

Royal Secret: I'm A Princess!

Volume 2: NEOMA SUPREMACY

Chapter 137 – PLAYING WITH FIRE

‘AND THAT concludes my lecture on taxes and activism,’ Neoma said when the children and the crowd fell completely silent. She understood that the concept that she introduced to them wasn’t easy to digest. So she decided to give the people time to think, then she changed the topic. ‘So, aside from my blood, do you have other complaints against me?’

The children looked at each other as if they were talking among themselves. Then, they looked down with an embarrassed look on their face.

Ah, so they have nothing else to say.

Well, she already expected that. After all, she knew that these children were only being used. How could a group of ordinary teenagers install bombs in the barricade that surrounded People’s Palace ?

‘I’m sorry but I won’t apologize for my blood,’ she said firmly, then she stood up and faced the crowd in front of her. When she stood, Lewis and Duke Quinzel, along with the knights around her, stood as well. ‘Being an illegitimate child isn’t my fault and I will not apologize for having Roseheart blood in my veins. I have nothing to do with my parents’ history, so why would you judge me for something I have no control over?’

The crowd once again fell silent.

But this time, she could feel the tension in the air. It looked like expressing her thoughts in an unapologetic voice made most people uncomfortable.

‘What makes you superior to children born out of wedlock anyway?’ she asked in a genuinely curious voice. ‘Are all children with married parents

happy? Are all married couple decent people? Should the innocent children be punished for the sins of their parents?' She shook her head. 'Of course not. So if you're going to criticize me, I humbly request that you criticize me for my job as a Crown Prince and character as a person. If you're only going to throw insults at me for my blood, then I'll just ignore you. As I said, I won't apologize for who and what I am as long as I know in myself that I am not hurting anyone else.' She paused, then she snapped her fingers. 'Oh. Maybe my existence did hurt the people with political ambitions that were crushed when my mother, thought to be only capable of giving birth to a girl, actually gave birth to a royal prince.' She smiled and shrugged. 'My bad.'

Much to her pleasant surprise, she heard some people laugh in the crowd.

The tension that she felt a while ago disappeared. Even the kids in front of her looked more comfortable now.

She was relieved, too.

Adouz fii, lvu jfl dpiiw nzunfzut om dfhu ovu jzfov md ovu numniu ovfo vfout vuz frt vuz qmovuz. Bpo fo ovfo qmquro, lvu jfl zuqartut ovfo vuz qmovuz, bplo iacu jvfo vuz dfovuz lfat, jfl film imsut gw lmqu.

And she could feel it right now.

'Y-Your Royal Highness...'

She squatted down to meet the edgy boy's eye level. He seemed hesitant and scared, so she smiled and gently encouraged him to speak up. 'Hmm? What is it? You can tell me anything.'

The edgy boy gulped hard, fear evident in his eyes. But soon, the fear was replaced by determination. 'T-To be honest, we were only ordered to—'

'Princess Neoma, don't let the children talk about the mastermind behind this.'

She was surprised when all of a sudden, Mochi appeared and landed on top of her head. It seemed like other people could see the bunny because the children looked up at her.

‘Why?’ she asked the bunny regarding her instruction a while ago. ‘Why shouldn’t I let them speak?’

‘We caught the assassins that were supposed to kill the children if they ever chickened out with their task,’ Mochi explained, then she hopped down and landed in front of her. ‘They said the children were bound with a spell. If they speak the name of the mastermind, the bomb implanted in their head would explode.’

She almost cursed under her breath.

‘Thank you for informing me, Mochi,’ she said seriously, then she turned to the children. ‘Don’t say a word about who ordered you to do this.’

‘B-But we want to make it up to you, Your Royal Highness.’

She smiled at the boy and ruffled his hair. ‘You’re already forgiven. It’s the thought that counts,’ she assured him. ‘And don’t worry because I can catch them. Trust me.’

The children once again looked at each other before facing her, then they firmly nodded.

She smiled again before she stood up. ‘Mochi, can you bring me the assassins you caught?’

Duke Quinzel, who probably couldn’t hear Mochi, looked surprised.

