

# Royal Secret: I'm A Princess!

## Chapter 19 - ROYAL BUSINESS PROPOSAL

NEOMA was amazed that both of her hands were fully healed now.

Right now, she sat on a high chair while facing her vanity mirror.

Stephanie stood behind her as the head maid combed her now short hair. It was also Stephanie who helped her change from her pajamas into a formal wear.

[I have a business proposal with His Majesty so I have to look professional.]

Neoma now wore a gray pinstripe suit complete with pinstripe jacket, gray shirt, and white ascot tie with diamond studs for a cravat pin. She wanted to wear slacks to look more professional but her legs were too short for them. So instead, she opted to dress shorts again. It was okay though. Her high socks and expensive leather shoes still made her look classy.

Thank goodness she didn't wake up with thick bandages on her hands or else, that would have ruined her outfit of the day.

Speaking of her hands...

[If I remember correctly, I broke the fingers in my hands when I punched the White Tiger and the emperor.]

As expected, the royal doctors were quite competent.

"Your Royal Highness, do you feel any pain in your hands?" Stephanie asked with a hint of worry in her voice. The head maid

probably noticed that she was staring at her hands. "Do you want me to call Madam Hammock?"

"No, I'm fine," Neoma said. "I'm just relieved that my hands are fixed now." She looked up at the head maid who looked genuinely concerned about her. That somehow warmed her heart. At last, her cutesy act seemed to be working perfectly on other people. "Stephanie, how's Lewis now? Is he already awake?"

"I heard from Alphen that Lewis is already conscious," the head maid said. "But the child is not allowed to see you until his probation is lifted, Your Royal Highness. His Majesty ordered to put him under house arrest for a month as punishment for interfering with your training session."

[Gosh, that sc\*mbag doesn't really stop giving me reasons to curse at him.]

"Thank you for telling me, Stephanie," Neoma said with a smile. "I'm ready to go to Papa's palace now."

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NEOMA wasn't really nervous about meeting Emperor Nikolai.

She had been through more nerve-wrecking situations to be nervous around a tyrant. Heck, she even died twice. The first time, she was brutally murdered by her own twin brother. And then, her second death...

[Never mind. My random death sounds like a premise of a N\*tflix sitcom.]

Come to think of it, she was mentally older than Emperor Nikolai if she added her ages from her first life to the current one together. As far as she knew, the emperor was currently twenty twenty-five years old.

[Gosh, Mama and that sc\*mbag conceived us early, huh?]

Anyway, she really didn't know where the uneasiness she felt came from.

"Welcome, Your Royal Highness," Glenn greeted her brightly. "His Majesty is waiting for you in his office."

"Okay. Thanks, Sir Glenn," Neoma said cheerfully— matching the knight's energy. Then, she turned to Alphen and Stephanie behind her. And there were also several other maids and knights behind the two. "Just wait here. I want to talk alone with Papa."

All her servants bowed to her. "As you wish, Your Royal Highness."

She just smiled at them before she entered the emperor's office.

His Majesty's office was as bland and as boring as his personality. Of course, it looked luxurious. But the furniture color scheme was as dark as his soul. And the space? It was as big as his ego.

"Papa," Neoma greeted him with a big smile. "How are you?"

Emperor Nikolai stopped signing whatever paperwork he was doing at the moment to look up at her. Then, he smirked. "You're not calling me "sc\*mbag" today, Princess Neoma?"

Her smile froze.

Yeah, he called her name. But it was full of sarcasm.

[Gosh, someone wants to get punched again.]

"Please don't make me call you "sc\*mbag" again, Papa," she said sweetly. "But if you insist..."

Emperor Nikolai frowned. "Keep the act."

Her smile grew bigger. "As you wish, Papa."

After that, she went to the lounge area and sat on the sofa.

Surprisingly, the refreshments were already served. The pastry stand was filled with yummy snacks, and the tea prepared for her had honey in it. Gosh, it would have been a perfect moment if she wore a pretty pink dress instead of a boring gray suit.

[I love girly stuff. What about it?]

"It is considered bad manners to start eating or drinking first in the presence of someone higher in position than you," Emperor Nikolai scolded her when he sat on the sofa across from her. He even had the gall to give her a disapproving look. "Do I have to punish your etiquette teacher for failing to teach you good manners?"

"My etiquette teacher does a splendid job teaching me good manners, Papa. Just in case you haven't noticed yet, everyone who knows me loves me already," she said with a sweet smile. Yes, her cheeks hurt from smiling too much but she enjoyed the fact that she could be this snarky around the emperor without being scared for her life. She thought that if her father let her live after she punched him in the face, she was certain that she wouldn't get killed for being sarcastic. "Only an iron wall like you is immune to my charm so I already gave up on you. And thus, I decided to treat you like how you treat me. So, my dearest Papa, if you want to see me apply my good manners on you, then please show me some respect first."

See? She said "please."

[That's on good manners, girl!]

"I guess this kind of relationship suits us better," Emperor Nikolai said before he picked up his tea cup in an unnecessarily graceful manner.

[Gosh, he's oozing with elegance.]

"I agree, Papa," she said cheerfully just to annoy her stoic father. "And I'm glad that you brought it up. Actually, my business proposal has something to do with our "relationship.""

"I can't wait to hear it, Princess Neoma."

[Gosh, is he going to die if he stopped being sarcastic for a minute?]

"Papa, before I present my business proposal, I need to ask for compensation first."

He was supposed to sip his tea but stopped mid-way to give her a stern look. "Excuse me?"

"You almost killed my butler-slash-bodyguard, Papa," she reminded him sternly. Wow, it seemed like freedom made her nerves turn into steel. "I'm aware that Lewis is doing fine now. But I won't settle for the bare minimum. As compensation for hurting my butler, I want you to give him the education that nobles his age receive."

