

The Unshackled Queen: Never Say Never Novel

Chapter 301

Hannah erupted into laughter, peering at Eliana with a grin.

“So, in his eyes, you’re only worth a mere 100 thousand!”

Eliana’s eyes filled with tears. She opened her mouth to object, but Hannah lifted a hand to silence her.

“I’m not one to put a price tag on women.”

Hannah gave her an icy look.

“However, Miss Patel, this time I didn’t have to. You seem to relish it. To each her own, I suppose.”

Swinging her purse over her shoulder, she beamed at Declan and Eliana.

“Expect a summons. I won’t be settling.”

As she walked away, Hannah heard Eliana’s muffled sobs and Declan’s restless voice echoing through the police station.

“Miss Moore.”

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Outside the station, Clive intercepted Hannah, offering her a black card.

“Franklyn instructed me to hand this to you personally.”

Hannah looked at the card, shaking her head.

“No need. I won’t be returning anytime soon, so I won’t be needing that.”

“Franklyn insists you take it, Miss Moore! Otherwise, what am I to say to him?”

In a voice barely above a whisper, Clive added, “Also, the Moore family in Aldgate is searching for you. They seem to...”

Hannah's expression tightened, cutting him off.

"Tell Franklyn to keep that under wraps for now. I don't want them knowing about my time in Valmere."

"Don't worry, Miss Moore. Franklyn already told me to be cautious."

"Thank you."

Inside Brayden's car, Hannah idly flipped the black card between her fingers, lost in thought.

Reflecting on Clive's words, her mind was a maze of confusion.

"Brayden, can you take me to the Haywood Racing Car Agency?"

Brayden sensed her unease. At her request, he simply nodded.

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"Of course, we'll head there now."

The Haywood Racing Car Agency had been the first in Valmere to capitalize on the lucrative car-racing market.

Known for exceptional modifications, they no longer served the public and had become an exclusive workshop.

As Brayden drove, he ventured, "Haywood Racing isn't open to the public anymore. What kind of modification are you looking for? Maybe I can assist."

"I'm not there for a car modification. I'm meeting an old friend,"

Hannah said, cutting off further inquiry.

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Brayden sensed her reluctance to elaborate and simply nodded, saying no more.

Located in the city's luxurious villa district, the Haywood estate sprawled over a vast area.

The ride there was solitary. They encountered no other vehicles.

Finally, as they pulled up to the manor's front gate, Hannah turned to Brayden.

“I’ll manage on my own from here. You don’t need to take me back. Thank you.”

Originally, Brayden had intended to suggest waiting outside to give Hannah a lift home. Just then, his phone buzzed.

Answering it, he scowled and turned to Hannah.

“I’m sorry, Miss Moore, but you’ll have to find your own way back. Something’s come up that I need to handle.”

“No worries,” Hannah replied, flashing him a smile before ringing the doorbell.

As Brayden ignited the car’s engine and prepared to drive off, his eyes involuntarily drifted towards the villa’s gate.

Suddenly, an old woman greeted Hannah and ushered her inside the estate.

Could Hannah be connected to Haywood Racing Car Agency?

The question darted across Brayden’s mind as he floored the accelerator and zoomed off toward Bryson’s office.

Once inside the villa, Hannah hesitantly inquired of the old woman, “Janet, how’s Rocco doing?”

Janet shook her head somberly.

“Not well. He was recently diagnosed with bipolar disorder. Mrs. Haywood passed away two years back, and Mr. Haywood is overseas. As for you, Miss Moore you haven’t visited in years. I worry what that’s doing to him.

“I know, it’s my fault,” Hannah admitted, her face tinged with sadness.

“Since my marriage, I’ve been confined to the Edwards family estate and haven’t been able to participate in racing. It’s my fault I haven’t visited. May I see him?”

C 303

Janet nodded emphatically.

“Of course, Miss Moore. Let’s go upstairs right away.”

From the second floor, strains of sorrowful violin music filled the air.

Reaching the upstairs room, Janet knocked gently and greeted, "Rocco."

Abruptly, the violin ceased, and the sound of something breaking emanated from within. Janet looked flustered.

"It seems Rocco prefers not to be disturbed, so, Miss Moore..."

Ignoring the warning, Hannah clenched the doorknob and pushed her way into the room.

"Oh my God! Miss Moore!"

Rocco's icy eyes met Hannah's, showing a flicker of emotion, yet his tone remained frosty.

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"Did you come to check if I'm still breathing?"

Janet opened her mouth and tried to speak up for Hannah.

"Rocco—"

Crash!

Rocco had smashed the cup and books to the floor.

"She doesn't have to bother with me anymore!" he exploded.

"Send her away! I don't want to see her!"

"Miss Moore," Janet said frantically.

"It would be best if you head home for today. Rocco is a little unstable, you should return another day..."

"You can go ahead and get back to what you're doing," Hannah replied kindly.

