

The Unshackled Queen: Never Say Never Online Free - Chapter: 13-15

You're ever so thoughtful. I finished the entire soup, and my cough has gotten much better."

Nodding, Hannah responded, "I'm glad you liked it. I'll make it again for you."

Ignored and slighted, Leah tightened her lips and said, "If you're heading for divorce, why prolong the attachments? You've latched onto a fortune not yours for four years. Why continue this charade?"

Before Hannah could reply, Allison slammed her cane on the floor.

"For four years, Hannah has been nothing but dutiful and considerate.

She even learned to cook dumplings because you mentioned wanting them once. Are all her efforts wasted on you? Leah, how can you say that?"

Leah's face turned ashen, but she dared not lash out at Allison.

Instead, she glared at Hannah.

"She has a lowly background, no money, and even a prison record. Had you not been so insistent, there's no way I'd let them marry. And for what? Four years and still no child.

Who would invest in a barren hen?"

Allison fixed her gaze on Leah and retorted, "What kind of nonsense are you spouting?"

Leah recoiled but clung to Eliana's hand, mumbling, "I'm stating facts. Someone as stellar as Eliana is the only suitable match for Declan. I can guarantee that their offspring will continue the Edwards family's legacy of excellence. Or else, imagine the disgrace if that woman were to birth a convict!

In the midst of Leah's barrage, Hannah chose not to engage. She silently resolved to sever ties with the Edwards family as soon as the day was over.

Allison's expression turned even grimmer. She scoffed, "A match? Hear me well. As long as I draw breath, the only wife of Declan's will be Hannah."

Just then, Declan appeared at the stairs.

"Grandma, what's happening?"

Still furious, Allison directed her ire toward her grandson.

“So, you think some shameless woman can just waltz into the Edwards family by attaching herself to Declan? Think again. This is a respectable family. No place for shameless women.”

Declan’s face stiffened while Eliana looked at him, her eyes moist and sorrowful.

Noticing the tension, Hannah assisted Allison into her seat and offered her a glass of warm water.

“Allison, your cough hasn’t improved. Raising your voice won’t help.”

With a clenched fist, Declan loosened his grip and said, “Grandma, the one who has my heart has always been Eliana. Marrying Hannah was never my choice. A loveless marriage is cruel to both parties. A peaceful divorce, with proper compensation for Hannah, seems the best option.”

Allison snapped, “And what compensation? Is your time more precious than Hannah’s youth? What did she ever do wrong? She’s been nothing but devoted to you for four years. Even a block of iron would soften under her care, but you remain stubborn. And what about Eliana? She left you before, didn’t she? Hasn’t she caused you enough suffering?”

As Eliana stood, tears filled her eyes.

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“Allison, I apologize. My past decisions hurt many, myself included. These years apart have shown me how much I need him. I’m committed to proving my love for the rest of my life.”

Allison widened her eyes in disbelief. Sensing another argument brewing, Hannah offered Allison a glass of water.

“Here, drink some water first.”

Taking a sip, Allison finally calmed down. Softly, Hannah said, “Allison, don’t blame him. My feelings have changed.”

A chilling silence engulfed the Living room.

Upon saying that, Hannah seemed as if a weight had been lifted off her shoulders.

“As you said, there’s no point in wasting my youth on someone who’s emotionally unavailable. It’s just not worth it.”

Without her plain black-framed glasses, her eyes sparkled brilliantly in the light, casting a shadow over Declan’s face.

Clutching a glass of water, Allison appeared to be in a state of disbelief.

“Are you for real, Hannah? There’s no turning back...”

Hannah offered a faint smile and nodded, an air of detachment about her, as if the past no longer weighed on her.

The living room was enveloped in quiet. Finally, Allison shattered the silence.

“We’re to blame. I will respect your decision.”

Sensing the conversation had reached a tipping point, Hannah felt it was time to make her exit. She rose and said her goodbyes to Allison.

