

The Unshackled Queen: Never Say Never Novel - Chapter: 296-300

A shadow of disbelief crossed Declan's face.

"Hannah Moore! You've truly outdone yourself this time! Wasn't your penchant for mingling with men enough? Now this gambling mess too?"

"Mind your language!"

With icy eyes, Hannah stared Declan down.

"Remember, we're in a police station. I can slap you with a defamation suit in a heartbeat!

Earlier, weren't you all high and mighty about settling my debts?

What happened now? Has the figure of 10@ million rattled your once sturdy confidence? The grand and esteemed CEO of Edwards Group doesn't have a measly 100 million to spare?"

Hannah smirked, her eyes narrowing playfully.

"If it's too rich for your blood, then quit the charade. But hey, if you think your words are that pricey, be my guest."

Declan's expression grew stormy.

"Hannah Moore, stop playing with words. You're in the hole for 100 million from gambling. Who else but me would bail you out?"

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"Jumping to conclusions, are we? So, you're certain I'm buried in 100 million of gambling debt?" Hannah sneered.

Eliana chimed in provocatively, "Miss Moore, if you hadn't taken any money... surely no one would point fingers unjustly. But relax, Declan's got your back."

Hannah confidently pulled her bank card and ID from her bag.

"Here's my proof of identity and finances. The authorities can check anytime to see if I've been in debt."

With a knowing look, her gaze landed on Eliana.

“I have a hunch someone’s setting me up, and all fingers point to Miss Patel. I’m ready to support my debt-free status. Does Miss Patel have the guts to do the same?”

Eliana’s complexion lost its color, gripping Declan as if he were her lifeline.

“What’s this about? Keep me out of your mess. You’re slinging mud without cause!”

Hannah tilted her head innocently.

“If you’ve stayed away from shady loans, why the fear? It’s a simple check. Isn’t Miss Patel known to be transparent, kind-hearted, and magnanimous?”

“Declan...” Eliana clutched at his attire, her voice frail and filled with distress.

“I haven’t... I don’t want this undeserved blame...”

Declan’s brows knitted in concern, eyes on Hannah.

“Why drag Eliana into this? Keep her out of your tangled web.”

“But if she’s truly innocent, wouldn’t a simple check clear her name?”

Hannah’s voice grew tender, her gaze meeting Declan’s with a glint of vulnerability.

“I don’t want you believing I’m mired in sketchy debts, nor do I wish to falsely accuse Miss Patel. Our best shot is to review the financial activity under our names. It’s all about proving who’s clean and who’s not. What are your thoughts, Declan?”

Declan appeared somewhat uncertain, taken aback by Hannah’s unexpected change in tone.

Observing his hesitation, Eliana hastily grasped his hand.

“Declan...”

She was about to express herself but got swiftly interrupted by Hannah.

“If I’ve made a baseless assumption and spoken wrongly, I’m ready to offer a formal apology to Miss Patel, alright?”

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Declan was swayed by Hannah’s words and directed his gaze at Eliana.

“She’s right. Since you’ve done nothing wrong, there’s nothing to fear. You should be fine with her checking your bank transactions.”

Eliana was thoroughly flustered.

“But I…”

“Miss Patel, are you scared?” Hannah raised an eyebrow.

“Didn’t you claim you’re innocent? This is your chance to liberate yourself, isn’t it?”

Tensions escalated as both sides refused to back down!

Through the entrance, a newcomer arrived, accompanied by several individuals.

At the forefront was Clive Wainwright, trailed by a dozen associates, wearing a smile.

“Pardon the intrusion, officers, but I’m seeking Miss Moore. Is she present?”

“Why are you here?!”

One of the police officers seemed quite familiar with Clive.

“Who’s your bail candidate today? Don’t you see we’re busy right now? Return tomorrow if you’ve got business!”

“Well, Officer Carter, I do apologize, but my business today is exceedingly urgent and can’t wait until tomorrow. I’ve heard that there’s a Miss Moore here giving a statement, and I’ve come to find her. Is she still here?”

ALL eyes instinctively turned toward Hannah.

Clive noticed this as well and maneuvered through the gathering to approach Hannah.

“You must be Miss Moore, right?”

Hannah nodded.

“And you are?”

“Oh, Mr. Vargas sent me,” Clive stated with a smile, proffering his business card to Hannah.

“I hold the position of General Manager at FortuneFrontier Group.”

At the mention of the company, Declan's brow furrowed.

"FortuneFrontier is involved in many gambling-related ventures. Hannah, why would someone like him seek you out?"

Clive, sporting a mocking grin with hands in his pockets, remarked, "Your Edwards family operates lawful enterprises, but the market value falls short in comparison to what Miss Moore raked in overnight at the casino. Continuing along this path, I'm concerned that the prominent Valmere families might distance themselves from the Edwards family."

As Declan's expression stiffened, Clive carried on with a smile.

"The majority of Valmere's entertainment establishments are under our boss's purview. It appears Mr. Edwards is a frequent patron. Would you like me to review the records and report?"

Declan retorted indignantly, "You're infringing upon personal privacy."

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I reserve the right to take legal action!"

Clive raised his hands disarmingly.

"Mr. Edwards is quite impressive.

I'm not here to cause you any inconvenience today; I am here for Miss Moore."

"Have you come because Miss Moore has outstanding debts at the casino?"

Eliana, positioned behind Declan, clutching his sleeve, appeared anxious.

"How much does Miss Moore owe? We're willing to assist."

Clive's gaze briefly swept over Eliana before he handed a document to Hannah.

