

Ready to Rule: The Real Heiress Strikes Back

Chapter 2

He tried to make out who was standing in front of him, but everything just stayed hazy, no matter how hard he looked.

"No signal..." He forced out the words, breathing heavily.

Lydia frowned at him. Great, just what she needed.

"Where's your phone?"

"In my pocket."

She bent down to search, her small hands moving quickly over Connor's broad chest. Before she could get too far, Connor grabbed her wrist, his grip weak and voice even weaker. "Inside, right side."

Lydia shot a look at him. He looked like he might faint again at any second. Still, she reached into his suit's inside pocket and pulled out his phone.

Connor kept his eyes shut, barely whispering, "First contact."

Lydia opened his contacts, didn't bother checking who it was, and hit call. The phone rang once before someone picked up, panicked and breathless.

"Sir! Where are you? It's pouring on the mountain. Are you alright?"

Connor didn't answer. After a moment, Lydia spoke for him. "He's hurt. You need to come and get him, fast."

The person on the other end sounded like the world had ended. "What? He's hurt? Miss, please, how is he? Where is he right now?"

"I've taken care of his wound. He's..." Lydia looked around, taking in the hills, then spotted a patch of hawthorn trees not far away. "There's a hawthorn grove west of the halfway point up the mountain. There's a small path next to it. Come get him there."

It wasn't much to go on, but everyone around here knew about that wild hawthorn grove.

She hung up, just as the phone's last bit of battery died. Lydia slid it back into Connor's pocket. "Feel any better? Want me to help you over there?"

Connor nodded. "Yeah."

Ever since this girl appeared, he'd started feeling like he might actually maké faut alive! creeping sense of death had finally started to fade.

Lydia bent down to pull him up, surprised at how heavy he was. She liked to think she was pretty strong, but he was no lightweight.

For the first time ever, Connor found himself leaning against a girl for support. She was small, soft, and yet, somehow steady enough to hold him up.

He couldn't help himself. "What's your name?"

If she hadn't shown up tonight, he probably wouldn't have survived till morning.

Lydia was exhausted and not in the mood. "You don't need to know."

From the second she saw him, Lydia could tell he wasn't someone she wanted to get involved with

Complicated people meant complicated problems, and she had enough of her own.

Connor pressed on, saying more to her than he ever had to any girl before. "You saved my life. I can give you whatever you want."

She didn't hesitate. "Medical fee is eight hundred and eighty-eight. Most payment apps are okay with me, but no IOUS."

Connor just stared at her, stunned. He was the richest man in the Capital, and this village girl was acting like he might not be able to pay?

"I'll pay you as soon as I get back..."

"Forget it. I have things to do. Wait here for your people. I'm leaving."

With that, Lydia dragged Connor over to the edge of the path and left him in the grass. She slung her medicine basket onto her back and turned to go.

Connor was too weak to follow, but as she started to walk away, he used the last of his strength to grab the edge of her shirt. Lydia wasn't expecting it and lost her balance, falling right on top of him.

And somehow, impossibly, their noses bumped, lips pressed together, with her on top of him.