

Royal Secret: I'm A Princess!

Volume 2: NEOMA SUPREMACY

Chapter 198 - MOON + ROSE

NEOMA had a wonderful lunch with Hanna, Duchess Amber Quinzel, and Lewis.

But since Hanna's real health condition was a secret even to the servants of House Quinzel, they ate lunch in her cousin's room. Well, Hanna's room was so big and so spacious that replacing the tea table with a dining table didn't feel out of place.

During their meal, she noticed that the duchess didn't mention anything about the 'vision' that saved Hanna.

She only found out the reason when Duke Rufus Quinzel arrived and asked her to have tea with him separately. So, she left Lewis in Hanna's care and followed the duke in the tea room. She thought that Duchess Amber Quinzel would join them.

But much to her shock, the duchess left after personally serving tea and snacks to them.

Duke Quinzel, seated from across the table, sipped his tea before he asked. 'Are you wondering why my wife didn't join us, Princess Neoma?'

'Yes, Your Grace,' Neoma said while nodding gently. 'Is there a specific reason why Duchess Quinzel didn't join us?'

'My wife and I decided to stop talking about the vision that you saw, Your Royal Highness,' the duke said. 'Since we already know that Regina Crowell plans to manipulate Amber to get into our family, we thought that it would be best if my wife doesn't know anything about our plan. Although we're being more careful now, we still decided for Amber to be left out as a

precautionary measure. After all, we don't know the real ability of our enemies yet. Who knows if they have someone who could read minds or manipulate people to make them speak?'

Svu rmttut fefar, aqnzullut fo vmj ovu Qparxuil qfrfeut om nifr oval dfz fizuftw.

Hanna did the right thing when she told her parents about our dilemma.

'Thus, from now on, my wife won't be involved with our operations anymore, Princess Neoma,' the duke continued. 'We thought it would be safer for me to work with you because Regina Crowell wouldn't have the chance to get near me. After all, my position requires me to stay in the palace often. Thus, it's unlikely for the crows to target me yet.'

She nodded thoughtfully. 'That makes sense, Your Grace.'

Even in her first life, Regina Crowell didn't approach the duke as much as she did with duchess. Although she wasn't sure what happened to the Quinzels after she died.

'Princess Neoma, I can't thank you enough for saving our Hanna,' the duke said sincerely. 'As the head of House Quinzel, I swear on my name that my family and I will support you.'

Was that a pledge of loyalty?

But since House Quinzel had always been loyal to her father, she didn't think much of it.

'Thank you, Your Grace,' she said with a smile, then she changed the topic. 'Are you not going to ask me about the visions that I saw?'

The duke sipped his tea before he responded. 'When Lady Roseheart was still alive, she wasn't comfortable with talking about her ability to see a

glimpse of the future. I'm afraid that you might feel the same, Princess Neoma.'

Huz vufzo quiout.

Duke Quinzel was the only father that she acknowledged in her first life. He was the kindest person to her in the past. And even now, he was still good to her.

Duke Quinzel is really the ideal father.

She didn't want to compare but Papa Boss should learn a thing or two from the duke about being a father.

'Thank you for not asking about my ability, Your Grace,' she said. 'Can you please keep this a secret from my father? Papa doesn't like it when I talk about my mother.' That wasn't entirely true but she needed to convince the duke to keep her secret safe. 'Moreover, he told me to keep my abilities as a Roseheart a secret.'

'Princess Neoma, would it really be better to keep it a secret even from His Majesty?' he asked worriedly.

'Your Grace, I'm just Nero's replacement,' she said with a hint of sadness in her voice. She was slightly in her 'actress mode' to get what she wanted from the duke. 'His Majesty doesn't need to know that his daughter is awesome. After all, the empire isn't kind to royal princesses.'

The duke looked at her sympathetically.

'I'm fine, Your Grace,' she assured him with a bright smile. 'I just want to live quietly after Nero returns. That's why I don't want my father to know my ability as a Roseheart. I don't want to be exploited.'

Understanding finally dawned upon the duke's face. 'I understand, Princess Neoma,' he said. 'Our family will keep your secret safe.'

‘Thank you, Your Grace,’ she said, then she changed the topic. ‘Hanna told me that she still plans to go to Gonora. But I’m worried that Regina Crowell might follow her and attack her while she’s defenseless and alone in a faraway country. That’s why I’m thinking of making Regina Crowell a court lady, Your Grace. I bet she won’t miss the chance to get close to me. By using that tactic, I could keep an eye on her naturally.’ She paused for a while to sip her tea. ‘But Hanna is worried. She’s not comfortable with the fact that I want to keep Regina Crowell close to me.’

The duke fell silent for a couple of seconds before he shared his opinion. ‘I’m sorry but I agree with Hanna, Princess Neoma,’ he said seriously. ‘Regina Crowell is a dangerous child. It seems like she’s being backed up by a strong and influential group. Only people who have the same status as we do would have the audacity to target House Quinzel.’

Ah, right.

Hanna didn’t tell her parents about the crows.

‘Your Grace, I have another secret that I wish to share with you,’ she said seriously. ‘But it’s a secret that I want you to keep even from Duchess Quinzel. It’s not that I don’t trust your wife. But please trust me on this: the less Her Grace knows, the safer she’d be.’

‘I don’t like keeping secrets from my wife but if it will keep her safer, then I must obliged,’ the duke said firmly. ‘You may share your secret with me, Princess Neoma.’

