

Royal Secret: I'm A Princess!

Chapter 76 - THE AUDACITY OF THIS B*TCH

TRIGGER WARNING: A slightly detailed scene of c/hild a/buse (physical). Please skip the chapter if it will trigger a trauma. Or stop reading after Neoma left her office with Lewis to go to Rubin's room. I'm sorry, that scene is very necessary for Neoma's development. I hope you understand.

"WHAT LANGUAGE is that, Neoma?"

"What are you talking about, Papa Boss?" Neoma asked, acting as nonchalant as she could. "If I talked in my sleep, then it might just be incoherent talking, you know?"

"You say things that I don't understand sometimes," Emperor Nikolai said with a raised brow. "But I'm pretty sure they were never "incoherent.""

Argh. She hated it when her father looks down on her. But it didn't feel great too if he overestimated her in that kind of situation. Thankfully, her expertise in lying was backed up by her creativity.

"Fine, you got me there, Papa Boss. I'll now reveal my secret to you," she said with a shrug. "Actually, I invented a language that doesn't exist in this world in order to bad-mouth you. I mean, even if you're like that, you're still the emperor. I might get beheaded for treason if other people hear me talk sh*t about you."

"It's an honor for me to be your inspiration for creating a whole new language, Princess Neoma," he said in a very sarcastic tone.

"Judging by how you cursed at me in the pond every time I make you upset, I didn't think you'd care about being heard by other people."

She almost choked on her saliva. "Papa Boss, you know that I go to the pond to cuss at you?" Her brows furrowed when she realized something. "Was it Sir Glenn?"

Sometimes she would feel the knight's presence near them. But since he wasn't a threat to her, she'd just ignore it. She didn't expect him to "betray" her though, so she was a little disappointed.

"Glenn works for me and not for you."

"He's still a snitch."

He just rolled his eyes at her. "I thought I told you to stop cussing at me?"

"I'm not cussing at your face these days, Papa Boss," she insisted. "Cut me some slack and allow me to cuss at you behind your back. I'm going to die of a heart attack if I don't have an outlet for my rage."

"It's not like you'll listen to me even if I tell you to stop cussing altogether," he said bluntly. "I don't care if you cuss but make sure other people won't hear it. But you have to follow this order: never let anyone else find out that you inherited your mother's power."

"But I'm posing as Nero now."

"It would become a problem if it turns out that Nero didn't inherit your mother's power."

"Is it possible that Nero wouldn't inherit the same power as I did even though we're twins?"

"It is highly possible," the emperor said firmly. "So be careful, Neoma. The first sign that your power as a Roseheart has awakened is when you start hearing voices of the spirits. If that happens, tell

me right away."

"Sure, I can do that," she said, then she gave her father the best business smile she could muster at the moment. "But Papa Boss, I want something in return."

"Of course, everything is a trade to you," Emperor Nikolai deadpanned. It was both funny and relieving to know that her father was already used to her terms. Every day, it seemed like they were getting better and better at dealing with each other. "What do you want in return?"

"Can I wear a pretty dress and take a lot of pictures before Stephanie cuts my hair? I need to immortalize the moment I turned this pretty," Neoma said, then she raised her right hand as if she was taking an oath. "I promise I'll make sure that no one else will see the pictures."

I LOOK like a pretty doll.

Neoma was aware that she should wait for other people to tell her that she was pretty. But she couldn't help praising herself while she was looking at her reflection in the mirror. She was glad that the peach dress that Stephanie brought her suited her well.

To be honest, the dress with a lot of laces and ruffles looked too childish for her taste. But when she wore it, she realized that she could pull off any clothes and style.

Plus, Stephanie gave her a pretty half up dutch crown braid.

Now I look like a proper princess with this "crown!"

"Princess...?"

She turned around when she heard Lewis's voice. When Stephanie left the room, she asked her to tell Lewis to come to her room. It had been a while since she saw her son. She was sure that he was worried about her so she wanted him to know that she had already

recovered.

"Lewis, how do I look?" Neoma asked while twirling around. Then, she stood in front of him. "I look like a real princess now, don't I?"

Lewis, as usual, just looked at her with a blank look on his face.

Yet, his golden eyes aglow.

