

Royal Secret: I'm A Princess!

Chapter 6 - CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

"I'M NOT crying, Brother," Neoma denied while blowing her tears and snot were rolling down her face like crazy. "These are tears of joy. I'm happy for you."

God, why was she crying like a baby?

Well, technically, she was a baby girl. But her mental age was that of an a.d.u.l.t. Living in a modern world as a modern girl in her second life taught her that she didn't need validation from men! She was a strong independent woman, okay?

[I don't need my father's approval to feel and live like a human!]

Stupid tear ducts.

"Leave," Nero ordered Alphen. "Tell His Majesty that I'm grateful for the invitation but I have to reject it. I don't want my sister to have dinner alone."

"Brother, I'm fine," Neoma insisted. "I can eat on my own."

"No."

"Brother, I want you get along with our father," she said while hugging his arm and giving him puppy dog eyes. "Please have dinner with His Majesty. Please? Please? Please?"

Her brother went to her and wiped her tears using his hands. Then, he pulled his dainty white handkerchief out of his b.r.e.a.s.t pocket and put it over her nose. "Blow your nose, Neoma."

She did as she was told.

It was gross but Nero didn't seem to mind. He just quietly cleaned her nose and folded the hanky inward before putting it back in his pocket. "Do you really want me to have dinner with His Majesty?"

She nodded eagerly. "Yes, Brother!"

"Are you sure you won't get lonely while eating alone?"

"I won't," she assured him. "I'll miss you, though. So please come back early."

Nero seemed to be satisfied with her words because he smiled warmly while caressing her cheek. "Okay, I'll do what you want." When he turned to Alphen, she noticed that her brother's face turned serious. "Tell His Majesty that I'll join him for dinner."

Alphen bowed. "As you wish, Your Royal Highness."

After saying that, the butler bid them goodbye respectfully and left the room.

"I'll tell the chef to cook all your favorite meal tonight," Nero promised her. "And don't worry about your diet. I made sure that Stephanie and the other maids won't scold you."

That made her half happy-half nervous.

Was it just her or Nero was really turning into a little tyrant?

[I need to soften up my brother with love.]

"Brother, you're really kind," Neoma said sweetly. "I know that brother is kind to everyone, right?"

Nero only gave her an awkward smile.

[Uh-oh.]

"BROTHER, you look so cool!"

Nero smiled at Neoma's praise.

He also liked how she looked at her with big, shining eyes. Whenever his twin sister looked at him that way, he really felt loved and appreciated.

[That feeling is very addictive.]

"Your new clothes are so nice, Brother," Neoma said while admiring his outfit. "You've always looked elegant but this time, you look extra expensive."

The clothes the emperor sent him was a tailored tailcoat, dress shirt, and dress shorts in gold. And oh, his shoes were obviously expensive.

He was also adorned with other luxury accessories like gold cuff links and buttons, gold brooch, and a customized pocket watch with his initials. To simply say, he was covered in gold and other luxury gems.

His outfit was very different from his twin sister's.

[God, how can they treat my Neoma like this?]

Neoma wore a simple pink sailor dress. Her hair was flowing freely on her back. The only decoration on it was a pink headband. Her accessories were all very simple, and so was the old pair of shoes she had been wearing since she turned five.

Of course, his twin sister was lovely whatever she wore.

[But still, simplicity doesn't suit a princess like my Neoma.]

His precious sister deserved all the best things in the world.

"Brother, why are you looking at me like that?" Neoma asked while tugging at the hem of his tailcoat. "Is there something on my face?"

"Yes," Nero said. Then, he gently pinched her chubby cheek. "You have cuteness on your face, Neoma."

She giggled at that. "Am I cute, Brother?"

"You're the cutest in the whole empire, Neoma."

And Neoma hugged him as reward. "Thank you, Brother."

Nero smiled and kissed the top of her head. [Don't worry, Neoma—I'll give you a comfortable life soon.]

"YOU look like a proper prince now," Nikolai commented while watching Nero eat steak with an elegance that didn't make him look like a child. Now, he wouldn't regret his decision to invite his son for dinner. This was the first time after so many years that he allowed someone to join him in the grand dining hall of his palace. [And of course, the tailored clothes I sent him made him look like a royal more.]

"I'm not your only child, Your Majesty," Nero reminded him in a cold voice. "The royal princess also deserves to be dressed luxuriously."

"The empire doesn't need a princess so I don't see the benefit of investing on your sister," he said to his son, colder than the tone his child used on him. "Nero, you're going to move in to Blanco Palace. The arrangements have already begun."

