

## Chapter 109 Quickly and discreetly.

Ethan's POV:

I was dumbfounded. I knew that I was hot-blooded, and that Hannah was more in control, but you can be sure that if it were the opposite, I would never have forgiven her. I really didn't deserve that woman.

"You saw what?" I asked her.

"I didn't see anything. I refused to look at anything, but I did hear a recording of you having s\*x with Tess," she told me. Her posture was completely altered. She was prepared to attack.

"I...I..." Honestly, I didn't even know what to say in this situation. I wasn't merely bothered by the fact that I had been recorded in an intimate moment. I was embarrassed to the bone by the role I had played in this story.

"No 'I...I...' Ethan. Here's your opportunity to defend yourself, to state your case and you just stand there stuttering?" She told me.

"I don't even know what to say, Hannah. What I did was indefensible," I told her. "I have no justification for my actions. I just know that I've already

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promised you that I'll try to make up for every blunder I've given you for the rest of our lives, if you'll let me," I told her.

"I don't know if I want your way of making it up to me anymore, Ethan," she told me.

"I'll make it up to you any way you want, just please don't leave me," I told her desperately.

"This isn't out of the question, Ethan, but right now I need some time to reflect. And I need to do it away from you," she said to me.

"So does that mean we're splitting up?" I asked her. My stomach was churning and I was completely nauseous. It felt like the ground was opening up under my feet.

"I still don't know about that, Ethan," Hannah told me with a frown. "I just need some time. But if you feel like you can't give me that time, then I guess you can formalize the divorce papers I gave you months ago," she told me.

I knelt at her feet and told her, "I can wait as long as you want, love. Just don't give up on us, at least not yet," I pleaded.

"So give me the time I really need. I need to reflect on whether this is what I really want, Ethan. And I

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thought your presence here would help me come to some conclusion, but now I don't think so," she told me.

I swallowed hard. It felt like I had been punched in the stomach. But still I nodded. "And do you already know what you're going to do in that time?" I asked her shyly.

"I'm going to look into my background, and I'm going to look into my mental health. Maybe my mom was right and I'm going through postpartum depression," she told me.

"I understand. I'll be here if you need me," I told her as my heart sank.

Hannah nodded and said, "Thank you. Are you going to stick with the plan?"

"I will. Until everyone sees the real Tess and Alexander," I told her. Since I couldn't live in peace with my wife, the best thing to do would be to get rid of these two parasites at once. Who knows, maybe that's what we needed?

Hannah nodded and murmured, "Okay. I guess I should turn off the alerts about the Browns then. Otherwise every time I see the two of you together, I might have reactions like that."

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"I want you to know that I want to get back at her as much as you do. Never forget that my love and loyalty is here, okay?" I told her. I wanted to assure her that there were no feelings on my part. I didn't want her to have any doubts about me.

Hannah nodded and murmured, "Mine has always

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been with you," and she gave me privacy to pack my things.

Normally, I would be much more insistent that she reconsider and that we not take a break from our relationship, but I felt like she needed a moment of her own. I could only hope to heaven that when

she was ready, she would come back to our family.

\*

I returned to the city that night, my heart heavy with concern for Hannah. I asked everyone around my wife to keep an eye on her and that at any sign that she needed me, that they would get in touch with me and I would come as soon as possible.

Annoying as she always was, I already had a handful of messages from Tess waiting for me when I landed in the city's airport. In some she would ask us to have dinner together, in others she would say things like 'I'm really worried about you. You don't return my messages! What is going on?'

Well, at that very moment, I had no wife to go back to, at least momentarily. Hannah had given me a kind of carte blanche to go ahead with my plan. So I swallowed my irritation with Tess and texted

'Dinner tonight at Le Picotin to talk about our future?'

And not a minute later there was already an answer: 'Yes! I'm already going to start getting ready!'

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'I'll drop by wherever you are, okay? Are you still at the manor?' I asked her.

