

The Unshackled Queen: Never Say Never

Online Free - Chapter: 531

Only a hundred units were in existence, each with a jaw-dropping price tag of 6 million!

“Here’s the 100th AI gaming humanoid,” the sales assistant said, donning gloves to lift a slim chip from the table.

“Just plug this into a computer, and you’re good to go. It even links up with your phone. Just a quick scan, and it’ll settle into your phone, keeping its owner company.”

Hannah nodded her approval. While she had no special interest in gaming, she wouldn’t be stingy when it came to Edwin.

“By card.”

“I’ll take that gaming humanoid!”

As she was finalizing her purchase, Hannah’s brows furrowed. She turned to see a face she recognized.

Valery, parading around with an older man on her arm, shot Hannah a smug glance.

“Well, well, look who’s here!”

Hannah shot back, her voice dripping with irony, “Switched out your partner, have you?”

Just as predicted, Valery’s face soured. In her high heels, she marched up to the sales assistant and flashed a black credit card.

Angela’s Library

“I want the last gaming android, and I’ll give you 7 million for it”

“This isn’t an auction house. Who do you think you are, making bids?”

Hannah's eyebrows twitched in annoyance.

Recently attached to a prosperous businessman, Valery sneered at Hannah, "Money talks. Can you top my offer? That gaming humanoid is as good as mine. No one can take it away from me!"

Layne Cartwright, on his rounds to check the staff, noticed the commotion. With a frown, he beckoned a staff member over.

"What's going on there?"

"A customer is causing a scene. The final gaming humanoid was already reserved by that woman, but this other customer wants to pay an extra million to snatch it."

Layne glanced at Hannah, who was garbed in a black dress, radiating charm. He signaled for the staff to back off and approached the arguing pair.

Choosing to ignore Valery, Hannah turned to the sales assistant.

"I apologize for the unpleasantness. Let's wrap this up. I'll pay now."

Valery's voice scaled up in agitation.

"Are you deaf? I said I want it! Listen to me, sales assistant. If you don't sell it to me, your job's on the line the second I leave this store!"

The sales assistant's face paled, clearly torn and on the brink of tears.

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Just as Hannah was about to back down, another voice cut through the tension.

"I find this gaming humanoid rather intriguing myself. You both seem eager to have it. What's so special about it, according to you?"

Valery scoffed dismissively, “It’s a mere toy for the rich. But I can easily drop 7 million on it! And even if I decide to smash it or throw it away, you’re not getting your hands on it!” Valery shot Hannah a venomous Look.

Hannah teased, “You’re pulling out all the stops, competing with me for something you have no interest in, huh?”

She cast her eyes toward the chip on the table.

“To be frank, I’m no expert on this stuff. It’s a graduation gift for my cousin. He’s a big fan of WiseTech. He’s mentioned wanting to create his own games.

I’m just trying to back his dreams.”

Valery scoffed, “Enough with the act. It’s public knowledge that the White family doesn’t exactly roll out the red carpet for you. Do you actually believe sucking up to their young heir will elevate you?”

With a stern expression, she ordered the sales assistant, “Wrap that up for me, now. And enough chatter!”

As the sales assistant reached for the chip, Layne intervened, “I’m afraid WiseTech doesn’t sell to those who don’t appreciate the technology.”

Valery shot Layne a piercing look.

“And who are you to speak on behalf of WiseTech? Oh! Are you and Hannah staging this whole scene just to mess with me?”

A N G E L A ‘ s L I B R A R Y

Valery rolled her eyes dismissively.

“Impoverished nobodies playing wealthy. If you can’t afford it, just scam!”

Just then, the older man standing next to Valery shoved her aside.

“You must be Mr. Layne Cartwright, the son of WiseTech’s owner!”

The old man extended a business card.

“My apologies for not recognizing you earlier. I look forward to future partnerships!”

Layne ignored the card and told the sales assistant, “Kindly pack this for the young lady.”

“Understood.” The sales assistant promptly set to work.