"I'll only move to another palace if Neoma is with me."

"I'll send the princess to House Quinzel," he said. "My cousin, Duke Quinzel, has a daughter the same age as your sister. The princess will stay there to study bridal lessons."

The prince snapped the knife in his hand into two the same time his aura turned menacingly. "What do you mean by "bridal lessons," Your Majesty? Neoma is only five."

"Young ladies as young as that can already get engaged at that age," he countered. "But of course, she will wait until she's sixteen before she can get married."

"Who did you choose for Neoma to be her fiancé?"

"House Drayton has a son two years older than you," he answered. "Their family belongs to the Royal Faction and they're very rich. The young Lord Drayton would be a good match for your sister."

"No," his son said angrily. "I won't let you sell my sister off to an unknown family at such a young age."

"If you don't like my decision, then feel free to try and kill me," Nikolai said with a smirk to rile up his son. Maybe angering him would awaken his power. Before he declared Nero as his official heir, he wanted him to be awakened first. And it was embarrassing that a mere princess had managed to wake up her Soul Beast first. "If you become the emperor, then maybe you can make a law that will prevent your precious sister from getting married."

"I'll steal the throne from you even without your provocation," Nero said firmly. "You better enjoy the last remaining years of your reign, Your Majesty."

NEOMA felt nervous while watching the maids pack her things.

According to Stephanie, the emperor would be sending her to House Quinzel for her bridal lessons. Even though the head maid didn't say who'd she be engaged to, she had a feeling that it would be Lord Rubin Drayton again.

[This is seriously scaring me. Everything is happening fast. If I get

sent to House Quinzel now, then that means I'll meet Hanna who's still alive this time. Will the duchess be kind to me if her real daughter is around?]

But on the other hand, meeting Rubin this early could be an advantage to her.

[Rubin and Regina are only two years older than me. Maybe Regina isn't as rotten as she was in my past life during this time. And if they're still children like me, I can "innocently" destroy their relationship by purposely charming Rubin. Plus, even though I'm not neglected, I'm still a princess. I'm sure House Drayton would choose me over a lower noble like Regina for their son.]

She would use her acting skills to charm Rubin's parents so they would choose her side eventually.

And of course, she would "seduce" Rubin. She would make him crazy in love with her until he dumped Regina. She wasn't sure if their relationship would change this time but one thing was certain: she wouldn't let Rubin and Regina make a fool of her again.

[But would Nero be alright if I leave him alone here?]

Well, she was sure that her twin brother would be properly treated as a crown prince. But she was worried about his violent nature that was starting to show as early as now.

[How can I watch over him if we were apart?]

"Your Royal Highness, are you feeling alright?" Stephanie, who was kneeling before her to reach her eye level, asked. She looked formal as usual but she could see a hint of worry on her gentle face. "I understand that you may have been shocked by His Majesty's order to suddenly send you to House Quinzel. But please don't be scared. Duke Quinzel is your biological uncle. He also has a good reputation so I'm sure he'll treat you well."

["Better than this palace,"] she could almost hear Stephanie add.

"I'm fine, Stephanie," Neoma said cheerfully. Even though the servants weren't exactly friendly to her, she would still always act kindly to them. She knew that they were starting to warm up to her and Stephanie was no exception. Good thing she used to be a child star in her second life. She knew exactly how she should act to get the a.d.u.l.ts to like her. After all, whether in this world or the modern one, good-mannered and bright children were always favored. "I'm sure Papa only wants what's best for me."

[God, give me strength to punch that sc*mbag of a father someday.]

Stephanie gave her a look of pity, then she hugged her as politely as she could. "Oh, Your Royal Highness. You don't deserve this."

[I know, right?]

NERO was forced to stop walking when he felt a pang in his chest. He leaned against the wall when he lost his balance. Also, he was starting to get dizzy.

"Your Royal Highness," Alphen, who was now squatting in front of him, asked him worriedly. "What's happening?"

He just heaved a deep sigh.

[The poison is probably working.]

Ever since he got a hold of the poison that Neoma consumed, he started to mix it in his own food just like what happened to his twin sister.

It was his own way of punishing himself for failing to protect her.

And moreover, he decided to consume the poison to see if he would awaken the same way that Neoma did. He was being impatient because he wanted to be stronger to protect her. Once he had awakened, he would start his plan of overthrowing Emperor Nikolai.

"Alphen," Nero called his butler. "Catch me."

He collapsed after saying that.

[Now, let's see what kind of Soul Beast awaits me.]
