

Ready to Rule: The Real Heiress Strikes Back

Chapter 3

Connor froze, completely thrown off guard.

His eyesight had always been poor due to an old injury, especially in the dark. Now, with poison clouding his mind, everything seemed fuzzy. He couldn't make out Lydia's face at all, but he felt her lips brush against his. They were impossibly soft, with a hint of sweetness that lingered.-

Without thinking, his lips moved ever so slightly. That tiny reaction was all it took. Lydia shot up like she'd been zapped, scrambling away from him, her cheeks burning. "You... you jerk!"

She wiped her mouth hard with the back of her hand. For a second, she wanted to slap him, but remembered he was injured. So, still fuming, she spun around and stormed off.

Just her luck, really.

She'd tried to save someone and ended up losing her first kiss to a total creep.

Connor lay on the ground, watching her blurry figure disappear into the rain. He held a small object tightly in his hand and murmured, "I'll find you."

Drenched from head to toe, Lydia trudged down the mountain carrying her medicine basket. She reached the front gate of the Smith family's old house, only to spot a mud-splattered figure standing up from near the wall. The man rushed toward her, grinning from ear to ear. "Miss! I've finally found you!"

Startled, Lydia dodged to the side as the muddy man nearly collided with her. He stumbled, then flashed an awkward, toothy smile. "Sorry, Miss. Didn't mean to scare you."

Lydia eyed him warily. "Who are you?"

Before he could answer, a woman's impatient voice rang out from inside the house. "Lydia, you're not a Smith anymore. Your new surname is Norwood. He's here from the Norwood family to pick you up. Go with him."

Lydia looked up and saw two figures standing at the top of the steps: Sandy, the real Smith family heiress, and Milana, Lydia's adoptive mother.

Two months ago, her pampered 'brother' had gotten into a car accident that left him with kidney damage. As the neglected daughter Lydia was the first to be tested for a match. But what the test revealed was far more shocking-she and her 'brother' weren't related at all.

The news blindsided everyone, including Lydia.

Her adoptive father, Jenson, spared no expense or effort tracking down his true daughter. After two months of searching, he finally found her. Jenson's quest had made headlines everywhere, since he was the richest man in town.

Now that the real heiress had

the real

returned, Lydia, who was never favored and raised in the

countryside by her grandmother

was kicked out on the spot. She'd only lingered these last few days because her grandmother's bad leg had flared up in the damp weather, and Lydia wanted to gather herbs and make medicine for her. The Smiths, though, assumed she was just refusing to leave.

Then yesterday, she got a call. Someone said they were her biological parents and would come get her today. Lydia hadn't really believed it, but, unbelievably, here they were.

The muddy man took another step closer, grinning wide. "Miss, I'm Jack. Your parents sent me to bring you home."

Before Lydia could say a word, Milana cut in again, voice cold. "There's five thousand dollars in this bag for you. It should last a while. We raised you for eighteen years, so don't come asking for more when you run out."

She tossed a black backpack at Lydia's feet.

Just to be sure Lydia would actually leave, Milana and Sandy had packed up her belongings while she was out picking herbs, ready to send her off the moment she came back. Milana didn't know much about Lydia's real family, except that they came from a poor village up north, were out of work, had four unmarried sons and an elderly grandfather at home. It was obvious they weren't well-off.