

# Royal Secret: I'm A Princess!

## Volume 3: ROYAL PAIN IN THE NECK

### Chapter 212 – GOD OF COOKING

‘RUTO, now I want to believe that you’re the god of cooking,’ Neoma said while looking at the beautiful spread of ‘Korean’ barbecue dishes on the table. ‘They look delicious.’

It wasn’t just the food that impressed her.

Right now, she felt like she was in a Korean barbecue restaurant instead of Ruto’s private garden. The garden was located within her Papa Boss’s residence. It had walls around so their privacy was guaranteed.

Anyway, the customized table that Ruto prepared for today impressed her. There was a grill on the table with charcoal briquettes below. Moreover, there was also a cooking tool that looked like a portable stove. But of course, the fire was coming from a Spirit Stone that produced fire and not butane.

It was for the hot pot.

Yes, Ruto was so extra for preparing Korean barbecue and hot pot for today’s lunch.

He prepared thin slices of pork belly, Angus beef, and even chicken breasts. For the side dishes, he prepared cabbages for the wrap, braised baby potatoes, seasoned soybean sprouts, seasoned spinach, spicy cucumber salad, steamed eggplants, spicy radish salad, and of course, vegetable PICKLES.

‘Tsk,’ she said while ‘discreetly’ pushing the small plate of pickles away from her side.

‘What are you doing?’ Ruto scolded her right away. ‘I purposely put the pickles near your side, Miss Ramsay.’

She just pouted while putting the small plate back in its place. 'Fine. I'll eat today since you made fish cake, kimchi, and ssamjang from scratch. It was hard, wasn't it?'

Those three dishes were the hardest to make according to Ruto.

She gave him the list of ingredients to make a fish cake, ssamjang, and kimchi. Ruto had to travel to the East Continent last month just to personally buy the ingredients. And now, he successfully made some of her favorite Korean dishes.

'Yes, but it was fun,' he said gently. 'But I'm not that confident in the 'ssamjang' and 'kimchi' that I made because I didn't find all the ingredients that you listed for me. I made some alternatives so it might not taste the same for you.'

'I trust you, Ruto,' she said, then she grabbed the tongs and began to put some slices of pork belly and beef on the grill. 'Even if they don't taste the same as the ones I have already tried, I'm sure that your own version of ssamjang and kimchi would still taste good. Or maybe even better.'

He raised a brow at her. 'You're still eating your pickles later, Miss.'

'I know,' she said, then she clicked her tongue while busy grilling. She had to hurry because the meat slices were thin, and the fire produced by the charcoal briquettes was quite strong. 'I'm not praising you just because I don't want to eat pickles. I'm just good at praising people.'

He didn't comment on that. Then, he began adding the thin slices of beef in the hot pot. The pot had broth in it already, as well as the other ingredients like mushroom, a variety of vegetables, and tofu. It smelled really good.

'The meat is already ready,' she announced excitedly, then she picked up one slice of beef using the tongs and blew on it. After that, she put it near

Ruto's mouth. 'Since you prepared all of this for me, I'll give you the honor of having the first bite.'

Yes, straight from the grill.

It was how she would eat Korean barbecue with her eomma/mommy and appa/daddy in her second life.

Thankfully, the young chef didn't look offended.

Ruto opened his mouth and took the beef from the tongs. She was reminded that he was a noble by the elegant way he chewed his food. Like Juri said before, nobles had a distinct elegance in them that they wouldn't be able to hide. 'I think it's good,' he said after swallowing the meat. 'But I can make a better marinate next time.'

Ah, he wasn't satisfied.

She took a piece of beef from the grill and ate it straight from the tongs. Yes, she didn't change tongs but she wasn't a child who'd get flustered over an 'indirect kiss.'

[Adults don't make a big deal out of trivial things like that, heh.]

Ruto, just like her, seemed like he didn't care about what happened. He just quietly grabbed a bowl and began to pour some broth into it.

'The beef tastes good, Ruto,' she commented, making Ruto's face light up even though he didn't say anything. 'And the broth also smells good.'

