

Ready to Rule: The Real Heiress Strikes Back

Chapter 12

Mikey piped up, grinning, "Come on, Chris. You're twenty-two, Lydia's eighteen. That's pretty close in age. You'll have plenty to talk about. Honestly, you two would make a great couple, right Connor?"

Connor agreed with a lazy nod. "Perfect match if you ask me."

Chris could hardly believe his sly brother was selling him out like this. He sputtered, "Mikey, Connor, seriously? I'm swamped right now. I'm studying for my grad school exams and-"

"Studying?" their grandfather cut in, his tone sharp. "Don't act like I don't know what you're up to. You're just a layabout. If you can't even figure out how to chase after a girl, this could be your perfect chance!"

Chris felt an anxious chill run down his spine and took a step back, looking truly pitiful. "Grandpa, why are you all ganging up on me?"

Their grandfather glared, not budging an inch. "Don't think I don't know what the three of you are plotting. Tomorrow, Mikey and Chris, you're coming with me to visit the Norwoods and meet Lydia. Connor, you can rest for now."

Dragging an injured grandson along would only scare the poor girl. No sense in ruining things before they even began.

Mikey just shot Grandpa a helpless look.

Chris tried to argue, but Grandpa's stare shut him right up. "None of you are getting out of this. Connor can recover for a week, then he'll go over too. If anyone refuses, I'll deal with him myself. He'll never have to worry about marriage again."

The three Jefferson brothers exchanged glances. Was this really their grandpa? Sometimes it felt like they'd been picked up off the street.

The next morning, Lydia woke up to a gentle knock at her door.

"Lydia, sweetheart, are you awake?"

It was Kylie. Lydia blinked, taking in the soft princess room, still not used to all the luxury. She stretched, rolled out of bed, and opened the door. Kylie stood there, warm and graceful, eyes crinkling with a smile.

"Lydia, did I wake you up?"

Something soft and sweet filled Lydia's chest. She smiled back. "No, I just woke up." Kylie's smile grew even more tender. She reached out and smoothed Lydia's messy hair. "Did you sleep well? Is there anything you don't like, or anything uncomfortable?"

"Everything's great," Lydia said honestly.

She wasn't the delicate type. She could sleep on a princess bed or in a tree in the middle of nowhere. It was all the same to her.

"That's good to hear." Kylie glanced at the group of maids behind her and waved them forward. "She is up. Please help her get ready."

Seeing the maids start to pour in, Lydia quickly protested. "It's okay, I can do it myself."

Kylie blinked, then nodded, thinking Lydia just needed some time to adjust. "Alright. You can all go for now."

The maids left quietly. Kylie gave Lydia a look full of gentle excitement. "Lydia, your dad and I have a surprise for you. We're waiting downstairs."

Their precious daughter had suffered eighteen long years. Now that she was home at last, they were going to give her the warmest welcome possible.

Lydia smiled and nodded. "Okay."