Layne smiled at Hannah and said, “Seems like this final game character was meant for you. Consider it a gift from our company.”

Handing over something valued at 6 million was truly befitting a young tycoon.

Hannah’s eyes sparkled, sensing an opportunity for collaboration. She presented her own business card.

“I’m with the White Group. If circumstances allow, I’d love to partner up, Mr. Cartwright.”

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This time, Layne accepted the card, his eyebrows lifting slightly as he read Hannah’s name.

“Miss Moore?”

He regarded Hannah and remarked, “As far as I’m aware, the White Group hasn’t ventured into electronics just yet.”

Hannah agreed, “That’s true. The White family is currently not involved in the electronics industry. However. With a grin, Hannah added, “That doesn’t rule out a future entry into that industry. I’m hopeful that we

could collaborate someday, Mr. Cartwright.” Her smile punctuated the statement.

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Layne admired Hannah’s forward-thinking nature. Accepting her business card, he replied, “I eagerly await the day we can work together, Miss Moore.”

Valery interrupted, clearly annoyed, “Are you out of your mind, disregarding the chance of making a profit? Why not sell to me?”

The man beside her, whom she called honey, pointed a finger at her and yelled, “Shut up!! Do you even know who you’re talking to? Don’t embarrass yourself. Let’s go!”

Hannah settled the tab and departed, leaving the commotion behind her.

She checked her phone; her shopping had consumed too much time. She needed to head to the salon immediately.

She had already scheduled an appointment with a beauty salon she knew well before heading out to purchase the gift.

She drove there and, to her relief, arrived just in time.

When makeup artist Margaret saw Hannah, her eyes widened in surprise.

“You’re growing more gorgeous by the day. I almost didn’t recognize you.”

Margaret ushered her to a chair.

“The last time I saw you was on the day of your high school graduation. Why have you been away for all these years?”

“I only returned because there’s something urgent I need to attend to,”

Hannah replied with a smile.

“I have to get back to Valmere soon.”

Margaret sighed, a touch of regret in her voice, “I thought you’d be a star by now. I haven’t seen you since your graduation. It’s nice that you still remember me.”

Hannah chuckled, “How could I forget? Your expertise saved me from embarrassment at the graduation party.”

As they chatted, Margaret deftly applied makeup to Hannah. Taking in Hannah’s glossy, black hair, she suggested, “You’d look stunning in the latest hairstyle, coupled with a white silk cheongsam. Why don’t you go get changed, and I’ll work on your hair after that.” Margaret instructed her assistant, “Fetch the newest white cheongsam of the season and help her get changed into it.”

“Of course. Follow me, Miss Moore.”

Once Hannah had slipped into the new cheongsam, she descended from the second floor. Margaret was taken aback.

“Darling, you wear that dress better than anyone else ever could! You should seriously consider modeling for me.”

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Margaret surveyed Hannah with unmistakable admiration. After helping her with her hair, Margaret said, “You’re both charming and sophisticated. This look suits you perfectly.”

Gazing at her reflection, Hannah realized her usual style was more extravagant. Adopting a more subdued look for Edwin’s graduation ceremony actually suited her well.

“Margaret, you always know what’s best for me.”

Margaret grabbed a hairpin from the table and secured Hannah's hairstyle.

"It's not so much that I know you. It's that you effortlessly pull off these looks. If you stick around, I'd love to take more photos of you. It would be great promotion for me."

"I'd be happy to help out when I can."

Realizing it was time to depart, Hannah, now fully styled, made her way to Hoijery's business school.

Luxury cars like Maybachs and Bentleys lined the school's entrance.

Stepping out of her own car, Hannah dialed Edwin's number.

"I'm here. Where should I meet you?"

From the other end of the line, sounds of chatter and commotion filled the air. Edwin seemed to be some distance from the entrance.

"I'm in the main hall. Just wait by the gate. I'll come get you."

"Alright."

After ending the call, Hannah stood by the entrance for a short period.

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Edwin, clad in a black tuxedo with his hair impeccably styled, clearly took his appearance seriously for the day. Students frequently turned to steal glances at him as he walked.