"Your eyes are so pretty, Lewis!" she gushed, then she tiptoed to take a closer look at his golden orbs. "Wow. They're really gold."

Lewis's face suddenly turned red. Then, he stepped away from her while covering the lower part of his face with his forearm. Still, his golden eyes remained aglow. "Cut your hair, Princess Neoma."

"Huh?"

"Cut it," her son said firmly, then he turned his back on her and practically bolted out of the room. "Your long hair will only be a hindrance to your training!"

That was the first time that she heard Lewis raise his voice.

"Lewis doesn't understand a girl's heart," Neoma said to herself while shaking her head. "I guess he'll have a hard time looking for a bride in the future."

NEOMA was satisfied after her photo shoot.

The cameras in that world were similar to the old cameras that they had back in the modern world. The difference was that the cameras in the empire needed spirit stones to work. It also functioned like a polaroid. She immediately got her photos.

But instead of films, her photos came out in a paper-thin and light stone tablet. It was the size of half an A4 paper.

With some magic, I can change these pictures into any size that I want.

"Princess Neoma, are you listening?" Lewis, who stood beside her, asked in his usual monotonous voice. "Should I continue my report?"

"I don't care about the lessons I missed. I'm sure I can catch up with them," Neoma said while admiring her pictures on the desk. She was in her study room but instead of checking the lessons that she missed, she was too busy being a narcissist. She couldn't help it though. It had only been a few hours since Stephanie cut her hair short, but she already missed her long hair. Thankfully, the pink tone in the strands of her hair remained. "Ah, wait," she said, then she looked up at Lewis. "How is Hanna?"

"Lady Quinzel was brought to the temple by her parents," he said. "The young lady will be back three days from now."

It was a relief.

If Hanna would return soon, that only meant that she was in a good condition already.

"How about Rubin?" she asked. "Is he alright?"

"Yes."

She blinked several times while waiting for Lewis to say more. But he didn't. "That's it?"

He just shrugged.

"Gosh," she complained lightly. "Lewis, are you in your rebellious phase?"

He remained silent.

She clicked her tongue, then she stood up. "Let's go."

Lewis tilted his head at one side. "Where?"

"To Rubin's room," Neoma said with a business smile. "Since you don't want to report to me properly about his condition, I'll just personally check on him."

WHEN Neoma arrived in front of Rubin's room, she realized that Lewis wasn't in his rebellious stage. He purposely didn't report to her about the young lord's condition because he didn't want her to get worried. She wouldn't say that Lewis did the right thing, but she appreciated his concern.

Still, Rubin was staying in her residence.

He's my responsibility.

"Move," Neoma said coldly at the unfamiliar maids and knights that were currently blocking her way. "How come people I don't know are here in my palace?"

One of the maids, the oldest one and probably the head maid, bowed lowly to her. "We are the servants of House Drayton, Your Royal Highness," she said. "We apologize but we need to ask you to return later. Lord Drayton is still talking to the young master."

By "talking," the head maid meant the duke beating up his own son.

She clenched her fists while listening to Rubin's cry while begging Duke Drayton to stop hurting him. "Lewis, answer me properly this time," she said in a cold tone. "How was Rubin's condition while I was asleep?"

"Duke Drayton apparently feels guilty that Sir Rubin wasn't able to protect you properly when you were dragged to hell, Your Royal Highness," Lewis informed her. "As punishment, the duke told the servants of your palace to not give the young lord any food. Instead, only a glass of water was served to Sir Rubin every meal time for the past seven days. Whenever Duke Drayton visited and you weren't

awake yet, he would come to the young lord's room to beat him up."

Only her closest aides were informed that she was already awake because she asked her Papa Boss a while ago to give her a day-off for her photo shoot. If she knew that it would lead to Duke Drayton beating up Rubin, she would have announced that she was already up.

"Your Royal Highness, please understand Lord Drayton," the head maid said. "This is just how our master trains his successor. Every son of House Drayton has undergone this tradition."

B*llshit.

No wonder Rubin ended up with a poor mental health.

"I don't care about your family drama," she said, hiding the fact that she was angry for Rubin. "Who gave the duke the right to give orders to my servants in my place while I was asleep? He even brought his own servants without my permission."

