

The Unshackled Queen: Never Say Never Online Free –

Chapter: 16

“We’ll discuss it later. I’ve got a lot on my plate right now.”

After that, silence. Declan never responded again.

Hannah frowned at her phone, puzzled. Hadn’t Declan been desperate to marry Eliana? Why did it feel like she was the one pushing him now?

Lydia poured a glass of milk for Hannah, then furrowed her brow in thought.

“Oh, I almost forgot, a few days ago, Mr. Campbell asked if you’d be interested in resuming your old job. And if you are not inclined to, he hoped you could mentor at Starrywinter University. He even offered to be your assistant.”

Taking a sip of milk, Hannah shook her head as she wiped her Lips.

“Having a senior citizen as my assistant? That’s just not going to work.”

“So, should I tell him that?”

Pausing to wipe her mouth again, Hannah pondered, “Tell him I’m not inclined to reclaim my old position for the time being. It’s been ages since I’ve used a scalpel. My hands might be a bit shaky. Being a mentor sounds plausible. But can I sit in on other people’s classes? I’ve been out of the loop for so long. Who knows how many research papers Mr. Campbell and the others have published by now?”

Lydia rolled her eyes playfully.

“Seriously, even if you took a break for decades, you’d still outperform most.”

When Hannah walked into the hospital, Saul Campbell had just finished a surgical procedure. At the sound of a knock, he hastily swallowed a mouthful of tea and blurted out, “He’s not available. Try again tomorrow.”

Feeling awkward, Hannah replied, “Alright, Mr. Campbell, I’ll leave these items at your doorstep. Please remember to grab them later.”

Just as Hannah was about to leave, the door swung open. Saul gazed at her, astonished.

“Hannah? What brings you here? Please, come in!”

Eagerly ushering her inside, he continued, "I had a critical situation in surgery today and wasn't sure who to talk it over with.

Lucky you're here. I've got a ton of questions!"

Once she entered, Saul immediately handed her a stack of papers and reports, essentially pinning her to an academic chair. While fixing tea beside her, he said, "It's a rare visit. I need to pick your brain as much as I can today. Who knows when I'll get another chance?"

Hannah set down the papers and reassured him.

"No need to worry, I'm divorced now."

Observing Saul's stunned expression, she elaborated, "I'm here to discuss the mentor position you mentioned to Lydia previously."

Hannah seemed composed, but a rush of conflicting emotions surged through Saul.

Years ago, as an intern, Hannah had displayed a remarkable aptitude in her first surgery. She had then, however, sacrificed a promising medical career for a man. This decision remained a persistent ache in Saul's heart.

Upon learning of her divorce, his initial concern was for her emotional well-being. He had feared she might make another drastic sacrifice. Relieved to see her stable, he exhaled softly.

C 17

"If you're open to it, I can help with the paperwork tomorrow.

You'll be officially on board in a few days," he offered.

Then, hesitating a bit, he added, "Your credentials would easily qualify you to be a doctoral advisor. It seems a waste to just be a guidance teacher."

Hannah's eyes sparkled for a moment.

Saul's meaning was clear to her, but she chose to respond by shaking her head, a faint smile gracing her lips.

"Thank you for the high praise, Mr. Campbell, but I haven't operated in four years. I can't say I'm as adept as I once was. Becoming a doctoral supervisor wouldn't be fair to anyone."

"Unbelievable!" Saul interjected, almost desperate to convince her.

"With your extensive background and field experience, you'd be..."

Hannah cut him off.

"I appreciate your kind words, Mr. Campbell, but I'd prefer to ease back into things. It's also an opportunity for me to learn."

Realizing she was resolute, Saul sighed. An idea then flashed across his mind.

"Speaking of which, a friend told me someone privately offered a substantial sum just to consult with you."

Hannah's brows furrowed.

"He's quite influential, apparently seeking help for a family member."

Hannah's fingers idly fiddled with the hem of her dress.

"Mr. Campbell, I'd rather you didn't..."

"I understand," Saul cut in swiftly.

"Given how much you've aided my medical expertise, I won't disclose your identity unless you give the green Light."

Warmth filled Hannah's heart. Despite her distant relationship with Saul compared to her closeness with Lydia, his enduring sincerity after four years of no contact felt like a blessing.

After some discussion with Saul, she respectfully turned down his offer for dinner and left the hospital.

Eager to participate in the East Coast Racing event, Hannah headed home early to gear up and recharge her energy.

Returning to racing after a four-year hiatus, a mix of jitters and excitement buzzed within her.

The next morning, Lydia drove her to the east coast. Competing under her old alias "Tequila", a name that once topped the rankings, Hannah adhered to the rules of anonymity. Besides the event staff, no one knew the real identities of the racers.

With two hours to go before her race, Hannah blended into the crowd as a spectator, leaning against a railing and talking with Lydia.

C 18

"Rumor has it Moonshadow's racing today. Can't wait to see him in action. Wish I could snag his number after the race. He seems Like my kind of guy!"

The voice belonged to Sadie, and it made Hannah frown unconsciously.

“Why not ask your brother? Despite his shares not being in the same league as the Mitchell family’s, obtaining a racing driver’s contact information is rather simple,” Eliana suggested, smiling warmly at Declan.

“Declan, any racer you’re rooting for?”

Declan appeared indifferent.

“Doesn’t matter to me. Though I heard a once top-ranked player is making a comeback today.”

“That’s just a publicity stunt...” one of Declan’s friends began, only to stop abruptly, eyes widening.

“Declan, isn’t that your...”

“What’s she doing here?”

The moment the words left his lips, he glanced at Declan’s face and felt a twinge of regret.