Lewis, on the other hand, remained pokerfaced. But she could feel his son’s Mana rising which meant he was ready to fight.

‘As you wish, Princess Neoma,’ Mochi said. ‘Give me five seconds.’

Within the five seconds that the bunny asked, she created a weak tornado that thankfully didn't send them flying.

Then, after blinking several times to remove the dust in her eyes, she saw three unconscious grown-men wearing black outfits appear on the ground. Each one of the assassins was bleeding profusely from the long and deep cuts all over their body as if they were mauled by an animal.

Av, Nuzm qplo vfsu plut ovu Wvaou Taeuz om foofhc ovu àllflarl.

'We knocked them out because they tried to kill themselves when we interrogated them a while ago,' Mochi, now in her arms, explained. 'It seems like they were adamant to protect their boss.'

She just nodded as an acknowledgment of Mochi's report. 'Duke Quinzel, my Spirit Guardian caught those assassins for me,' she said to the duke. 'They were hired by the same person who used these poor children to assassinate my character. Apparently, the assassins were ordered to kill the children if they failed their task.'

She smiled while clenching her hands tight. If Mochi didn't arrive in time, the poor children would have exploded right before her. She put her guard down when she realized that the people behind this character assassination campaign against hers weren't planning to literally kill her.

But she expected that the children would be attacked.

She just didn't think that the enemies would install bombs inside the children's bodies.

If they could use such spells and technology, then the family behind this attack is definitely rich and powerful.

'Please investigate them thoroughly, Your Grace,' she said, still smiling even though she was seething inside. 'And oh, my Spirit Guardian said that the

àssassins tried to kill themselves when interrogated a while ago so please keep an eye on them as soon as they wake up.'

Duke Quinzel looked worried about her. But since they were still in the public, he just bowed politely to her. 'I'll take care of the rest, Your Royal Highness.'

'Thank you, Duke Quinzel,' she said, then she faced the crowd again. 'I apologize but I need to go now. I will personally check on the bomb survivors.' She gave the crowd her infamous 'business smile.' 'As you can see, the àssassins hired to intimidate the children who were ordered to insult me is in our custody now. Whoever is behind this, I'll give you a chance to turn yourself in before I find you. But then again, it doesn't matter. After all, I'm the best in playing hide-and-seek.'

Adouz lfware ovfo, lvu jarcut fo ovu hzmjt jvaiu jfsare fo ovuq.

It's fanservice, y'all.

And it worked because the majority of the crowd cheered loudly while waving at her. It was safe to say that she managed to win over most of the people that gathered here today.

'To avoid such incidents to happen again, I swear on my name that we will strengthen the security in the area for your safety,' she said in a cheerful voice. 'Everyone, please stay safe and enjoy the Moon Festival. See you later!'

After saying goodbye to her 'fans,' she squatted down and faced the children in front of her again. They still couldn't move because Duke Quinzel's shadow was still keeping their shadows' 'hostage,' but at least, they looked calm now.

‘Come with me,’ Neoma said to the children (actually, teenagers but they were still kids in her eye). ‘I’ll bring you to Madam Hammock and ask her to get rid of the bombs in your body.’

NIKOLAI didn’t expect that Neoma would reveal her ability to summon and use Spirits.

At first, he was against her showing her Roseheart blood to other people. But since his children decided to embrace their mother’s blood running through their veins, he decided to respect their choice.

Everyone knows that the Rosehearts could summon and use Spirits anyway.

‘Glenn.’

‘Yes, Your Majesty?’

‘Go and fetch Nero,’ Nikolai ordered the knight while using a blocking spell so that no one could hear him or even read his lips. ‘I felt the White Tiger and the Black Tortoise move to protect Nero a while ago.’

It wasn’t a big deal because his Soul Beasts let him know that Nero was safe.

Still, it would be better to bring his son back to the palace. After the attack that happened today, he didn’t want to risk the safety of his children.

‘I understand, Your Majesty,’ Glenn said, then he bowed to him. ‘I will now bring Prince Nero back to his residence.’