Spotting Hannah from afar, her presence unmistakable, he quickened his pace.

As he reached her, Edwin couldn't hide his surprise.

"You..."

Reading his expression, Hannah looked down at her own dress and inquired, “Is something the matter? Have I embarrassed you?”

Edwin shook his head, awed.

“You’ve changed, haven’t you?”

With raised eyebrows, Hannah responded, “Well, I had to stand out somehow for your graduation ceremony, right?”

“Let’s head in. Hold on a second...”

As Edwin prepared to lead Hannah into the hall, he noticed the sticky notes in her hands.

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“What’s all this?”

“Ah, right.” Hannah glanced at the notes, recalling the earlier encounter.

“Some guys wanted to connect with me on WhatsApp. I told them it wasn’t a good time, so they gave me their numbers instead.”

“You’re kidding!”

Snatching the notes from her, Edwin muttered, “Don’t trust them.

They’re just kids, and you’ve got a boyfriend, remember?”

“I wasn’t planning on talking to them. They just shoved the notes into my hands. What was I supposed to do, throw them away on the spot?” Hannah explained.

“So they’re kids, but you’re not?” she teased.

Stung by her sarcasm, Edwin retorted, “Just stay away from those guys at my school, okay?”

ANGELA’S LIBRARY

Hannah lifted her arm to pat Edwin’s shoulder, even though she couldn’t quite reach his head.

“Don’t overthink it.”

The pair stepped into the school’s grand hall, bathed in brilliant light and adorned with opulent decor.

Graduating students flocked together, their attire flashy and expensive, conversing over wine glasses.

The setting resembled less a graduation party and more a business gathering, with older attendees discussing deals over toasts.

The food tables on both sides were laden with exquisite dishes, showcasing the school's effort in organizing the event.

Edwin guided Hannah towards the front, advising, "Those people up ahead are my classmates. Just smile and keep the talking to a minimum."

"What, are you embarrassed by me or something?"

Edwin sneered, "Given how outspoken you are, you'll probably just make people uncomfortable."

As they strolled arm in arm, a young woman in a blue evening gown suddenly latched onto Edwin's other arm.

"We've been waiting for you, Edwin"

Gently extracting his arm, Edwin said, "Sorry for the delay. I went to fetch my cousin."

The woman glanced at Hannah and grinned.

"Ah, so you're his cousin?"

"You're quite stunning."

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Not wanting them to engage in further conversation, Edwin cut in, "I'll find a seat for my cousin first."

Once they had moved away, Hannah nudged Edwin with her elbow.

"Are you keeping something from me?"

A shiver ran down Edwin's spine as he swiftly turned to Hannah.

"Why would I?"

A N G E L A ' S L I B R A R Y

Hannah scrutinized Edwin, her gaze piercing.

“So you’re sure you’re not hiding anything?”

Feeling a pang of guilt, Edwin faltered, “I swear, there’s nothing I’m hiding. What could there be?”

“And who was that girl just a minute ago?”

“Ah, that girl...”

Casting a quick glance over his shoulder and realizing the girl had vanished, Edwin explained to Hannah, “That’s Miss Garza of the Garza family. She’s not someone I can risk offending.”

“The Garza family, you say?”

Aware that Hannah was out of the loop regarding Hoijery’s power dynamics, Edwin ushered her to a seat to fill her in.

“Her father’s Hoffman Garza, a titan in Hoijery’s seafood industry.

Crossing paths with his daughter would be a bad move. She’s got a reputation. Breaking up with her would be like ripping off a band-aid from a wound.”

Hannah burst into Laughter.

“That sounds perfect, actually. If you ended up with her, you’d be too scared to cheat.”

Struck dumb, Edwin replied, “You’re not making this any easier. I’m not looking to date right now, especially after that previous incident. So, where’s my present?”

Edwin extended his hand towards Hannah.

“Why don’t you show me my gift?”

Hannah playfully swatted his hand away.