Hannah looked different. Her hair was up in a high ponytail, and her glasses were swapped for subtle makeup. She wore a simple white tee and low-rise jeans that exposed her slim, smooth waist.

She tipped her head back, gripping the beer bottle with her teeth, exuding the effortless cool of a ‘90s icon.

Eliana’s eyes darted toward Declan and caught a glimmer of surprise and admiration in his gaze. She clenched her Lips and etched a deep scratch into her palm with her fingernail.

Quick to mask his emotions, Declan directed a scowl at Hannah.

“You shouldn’t be here.”

Lydia chuckled at his words and tossed her eyes dismissively.

“If both the home wrecker and the jerk are allowed, it’s clear the standards here aren’t lofty. Why shouldn’t regular folks come in for some fun?”

Eliana’s face shifted subtly before she replied calmly, “You’ve got it wrong, Miss Phillips. Declan’s running the East Coast Racing event.

My curiosity about the sport brought me here. I just didn’t anticipate Miss Moore tagging along so closely...”

She turned to Hannah, feigning compassion.

“Love can’t be forced.

Since you and Declan are divorced, you might consider forgoing these desperate attempts to recapture his interest.”

Her words were slick, well-crafted to portray her as if she were Declan’s committed partner, implicitly painting Hannah as shamelessly persistent.

The crowd, mostly celebrities who had followed the story between Declan, Hannah, and Eliana, was well aware of Declan’s historical fondness for Eliana and his reluctance to acknowledge Hannah.

C 19

Now divorced, it appeared Hannah still couldn’t resist stalking him.

“Fuck off! Do you honestly think that jerk is royalty?” Lydia silenced Eliana before the latter could utter another insult.

Turning around, Hannah said to Declan and Eliana with a touch of apathy, “Miss Patel, perhaps you should spend more time in front of a mirror. Don’t get ahead of yourself. Feel free to chase me away once and only when this shareholder revokes my right to attend the event.”

Declan’s expression shifted abruptly. For the entirety of their four-year marriage, Hannah had been submissive, never daring to oppose him. However, ever since he broached the subject of divorce, she seemed to have transformed into a different person altogether.

She had become sharp-witted and dignified.

“Why the tone? You think seeing Miss Phillips makes you great?” Sadie, unable to contain her fury, snapped.

“How dare you disrespect the Edwards family like this? I’ll have you escorted out this instant!”

A N G E L A ’ s L I B R A R Y

She turned around and signaled to the nearby security guards.

“Remove this instigator right away...”

Her words were cut short as the crowd parted like the Red Sea, making way for an imposing figure. The only sound was the rhythmic thump of leather boots on the floor. Everyone held their breath, fixated on the man who was approaching.

This was Bryson, Valmere’s most esteemed resident and the true power behind the East Coast’s business operations.

Declan straightened up as he acknowledged Bryson, who had slowed his pace.

“Mr. Mitchell, it’s been a while since our meeting at Westridge Villa. You seem just as...”

Bryson, tall and upright, brushed past Declan without a word.

Then Bryson paused. He tilted his head slightly, locking eyes with Hannah, who was leaning against the railing, peering down.

Instinctively, Hannah straightened up. Before she could avert her eyes, Bryson chuckled.

“It’s been ages, Miss Moore.”

His eyes were penetrating, and his smile was magnetic. It was enough to captivate any girl with a single look.

Hannah was mildly astonished that Bryson even remembered her.

“It’s been a while, Mr. Mitchell.”

Grinning, Bryson glanced back at his assistant.

“Put all of Miss Moore and her friends’ expenses on my tab today.”

Caught off guard, Hannah protested “That’s not necessary, Mr. Mitchell. You really don’t have to…”

She was on the verge of pointing out that they weren’t close enough to warrant such a gesture.

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C 20

Interrupting her, Bryson queried, "Miss Moore, did you make a bet?"

Moonshadow or Tequila? What's your pick, Miss Moore?"

As the sea breeze from the East Coast brushed her forehead, a glint of curiosity flickered in her captivating eyes.

She grinned.

"I didn't bet much. I prefer to back the strong horse."

It's safer that way."

Arching an eyebrow, Bryson questioned, "So you bet on Tequila?"

Hannah didn't deny it.

Bryson subtly shifted his stance and commanded, "Bet five times the sum of Miss Moore's stake on Tequila again. Ensure Miss Moore enjoys herself."

Hannah scrutinized Bryson with blatant intensity.

However, Bryson appeared indifferent. He offered a slight nod, turned around, and walked away.

Once Sadie was certain Bryson was out of earshot, she queried Hannah, "When did you hook up with him? Why is he treating you so distinctly?"

Hannah shot Sadie a frosty look and said, "When? It was all because of you idiot!"

She then turned around and departed with Lydia, not sparing them another glance.

Today, the East Coast Racing event had drawn a sizable crowd. The audience was primarily there to witness the return of Tequila, once the top-ranked racer, and the rise of a new force, Moonshadow.

Additionally, rumors swirled that Bryson, the Mitchell family patriarch, would be present.

Within moments, the venue, capable of holding ten thousand spectators, was packed to capacity.

Declan couldn't shake the recent encounter between Bryson and Hannah from his thoughts. His fingers subconsciously grazed his palm.

Recalling the interaction, his eyes grew shadowy.

"Declan, are you alright? You seem off," Eliana inquired, gripping Declan's arm.

"It's nothing. The race has started."

Clearly, Declan wasn't keen on elaborating. His gaze shifted to the center of the venue.

Eliana, however, clenched her clothing's hem. She couldn't overlook the jealousy igniting in Declan's eyes when he witnessed the exchange between Bryson and Hannah.

Nonetheless, Hannah, a divorced woman, couldn't possibly compete with her.