

# Royal Secret: I'm A Princess!

## Volume 2: NEOMA SUPREMACY

### Chapter 197 - TWO PRETTY BESTIES

‘YOUR MAJESTY, I’ve heard from Count Sprouse that the rebels would be publicly executed soon.’

‘That’s true,’ Nikolai said, then he returned to his seat with a bottle of whisky. ‘But I didn’t call you here to talk about the rebels, Rufus.’

Rufus, seated on the chair across from him, suddenly looked tensed.

‘Relax,’ he told his cousin as he poured whiskey into Rufus’s glass.

‘Your Majesty, you don’t have to do that for me,’ Rufus said, flustered that he was pouring alcohol for him instead of the other way around. After all, he was the emperor. ‘Please let me pour our drinks.’

That was exactly the reason why only Rufus was allowed in the royal parlor at the moment.

If his butler saw that he was serving his cousin a drink, the poor old man would probably have a heart attack.

‘Let me do this because I have a favor to ask,’ he said seriously, then he poured some whisky for himself before he turned to his cousin again. ‘Rufus, I need you to drop your proposed bill regarding female successors to be officially recognized by the law.’

His cousin looked shocked by his ‘favor.’ ‘Your Majesty, I can’t do that,’ he said sternly. ‘You know that’s the only reason why I entered the House of Lords.’

‘Calm down and let me finish,’ he said sternly, then he sipped his whisky before he spoke again. ‘I’m not telling you to drop it forever. But I need you to stop pushing for your proposed bill to be passed as a law for now.’

‘For now?’

He nodded before he explained to his cousin. ‘Rufus, the only reason why I didn’t support your proposed bill was that I personally didn’t want Neoma to have a right to the throne before,’ he said. ‘But I already changed my mind.’

His cousin’s eyes widened in shock. ‘Your Majesty, are you saying that you’ve chosen Princess Neoma as your successor instead of Prince Nero?’

‘Neoma made a deal with Yule,’ he explained. He told Rufus the truth because he trusted his cousin. ‘In return for returning her appearance back to normal, Yule made her promise that she’d be the first empress regnant of our empire. You know that a ‘promise’ with a god isn’t something that you should break unless you don’t value your life, don’t you?’

Rufus nodded thoughtfully, then he fell silent for a while before he spoke again. ‘Your Majesty, what is your plan?’ he asked carefully. ‘How would you support me with my proposed bill without being criticized by the nobles? I know that you would be put in a different spot if you openly showed your support.’

He smiled at his cousin’s sharpness. ‘Rufus, we need to wait for Neoma and Hanna Quinzel to turn thirteen years old. Do you remember what kind of right the noble children of our empire receive once they officially become a teen?’

‘The right to own and run a business...?’

‘That’s correct,’ he confirmed with a nod. ‘In our empire, noble children are allowed to legally own a business using their personal funds once they turn thirteen.’

Moreover, Nero would have probably returned once he and Neoma turned that age.

That would be the perfect timing for his plan to be executed by then.

‘We have to show the whole continent that female successors could bring success to their families,’ he told Rufus seriously. ‘My daughter and your daughter should set a great example. If they become very successful at such a young age, then it would be easy to convince and manipulate the nobles to recognize female successors.’

‘But it’s normal even for female noble children to own a successful business at that age, Your Majesty,’ Rufus said worriedly, then he took a gulp of his whisky. ‘Even if Princess Neoma and Hanna become successful businesswomen in the future, it wouldn’t make that much of a difference.’

‘The businesses that the young ladies in our empire run are all the same,’ he said. ‘They either own a dessert restaurant, a dress shop, or a jewelry store. There are some who run art galleries and enter knighthood. All of those careers are thriving and inspiring. But what I have in mind is something of a grand scale— something that will definitely make a change, Rufus. Guess what it is.’

‘Can you give me some hint, Your Majesty?’

‘Neoma has been supporting talented individuals from the middle class and poor families for the past few years through the Sword Lily Foundation,’ he said. ‘On the other hand, Hanna Quinzel, as your sole successor, has abundant personal funds. After all, House Quinzel is arguably the richest family in the empire.’ He poured some more whisky into his glass. ‘Now, this is my question, Rufus,’ he said, then he drank his whisky first before talking again. ‘Neoma has talented individuals under her wing that, unfortunately, can’t enter the prestigious academies in the empire because their poor background hinders them. But your daughter, given the wealth

under her name, can easily build an institution that can shelter those people. What kind of institution do you think I'm talking about?