‘NEOMA is angry,’ Nero, still seated on the stone railing of the gatehouse, said while looking at his twin sister. She was smiling and acting friendly,

but he could see the fire in her eyes. ‘It’s a good thing that Miss Gale managed to interrogate the assassins before knocking them out.’

Hanna, seated beside him, nodded. ‘But she’s doing a good job hiding it.’ She turned to him. ‘I’m glad that you and Miss Gale managed to find the assassins in time.’

The young Quinzel couldn’t hear Gale so he just told her the plan that he made with the Wind Spirit.

A jvaiu fem, fdouz nmaroare fo ovu àllflarl ovfo vu rmoahut vatare ar ovu hzmjt, Gfiu qmsut dflo frt gzmpevo ovmlu ovzuu lplnahampl qur om vaq. Wvur ovu vazut caiuzl hfqu fo vaq, ovu Wvaou Taeuz qfpiut ovuq jvaiu ovu Bifhc Tmzomalu fhout iacu val lvaut.

The White Tiger only stopped when he asked it to return.

After that, Gale interrogated the assassins. The three men laughed at them, and one said that even if they caught them, the young people that tried to attack Neoma (the ‘Crown Prince’) would still die if they mentioned the mastermind behind this whole ordeal. Apparently, a bomb was implanted in the teens’ body via spell and it would explode if they talked.

Then, the assassins tried to kill themselves via poison intake.

Thank goodness Gale was quick enough to knock them out.

Miss Gale is the Wind Spirit so it’s natural for her to be fast and agile.

‘Lady Nara and Lady Hanna Quinzel, I’ve come to pick you up.’

Both Nero and Hanna turned to see Sir Glenn standing politely behind them.

Ah, his father must have felt it when his Soul Beasts attacked the assassins. Thus, the emperor sent his most-trusted knight to fetch him.

Hanna, the young lady with perfect etiquettes, stood and bowed to greet the knight. ‘Greetings, Sir Glenn.’

Sir Glenn bowed to Hanna as well. ‘It’s good to see you again, Lady Quinzel.’

‘What does Neoma plan to do?’ he asked when he stood up and faced the knight. ‘I saw her enter People’s Palace with the young commoners.’

‘Princess Neoma plans to have Madam Hammock to help the young commoners, Your Royal Highness.’

‘Ah, I see,’ Nero said, then he pulled out the pocket watch from the pocket of her skirt. ‘It’s almost time for us to play in the Castillo Hall though.’

NEOMA smiled when she saw Nero and Hanna waiting for her when she got out of Madam Hammock’s infirmary. The young commoners were already safe, thanks to the Healing Sage’s power. She was relieved when the teens fell asleep. To make sure that they would get plenty of sleep, she left the children in Madam Hammock’s care before she left.

Of course, her son Lewis was behind her.

Anyway...

She noticed that Nero and Hanna were alone. They might have asked Sir Glenn and their other guards to leave because they had something important to discuss. Well, Emperor Nikolai already knew what they planned to do in Castillo Hall.

But Papa Boss doesn’t know that my esteemed guest is Duke Jasper Hawthorne.

‘You’re here,’ Neoma greeted them. ‘Are you ready to play?’

Hanna smiled and nodded. 'I will hide our presence with my shadow technique,' she assured her. 'But Nero and I will come to your rescue as soon as you need us.'

'That's reassuring, Hanna,' she said sincerely. 'Thank you.'

'Neoma, are you sure that you can beat Duke Jasper Hawthorne alone?' Nero asked worriedly. 'I know that you're strong. But we're talking about the duke who killed all his relatives in a single night.'

She gave her twin brother a thumbs up. 'Don't worry, Nero. I'm Neoma, so trust me.'

To be honest, she was going to use her 'cheat code' again: the memories of her first life.

In her previous life, Nero and Duke Hawthorne went after each other's throats during a 'friendly' match. Of course, it turned into a serious one after Nero almost killed the duke.

Yes, her twin brother won the fight.

After all, what Duke Hawthorne thought was his best weapon actually turned out to be useless against Nero.

Since we're twins, maybe Duke Hawthorne's power won't work on me as well.