The head maid flinched and bowed lower. "Our deepest apologies, Your Royal Highness."

"Move," she said as she marched forward. "How dare a lowly maid block my way?"

She hated herself for saying that, but she had to. In that world, that was the best way to assert dominance. If she asked nicely, the servants would think that she was weak and they would look down on her.

It was part of her job to make sure that Nero would be respected (or feared) as a crown prince.

I'm so sorry, head maid. I know that you're just doing your job. But I have no choice...

Her thoughts were cut-off when she realized that the five grown knights blocking the door to Rubin's room didn't move an inch. She

was able to easily walk past the maids but it seemed like the knights were trying to test her patience.

"Lewis," she called him in a commanding voice.

She didn't have to say more.

In just a span of a few seconds, the knights literally disappeared from her sight. She heard a loud bang behind her. She knew that it was Lewis's doing so she didn't turn to look anymore. Instead, she just knocked (lightly) on the door before she opened it and entered the room quietly.

She wasn't surprised anymore when she caught Duke Drayton beating Rubin with a fancy walking cane with an ivory handle and a black wooden staff. The young lord was kneeling on the floor while covering his head with his arms.

What a terrible father.

And everyone in the palace who kept quiet about Rubin's abuse was just as bad.

She wasn't trying to defend those sc*mbags but having said that, she still understood their silence. In the empire, people had no concept of "child abuse." There weren't laws to protect children from such cruelty. That applied even to the children of high-ranking nobles.

The beating that Rubin was receiving right now was considered a form of discipline. As far as she knew, every noble household in the empire had various ways of torturing their children that they guised as "tradition" or "discipline."

"Isn't it funny that we have laws that protect animals from abuse but we don't have one to protect the children?" Neoma asked sarcastically. I want to curse so bad.

Duke Drayton stopped hitting Rubin with his cane, then he turned to her with a smile. F*cking old man had the audacity to smile at her as if he wasn't just beating his son to death a while ago. "Your Royal

Highness, I'm glad that you're awake," he said after his formal greeting. "Please don't misunderstand. I am only doing this to discipline Rubin." He turned to his son. "Isn't that right, son?"

"Son," my foot.

Rubin immediately stood up and bowed to her. "Father is right, Your Royal Highness," he said even though his head was bleeding and he had bruises all over his body. "It's my fault that Father has to discipline me this way. Please don't misunderstand."

She clenched her fists tight until her nails dug deep into the skin of her palms.

Since the empire had no law against child abuse, children who experienced it didn't even know that their tormentors could and should be punished for hurting them. Instead, they grew up thinking that they deserved the beating that they received.

I f*cking hate it.

If she hated it, she had to do something to change it, right? She knew that their law dictates that a crown prince didn't have the authority to create laws. But she was aware that she had the power to influence the House of Lords to do so (while posing as Nero, of course).

But creating a law was overstepping her boundary as a mere replacement for her twin brother.

She felt cold all over her body when she realized that to accomplish her dream of becoming a lady of leisure, she had to close her eyes to the injustices happening around her.

"Your Royal Highness?" Duke Drayton asked "worriedly." How could he worry about her when his own son was in a terrible state, thanks to his cruelty? That was the f*cking last straw. "Is everything alright?"

"No," Neoma said, then she opened her hands and took a deep breath. "Lewis, arrest Duke Drayton."

"YOUR MAJESTY!"

"What?" Nikolai complained after Glenn entered his office in a disgraceful manner. But that scene was already familiar so he already knew what to expect. Thus, he didn't stop doing his paperwork even though the knight stood in front of his desk while catching his breath. "What did Neoma do this time?"

"It's bad, Your Majesty," Glenn said in an urgent tone. "Princess Neoma ordered Lewis to arrest Duke Drayton! The duke is currently locked up in the basement cellar under Her Royal Highness's residence!"

The tip of his fountain pen snapped when he pressed it a little too hard.

He thought he was already used to Neoma's bizarreness. But he was wrong. For the first time after a long while, he was fazed by his daughter's ridiculous antics.

And she did that when she just woke up.

Nikolai pinched the bridge of his nose. "Bring Neoma to me."

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