

Royal Secret: I'm A Princess!

Chapter 12 - DON'T CALL ME 'PRINCE'

"YOUR ROYAL Highness, please wear this choker."

Neoma looked at the piece of jewelry inside the box that Alphen was holding in front of her. She couldn't really move because she had her arms open while Stephanie was busy buttoning her jacket. Gosh, wearing a suit every day sucked. "What's the choker for?"

It was a black band with an embedded diamond in the center. The choker looked bland but obviously expensive. Plus, she could feel a strange energy from it.

"The choker is embedded with magic for voice modulation, Your Royal Highness," Alphen explained politely. "Once you wear this, your voice will change into the real Prince Nero's voice. Before the royal prince left the palace, the Supreme Royal Mage— the only one among the royal mages who knows your secret— copied His Royal Highness's voice to make this choker. It was made under His Majesty's order."

[That sc*mbag is so meticulous.]

But he did the right thing. Although she was still a child, her voice was already too pitchy for a "prince." Changing her voice was only a logical thing to do.

[But it still pisses me off.]

Not that she could do anything about it.

"Alright. I will wear it," Neoma said with a bright smile. Then, she turned to Stephanie who was now putting a brooch on the lapel of her jacket. "Stephanie, help me wear the choker."

Stephanie bowed to her. "Of course, Your Royal Highness."

To be honest, talking to older people casually was making her uncomfortable. But as the empire's "crown prince," she was "above" them. Having lived in a modern world, she had learned to hate the injustice of social hierarchy. She still hated it.

But she couldn't change the system of Moonasterion Empire just because she wanted to. Even though she was an a.d.u.l.t mentally, right now, she was just a little "prince" that could still be taken out anytime. Before worrying about the people below her, she had to worry about herself first. She wouldn't be able to save anyone if she died early, right?

[Gosh, I deserve a medal.]

"It's done now, Your Royal Highness," Stephanie informed her, then she stood up and bowed to her. "May we hear you speak to see if the choker works?"

Neoma smiled before she spoke. "Is it time for my classes already?"

Alphen and Stephanie smiled as if they were satisfied that the choker worked. Then, they bowed and answered to her at the same time. "Yes, Your Royal Highness."

[Oh, they have good rapport.]

"OH MY god," Lady Belmont, the countess in-charge of Neoma's basic education, gasped in surprise while looking at the result of her "first test." "His Royal Highness must be a genius!"

Neoma stopped herself from smiling haughtily. Instead, she remained properly seated behind the mahogany table while her teacher was standing in front of her.

It wasn't easy since she was a naturally arrogant person. Since she

lived as a famous online celebrity in her second life, she had developed a big ego. But she knew how to play her cards well. Being too arrogant was a no-no. Having confidence was a big yes though, especially if it was backed up by her beauty, talent, and wits.

That was why 9, 999, 999 followers loved her.

[The only thing I regret in my second life is dying before I reach 10 million followers. Gosh, if I return to my second life after this, I'd strangle whoever it was that made the coconut wine that killed me!]

"Your Royal Highness, you already mastered our language," Lady Belmont said with astonishment. "Your vocabulary and grammar are very good. Your penmanship could use some work, but the content of your essay is what matters most. You've exceeded my expectations, Your Royal Highness." She bowed respectfully to her. "It's a huge honor to share my knowledge with a genius like you."

At the start of their class, Lady Belmont asked her to write an essay about what she learned from her previous teacher so she would know where to continue. Of course, Lady Belmont wasn't aware that she wasn't the real prince who had taken lessons with another teacher before.

Thankfully, she was born academically smart even during her first life. Well, Nero was still way smarter than her back then. But she was better than the other ladies around her.

This time, she was armed with the memories of her two past lives. The knowledge in her head wouldn't fit a five year old, naturally. And she didn't have any intention to hide it. So no wonder the countess thought she was a genius.

[Well, compared to the exams I had in my second life in a modern world with advanced science and technology department, the lessons in this world are simpler.]