"I'd like to have a word with Rocco in private."

"But..." Janet began to protest, but eventually relented when she saw the determined set to Hannah's eyes. She quietly walked out of the room and closed the door behind her.

Hannah swept a glance over the mess scattered all over the floor and sighed. She crouched and began to pick up the pieces of shattered glass.

"I know that I'm the last person you want to see right now," she said as she set the books back on the desk.

"Believe me, I'm not trying to upset you on purpose."

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She took out the black card she had acquired and handed it to Rocco.

"I shall leave this with you. If you run out of funds, just ask Janet to give me a call. My line is open for you any time of the day."

Rocco did not reply, nor did he make a move to accept the card.

Hannah turned back toward the desk and placed it beside the stack of books.

"That's all I came here for. I'm leaving now."

Hannah had already stepped toward the door when she heard Rocco's sulking voice.

"I don't want your money! Who the hell do you think you are?! You can't just come and go as you like! Since you've been away for years, you should just never show up again. You just keep building up my hopes, even though they never go anywhere. What on earth do you want from me?! Tell me!"

Hannah stopped in her tracks and turned to look at the boy slumped in the wheelchair. Scenes of the incident a few years back flashed in her mind.

Rocco was still in primary school at the time, and Beuford Haywood, his father, was making a fortune with the Haywood Racing Car Agency, coupled with Hannah's impeccable racing skills.

But then Beuford got into gambling, and ultimately fell into a financial trap. He lost all of his family's assets within a matter of days, and even had to pawn his own company.

With the loan sharks in hot pursuit, the man somehow thought that the best solution-his only escape-was to murder his wife and child, then commit suicide.

Beuford had gone so far as to render mother and child faint, but as he was about to hang himself, a crippling fear washed over him. He realized then that he didn't want to die, after all. Twenty minutes after he had first enacted his plan, he called the emergency hotline.

While his attempt at murder claimed no lives, it unfortunately caused permanent damages to mother and child. Beuford's wife suffered a lifelong paralysis, while Rocco had to spend the rest of his life in a wheelchair.

Beuford was apprehended by the police, though there really wasn't much justice to be served at that point.

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Once Hannah caught wind of the situation, she bought Haywood Racing Car Agency at a high price and arranged for medical experts to take care of Rocco's rehabilitation.

When Beuford was released from prison, however, he took all the money his family had left, then fled abroad. He had never set foot back home since.

"I know that it's useless to apologize now." Hannah's clear voice cut into the room.

"I honestly thought I've taken care of every loose end back then. I never imagined that things would turn out this way.

I didn't have the guts to come and see you after I left the Edwards family. I was worried that those people would find out about you and try to use you against me."

Hannah mustered a smile, though there was an unmistakable sadness in her eyes.

"I'll leave a phone number with Janet. If you encounter any problems in the future, just give it a call. Anytime, anywhere.

Someone will come and help you."

"I'm not afraid of anything!" The pale boy in the wheelchair glowered like an agitated cub.

"I'm not afraid of those people! Let them come at me if they want to!"

C 305

Realizing that Rocco was on the brink of having a manic episode, Hannah rushed over and crouched in front of him.

"Listen to me, Rocco," she pleaded, taking his hands and squeezing them between hers.

"I can't let anything bad happen to you. Mr. Campbell is already finalizing the results of the research he has been working on these past few years. There is still hope for your legs to get better."

Rocco was quiet for a moment.

When he finally spoke, he stared into Hannah's eyes and asked, "You're not lying to me, are you?"

"I was going to ask the scientists at Mr. Campbell's Institute to tell you themselves, but..." Hannah paused and inhaled sharply.

"Look, Rocco. I already told Janet that you should move to the Intercontinental Villa District, at least for a short period. They have excellent security there. It would also help with your recovery."

A look of stubbornness passed over the boy's eyes.

"No, I'm not going!"

Another moment of silence fell in the room, this time laden with tension.

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Rocco spoke first.

"Those people you mentioned earlier, the one who might want to use me... Were you talking about the Moore family? You were, weren't you? Why else would you have come here yourself?"

Hannah stood up, her hands balled into fists.

"They are not the type to skimp on their resources. If they really decide to come to Valmere, I won't be able to hide from them for long."

"Then, I'll go."

Hannah jolted slightly.

"What did you say?"

Rocco shifted the violin in his arms.

"I've decided to trust you again. I'll go and stay at that district you spoke of. But that doesn't mean that I forgive you!" The boy looked away, his brows furrowed in a sullen frown.

"I still don't want to see you. Not if I can help it, anyway!"

Hannah just smiled.

“Don’t worry, I won’t bother you again, unless you ask for me. I’ll go and tell Janet to pack up. Someone will come and take you there tonight.”

“Wait!”

Rocco maneuvered his wheelchair to the desk and rummaged inside one of the drawers. After a while, he fished something out and pushed himself toward Hannah.