

Royal Secret: I'm A Princess!

Chapter 44 - TTEOKBOKKI IS USEFUL TODAY

"PAPA, please don't punish Duke Sloane," Neoma said in a "weak voice. Of course, she was on acting mode now. "Duke Sloane was right– I've said rude things about the late empress. I shouldn't have said those things. Had I kept my mouth shut, perhaps His Grace wouldn't have been that angry."

All eyes were on her now.

"What do you mean by that, Prince Nero?" Emperor Nikolai asked while giving her a cold look. "What did the duke say to you?"

It was definitely a warning for her not to mess up the atmosphere that he created.

[Trust me, Papa Boss. I have more experience than you in the acting department.]

"Papa, it doesn't matter," she said, acting like she didn't want to be a snitch. "I admit that it's my fault so please don't punish Duke Sloane."

"Stop acting, Your Royal Highness!" Duke Sloane yelled at her. "We both know the truth!"

"Duke Sloane," Sir Glenn warned the duke.

"Answer my question first, Prince Nero," the emperor said firmly, ignoring Duke Sloane. "I will decide Duke Sloane's fate after I hear your side of the story."

She let out a deep sigh, acting like it was hard for her to be a snitch. But of course, she still opened her cute little mouth in the end.

"Duke Sloane said that the son of a mistress like me don't deserve to be the royal heir."

She heard a collective gasp of servants standing behind them.

The royal knights, trained to be pokerfaced in situations like that, didn't react. But she could tell that the way they looked at the duke changed.

She took a discreet glance at Count Thompson and Marquis Alberts.

The two lords were scowling at the duke.

[Heh.]

"I was hurt by the duke's words so I said that I didn't wish to be born as a prince," she said in a cracked voice. She wanted to cry but the emperor's glare stopped her. Right, he was the kind of person that believed the "boys don't cry" b*llshit. "Then, I asked him why the late empress didn't give birth to an heir. I realized that I sounded like I was blaming the late empress, which was very rude, so I apologized to His Grace right away. But it was too late. I already made Duke Sloane very angry."

"You didn't say anything wrong, Prince Nero," Emperor Nikolai said indifferently. "The fact that the late empress failed to give birth to a royal heir was indeed a sin."

She hated hearing that b*llshit.

And she hated it even more to see that no one even batted an eye.

It was as if everyone acknowledged that it was really the late empress's fault for not giving birth to a royal heir. She understood that it was literally a law that an empress must give the emperor a son. But it didn't change the fact that it was a sh*tty law.

[A woman's worth isn't measured by her ability to give birth.]

Still, the show must go on.

"Duke Sloane, I apologize for hurting your feelings by being rude to the late empress," Neoma said in a (convincing) sad voice while acting remorseful. Well, she felt bad for the late empress but she needed to bring down the dyke before he became a threat in the future. "I will be careful from now on to avoid making the same mistake."

To put the nail in the duke's coffin, she even bowed to him.

A royal prince shouldn't be bowing to a person beneath him, but he was here to create the perfect image for the emperor's heir. Risks be damned.

[Duke Sloane, do you know the third and the final rule for the kids to be liked by a.d.u.l.ts?] Neoma asked the duke in her mind while bravely meeting his deadly glare. [It's really simple: a.d.u.l.ts like kids who admit their mistakes and apologize for it.]

But Neoma couldn't "kill" the duke yet.

"GREETINGS to the one and only moon of our Great Moonasterion Empire."

Nikolai just gave a curt nod to Count Thompson and Marquis Alberts. He was about to return to his palace when the two lords greeted him. They were still high-ranking nobles so he had to greet them back.

Ah, their respective sons also gave a weak greeting to him. But just like most kids, Byron Thompson and Harry Alberts both couldn't even look at him in the eye.

[Only Neoma is brave enough to meet my gaze.]

Speaking of the royal princess, he already sent her to the royal clinic

with Madam Hammock, Glenn, and the foxy boy that served as her butler-slash-escort.

On the other hand, he put Duke Sloane on a house arrest instead of putting him on a noble trial. He noticed that Neoma was trying hard to keep him from sentencing the duke with public execution. The royal princess was a smart girl. She wouldn't have acted that way if she didn't need the duke alive.