"Thank you for the praise, Teacher Belmont," Neoma said gently with a smile. "But I didn't achieve this by myself. It's all thanks to my previous teacher's guidance. And of course, your clear

instructions of what I have to do also helped me, Teacher Belmont."

Being smart was okay but being arrogant about it would damage her.

[No one likes a smartass kid.]

So of course, she had to acknowledge the efforts of other people who "taught" her the things she knew. A prince should always be modest, right?

Lady Belmont looked pleased by her flattery. "Thank you for the compliment, Your Royal Highness," she said, then she bowed politely to her. "I'll dismiss our class early for today so I could look for better materials to teach you with, Your Royal Highness."

Neoma smiled brightly. "I'm looking forward to it, Teacher Belmont."

NEOMA'S facial muscles were already tired from smiling all day.

Right now, she was waiting in the parlor room of Yule Palace. She was scheduled to have afternoon tea with the sc*mbag. But the emperor was still in a meeting with his advisors.

[He should have rescheduled our appointment instead of making me wait.]

Anyway, she was alone in the parlor because only members of the royal family were allowed in the parlor. Lewis was standing outside the room with the other royal guards. But she was fine with it because she liked talking to herself.

And she was busy looking back at her day.

All her teachers praised her and called her a genius. Of course, she had to deny it and praise her teachers instead. Also, she had to lie and say that she loved reading books.

[Well, I do enjoy reading. But not academic books.]

Whenever she was in the library, she would look for romance or crime novels. She would secretly read them inside the thick academic books that she would use as a cover-up. Anyway, the romance books she had read were okay. But she had read better books in her second life.

[Should I write a book and sell it using an alter-ego? I need to earn money after all. But I have to wait for a while because no one would believe that a five-year-old like me could write a novel. Plus, the genre I want to write is BL.]

She enjoyed reading and watching BL or Boys' Love stuff in her second life. During that time, she was a huge Kpop fangirl. She would write fanfics of her "ship" in the boy groups that she was a "stan" of. That was one of the reasons why she became online famous before she became a full-time vlogger.

[A five year old writing a BL book would only damage my reputation. I'll save that option for later.]

Her weird thoughts were cut off when she heard a knock on the door. When she asked the person behind it to come in, Glenn's handsome face greeted her.

"Greetings to the First Star of the Great Moonasterion Empire," Glenn greeted her politely with a bow. When he raised his head to face her properly, he gave her a bright smile before he spoke. "His Majesty is waiting for you, Your Royal Highness."

"What a relief." Neoma smiled even though she was pissed for waiting that long. "I can't wait to see Papa, Sir Glenn."

[Eww.]

NEOMA had to smile even though Emperor Nikolai was as stoic as ever.

This time, instead of the garden, they were having tea in the tea room of his palace. Because he didn't allow just anyone in Yule Palace, Lewis was asked to wait at her palace instead. The emperor said that Glenn would send her home later.

[I hope Lewis doesn't get lost while waiting for me.]

"Your teachers are singing praises about you," Emperor Nikolai said when he gently put the tea cup on the table. "They're calling you a genius."

Neoma smiled sweetly at him. "Am I making you proud, Papa?"

"Being smart is only expected of a royal prince," he said coldly. "There's nothing to be proud of it."

[Stingy.]

She smiled anyway and tapped her shoulder.

The emperor's forehead knotted in confusion. "What are you doing?"

"I'm tapping my shoulder as a way to tell myself that I did a good job," she said in a disgustingly sweet voice. "Regardless of what you think, I still believe that I'm doing a good job as Brother's proxy, Papa. If my brother was here, I'm sure he'd praise me."

She knew she was being cheeky but thankfully, the emperor didn't look offended. He just raised an eyebrow in amus.e.m.e.nt.

[I remember that in my first life, this sc*mbag liked it whenever Nero would talk back or fight him head-on. Because according to the emperor, he didn't need an heir who couldn't think or stand up for himself. So let's push our luck more.]

"But it's okay, Papa," she said with a smile. "I don't expect you to praise me for something I didn't inherit from you."