Casting a fleeting look at Declan, who had been silent throughout, Allison felt a sudden wave of irritation. However, she masked it with a warm smile and softly patted Hannah’s hand.

“Please, make sure you come to visit me. We can catch up, and you know how much I adore your cooking.”

Hannah smiled back but said nothing, grabbing her purse and heading for the door.

Dinner at the Edwards household was equally strained. Despite Eliana’s best efforts to engage her, Allison barely acknowledged her presence. Eventually, Allison had enough of Eliana’s overly attentive manner towards Declan, and she slammed her fork down, her expression turning sour.

“Declan, meet me in the study!”

Leah interjected instinctively, “Allison, Declan hasn’t even finished his dinner...”

“Missing one meal won’t kill him, will it?”

Leah went mute, and Allison shot Declan a stern look before ascending the staircase alone.

Declan’s grip on his fork tightened.

“Declan, you should go comfort Allison. She seems quite fond of Miss Moore. Seeing her leave so casually must have hurt. You’re her cherished grandson; she’ll want to talk to you,” Eliana suggested, gently touching Declan’s hand.

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Touched by her words, Declan said, “Eliana, you’re so perceptive. Once Grandma gets to know you better, I’m sure she’ll warm up to you.” Eliana smiled softly, “No worries. We have all the time in the world.”

After consoling Eliana, Declan proceeded to the study upstairs. Upon entering, he found Allison fidgeting with a familiar bead bracelet.

He sighed, a note of resignation in his voice.

“Grandma, Eliana is my choice for a life partner. The Patel family has been friends with us for years. If you have reservations, couldn’t you discuss them with me privately? Why humiliate her?”

“Defending her already, even before marriage? Where was this concern for Hannah?” Allison retorted, lifting the beaded bracelet.

“Remember this?”

Declan’s brow furrowed as he searched his memory, then shook his head.

Allison exhaled sharply in vexation.

“You remember every detail about Eliana, but forget what concerns your own wife. Hannah gave me this bracelet the year you married. For a decade, I’ve had trouble sleeping. Despite countless medical consultations, nothing helped until Hannah found this blessed bracelet for me. And let’s not forget, last month she burned herself with fireworks while prepping your sister’s birthday party. That scar on her waist? Does that ring any bells?”

Declan clenched his jaw, his eyes clouding over.

“Whatever she’s lost, I’ll make it up to her, twofold...”

“Can you actually make it up to them?” Allison exhaled deeply, staring at her normally level-headed grandson who never ceased to perplex her on this issue.

“Do you honestly not understand why Hannah agreed to become a part of our family? It’s one thing to deceive others, but can you truly deceive yourself?”

Declan’s fists tightened involuntarily, his eyes growing darker.

“You secured the venue, sent out engagement invitations, and had an engagement party planned. Then your intended bride took off! If Hannah hadn’t stepped in to salvage the situation, we’d be the town’s biggest joke!” Allison scoffed.

“And you wonder why I don’t welcome Eliana with open arms? She bailed and created this fiasco for us, and now she expects a warm welcome as if nothing happened? Absurd She glanced at Declan.

“You need to do some serious soul-searching.”

Motionless, Declan remained in Allison’s study, strands of his hair casting shadows over his contemplative face.

That night, Hannah slept soundly, blissfully unaware of Allison and Declan’s discussion. After finally breaking free from Declan, she had enjoyed a rare restful night. Lydia was the one who woke her up the next morning.

She eased her mildly fatigued eyes and savored a bite of toast coated in blueberry jam, all while using one hand to send messages.

“Mr. Edwards, are you free this morning? If so, meet me at the courthouse at 10 a.m.”

Declan's reply arrived unexpectedly quick, startling Hannah. She knew this was usually his meeting time at Edwards Group, and he was typically unreachable.

"No. I have commitments."

"What about 3 p.m.? Or even 4? Just not past 6, as they close then."