She nodded before she spoke. ‘According to my dream, Regina Crowell is a part of the Crow– the cult that kills royal princesses.’

The duke looked shocked by her revelation.

‘Your Grace, for some reason, the crows are interested in House Quinzel,’ she said. ‘But I don’t know how it’s related to their goal.’

The duke's expression turned grim. 'Princess Neoma, thank you for telling me that the crow is the one targeting my family. Truth be told, this isn't the first time that they tried to control House Quinzel. In the past, they also attacked my brother.'

Her brows furrowed in confusion. 'May I know why?'

'The crows have always been interested in our Shadow Manipulation Technique,' he said seriously. 'I thought they would stop going after my family when my brother died. After all, the technique that the crows desired died with my brother.' His jaw clenched. 'I guess they believe that the technique was passed down to me when I inherited the duke title. If my theory is correct, then it only means that the crows wanted Regina Crowell to enter my family to target me.' He let out a deep sigh while 'washing' his face with his hands. 'They targeted Hanna because of me.'

'Your Grace, please don't blame yourself,' she said sternly. 'Hanna wouldn't like that. Plus, the only thing to blame here is the stupid cult.'

Duke Quinzel turned to her and when he smiled, it seemed like all his worries faded away. 'Thank you, Princess Neoma.'

She just smiled at him. 'Now, what should we do with Regina Crowell? I will listen to your advice, Your Grace.'

'Now that I know that Regina Crowell is a crow, then the more I wouldn't allow you to keep her close to you, Princess Neoma,' he said solemnly. 'The late Princess Nichole tried to use that approach to a crow that we caught spying on her. It didn't end well for her.'

'Oh.'

She didn't ask what happened because she felt like it would be hard for the duke to talk about it.

'But I agree with your plan to make that child a court lady, Princess Neoma.'

‘Hmm?’

‘There’s an old custom that the palace used to practice when it comes to choosing the court ladies that would serve the emperor or the Crown Prince,’ Duke Quinzel said in a light tone. ‘If you bring that custom back, we will get an opportunity to send Regina Crowell away from us, Princess Neoma.’

‘Ohh,’ Neoma said with a smirk. ‘I’m all ears, Your Grace.’

‘NEOMA, His Holiness will arrive in an hour so do your presentation quickly.’

Neoma cleared her throat, then she unfolded the paper that she brought in her father’s office. Gosh, if only computers existed in this world, she would have prepared the best powerpoint presentation ever. But her handwriting looked nice so that would do. ‘Papa Boss, this is what I want to name my dream team.’

Her group of ‘knights’ wouldn’t be recognized as an Order of Knights officially since ‘Princess Neoma de Moonasterio’ didn’t exist in the family registry.

Still, she wanted to give her group a proper name.

‘‘Moonrose?’’ Emperor Nikolai read what was written in the paper, then he raised his head to meet her gaze. ‘How bland.’

‘At least, it’s more creative than ‘White Lion Knights,’ she said with a bright smile on her face. ‘Anyway, Papa Boss, you should be honored that I used your surname and not Ramsay.’

He just glared at her.

‘I got the ‘Moon’ from Moonasterio, and the ‘Rose’ from Roseheart, obviously,’ she said quickly. ‘Moonrose sounds nice, doesn’t it?’

‘It’s fine.’

‘Kay,’ she said, then she dropped the paper in the front to show the one behind it. ‘And this will be my dream team’s symbol, Papa Boss. Behold my amazing drawing skills!’

Her father’s face remained poker-faced while looking at the coat of arms that she drew.

Since her Papa Boss wasn’t giving her the reaction that she wanted, she broke the awkward silence in his office and explained the meaning behind her chosen symbol.

‘Papa Boss, as you can see, a single pink rose is seated on top of the crown,’ she began explaining. The single pink rose was the crest of her group, of course. ‘The crown is surrounded by a wreath and a mantling. Very classic, right?’

‘Why are there two pink flamingoes in there?’

Her father was talking about the ‘supporters’ or the two figures that protect the shield.

‘I chose pink flamingoes because they’re pink and I love pink,’ she said proudly, making her Papa Boss scowl. ‘They’re cute,’ she said defensively. ‘Plus, look, Papa Boss. My pink flamingoes are kissing to form a heart.’

The emperor let out a deep sigh. ‘And what is that image in the shield?’

‘Oh,’ she said excitedly. ‘It’s a lady sleeping on a sofa. It represents me and my *désiré* to become a lady of leisure someday.’

The shield in her father’s coat of arms featured a roaring lion.

She was aware of that but still, she chose an image of a lady sleeping on a sofa to put in the shield of her crest.

Of course, her Papa Boss wasn't impressed.

Then, his gaze landed on the compartment of the coat of arms. The compartment was the landscape in which the shield and the supporters rested.

Well, it makes sense since the landscape is plain.

Her father didn't comment on that, but when his eyes landed on the motto displayed on a ribbon below the rest of the design, he let out a frustrated sigh.

'Seriously, Neoma?' her Papa Boss asked in a tired voice. 'Do you know what the motto in the emperor's crest is?'

'Yes,' she said. 'It's 'under the moon thou shalt conquer.''

'Knowing that, you still chose that motto for your coat of arms?'

Neoma pouted and complained. 'What's wrong with 'eat, sleep, play, and rule,' Papa Boss?'

Emperor Nikolai shut his eyes tight and pinched the bridge of his nose.

'Rejected.'

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