“The gift comes after graduation, silly. What’s the rush?”

Eyeing Hannah with suspicion, Edwin pressed, “I’m starting to think you didn’t even get me a gift!”

“If you want to think that, fine. No gift after graduation, either!”

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Edwin wasted no time in admitting his fault, stating, “Okay, okay, my bad. Please don’t take the gift back...”

As they chatted, an announcement boomed from the front-stage loudspeaker.

“Would Edwin White of Class 3 please make his way backstage. Thank you.”

Only then did it click for Edwin. He stood up and told Hannah, “I have to deliver the graduation speech. We’ll continue this when I return.”

“Alright.”

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Once Edwin had gone, Hannah felt a tinge of boredom and decided to check her phone. She noticed a message from Bryson that had been sent about 10 minutes earlier.

[We’ve secured our flights for tomorrow evening. Expected to land by 7 PM.]

Without delay, Hannah sent a reply.

[Great, let’s plan on dinner once you arrive.]

“What a coincidence, you’re here too.”

After hitting send, Hannah looked up to see Omar standing before her.

She narrowed her eyes at him.

“Why does it feel as if you’re a constant ghostly presence, showing up wherever I happen to be?”

Omar burst into laughter and said, “I swear I’m not following you.

I’m here for my cousin Tasha’s graduation.”

From the side, Tasha warmly greeted Hannah.

“Hi, Hannah!”

Omar casually took a seat beside Hannah and signaled to Tasha.

“Go ahead, mingle. I’ll be here if you need me.”

“Got it!”

As he watched Tasha move away, Omar turned to Hannah.

“I’m working on a joint venture and thought you might be interested.”

Hannah glanced at Omar skeptically.

“Are you actually invested in your family’s company? I was under the impression you dabbled in shadier endeavors. Also, considering your fiancée and I don’t exactly get along, if our families were to collaborate and she got involved, it could get messy. So, let’s just skip it.”

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Omar chuckled, “Every business has its risks, but the opportunity I have in mind guarantees profits, zero losses!”

As if anyone would buy that! Internally rolling her eyes, Hannah chose to disregard him, fueled by both skepticism and a lack of interest.

Omar added, “The decision to partner with the White family is ours alone, and it’s none of the Bailey family’s concern. The entertainment sector is booming right now. Teaming up with us would be a gold mine.”

“Why the White family, when they have no stakes in entertainment? The Bailey family, on the other hand, has multiple successful ventures in the field,” Hannah questioned, her smile barely noticeable as she continued, “Choosing between a newcomer and a seasoned player is like weighing a 50% risk against a 10% one. You should know which is wiser.”

Annoyed by the repeated mention of the Bailey family, Omar scowled, “I’ve already told you, this is strictly between our families. The Bailey family have no role here!”

“And what do you think the Bailey family would say? Considering you’re their future son-in-law and you’re sidestepping them for the White family?”

Hannah felt like she was talking to a wall and bluntly told Omar, “I have zero interest in partnering with the Morrison family. The White family aren’t even planning to join the entertainment industry.”

Angela’s Library

“You’re aware the White family is facing a financial crunch, aren’t you? Are you deliberately avoiding an alliance that could save you hundreds of millions?” Omar arched an eyebrow, adding, “I urge you to think this through.”

Why was he so annoying? Hannah was about to retort when another voice chimed in, “The entertainment sector might be promising, but it’s also risky for newcomers to invest heavily.”

Omar turned around, startled by the interruption.

“And who are you to offer this unsolicited advice? My family has been in this industry for years, and your theory is news to me.”

Hannah glanced back, her eyes widening slightly in recognition. Layne Cartwright?

Layne caught her eye and offered a gentle smile.

“The entertainment market may be lucrative, but it’s nearing saturation. New companies could just be paving the way for others. Like the lady said, veterans in the industry can easily overpower newcomers,” Layne said respectfully to Omar.

“Mr. Morrison, maybe you should explore alternative avenues for profit.”

Recognizing Layne, Omar sneered, “Ah, the electronics mogul. Just because you’ve launched some hit products doesn’t mean you can lecture me.”