"Rejected," he said before he sipped his tea.

She stopped herself from cracking her knuckles.

Instead, she took a deep breath to calm herself.

[I already expected this anyway.]

When she opened her eyes, she smiled at the emperor who was looking at her with calculating eyes. "Papa, you don't have to spend your money on Lewis' education. I'll take care of it."

"I won't let the royal prince pay for a servant's education."

"I won't use my money," she said. "Not that I have it anyway."

Plus, education in this empire was very expensive. That was why only the nobles had access to it. Thankfully, there were kind-hearted nobles like Duke Quinzel who had started to financially support smart and talented commoners.

She wanted that for Lewis.

"So, how do you plan to support the foxy boy's education then?" the emperor asked as if he was challenging her.

"Papa, remember the shitty little brats that bullied my butler?"

"Did you just say "shitty" in front of my face?"

She gently bit her lower lip as a punishment for herself.

Gosh, her filthy mouth just wouldn't shut up, huh? She really couldn't help it because her second life was still vivid in her memories. In that life, she had the privilege to live like a normal person in a world where cursing was pretty normal.

Well, not really but at least, in that world, she wouldn't get executed by simply saying some nasty words.

"Let's do it this way," Emperor Nikolai said after she fell silent for a few seconds. "I will allow Lewis, a lowly commoner servant, to receive education in two conditions. First, you'll take care of the expenses. Second, you'll refrain from cursing in front of me—especially not around other people. I don't care if a five year old child cusses like a sailor. But don't let me hear it."

Okay, that was one tempting offer.

[Yes, I should seriously stop swearing. I won't be able to act as a cute and innocent angel if people find out that I curse like a sailor.]

"Accepted," she said. When the emperor just nodded, she continued. "Papa, I plan to "persuade" the family of the boys who bullied Lewis to let my butler study with their sons. Of course, they will take care of the expenses as compensation for raising bullies."

"Good luck on that," he said indifferently. "Now, I want to hear your "business proposal.""

She cleared her throat first before she spoke. "Papa, I don't want to work for free anymore."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I risked my life by agreeing to be Nero's proxy because I wanted to gain your love and attention," she confessed. "But now that we both know that it's not going to happen anymore. So I decided to work for you instead. I'll only continue playing as Nero if you agree to pay me for my acting skills."

She needed to earn money as early as now to survive on her own once Nero returned. To be honest, she wasn't sure if the emperor would grant her the first two wishes that she asked for. But regardless of whether he gave her the title of a duchess or not, she still needed money.

Because I'm 100% sure that if ever this sc\*mbag did grant me the duchess title, he'd definitely give me a barren land for a territory.

He smirked at her— obviously not pleased by her business proposal. "If you refuse to continue posing as the royal palace, then you'd be nothing but a worthless princess to me. I can marry you off or kick you out of the palace if you don't prove your use to me, "Princess Neoma.""

"Do it, Your Majesty," she said, her smile gone and her voice as cold as the sc\*mbag's heart— if he has any. "Marry me off. Kick me out of the palace. Heck, you can even order my execution right here, right now. I don't care anymore. But from now on, I won't allow you to boss me around without gaining a single gold coin from you."

The majesty turned as serious as she was. "There you go again, speaking like an a.d.u.l.t. Do you know how disgusting you sound right now?"

"Like I care," she said casually.

"Do you have a death wish?"

She laughed at that.

Gosh, was he really talking about death to a person who already died twice?

"I'm not scared of dying, Your Majesty," she said with a bitter smile. "I'm more afraid of losing myself in the process of gaining the affection of an undeserving sc\*mbag like you."

For the record, she didn't want to die. She sucked up to Nero and Emperor Nikolai because she wanted to live a longer life this time.

But she didn't mind losing her life either if it meant being freed from the sc\*mbag.

In short, she had nothing to lose.

And she knew that Emperor Nikolai could see it in her eyes.

"I can't believe that I'm talking about death to a five-year old royal princess," His Majesty said while shaking his head. "Alright, let's have it your way. Name your price."

"I'll settle for a bag of gold coins weekly, Your Majesty," she said with a sweet smile. "Plus, you have to spoil me. At least, on the surface."

His furrowed brows told her that he wasn't starting to run out of patience. "And why do I have to do that?"

"The crown prince that is favored by the emperor will gain more power, Papa," she said cheerfully. She was back to her cutesy angel role now that the emperor accepted her offer. Plus, she needed to change her tone now because she didn't want to test his patience more than she already had. "If you want the nobles to support the real Nero once he returns, we have to solidify his position as your heir apparent first. We can do that by showing everyone that we have a good relationship. Plus, we need to rebrand your image from an indifferent tyrant to a doting father. I know that you're a capable emperor. But it wouldn't hurt to improve your image." She gave him double thumbs up. "Trust me, Papa. We will both benefit from this."

Emperor Nikolai looked at her as if he was studying her. Then, a few moments later, he let out a deep sigh. "Accepted."

She smiled and stood up to walk towards the emperor. Then, she stopped in front of him and extended her hand to him. "Do we have a deal, Papa?"

His Majesty took her little hand in his for a professional handshake. "Yes, it's a deal, Princess Neoma."

She smiled when she noticed the lack of sarcasm in his tone this time.

But that smile faded away as soon as she felt her heart stop beating for a moment. She didn't know why but for some reason, she already knew what that meant.

And it was enough to make her cry silently.

Emperor Nikolai's furrowed brows showed his confusion. "Are you acting again?"

"Papa..." Neoma said in a cracked voice as her tears roll down her cheeks quietly. "Nero's heart just stopped beating."

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

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