"And what do you mean by that?"

"I read from a book that a child's intelligence is inherited from the mother," she said cheerfully. "I don't know who my Mama is but I bet she was smart."

'Was' because she and Nero was told that their mother was already gone.

"Don't," Emperor Nikolai warned her coldly. "Don't you dare bring up your mother again, Nero de Moonasterio."

["Nero de Moonasterio."]

She didn't expect that she would still call her by her brother's name even though they were the only ones in the room. It was a very solid proof that the emperor was really treating her as a mere replacement for Nero. Maybe he was being lenient to her because he saw her as the royal prince and not as the royal princess that she was.

Ah, she also didn't expect that it would still hurt even though she was aware of how much of a sc*mbag her father was.

"I'm sorry, Papa," Neoma said with a smile— a smile that was probably sad now. "I won't talk about Mama again."

NEOMA was surprised when she saw Lewis' beat-up face. His lips were bleeding and he had bruises all over. It was obvious that he didn't fight back and just let himself get beaten into pulp. "Who did that to you?"

Lewis blinked several times and when recognition crossed his eyes, he bowed to her. "Welcome, Prince."

"Lewis, you should greet His Royal Highness formally," Glenn scolded her butler.

The emperor's knight walked her to Blanco Palace as promised.

And when they reached her palace's entrance, Lewis greeted them with that face. There were two other royal guards with the young butler.

"What happened to Lewis?" Neoma asked strictly to the two guards. Acting cute was her main weapon but she also knew when to be strict and intimidating. "Who did that to him?"

One of the guards bowed to her before speaking. "Your Royal Highness, the children of Count Thompson and Marquis Alberts went to see you. They were about to leave when they saw Lewis. And then... they ganged up on him and beat him to pulp."

"Why?" she asked in an irritated tone. "Why did they beat Lewis?"

This time, the other guard bowed to her and answered her question. "The noble children were insulted when Lewis failed to greet them properly, Your Royal Highness."

"And you didn't do anything to help MY butler?"

The two royal guards flinched, then knelt before her and spoke in unison. "Forgive us, Your Royal Highness!"

"No," she said coldly. "But I might reconsider if you bring those insolent children before me RIGHT NOW."

The two royal guards froze for a moment. Then, they looked at each other. After a few seconds, they stood up and bowed to her. Like what they did earlier, they talked at the same time again. "We will bring the noble children to you, Your Royal Highness!"

She waved her hand casually. "Do it now."

The two royal guards bowed before they ran in a hurry.

Neoma then turned to Glenn with a smile. The knight obviously looked surprised by her sudden change of mood. "Sir Glenn, thank you for taking me back to my palace. Lewis is here now so you can back to Papa's side. See you tomorrow."

Glenn knew that he was being dismissed and he didn't resist it. Instead, he smiled and politely bowed to her. "See you tomorrow, Your Royal Highness."

And after that, Glenn left.

Neoma removed the choker around her neck and talked to Lewis using her real voice. "Lewis, I have three orders for you."

Lewis just bowed to her.

"First, remember my real voice," she said firmly. "Whatever voice modulator I use, you must remember my real voice so if even I ask for help without this stupid choker, you'd still know that it's me who's calling for help. Can you do that?"

He nodded as a response.

[Well, he's a fox so I can trust his sharp senses.]

"Second, don't let other people beat you up again," she scolded him. "You are my butler. If people look down on you, it's the same as looking down on me."

"Me," he said, then pointed at himself while shaking his head. "Can't hurt humans, Prince."

"I'm your master now so I'm the one you should follow," she declared, then flicked his forehead with her fingers. He looked surprised, and that was the first time she saw him react that "vividly." "And don't call me "prince" when there's only the two of us."

"Me," Lewis said, pointing at himself again. Then, he pointed at her. "You. Not prince?"

"My third order is for you to call me 'Princess' when there's only the two of us," Neoma said sadly. "I need someone to remind me that I'm a princess and I want it to be you, Lewis."