'Try it first,' he said, then he gently scooped a spoonful of broth. He blew on it first before he brought the spoon near her mouth. 'Here.'

She naturally opened her mouth and literally sipped the broth from the spoon. It was hot, but since the weather was cold, she didn't feel burned. Instead, she felt warmth all over her body. 'Ohh,' she said, impressed. 'It really tastes good, Ruto.'

He just smiled at her.

[Wait, why does this feel so natural? I mean, this isn't the first time that Ruto and I shared a meal. But why does this feel like a *déjà vu*?]

'By the way, the palace is noisy today,' Ruto said after tasting the broth. He seemed satisfied this time. 'Did something happen?'

She smirked arrogantly. 'Haven't you heard yet, Ruto? Our handsome, strong, charismatic, and smart Crown Prince has successfully mastered the Art of Defense. He's now called the 'new shield of the empire.' Impressive, isn't it?'

'Not really,' he said bluntly. 'Is our empire so weak that we need to be protected by a child?'

Of course, Ruto wasn't impressed.

She was so upset by his disinterested reaction to the 'Crown Prince's' achievement that she consoled her heart by stuffing her face with meat.

[Rpom rusuz dfail om hzplv qw uem jaov bplo f duj jmztl!]

'Eat slowly,' he scolded her again. 'And don't just eat meat. I prepared all those vegetables for you.'

She just glared at him.

He remained unbothered. Instead, he offered her a glass of orange juice.

'Glare at me all you want. You're not leaving this table without eating vegetables.'

She just scowled, then she grabbed the glass from him and took a sip.

[I'm an adult inside but whenever I'm with Ruto, I somehow regress to being a child. But I wonder why I don't mind. Even though I get pissed at him most of the time, I still somehow enjoy being scolded by him...] Her

thoughts trailed off, then she gasped internally. [Oh, no. Am I secretly a masochist? !]

‘I can’t see your face clearly but your silence tells me you’re upset,’ Ruto said carefully. ‘Did I say something wrong... again?’

‘No, I’m just being childish because I’m upset that you don’t praise me.’

‘You’re not being ‘childish’ because you’re a child and it’s normal for your age to act that way,’ he said casually. ‘But what do you mean by I don’t praise you? I did many times.’

Her eyes widened in shock. And if she’d be honest, she’d say she was quite thrilled to know that. ‘Really? When? Where? And what did you tell me?’

‘I told you many times that you eat well,’ he said. ‘That’s a compliment.’

She should have expected that from Ruto but why did she still feel disappointed.

[Why was I even disappointed in the first place? !]

‘Ruto, sometimes I want to strangle you,’ she said while shaking her head. Then, she grabbed a cabbage to begin creating a wrap. ‘You don’t say the things that I want to hear.’

‘I don’t know what things you’re expecting to hear from me.’

‘Never mind,’ she said while putting beef, pork belly, a small portion of chicken, fish cake, pickles, spinach, radish, ssamjang, and kimchi in her wrap.

[Woah, what a big, pretty wrap this is.]

‘You’re probably being doted on by your ‘Lulu’ a lot,’ Ruto said suddenly, calling Lewis by the pet name that she randomly gave her son a year ago. ‘Is that why you like him?’

‘Yes,’ she said without missing a beat. ‘I like Lulu a lot.’

After all, Lewis was her son and she was a loving mother.

‘Well, if it’s him, then I guess he can take care of you,’ the young chef after finishing his first bowl of hot pot.

‘Yeah, but I can take care of myself better,’ she said bluntly. ‘I don’t need anyone to do that for me, even if it’s Lulu.’

‘Don’t be arrogant, Miss Ramsay,’ he said, suddenly scolding her again.

‘People aren’t looking down on you when they say they want to protect or take care of you. They do that because they care about your well-being.

Don’t shun those type of people even though you’re capable of taking care of yourself.’

She clicked her tongue in annoyance for being called out. ‘You sure talk a lot when you scold me, Ruto.’