'Ah, I remember something,' she said, then she turned to Lewis. 'Duke Hawthorne has an annoying and very nasty right-hand man, Lewis. I'll leave him to you.'

Lewis, who seemed to be happy that she relied on him, nodded firmly.

'Yosh,' she said, then she cracked her knuckles. 'Tteokbokki, preheat mode on.'

‘I don’t understand what you mean by that, thug princess,’ Tteokbokki, her ever tsundere Soul Beast, said in a grumpy voice. ‘But I’m ready to fight anytime.’

‘I need your flame, Tteokbokki,’ Neoma said seriously. ‘Our opponent is a flame user after all.’

NERO, of course, was curious as to why Neoma seemed to know a lot about Duke Jasper Hawthorne.

But he didn’t ask his twin sister about it. After all, he knew that she wouldn’t give him an honest answer anyway. So in the end, he just decided to accept that his precious Neoma was special.

‘Nero, don’t worry,’ Hanna, seated on the railing of the balcony while facing the room in front of them, assured him. ‘If Neoma says she won’t lose, then she won’t.’

Nero, seated beside her, just nodded in agreement.

Right now, the whole balcony was covered with Hanna’s Veil of Darkness Technique. That meant nobody could see or feel them on the balcony. But it wasn’t just their presence that disappeared. In fact, everything inside the Veil would temporarily disappear from the sight and the memories of everyone outside it.

‘I agree with the young lady,’ Gale, appearing out of nowhere, said as she landed squarely on his lap. ‘But I hope the fight lasts long. I want to see Princess Neoma fight.’

Hanna turned to him with a curious look on his face. ‘Did Miss Gale say something, Nero?’

‘Miss Gale said she wants to see Neoma fight,’ he said to her, then he looked down at the bunny on his lap. ‘Miss Gale, what does Duke Hawthorne look like?’

‘He looks strong,’ the Wind Spirit said. ‘But if you mean his physical appearance, then I’d say he’s handsome.’

‘Oh, that would be a problem then,’ he said while shaking his head, then he turned to Hanna. ‘Miss Gale said Duke Hawthorne is handsome.’

‘Oh,’ Hanna said, then she let out a deep sigh. ‘That’s a problem, indeed.’

‘Why? Why? Why?’ Gale asked, obviously intrigued by their reaction.

‘Why is the fact that the young duke is handsome going to be a problem?’

Nero took a deep breath before he spoke again. ‘Neoma likes good-looking people a little too much.’

Hanna nodded firmly in agreement. ‘Neoma might get distracted by Duke Hawthorne’s face and lose.’

AS SOON as Neoma entered the Grand Hall, she already felt the thick bloodlust in the air.

Duke Jasper Hawthorne (and his right-hand man that she chose to ignore) didn’t even bother to hide. The two were seated on the railing of the grand staircase. It was kind of dark because the curtains all over the hall were covering the glass windows, so she couldn’t make out the face of the young duke and his aid.

‘Ah, it’s the fake prince.’

Judging by the arrogant voice that belonged to a seemingly confident young man, it was obvious that it was Duke Jasper Hawthorne who spoke just now.

Neoma matched his arrogance with her own arrogant smirk. ‘Ah, it’s the son of slave traders.’

That obviously riled up the young duke.

His bloodlust all over the room got thicker.

Then, the hundreds of bloody red butterflies scattered all over the Grand Hall lit up. Ah, maybe it would be more appropriate to say that the wings of the butterflies had turned into a red flame.

After all, it was one of the young duke’s abilities.

Thanks to the burning wings of the butterflies around them, the whole Grand Hall began to light up.

And that was when she saw the face of Duke Jasper Hawthorne.

Bluish-black hair, deep blue eyes, beautiful bronzed skin.

Damn, Duke Jasper Hawthorne’s face was god-tier.

‘Omo,’ Neoma said, clutching her chest tight when she felt her heart’s sudden erratic beat. ‘Why do you have to be so unnecessarily handsome, Duke Hawthorne?’

And did she just hear Lewis sigh behind her?

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