be swallowed by my beast. Do you want to become my LOVELY PET's snack?"

In fairness, the two brats looked like they wanted to answer.

But their little bodies were shaking too much. They could definitely

feel the heavy pressure from her Mana. A few seconds later, they dropped on the ground while holding their necks as if they couldn't breathe.

She raised a hand to stop her attendants and knights to come and help the kids. They bowed to her and remained where they were.

Neoma looked down at the two kids on the ground. They were now crying while scratching their necks. "Lewis, listen to my new orders."

"Me," Lewis said behind her. "Listening."

"I'm giving you the permission to hurt the humans who hurt you," she said coldly while looking down at the two brats who were now looking at her with fear in their eyes. "Always return the favor tenfold. Do you understand?"

"Me understands," Lewis answered in a flat voice. "Prince."

"Good," she said, then she smiled. Now that she had calmed down, she was sure that her eyes already returned to normal. As proof, the brats also started to breathe again. Ah, it would be more appropriate to say that the two boys were now catching their breath. "You've heard me, Lord Thompson and Lord Alberts. The next time you hurt my butler, WE will return the favor tenfold. So you better think twice before touching my people."

The two brats nodded eagerly, tears brimming in the corner of their eyes.

Byron and Harry tried to run away but she stopped them.

"Sit," she said with an overly sweet smile. "Finish your tea before you leave or else, I'll ask Lewis to run after you."

Byron and Harry sobbed, but they were forced to sit down anyway.

[Good.]

She picked up a macaroon, then she turned to Lewis and smiled at him.

Of course, he didn't react and just looked at her with a blank face.

"Open your mouth, Lewis," Neoma asked him. When he opened his mouth, she put the macaroon close to his mouth. "Bite this." He did bite the macaroon but he didn't chew. She decided to be more patient with him. "Chew it slowly before you swallow."

Lewis nodded, then he slowly chew the macaroon.

Neoma smiled and gently brushed the crumbs at the corner of his mouth. She touched his face as light as possible to not startle him. Thankfully, this time, her touch didn't trigger his trauma. [I need to help Lewis.]

"I HEARD what you did to the young nobles yesterday."

Neoma forced herself to smile at what Emperor Nikolai commented. Right now, they were having breakfast at his palace. But she was the only one enjoying her pancakes. The emperor was only having tea for his breakfast. Not that she cared. "Papa, if you're just going to scold me, please forget it. I don't want to have a stomachache. But if you're going to praise me, go ahead and make my day."

"You're getting more and more arrogant, Prince Nero," Emperor Nikolai said. "Are you trying to test my patience?"

"No, I'm using my male privilege against you," she answered brightly. She could talk freely like that because aside from the two of them, no one else was in the dining hall. Not even Glenn. "If I were the real Nero, I'm sure you'd praise me. I only copied what you often do, Papa— and that's terrorizing your subjects."

"Balance it," the emperor said, obviously dismissing the fact that she was being so rude to him. "Too much fear would create hatred in your subjects' hearts. You have to make them fear and respect you at

the same time."

"Thank you for the advice, Papa."

"I'll be your personal trainer for today."

She almost choked on her food, forcing her to gulp down a glass of juice. "What do you mean by that, Papa?"

"I'm giving you the attention you're desperate for," Emperor Nikolai said with a smirk. "I'm going to teach you how to use your Soul Beast."

Neoma almost threw up.

[Is he planning to torture me as a punishment for my rudeness?!]