'Yes I am still. And who knows, maybe you'll be able to sleep at home tonight?' she asked me.

'Let's see,' I wrote down and stopped texting her.

\*

"Oh, Ethan! This place is still as fabulous as ever!"

Tess exclaimed as soon as we entered the restaurant. I didn't need reservations at this place. I was already known to the house, and they always found a way to fit a table for me. We were arm in arm and I had chosen this restaurant on purpose. It was here that my romance with Tess had began.

"I knew you'd like it here, Tess," I told her with a smile on my face. Every time I wanted to please Tess, I was a little sappy. And now, I was realizing what an i\*\*\*t I had been.

Soon we were directed to the best table in the house. As soon as Tess sat down, she already grabbed her purse and retrieved some papers. and she placed them in front of me.

"What's all this?" I asked her confused.

"These, honey, are the pictures from my most recent ultrasound. Our baby is growing strong and

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healthy, and this time I'm avoiding any and all stairs," she told me excitedly.

I looked at the photos for a few seconds, pretending I was analyzing them. I knew they were fake, but she was even able to put her details at the top of the photos. She definitely had someone helping her with medical matters.

"Wow, Tess... I don't even know what to tell you!" I exclaimed and pretended to be thrilled.

"Well, you can start by telling me what you're going to do now," she told me sweetly as she placed her hand on my forearm. "You can choose to start your family with me, as we wanted from the beginning, or go on a wild and fruitless search for your ex-wife."

Obviously she was pushing. I could see that she was getting more desperate every day.

"I still think you're in too much of a hurry, Tess. We've waited until now. Why not wait until after the baby is born so we can make the wedding you want and deserve?" I suggested to her.

Tess rocked a little uncomfortably in her chair and told me, "Because I don't want my son to be considered a bastard for even a second, Ethan! You know being married to you is all I want! Why

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put it off?" She asked me.

I sighed and told her, "I don't want to draw attention to myself right now, Tess. If you want me to marry you, it will have to be a discreet ceremony," I conceded. Of course, the core of my plan was getting Tess down the aisle, so both her plan and mine were aligned but with different ends.

Tess's expression was somewhere between relief and glee. Then, she clapped her hands like a child and said, "Yay! I'm going to get in touch with a wedding planner I've always wanted to hire. Let's do it quickly and discreetly then. I promise!" she exclaimed.

"Well, you already have a credit card from me in your name. You don't need any further authorization from me to proceed with the arrangements for the ceremony. I'll register the divorce and we can get married right away," I told her.

"Agreed, honey!" She told me excitedly.

\*

Later, I left her at the manor.

"Aren't you going to stay and sleep in your own



house tonight?" Tess asked me suggestively.

"I'm trying to do this right, honey," I told her. "I'll be back at the manor when we get back from our honeymoon. You understand me, don't you?" I told her. The excuse was lame, but there was no way in hell I was going to sleep under the same roof as her and risk her doing something crazy like last time.

"Okay," she said pouting. "See you tomorrow?" She asked me.

"Absolutely," I told her, and placed a kiss on her cheek.

Along the way, I caught myself thinking that it was getting harder and harder to pretend to put up with that crazy woman. I needed her to believe me, and in the meantime, I needed to be close to her to find out what she and Alexander were up to against Hannah and I. With that thought, I made a few calls to Dante and Piero, to some slightly irregular arrangements I had to give Tess the illusion that Hannah was in the past and that she was my future.

When I arrived at the apartment, I saw the little box that I had forgotten on top of the kitchen island. Would that box now make sense? From

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what I'd heard, the contents of the wooden box were nothing less than my grandfather's silver bullet to assure that I kept my marriage with Hannah.

Well, what better time than now to dig up old

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secrets and find out why he so wanted me to marry Hannah over Tess back then?

I retrieved the key from the box and carefully opened it. And what I found inside moved me in an unexpected way.