[Putting the arrogant duke on a house arrest and banning him from the Royal Palace will suffice for now. His attempt to kill the "royal heir" won't be made public as per Neoma's "heartfelt" request to everyone who witnessed the incident. But the fact that Duke Sloane was arrested and banned would be enough to tarnish his reputation along with his household.]

And he was pretty sure that despite Neoma's request to keep that incident a secret, the servants would still talk. They loved gossiping about the nobles, after all. He was confident that Duke Sloane's offense against the "royal prince" would still spread around the empire like wildfire.

"Your Majesty, the children have something to say about the incident," Marquis Alberts said. "They believe that His Royal Highness can't be rude to Duke Sloane despite the royal prince admitting his apparent mistake in front of everyone."

He almost laughed at that.

[Clearly, these children don't know the real Neoma.]

Still, he could use the kids' statement to clear the image of "Prince Nero." He didn't like the fact that Neoma had to apologize to someone below her position.

He looked at Byron Thompson and Harry Alberts. "Speak."

"Y-Your Majesty, H-His Royal Highness s-scared us before because w-we made a mistake," Harry Alberts said, avoiding his gaze.

"B-But when w-e properly a-apologized to him and his b-butler, he

b-became nice to u-us."

[Only because she needs something from you, fool.]

"T-That's why I b-believe that His Royal Highness b-became rude to Duke Sloane because the d-duke s-said or d-did something to m-make the royal prince angry," Harry Alberts continued. "His Royal Highness d-didn't have to a-apologize to His Grace, Your Majesty."

"I agree with Harry, Your Majesty," Byron Thompson said. He was calmer than Harry Alberts but just like the latter, he couldn't make eye contact with him. "When Duke Sloane arrived, he was immediately rude to His Royal Highness. His Grace talked to the royal prince as if they were equal. The duke was very hostile to His Royal Highness from the very beginning. This may sound like an accusation but we believe that Duke Sloane intentionally hurt the royal prince."

"Very well," Nikolai said indifferently. "Your effort to protect His Royal Highness is appreciated, Byron Thompson and Harry Alberts."

[And congratulations for being Neoma's new toys.]

NEOMA couldn't help but smile while staring at the ceiling.

Right now, she was lying on a bed in the royal clinic. Madam Hammock just finished cleaning and treating her wounds, and she went out for a while to get some medicine for her.

On the other hand, Sir Glenn and Lewis were guarding outside the door.

In short, she was alone so she dropped her act as a hurt royal prince.

[Duke Sloane, be grateful that I still need you,] Neoma said to herself while her brain was busy coming up with ways to get what

she wanted from the duke. [So don't die on me, okay?]

And then, she remembered what Tteokbokki told her a while ago...

{Flashback of when Neoma walked Duke Sloane to the pavilion...}

Neoma was walking faster than normal because the f*ckface aka Duke Sloane was trying to walk a step ahead of her. She had to keep the duke half a step behind her or else, people would think that she, the "crown prince," was being a push-over.

Normally, she preferred to walk beside the people she liked like Lewis or Sir Glenn. But it was a different case when it came to the duke.

[I won't let him embarrass me while I'm posing as Nero.]

And personally, she didn't like how the duke disrespected her not as a royal "prince" but as a human being. It was obvious that he was looking down on her because she was just a child and a "son" of a mistress.

[Thug princess!]

She scowled when Tteokbokki suddenly created a link in their mind.

[What is it, Tteokbokki?] she asked in her mind. [Make sure it's important.]

[It is important!] Tteokbokki exclaimed in a voice filled with urgency. [I can smell a grimoire in that man. It seems to be as old and as special as the Royal Grimoire. But the energy that I sense in the duke's grimoire is very dark and dangerous. To be honest, if I haven't met you, I'd say that that grimoire is the scariest thing that I've ever encountered.]

[You didn't have to add the last part,] Neoma snarled at the Soul Beast. But deep inside, she was very grateful to her Soul Beast. That

was a very valuable piece of information. [Thanks, Tteokbokki. I'll feed you healthy grass later.]

[Oh, shut up!]

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