

Royal Secret: I'm A Princess!

Chapter 29 - SWEET CHILD OF MINE

NEOMA woke up feeling refreshed.

She was in a good mood because she had a very nice dream. In that dream, she slapped Emperor Nikolai on his unnecessarily handsome face and called him an "idiot sandwich." It felt very real, and that made her happy.

"Princess?"

Neoma turned to the owner of the voice and smiled. "Good morning, Lewis."

Lewis, for some reason, was kneeling beside her bed while looking up at her with a relieved look on his face. Well, to be honest, the boy looked stoic as usual. It was only her who decided that he looked relieved. She wanted to think that he was worried about her, okay?

"How are you, Lewis?" she asked when she got up. Then, she stretched her short arms. "Did the knights who caught you last night hurt you?"

Lewis shook his head, his eyes never leaving her. "Me. Fine. You?"

"I'm fine," she assured him. "Were you worried about me?"

He blinked as if he didn't understand her question.

[Right, this boy lacks emotional intelligence.]

"Lewis, you should know that you care about me because I'm the

second person that you need to protect and take care of in this world," she declared.

"Princess? Number two?" he asked, obviously more confused this time. "Number one who?"

"You, duh," she said. "You should protect and take care of yourself first, Lewis. How can you guard my life if you're not in your best condition?"

"Me. Strong."

She scoffed at that. "I will acknowledge that you're strong once you beat my father. He almost killed you last time, didn't he?"

He obviously looked disappointed himself.

"It's okay, Lewis," she consoled him. She wanted to tap his shoulder but she remembered that he hated sudden physical contact. So she withdrew her hand and just stretched her arms again. "We just have to work hard. I need to be super strong, too."

"Princess. Strong now."

She smiled at his compliment. "Thank you. But I need to be stronger."

When she turned to her night table, she found the candies that the saint gave him in a glass jar. She didn't remember putting those candies in her pocket last night. But then again, she was now in her pajamas. Stephanie was the one in-charge of changing her clothes so she was definitely the one who put the candies in the glass jar.

[Should I really trust the saint?]

She opened the lid of the glass jar and took out one candy from it. "Lewis, you have sharp senses," she said, then she extended her hand to him, the candy sitting on her palm idly. "Can you tell if this candy is dangerous or not?"

Lewis leaned forward, then he sniffed the candy for a few seconds. Then, he looked up at her and shook his head. "Candy. Divine. Safe."

"Then, can I eat this?"

He shook his head. "Candy similar. Mine Marble. The Marble. Me. Strong."

She took her a while before she understood what he said. The thing that made everything sense was the "Marble" he mentioned. She remembered that in her first life, there was a rumor that circulated about how Nero became powerful.

Apparently, Lewis gave a "Fox Marble" to Nero back then. She just couldn't remember what happened after that because it happened around the time before she was killed.

[Anyway, if it was similar to the Fox Marble, then this candy could make me stronger.]

Huh.

It seemed like the saint wanted to make it up to her.

[Okay, I'll let him make it up to me.]

She unwrapped the candy and put it in her mouth. Then, she bit it in half, chewed it, then swallowed it. "It tastes like a normal candy."

Lewis just stared at her with a blank look on his face.

Her peaceful time with her butler was cut-off when Stephanie and Alphen came. They always did because that meant it was time for her to start her day.

"What's my schedule today?" Neoma asked the head maid and the head butler after they gave her their usual greeting. "And why is Lewis in my room this early?"

"Starting today, Lewis is no longer a resident of the butlers' mansion, Your Royal Highness," Alphen said politely. "Under His Majesty's order, Lewis will now be a resident of Blanco Palace. He'll be occupying the room next to yours. So in case of an attack, he'll reach your room faster."

"Okay, that's convenient," she said.

"His Majesty also cleared your schedule for today, Your Royal Highness," Stephanie added. "His Majesty said that you can do whatever you want as long as you don't leave the palace."

"Good," she said, then she looked up the head butler. "Alphen, I want to invite Count Thompson and Marquis Alberts for an afternoon tea later. I'll write a letter for them before I take a bath. Send the letter to them as fast as possible."

The head butler and the head maid looked surprised by her order.

"Your Royal Highness, please pardon my insolence," Alphen said carefully. "But it's rude to invite guests in such a short notice."

Well, even in the modern world, it was rude to do that. But what could she do? She had a very tight schedule. Today was her only free day. Still, she had a reputation to protect. While thinking of a way to invite the noblemen without appearing rude, her brilliant mind came up with an excuse.

"Byron Thompson and Harry Alberts invited me to have lunch with their fathers," she said that obviously confused her servants. Lewis remained pokerfaced though. "And today is the day that they promised to introduce me to Count Thompson and Marquis Alberts."

"Your Royal Highness, did the young lords really say that...?" the head butler asked worriedly.

"Maybe, maybe not," she said coily. "But I'm sure the little kids will "remember" that if you remind them about it."

She remembered how scared Byron and Harry were at her on "that"

day.

That was why she was pretty sure that those two brats wouldn't deny whatever she said. If she did it that way, it would appear like she set a lunch date with Byron and Harry— and the boys just forgot about it.

"I understand, Your Royal Highness," Alphen said with a bow. "I will prepare the necessary tools and your stamp."

Her smile vanished.

[So, Nero already has a stamp?]

She didn't have any. Well, she practically didn't exist in the royal family. Still, that was a harsh reminder that she was nothing but Nero's proxy.