‘It’s for your own good.’

She just rolled her eyes at him, then she put the whole wrap in her mouth.

[Ohh... yummy!]

Ruto smiled gently while watching her eat. ‘You really eat well, Miss Ramsay.’

‘Because the food you make is delicious,’ she said cheerfully. ‘Ruto, the ssamjang and the kimchi taste really good. You’re really the god of cooking!’

‘Thank you.’

‘I didn’t expect that I’d be able to taste my favorite dishes again,’ she said with a dreamy sigh. ‘I can die happily now.’

‘Don’t.’

She flinched when she heard Ruto's cold and somewhat terrified voice. When she looked at his face, she was confused when she saw the fear and sadness on his face. To be honest, she felt like she was looking at someone whose trauma was suddenly triggered.

[How can a child like him make a heartbreaking face like that?]

'Miss Ramsay, don't talk about dying so lightly,' Ruto begged her in an anguished voice. 'Please.'

She was curious and she wanted to ask why Ruto suddenly acted like that.

But the melancholy look on his face stopped her. She felt like she, of all people, must not intrude. And so, she didn't ask anymore.

'Okay, I understand,' Neoma said softly. 'I'm sorry for saying something insensitive, Ruto.'

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'YOUR MAJESTY, why do you look happy even though Princess Neoma is spending time with Ruto right now?' Glenn, who just handed him a document that he needed to sign, asked curiously. 'I thought you don't want either Ruto or Lewis Crevan to spend private time with our little princess.'

'Ruston Stroganoff is going to leave the empire soon,' Nikolai said in a slightly livelier tone than usual. 'Although I want him to be the next Commander of the White Lion Knights, I don't want him near my young daughter for now,' he explained firmly. 'So I'm glad that he chose to finally pursue his studies abroad.'

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'HAVE YOU calmed down, Ruto?' Neoma asked while she and Ruto were now having tiramisu cake for dessert. 'Are you not upset with me anymore?'

Ruto's mood changed a while ago after she misspoke.

As a result, they finished their lunch in silence. Since she was upset after being ignored, she was able to finish more than half of the meat and the hot pot on her own. Even the vegetables and the pickles that she hated so much.

After that, she thought Ruto was going to kick her out of his kitchen when he stood up. Thankfully, he only left the table to bring out the dessert.

[Of course, I requested the tiramisu cake as usual.]

‘I wasn’t upset with you,’ Ruto denied while putting another (big) slice of tiramisu on her plate. ‘I’m sorry for ignoring you earlier. I was just thinking.’

He didn’t offer a detailed explanation, and she didn’t ask about it.

‘Okay, I forgive you,’ she said, then she took a bite of the cake before she spoke again. ‘I don’t us to fight before I leave the palace.’

He looked surprised by what she said. ‘You’re leaving the palace?’

‘Just for a few weeks,’ she said. ‘I asked you to have lunch with me today because this might be the last one for the meantime.’

She would be busy in the coming days.

Lewis would be kidnapped.

Her Papa Boss would send her to the Hisa Tree with Juri soon.

But most of all, she decided to stop going out as ‘Miss Ramsay’ for the meantime. There was the issue about her stalker. Plus, she got a little scared when she realized that people like Juri existed— people that could literally tell her real identity despite her disguise.

[I must be extra careful.]

‘Miss Ramsay, I actually prepared all of this today as a farewell gift to you.’

It was her turn to be surprised. ‘Farewell gift?’



‘I’m leaving the empire soon,’ he said in a somewhat sad voice. ‘Miss Ramsay, I’m going to study at Winslow Institute of Culinary Education starting this year.’

She didn’t know why but her heart suddenly sunk upon hearing the sad news. ‘Oh.’

Ruto’s eyes suddenly widened in shock while looking at her face. ‘Miss Ramsay, I’m not sure because I can’t clearly see your face but... are you crying?’

Huh?

Neoma automatically touched her cheeks to confirm and yes, tears really rolled down her face. ‘Weird,’ she said. ‘Why am I crying?’

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

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