Rufus let out a gasp before he spoke. 'An academy for the commoners...?'

'Yes, an academy for the commoners,' Nikolai confirmed while nodding. 'Moreover, I want it to be an academy that would be fair in accepting students.'

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That disgusting practice was the reason why the acceptance rate for female students was low, resulting to fierce competition among ladies vying for a spot in prestigious academies.

He was ashamed to admit this but as an emperor, he had turned a blind eye to that issue to protect his throne.

But to support Neoma as the future empress, he was now ready to risk it all.

'That kind of academy wouldn't be easy to build and it will require a lot of money,' he said to his cousin. 'Of course, I will invest to help you financially. But you will still need to spend a fortune for this, Rufus.'

'Money isn't going to be a problem, Your Majesty,' Rufus said casually. Of course, it wouldn't be a problem. House Quinzel was richer than the Royal Family after all. 'But how can we keep this a secret from the other nobles?'

'I will take care of that,' Nikolai assured his cousin. 'If the academy under Neoma and Hanna Quinzel's names succeeds, then the whole empire wouldn't be able to ignore female successors anymore.'

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ENTERING the Quinzel Mansion discreetly went smoothly.

Neoma and Lewis's carriage was 'inspected' by Vice-Captain Jaxson Emmett himself, dressed in the casual version of their squad's all-black knights' uniform.

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It wouldn't change the fact that the vice-captain still looked older than Duke Quinzel though. As far as she remembered from her first life, Vice-Captain Emmett was only in his early twenties.

'Lady Nara, we have arrived,' Sir Emmett said politely, then he bowed to her. 'Her Grace Duchess Quinzel is waiting for you inside Young Lady Hanna's room.'

Ah, right.

She entered the mansion as 'Lady Nara'— Nero's disguise when he was still living with the Quinzels. After all, the Black Hawk Knights didn't know that she was the 'Crown Prince.'

Neoma smiled and gave the knight a polite curtsy. 'Thank you, Sir Emmett.'

The Vice-captain smiled and bowed to them before he left.

It wasn't like the mansion didn't have strict protection. The Black Hawk Knights were diligently patrolling the estate, even inside the house. But the hallway where Hanna's room was located was noticeably empty.

And she thinks it was because the room was already covered with a thick, protective Mana. She was told that Duke Rufus Quinzel wasn't in the

mansion because he was summoned by her Papa Boss in the palace. But for some reason, he could feel the duke's heavy presence.

Lewis looked at her, then he tilted his head at one side. 'Should I just wait here outside, Lady Nara?'

Svu iacut vmj Lujal prtuzlommt val àllaerquro.

Since she was pretending as Lady Nara Quinzal, her son addressed her as such.

'You came here as our friend and not as my knight so it would be weird if you stayed here,' she said, then she faced the double doors and knocked politely. 'I am here, Your Grace.'

'Please come in, Princess Neoma.'

The fact that Duchess Amber Quinzal addressed her by her real name and title suggested that the room and the hallway were both safe places to talk freely.

As expected of the Quinzals.

Lewis opened the doors for her.

Then, she quietly entered the room. She was surprised by what greeted her. Thus, she remained frozen on her spot as Lewis entered the room and quietly closed the doors behind them.

I'm relieved to see Hanna healthy but why...

Why were Hanna and Duchess Amber Quinzal bowing deeply to her?

'Princess Neoma, thank you for saving my life,' Hanna said, surprisingly addressing her formally even though they agreed to drop the honorifics between them. 'I will never forget what you've done for me.'

Ah, it wasn't a big deal to her.

But she couldn't say it. Not when two of the highest-ranking noblewomen in the empire were bowing to her like that.

'You have our utmost gratitude for saving our daughter, Princess Neoma,' Duchess Amber Quinzel said. 'Rufus and I are much obliged to you, Your Royal Highness.'

'Please raise your hands, Hanna and Duchess Quinzel,' Neoma said. When Hanna and Her Grace raised their heads to look at her with genuine gratitude in their eyes, she smiled at them. 'We're family, aren't we?'

The smile that Hanna and Duchess Quinzel gave her as a response warmed her heart.

Ah, maybe I'm not yet as jaded as I thought I was.

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'HANNA, micheosseo?' Neoma asked Hanna between sobs. When she realized that she spoke to her cousin in Hangul, she repeated her statement using the language that Hanna would understand. 'Are you crazy? Why didn't you tell me your plan beforehand?'

