

Royal Secret: I'm A Princess!

Volume 3: ROYAL PAIN IN THE NECK

Chapter 273 – OMINOUS PRESENT

‘YOUR ROYAL Highness, when did you get this pretty Moonstone anklet?’

‘A what?’ Neoma asked Stephanie while rubbing the sleepiness off of her eyes using her hands. ‘I don’t remember getting an anklet.’

‘But you’re wearing one, Princess Neoma,’ Stephanie, kneeling in front of her while holding her right foot with the utmost care, said before she raised her head to meet her gaze. ‘It’s not just an ordinary Moonstone anklet. I can tell that the Moonstone gems used to make this anklet are very rare.’

‘Really?’ she asked, then she looked down at her anklet. She was quite surprised to see the beautiful little gems attached to the thin chain around her ankle. ‘The gems are shining.’

The Moonstone gemstones in the anklet had a silver-ish and purple-ish glow in them.

[It’s so pretty!]

But where did she get that anklet? She had countless jewelry in her collection but she couldn’t remember owning an anklet since as a Crown Prince, he didn’t need that. Plus, she also didn’t have an anklet in her secret jewelry collection. She has been investing in jewelry since she was five so that she could sell them if ever she gets kicked out in the future.

[Since Stephanie asked me when I got the Moonstone anklet, then it’s safe to assume that she’s not the one who put that thing on me.]

She was too sleepy that her big brain refused to function properly.

‘This anklet has eight Moonstone gems,’ Stephanie said in a surprised voice. ‘In the Kingdom of Suoh, if a man gives an anklet with eight Moonstone gems to a woman, it means he’s dedicating his devotion to her. Thus, the Moonstone gems have become the symbol of love and confession in the Kingdom of Suoh.’

‘You seem to know a lot about the culture of that kingdom, Stephanie.’

The head maid smiled shyly. ‘My ex-lover was from the Kingdom of Suoh, Your Royal Highness.’

‘Ex?’

‘He was a knight who died in the previous war.’

She bit her lower lip, suddenly feeling guilty for asking. ‘Ah, I’m sorry...’

‘It’s okay, Your Royal Highness,’ the head maid said with a reassuring smile on her face, then she quickly changed the topic. ‘My ex-lover gave me an anklet with eight Moonstone gems as well. I actually didn’t know that that kind of anklet has a deep meaning until the young Lord Stroganoff told me about it.’

Okay, now she was suddenly awake. ‘Ruto?’

‘Yes, Your Royal Highness,’ Stephanie said while nodding. ‘Lord Stroganoff told me that his mother is from the Kingdom of Suoh.’

Oh, right.

She often heard from the servants of the palace that Ruto was a foreigner. Let’s see...

[The Kingdom of Suoh is in the East Continent, right? And as far as I remember from my History class, the Kingdom of Suoh is actually a monarchical country. They're also on friendly terms with our empire.]

That was a relief.

Wait...

[Io jfl Rpom!]

The only person that she spent time with (except for her Papa Boss) this evening was Ruto. He probably put the anklet on her while she was sleeping. Wow, she couldn't believe that her big brain only figured it out now.

'Stephanie, is it okay even if the anklet gets wet?' she asked excitedly. 'It won't fade or anything, right? I don't want to take it off.'

Stephanie smiled warmly before nodding. 'You may wear it even when you're bathing, Your Royal Highness. I can tell that the craftsmanship of this anklet is high level so please don't worry too much, Princess Neoma.'

'That's a relief to hear,' Neoma said, then she smiled and lifted her leg to touch the Moonstone anklet. [Ruto, because of this gift, I will forgive you for leaving abruptly after giving me more questions about your secrets.]

'SEE YOU later, Stephanie and Alphen!'

Alphen smiled warmly at Princess Neoma who was waving enthusiastically at her and Stephanie while being carried by Sir Geoffrey Kinsley.

The royal princess, dressed in her pajamas usually worn by boys, was fetched by the Paladin under His Majesty's orders. Since they didn't know when Princess Neoma would return, he and Stephanie would wait at the entrance of Blanco Palace.

'His Royal Highness is in a good mood,' Stephanie said in a delighted voice after Princess Neoma and Sir Kinsley disappeared from their sight. Since they were at the entrance of the palace where other people might suddenly turn up, the head maid has to address Princess Neoma as the Crown Prince. 'It seems like he received a Moonstone anklet with eight gems from a special person.'

