

## The Princess to Eight Uncles Chapter 40

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#### Chapter 40 Tearing Hannah Apart

Winona's eyes brimmed with tears as she saw little Hannah running toward her. She had visited Crawford Mansion today in hopes of seeing Hannah, but the Crawfords had left on a camping trip. Winona recalled a time back when Lilly had yet to appear in the Crawfords' lives, where she would be hard pressed to find any of the Crawfords together, and now they're going camping together! If they had been this close last time, perhaps Liam and her would not have grown apart. They would have been closer than ever today.

"Mommy!" Hannah's sweet voice interrupted Winona's thoughts.

She smiled at the sight of her daughter and extended her arm toward her. "My sweet darling!" she called out. Hannah excitedly ran into her mother's embrace, having been attached to Winona since she was a baby. Tears began to well in Winona's eyes once more as she hugged her daughter tight. It had been two days since they last saw each other. Did Hannah miss her as much as she missed her daughter? she wondered.

"Have you been eating well these two days, Hannah? Sleeping well?" Winona asked.

Hannah thought for a moment before shaking her tiny head. "Grandpa and Grandma says I can only eat during lunch and dinner time. After that, there's no more food."

"Not even when you're hungry?" Winona asked in disbelief.

Hannah shook her head again. She had learnt that hard way that there would be no food for her if she threw a tantrum, so she always ate her meals on time nowadays.

"How could she do that to you? You're still a growing child!" Winona's heart ached for her daughter. "It's normal not to feel hungry during mealtimes. They shouldn't starve you! Hannah, let's leave this place. We'll go back to Grandma's house." Winona was both hurt and angry. She was only gone for two days, and they were already mistreating Hannah.

However, Hannah turned to look at the Crawford Mansion behind her before looking at her mother again. "Mommy, I don't want to leave. I want to stay here and play," she told Winona.

Winona's face scrunched up in disbelief. She could not understand why Hannah would want to stay with these people who gave her a hard time at home. She sighed and pulled a sad face. "Hannah, you don't want Mommy anymore?" She tried to guilt-trip her daughter.

As expected, Hannah shook her head vehemently. "I do!!"

"Alright, let's go then. Mommy will take you to the playground!" Winona coaxed her daughter.

To her surprise, Hannah pouted and refused to budge. "I don't want to!" Hannah just wanted to stay here and play. Mommy never lets her do what she wants!

"Come on, Hannah, we can come back here again soon, but we have to go now," Winona tried to persuade her daughter again. She was beginning to feel anxious as she caught sight of Liam and the rest of the Crawfords coming over.

"Noooo, I don't want to go!" Hannah cried. "I don't want to go! I want to play here!"

"Winona, are you done causing enough trouble?" Liam's cold eyes stared at the woman who refused to sign the divorce papers or show up at court. As a result, he could only file for a litigious divorce which would require at least three months of waiting.

Since Winona could not hide from her ex-husband, she decided to face him head-on. "What trouble? I can't even see my own child now?" she challenged as she held on to Hannah's hand. "Hannah, if you want to stay here and play, I can stay here with you."

Hannah struggled to free her hand from her mother's grasp. "I don't want to play with Mommy! I want to play with Lilly!!" she wailed.

Winona was stewing in anger as she tried to pull little Hannah toward the lake. Play with Lilly? That kid would only be a bad influence on Hannah! It has only been two days and

now her own daughter refuses to go with her! The Crawfords are no better. They must have talked bad about her in front of Hannah so that Hannah would hate her!

“Hannah, Lilly is a bad kid. She came in between your Mommy and Daddy’s relationship and broke us apart. If it was not for her, you’d be the only princess in the Crawford family, just like your Aunt Jean. Everyone loved her and got her everything she wanted!” Winona lectured her daughter. “And your Grandmother, that child abuser! Forget about her when you grow up. You must remember Mommy’s the only person who loves you and will treat you well...”

