

Ready to Rule: The Real Heiress Strikes Back

Chapter 11

Connor turned his icy glare on Mikey.

Chris let out a quiet breath, even patting his chest. That was way too close for comfort.

Mikey didn't seem bothered at all. He just grinned and said, "Come on, you're almost thirty. There's an order to things, you know. This match with the Norwoods was set up when you were a kid. Why should it suddenly be my problem, or Chris'?"

Chris nodded furiously. "Exactly. Lucinda Norwood is your fiancée, not ours. Why would we have anything to do with her?"

Connor went on, "I'm twenty-eight. Lucinda is only eighteen. The gap's too big. It wouldn't be right."

Grandpa Samuel had had enough. He banged his cane on the floor. "Useless, the lot of you!"

The three brothers fell silent.

Grandpa Samuel looked them over and said, "Since none of you can step up, none of you get a say in this anymore."

The brothers exchanged confused glances.

The old man continued, "I know none of you like Lucinda. You think she's too spoiled. Well, I just got word from the Norwoods. Lucinda isn't actually their daughter. The real one, Lydia, has finally come home. So here's what's going to happen. Lydia gets to pick one of you. Whoever she chooses, that's who's marrying her. No arguments."

The three brothers just stared at him, totally stunned.

Chris was the first to find his voice. He practically jumped to his feet. "Grandpa, you want some girl who just got here to pick between us?"

Grandpa Samuel tapped his cane for emphasis. "That's exactly right. From now on, you three are her candidates."

Chris protested, "No way. If people hear about this, we'll be a joke. It's not like I can't find a wife on my own. Why should some random girl get to pick me? What do you think we are?"

Grandpa Samuel looked at them, chin raised. "Anyone want to volunteer?"

The brothers went silent.

He nodded, satisfied. "Then you'll do it my way. Lydia gets to know all three of you. She picks, and that's final. Complain again and I'll knock some sense into you."

The brothers couldn't believe it. Their grandpa was seriously letting a girl pick one of them like they were produce at the grocery store. Was he really that desperate for great-grandkids?

Connor flopped back onto the couch. "I'm not feeling well. Might take at least a month to recover."

Mikey jumped in, "I've got research trips lined up. Honestly, I only got some free time when I heard Connor was hurt."

He was kicking himself. If he'd known visiting his brother would land him on a list of "potential fiancés," he never would have shown up. Talk about bad luck.

Grandpa Samuel turned his icy stare on Chris. Connor and Mikey did the same.

Chris tried to play innocent, but his heart was racing. "Why are you all staring at me?"

"You're the one with the most free time," they all said, voices overlapping. Even they seemed surprised by how in sync they were.

Chris' eyes widened. "I'm busy too, okay?" He was terrified they'd all dump this Lydia business on him.

Grandpa Samuel snorted. "You just graduated. What could you possibly be busy with?"