'A Moonstone anklet with eight gems?' Alphen asked, then he nodded when he remembered a certain story about Moonstone anklets. 'If the person who gave His Royal Highness the Moonstone anklet came from the Kingdom of Suoh, then does it mean the Crown Prince just received a confession?'

The head maid smiled and sighed dreamily. 'What can we do? His Royal Highness, even at his tender age, is already lovely.'

At first, he was confused as to why Stephanie seemed to be happy that Princess Neoma received a Moonstone anklet from a precious person. Then, he remembered that although the head maid had an ex-lover from the Kingdom of Suoh, she still didn't come from that country so her knowledge about the anklet might be limited.

He wasn't from that kingdom as well but he spent his childhood and adolescence in the Kingdom of Suoh. The story behind the Moonstone anklet was very famous locally. So naturally, he was well aware of what giving the anklet to someone special meant.

It was true that it had become a way of confessing now, but the true meaning behind the Moonstone anklet was quite heartbreaking.

As far as he remembered, in the past, the knights of the Kingdom of Suoh would give their lovers a Moonstone anklet if they were dispatched to fight in a war. The anklet wasn't a mere present— it actually served as a keepsake. It was said that the knights treated the Moonstone anklet as a memento for their loved ones in case they didn't make it back home.

[To simply say, it seems like the person who gave Princess Neoma the Moonstone anklet knows that they might not make it back alive.]

‘Alphen, are you alright?’ Stephanie asked worriedly. ‘You suddenly fell silent.’

‘I'm alright. Shall we check His Royal Highness's schedule for tomorrow?’ Alphen asked to distract himself from his worrisome thoughts. [Perhaps, the person who gave the Moonstone anklet to Princess Neoma is ignorant of the story behind it.]

‘GEOFFREY, did Papa Boss physically punished you?’ Neoma asked the Paladin who was carrying her in his arms. They were already at the Yule Palace and as expected, it was practically empty. Especially the hallway leading to her father's office. ‘You can't walk properly and your movements are slower than usual.’

Geoffrey Kinsley, her Papa Boss's Paladin that served as Sir Glenn's temporary replacement, smiled at her. ‘His Majesty only scolded us, Your Royal Highness,’ he assured her. ‘Me and my fellow Paladins punished ourselves by training extra hard.’

‘Ah, I see.’

She already expected that her father would punish the Paladins for failing to protect her.

‘I’m sorry, Princess Neoma,’ the Paladin said. Since her father’s palace was well-protected, Geoffrey Kinsley was free to call her by her real name and title. ‘I’m sorry that I failed to protect you at the camp. I shouldn’t have let you go alone.’

‘Nah, you wouldn’t have stopped me anyway,’ she said, then she paused. ‘But I learned my lesson now. I will be more careful so you and the people around me won’t get punished for my selfishness and recklessness.’

‘But it’s alright even if Your Royal Highness acts selfishly and recklessly.’

‘It’s not okay,’ she said. ‘I’m already very arrogant. I’ll get worse if you spoiled me too much.’

‘I believe that Your Royal Highness would only act selfishly and recklessly if it meant protecting and saving other people.’

She chuckled and gently patted the Paladin on the shoulder. ‘Don’t trust me too much, Geoffrey,’ she said. ‘Don’t forget that this royal princess of yours committed mass murder.’

Tvu Pfiftar bplo lqaiut fo vuz.

But she clearly got what he wanted to say: [‘Killing the criminals who committed heinous crimes is a great service to humanity, Princess Neoma.’]

‘We’ve arrived at His Majesty’s office,’ Geoffrey announced as he stopped in front of the giant double doors. ‘Should I announce Your Royal Highness’s arrival?’

‘Nah, I’m pretty sure Papa Boss already knows that I’m here even if you don’t announce it,’ she said, then she patted Geoffrey’s shoulder.

‘You may put me down now, Geoffrey. Thank you for bringing me here.’

The Paladin just smiled and bowed before carefully putting her down.

After that, she quietly entered her Papa Boss’s office.

Her father had his back on her as he was standing in front of the window while mumbling to himself. That was quite a surprise. She could tell that her Papa Boss was yet to notice that she had already arrived at his office.