"Miss Moore, my boss requested me to deliver this to you. As he's currently in Sracido and unable to return, he tasked me with this delivery. He mentioned that if Miss Moore finds herself in any trouble, he will return without delay."

Declan looked at Hannah in astonishment. How could she know the owner of the famous underground casino, and why did they appear so familiar?!

He held a conviction that Hannah had been a regular at the casino, which explained her acquaintance with the owner.

"Hannah, what else have you kept from me? When did you learn gambling skills, and how did you get so close to the owner?! Gambling with such staggering sums. How audacious!"

"Well." Clive regarded Declan with disdain as he conveyed, "Should Miss Moore wish to play in our place, our boss has made it clear: her losses will be on our boss, and her winnings are hers to keep.

After all this, do you still believe that there is a need for Miss Moore to resort to loan sharks? She can play as she pleases, and our boss will cover the losses. Be it 100 million or even a billion, our boss can bear the financial burden."

Clive maintained a smug smile, directing his gaze toward the visibly flustered Eliana standing behind Declan.

"However, certain individuals find themselves in quite a distressing situation, hounded by loan sharks over a ten-million debt."

Hannah opened the folder, and upon reviewing its contents, she passed over all the documentation to the police, asserting, "This folder contains all the evidence required."

The police's countenance swiftly shifted as they examined the information. With a grave demeanor, they presented the documents to Eliana, inquiring, "Miss Patel, could you clarify the circumstances outlined here?"

The contents of the file comprised IOUs bearing Eliana's signature, along with records of a five-million investment in a car race!

Every document was an original, featuring Eliana's distinctive red fingerprints beneath her signature!

Eliana's face lost color as she protested, "It wasn't me!"

"It wasn't you?" Hannah seemed to find it intriguing and remarked, "The evidence is quite clear; your fingerprints are right there. Were you forced?"

Eliana clung to Hannah's mention of force and vigorously nodded.

"Someone did force me!"

She clutched Declan's sleeve, pleading, "Declan, do you believe me?"

"I never intended to borrow from those loan sharks. I couldn't bring myself to tell you. I did not want to burden you with worry! It was my brother... My brother is addicted to gambling. He gambled away all his fortune, and he had no option but to approach me for a loan..."

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I was too afraid to inform you.

As she spoke, Eliana broke into tears, articulating her distress and helplessness with every word.

“He’s my brother! How could I abandon him? I borrowed money from the loan sharks, initially believing I could cover some of it by selling my bag...”

Eliana gazed up at Hannah with teary, reddened eyes.

“But I never anticipated... that they’d contact Miss Moore. I... I was momentarily puzzled, afraid to confess the truth...”

Hannah observed her coldly as she recounted, “Very well, if you claim this money was borrowed for your brother, bring him here, and let’s confront him directly.

After all, considering the fact that your brother pressured you into borrowing, I’m confident the police will treat you fairly.”

Eliana vigorously shook her head, her distress apparent.

“It’s not feasible; my parents are deeply fond of my brother; they won’t allow him to come to the police station! I beg you, Miss Moore. I had no idea they’d approach you. Maybe they weren’t aware of your divorce from Declan... It was an accident! Yet, it’s all linked to me! If you cannot find it in your heart to forgive me, I am prepared to kneel before you!”

Eliana was on the verge of kneeling before Hannah, her legs beginning to bend!

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Declan, standing by her side, extended his support, casting a complex glance at Hannah.

“Eliana’s brother is certainly irresponsible, but she shouldn’t be held responsible for his actions. Please don’t make it difficult for her.”

Hannah sneered and cast a cold look toward Declan.

“It’s quite amusing, isn’t it? Who’s truly causing trouble for whom?”

You both walked in here with the firm belief that I was indebted to loan sharks. And now that the debtor appears to be her, you suddenly forgot her previous words and adopt the role of the good peacemaker now?”

With a chill in her voice, Hannah declared, “This isn’t something I can just overlook.”

Out of the blue, Eliana dropped to her knees before Hannah, pleading, “Miss Moore, you have to spare my brother! He can’t afford to end up in prison!”

Tears flowed freely as she whirled around to clutch at Declan's pants.

"Declan, I can't let anything happen to him!"

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Moved by Eliana's distress, Declan lifted her up.

"Hannah, Eliana has already humbled herself before you. How can you remain so indifferent?"

"Why involve law enforcement if a simple apology would suffice?"

Eyes narrowing, Hannah flashed a thin smile.

"Be that as it may, I'm not letting this go. Brayden, get our attorneys on it."

"Hold on!"

Realizing that Hannah wasn't budging, Declan stepped in to intercept her.

"What if we paid you off? Name your price."

Hannah observed the sobbing Eliana in his arms and grinned.

"Well then, how much do you think she's worth? Why don't you enlighten me? If the offer makes sense, I might think about it."

Caught off guard, Declan hesitated, gazing at Eliana and contemplating the ten million dollars he owed on her behalf.

"We acknowledge her mistake, and we're prepared to offer you 100,000 for the emotional toll.

Before anyone could process it, Clive burst into laughter.

"A measly hundred thousand? That won't even cover our basic initiation fee. Why so frugal, Mr. Edwards? Weren't you just pledging to shoulder a debt of a hundred million for Miss Moore? So why only a hundred thousand now? Ah, I see." Nodding, Clive continued, "So, a hundred million is just lip service, but a hundred thousand hits close to home. You'd probably regret even that paltry amount, wouldn't you?"

Declan's face clouded over, at a loss for a retort to Clive's jab.