“I’m merely stating facts,” Layne replied, his smile unchanging.

“You’re free to venture into the entertainment world, but leave her out of it”

“Heh heh.”

Omar shot a forced grin at Layne.

“So, you two are close? Close enough to cut into our conversation?”

Hannah offered a slight smile.

“I find I have more in common with him than with you, Mr. Morrison.”

With that, Hannah rose and moved to sit beside Layne and said, “I’d rather not engage with someone who can’t hold a civil conversation.”

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“Hannah Moore!”

Omar tilted his head.

“You’ve been consistently spurning my good intentions. You really are something!”

Hannah scowled.

“Mr. Morrison, I sincerely believe we’re not a good match for collaboration.”

Hearing this, Omar abruptly turned and walked away without another word.

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“So Miss Moore graces us with her presence at tonight’s graduation celebration.”

Layne’s voice eased Hannah’s tension somewhat. She replied, “Well, it’s my cousin’s big night. I ought to be here.”

Due to prior interactions, they felt more at ease with each other.

Discussing the White family’s enterprises, Layne noted, “For generations, the White family have been invested in real estate and machinery. You’re not confined to just entertainment. You have other options. In light of emerging media trends, you might consider branching out. Diversifying could be good for your company.”

Hearing Layne’s advice, Hannah nodded and said, “That’s been on my mind too, but I’m swamped with current projects. Other matters will have to wait.”

After a brief exchange, the stage lights intensified, and the host took to the stage, officially kicking off the graduation ball.

Following the headmaster’s speech, Edwin ascended the stage.

His youthful energy was palpable.

He spoke of his victory in the computer contest and reflected on his earlier aimless days, before meeting Hannah.

Seated beneath the stage, Hannah's eyes locked onto Edwin's above. A gentle smile graced her lips as she clapped with the crowd.

Then, melodious tunes filled the room, and attendees escorted their dance partners to the dance floor.

Exiting the stage, Edwin headed straight for Hannah.

"Where's my present?"

From her purse, Hannah took out a chip.

"Here's the AI character you've been wanting. I got the last one available."

"Did you actually get it for me?"

Clutching the chip, Edwin declared, "This was crafted by a designer I deeply admire. But mark my words, I'll outdo him someday!"

His bold proclamation drew a laugh from Hannah.

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"Why are you laughing? You think I'm not serious? Trust me, I am!"

Hannah shook her head and said, "The designer you've always admired is sitting right next to me, yet you're acting so bold."

"What?"

Edwin paused, bewildered. He glanced at Layne with a vacant expression before finally realizing he was in the presence of the celebrated designer.

"My hero! You're my hero!"

Eagerly, Edwin approached Layne and offered his hand.

“I’m a huge fan!

Your work has been the inspiration behind many of my own designs!”

Layne offered a subtle smile as he shook Edwin’s hand.

“You have a lot of potential. I’m confident you’ll surpass me someday.”

“Ahem!” Embarrassed by his own earlier words, Edwin hesitated, “I mean, I was just... babbling.”

Layne shook his head in response.

“Having the ambition to excel beyond your predecessors is the first step to actually doing it. I’m here to help whenever you want to learn.”

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Edwin’s eyes widened in disbelief.

“Seriously?”

“Absolutely.” Layne nodded, adding, “Your cousin and I are friends, so consider yourself like a friend to me.”

Just then, Tess Cartwright, Layne’s younger sister, swept into the scene, lifting her dress slightly.

“Layne, it’s time to dance. Enough talking!”

With a smile, Layne stood up and said, “Until next time, Miss Moore.”

“Sure.”

As Layne departed, Edwin turned to Hannah with a look of sudden realization.

“How do you even know Layne Cartwright?”

Hannah then recounted the day's events involving the purchase of the chip.

Staring at Hannah in disbelief, Edwin asked, "So you became friends just like that? He even told me I could come to him for guidance anytime, and referred to me as his friend. Does he have a soft spot for you?"