'I'm sorry, Neoma,' Hanna said between sobs. Like her, she had been crying her eyes out ever since Hanna confessed to her the plan that she executed without telling her. 'I know that I should have told you about my plan. But I wanted you to get a natural reaction from you once you heard about what happened to me. In that way, the enemies would believe that I was really in a life-threatening condition.'

'Yes, you're really crazy,' she said, still crying hard. 'I'm a goddamn actress, for fućk's sake, Hanna. I would have still done splendid acting even though I know the truth. Please don't do something as reckless as this again.'

Her cousin nodded, then she cried harder.

Of course, she cried as loud as Hanna as well.

Right now, she and her cousin were hugging each other on the latter's queen size bed. Lewis was in the corner of the room, pretending to be looking at something interesting in the ceiling. Well, the painting in the ceiling was indeed interesting.

Anyway...

On the other hand, Duchess Amber Quinzel left to personally cook lunch for them. Apparently, it was the duchess's way of thanking her.

A while ago, Hanna told her everything.

'I'm sorry if I didn't ask for your permission when I told my parents that Regina Crowell is an enemy,' Hanna said when she calmed down a bit. 'I know that it wasn't my story to share. Still, I protected your secret regarding the fact that this is already your third life. I just really believed that we needed the help of my parents. I hope you understand, Neoma.'

To be honest, what Hanna did was a huge risk.

But thankfully, her cousin didn't tell the duke and the duchess about her other lives. The lie that Hanna said to her parents regarding her 'visions' was plausible as well. After all, her Papa Boss told her before that her Mama Boss could see the future.

Gaining the support of Duke and Duchess Quinzel would benefit them in the end. Moreover, now that the duke and duchess knew that Regina Crowell was an enemy, she wouldn't have to worry about them being controlled by girlie.

'You did well, Hanna,' she praised her cousin while gently patting her back. 'But next time, please tell me your plan. I know that you're smart and strong. That you can protect yourself. Still, I can't help but worry because I care for you.'

Her cousin nodded, then she held her hands. 'I won't do it again, Neoma. I swear.'

'That's good to hear,' she said, then she let out a sigh of relief. 'What do you plan to do after you made the whole empire believe that the Quinzel heiress was in a coma after being amputated?'

'I still want to go to Gonora, Neoma,' Hanna said determinedly. 'I need to meet my great uncle and learn from him.' She clutched her chest tight. 'My heart needs to be stronger literally.'

'It's still risky to do that, Hanna,' she said seriously. 'We have no way of knowing if Regina Crowell has given up on you already. Plus, what will you do if she still insists on going to Gonora? We can't protect you if you're that far from us.'

Her cousin fell silent, obviously thinking deeply at the moment.

Of course, her big brain began to work as well. Fortunately, after a few moments, a brilliant idea popped into her mind.

'Hanna, I will give Regina Crowell a reason to stay in the empire.'

Hanna tilted her head at one side while observing her face. 'What's your plan, Neoma?'

'I'll choose Regina Crowell as a court lady in my palace,' Neoma said seriously. 'I bet the crows wouldn't miss the chance for their pawn to get close to the Royal Family.'

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'SIR CREVAN, shouldn't we stop Neoma from her plan?' Hanna, seated on the sofa while having tea, asked the young knight standing behind Neoma's vacated seat. The royal princess was still in the bathroom while washing her

face. 'Getting close to Regina Crowell on purpose when she's supposed to be avoiding her doesn't sound good to me.'

Lewis kept quiet for a couple of seconds before he opened his mouth.

'Princess Neoma will be fine,' he said reassuringly. 'She has me.'

She smiled at his confident response. 'That put me at ease. Thank you, Sir Crevan.'

'Are you okay now?'

To say that she was surprised when he asked her in a concerned voice would be an understatement--- she was shocked.

'His Holiness personally confirmed that I have recovered completely,' she said with a smile on her face. 'Thank you for asking, Sir Crevan.'

He just nodded.

Then, much to her surprise, Lewis extended a hesitant hand. But the hesitation didn't last long. A few moments later, he was already patting her head. It was so light that his palm barely touched the top of her head.

'Good job surviving,' Lewis said, then he pulled his hand away from her head. After that, he stood straight and put his hands behind him. 'Princess Neoma would have been sad had you been hurt badly.'

Hanna smiled, her heart warm after realizing that Lewis already considered her a friend. It didn't matter if it was only because of Neoma. She was still glad that she found another good friend in him. 'I won't make you and Neoma worry again, Sir Crevan.'

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

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