Was he so distracted that he didn’t even hear when she opened and closed the door?

[And why is he talking to himself?]

‘And where is ‘Korea’ exactly?’

‘Korea?’

She was so shocked when she heard her father mention her country that she only realized she thought out loud when her Papa Boss turned around.

[Shit.]

Her father looked as shocked as she was.

To be honest, she knew that it was risky to have ‘that’ talk with her Papa Boss yet. But she was also aware that it was inevitable. Thus, she decided to take the risk.

‘Papa Boss, did you just say ‘Korea?’ she asked, her eyes still wide from shock. ‘How did you know about that place?’

‘I should be the one asking you that,’ her Papa Boss said sternly.
‘Mona told me in the past that a place called Korea exists in another world.’

The fact that her Mama Boss knew about Korea didn’t come as a surprise to her. After all, she believed that her eomma/mommy back in her second life had the memories of Lady Mona Roseheart.

But why did her Mama Boss tell her Papa Boss about Korea when the two were supposed to have a bad relationship? Wasn’t that the reason why her Mama Boss ran away from her Papa Boss and ‘eloped’ with Commander Gavin Quinzel who turned out to be her appa/dad?

‘But how come you know about that country as well, Neoma de Moonasterio?’

Was it really the right time to tell her father about her first life?

Well, as she thought earlier, it was inevitable. Moreover, she had to be honest with her Papa Boss if she wanted him to be honest with her. She didn’t want a misunderstanding to get in their way.

Although she was quick to get mad at her Papa Boss when she heard the terrible things that happened to her Aunt Nichole and the male Rosehearts, she reminded herself that she also needed to listen to her father’s side. It didn’t matter if the emperor would end up disappointing her again.

[It’s on him if he ended up as a disappointment again.]

But she wouldn’t easily be swayed by anyone anymore.

Thus, from now on, she would create her own judgment after a careful investigation. She didn’t care if the Devil wanted to help her. That didn’t mean that she had to be on their side. Why must she take sides when she could stand on her own anyway?

‘Answer me, Neoma de Moonasterio.’

‘Gosh, don’t be so impatient, Papa Boss,’ she said. ‘I need to be mentally prepared first. Plus...’ She took a deep sigh while shaking her head. ‘You need to prepare your heart before you hear my story so give me time to prepare.’

Her father didn’t look happy with her suggestion.

She would shamelessly admit that she was performing a delaying tactic.

But could you blame her ?

Ever since she was reborn as Princess Neoma again, she had fought tooth and nail just to survive and not get kicked out of the palace. That meant all this time, her Papa Boss was an enemy to her.

They did get close eventually, and she even got her Papa Boss to admit that he loved her. But that didn’t mean her anxiety and fear of getting abandoned once again disappeared altogether.

Thus, even now, she needed to be careful around her own father.

‘I promise that I will tell you everything soon, Papa Boss,’ she said softly. ‘But I need you to promise that you will also be completely honest with me. I want to know the dark history of our empire, and I want to know if I can still love you as a father.’

Her father looked like he was about to complain.

But in the end, he took a deep breath.

‘I suppose we can delay this conversation in the meantime since we have two urgent matters that we need to address as soon as possible,’ her Papa Boss said. ‘First, High Priest Wellington is on his way to our empire to investigate the disappearance of Saint Zavaroni.’

Ah, right.

She almost forgot about Beef Wellington– uhm, High Priest Wellington since His Excellency was overshadowed by the saint.

Her heart sank with heaviness when she remembered what Saint Zavaroni did. But she set her personal feelings aside. As her father said, they needed to clean up her mess first before they deal with their personal problems.

After all, it was their royal duty to run the empire.

[I didn't expect the temple to make a move this fast.]

But then again, Saint Zavaroni was a very important figure in the whole continent. His disappearance would truly create chaos especially among the people of the empire. Plus, the saint had a huge following.

If they wouldn't satisfy the saint's devotees with a solid explanation, then it was going to cause an uproar.

[Yep, this isn't the right time for me and Papa Boss to have 'the' talk.]

‘And second, the nobles wanted the Crown Prince to be punished.

Neoma raised an eyebrow at that. ‘The audacity of those bitches,’ she complained, her temper getting the best of her once again. ‘Why did those bastards want me punished after I cleaned up the mess that was the Death Camp?’

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