She got depressed for a second, but she reminded herself that beggars can't be choosers.

[I'm living comfortably and I should be grateful for that.]

At least, for now.

"Okay. Let's do that," Neoma said brightly. Then, she turned to Lewis. "Go to your room and unpack, Lewis. I'll call you when I'm done changing."

Lewis nodded, face still blank. "Okay. Prince."

"GOOD MORNING, Papa Boss!" Neoma greeted the sc*mbag cheerfully. They were alone in the dining hall so she was free to greet him that way. "Did you sleep well?"

"What do you want?" Nikolai asked without even taking his eyes off the toast he was eating.

"A grand gesture from you, Papa Boss."

He finally looked at her to give her a disgusted look. "A what?"

She took a bite of her fluffy soufflé pancake first before she explained. "I have an afternoon tea with Count Thompson and Marquis Alberts, and their brats later."

His brows furrowed in obvious irritation. "When did you send the invitation?"

"Before I went here."

"That's rude, Prince Nero," he said, emphasizing her twin brother's name to remind her of her "job." "Inviting guests on such a short notice is unbecoming of a royal prince."

"Don't worry about it, Papa Boss," she said. "I've got it covered."

"If you mess up, I'll deal is over."

She just gave him a big, fake smile. "I know, Papa Boss."

"What are you talking about a while ago?" he asked seriously. "What kind of "grand gesture" do you need and why do I have to give you that?"

"It's part of our deal," she insisted. "We will act like we have a strong father-and-son relationship, remember? I need to show-off to Count Thompson and Marquis Alberts later. If they see how you "cherish" the royal prince, I'll get what I want from them."

He smirked as if he found her amusing. "What do you need from people lower in rank?"

"Count Thompson and Marquis Alberts created a study group for the noble children under their cute little faction," she said. "I want Lewis to be a part of that study group."

It was a study group where only boys were allowed.

To be honest, it wasn't that bad. The de facto leader of that faction was Marquis Alberts whose family was known to produce scholars. Their group was also known to be loyal followers of the emperor.

[Count Thompson and Marquis Alberts are quite famous for being "decent" noblemen. I wonder what happened to Byron and Harry.]

Well, maybe all families had problematic children.

"Why do you need to go that far for that foxy boy?" the emperor asked in a cold voice. "If you fancy that boy, I will really kill him this time."

She rolled her eyes at that. "Lewis is my son."

"I shouldn't have asked," he said while shaking his head. Then, he sipped his earl gray tea before he talked again. "I'll ask Glenn to send you a gift in the middle of your little tea party later."

"I want flowers," she said excitedly. "My favorite flower is—"

"Princes don't need flowers," he cut her off rudely. "You will look effeminate if I send you flowers."

"When did flowers become exclusive for girls?" she asked in a bored tone. "'Effeminate,' my foot. Papa Boss, if you're a real man, you won't care what other people think of your gender. Even if you like "girly" stuff like pink, flowers, dancing, clothes, makeup, or whatever the stupid society decided to be "feminine," if you're confident with yourself, those things don't matter."

"Not when you're the future crown prince of this empire," he said indifferently. "Your ideals don't apply to any child born in the royal family. We have a lot of enemies and they are just waiting for you to make a mistake. If they see a hint of femininity in you, they would use that as a chance to ruin you."

"And what are you they going to do?" she scoffed. "Use "gay" as an insult when it shouldn't be?"

He nodded firmly. "They would even spread a rumor about how the future crown prince fancies boys."

"They can do that to a child?"

He nodded. "The nobles and the citizens won't accept an effeminate crown prince," the emperor said. "Prince Nero is the one who's going to suffer if you don't protect his image properly."

Neoma gave him a dire stare. "I still want flowers, Papa Boss."

"No," Emperor Nikolai said. "I'll send you something else."

[Sc*mbag.]

"LEWIS, you're eight years old now," Neoma said while she was sitting in front of her study table. The count and the marquis (plus the brats) would arrive in a few minutes. She was still in her room while writing the recipe of beef wellington. She'd give it to her palace's head chef later. "Since I'm your mother, I decided that I want you to enter a study group." She turned to Lewis who was standing beside her with his hands behind his back. "I know that it will be very difficult for you to mingle with other kids. They might even bully you again. But I really want you to receive proper education, Lewis."

Sadly, she couldn't simply ask the emperor to put Lewis in the same classes as hers.

After all, the education that the royal prince received was exclusive only to the MALE children of the royal family.

"Please endure it, Lewis," she said seriously. "If you want to stay by my side forever, you have to learn how to be a proper "noble" even if you aren't. I know that a person shouldn't be judged by his educational background. But unfortunately, I am not powerful enough to protect you from the sc*mbags around us. So I want you to help yourself fit in this society for now."

To be honest, she was this concerned for Lewis because she wanted him to live like a normal person. Right now, she wasn't sure how long she would be allowed in the palace. If ever something bad happened to her, she wanted Lewis to be able to take care of himself.

She was far from being a good person.

But at least, she wanted to be nice to the people that she was using to survive. That included Lewis and Nero. She was using the children for her survival and while it left a bad taste in her mouth, she couldn't stop because she wanted to live.

"I'm sorry if I'm deciding things for you, Lewis," Neoma said with an apologetic smile. "I'm a bad mother, am I not?"

"You. Not. Mother," Lewis said metallically. Then, he pointed a finger at her. "You," he said, then he placed a hand on his chest. "My princess."

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