Hannah sobbed pitifully, scared and shocked by everything that was happening around her. At this moment, a strong, masculine hand reached out to grab her other hand that was not held by Winona. Liam Crawford was a man of few words and spoke more through his actions as he pulled Hannah toward him.

Hannah felt as if she was about to split into half as her parents fought over her. She let out a heart-wrenching wail.

“Let go of her! Hannah is in pain!” Winona yelled, but she pulled Hannah toward her even more desperately. Liam let go of Hannah’s hand all of a sudden, causing Hannah to lose her balance and fall down on the ground.

Very quickly, Anthony Crawford and his brothers came over and surrounded Winona and Hannah. Hugh Crawford pushed Bettany in a wheelchair. All of them looked at Winona with raised eyebrows. How dare she still turn up at our door after being chased out? they wondered.

“Why are you guys still standing there?” Anthony bellowed. “Bring Hannah over here!”

Liam immediately took a step forward again, but Winona held on to Hannah even tighter. “You’ve already taken everything from me. What else do you want? Do you want to push me and Hannah off the ledge?” she cried out.

Liam’s knuckles cracked from him curling his fists tightly, and the green vein in his arm throbbed as Liam tried to control his temper. His phone rang suddenly and he picked up the call as soon as he saw the caller ID.

“Hello, Mr. Crawford! We are 110...” the caller began.

Liam listened to the call, but his stony eyes were still pinned onto Winona.

“Come over now then,” he clipped before ending the call. Winona, who had overheard the brief conversation, had a bad feeling about this.

“Let go of Hannah right now,” Liam ordered, his voice cold and menacing.

Winona weighed her options. As she looked at the lake from afar, an idea sprang to mind. If they were not going to let Hannah go with her, they gave her no other way out. Winona carried Hannah into her arms in one swift move and stood up tall, ignoring a struggling Hannah in her arms.

“It’s you Crawfords who forced me...” she threatened ominously.

Lilly had been hiding behind Bettany all this time, observing the drama quietly. She held on to her little spatula, her eyes full of suspicion and curiosity. Uncle Liam and Aunt Winona always had some black smoke that shrouded their faces sinisterly, but this time it had spread to their bodies. What was this black smoke?

Pablo stood by Lilly’s side, narrowing his eyes. “Hm... so she wants to die together with her daughter, it seems.” He fished a little notebook from his pocket and flipped through it. “It’s not their time to die yet, but there will be some kind of self-punishment involved...” he noted.

That meant Winona was indeed dragging Hannah to the lake with the intention of suicide, or perhaps she was using it as a method to threaten the Crawfords.

Lilly looked more confused than ever. “What is self-punishment, Master?” she asked Pablo.

Pablo closed the book and held it in his palm. The book immediately disappeared into thin air. “It means she’s going to kill herself,” he explained as a matter-of-factly.

A stunned Lilly looked at Winona once more. “Aunt Winona is bringing Hannah along to kill herself?!” she asked out loud.

Old Mrs. Crawford was about to have a heart attack. "Someone stop her!!" she shrieked.

Winona's face ticked. Her plan had been foiled, and foiled by a kid named Lilly Hatcher, no less! She had no choice but to run for the lake immediately, carrying Hannah along with her. However, the Crawford brothers already knew about her plan, and they were much faster and stronger than she was. They easily caught up with her and seized her.

Winona still held onto Hannah by the neck. "Don't come any closer!" she screamed at them. "Why do you all have to push me into a corner, why?!" she stumbled backward to the roadside, crying her heart out. She felt like the world owed her an apology. All she wanted was to become a dignified Mrs. Crawford. What did she do wrong? The incident six years ago had long passed. Was it truly so unforgivable?

"Beep beep—" the sound of a car honk brought Winona's attention back to reality. She saw a window of opportunity and grabbed it, rushing toward the car while she was carrying Hannah.

Liam's heart stopped as he took in the scene in front of him. There was no way he could get to Winona or Hannah in time. Suddenly, a little spatula came flying out of nowhere.

"Thwack!" It was the reverberating sound of the spatula hitting Winona in the back of the head.

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