

## Chapter 11 Ethan, what is going on?

Hannah's POV:

I wandered through the hospital corridors for a while so Ethan and Vincent wouldn't think that I had listened to their conversation and because I didn't want to come back to that damn room. When I nally managed to get back to Tess's room, she was sound asleep. I sighed in relief, because I was wondering what kind of things she would say to me to provoke me even more when I got back from bandaging my injured hand.

There was another woman in the room, a middle-aged nurse with a gentle face. She said a low "hi" to me so she wouldn't wake Tess up. Nobody else was in the room. I didn't know if Ethan or Vincent would come back, but I assumed that Ethan decided to bring this nurse to take care of Tess instead of me because of the earlier disaster, and that I didn't have to stay at the hospital anymore. So, I decided to go home. And even if I was wrong, I didn't care about the consequences of leaving right now.

Out of the hospital, I took the rst cab that appeared and headed home. I didn't want to stay a minute more. I was tired, frustrated, and cranky because I just had a couple of hours of sleep in an armchair and yesterday was a long day. Besides, I was worried about what I would do now that Grandpa Michael was gone. I had to create a strategy. Distracted by these thoughts, I arrived at the manor when the sun had started rising. I dragged myself upstairs and took a quick shower to wash away all the memories of yesterday. After that, I went straight to bed.

I didn't know for how long I slept, but when I woke up, I knew that I was at least renewed. The room had a funny smell of cigarette, though, and there was smoke everywhere, and that was odd. It was probably late in the afternoon and a dark shadow of a tall man was sitting by the window. At rst, I thought that someone had invaded my home, and was startled. It took me a few seconds to realize that it was Ethan, above all because he never smokes unless he is distressed. And apparently, he was more than distressed, because his ashtray was full.

I sighed in relief and exclaimed in surprise: "You are back!", and then, I sat straight and looked at him. He didn't say a word, as always, but his dark eyes were on me, watching me like a hawk. We remained in silence for a few seconds, and then I decided to open the curtains and a few windows, because the smoke was suffocating me, and the whole atmosphere was too intimidating.

Ethan was seated on a couch closer to one of these windows. He wasn't moving and looked just like a statue, but when I came closer to him to open the curtains that were near to the couch, he grabbed my wrist in a tight grip and started to pull me closer to him.

"Ethan! What are you doing!" I protested. He never said a word, but insisted on pulling me to him until I was sitting on his lap. He never did that before, so the feeling was awkward. The smell of cigarettes in his clothes was almost unbearable, but there was another different smell. "Have you been drinking?" I asked him, accusatory.

"Promise me that you won't hate me," Ethan murmured, instead of answering me. But I didn't understand what he was talking about. When I looked at his face, his eyebrows were tense, as if he was really focused or anguished. I could see the shadow of his beard starting to grow. He was never that sloppy with his appearance, on the contrary, he was always so neat that sometimes I felt inappropriate by comparison, but I believed that lately he was too busy with work, with Tess and our divorce that his own life was taking a toll on him.

"Ethan, what is going on?" I asked him suspiciously. "I don't get it. What are you talking about?" I tried to untangle myself from him, but he had always been stronger than me, and today, it wasn't any different. Besides, he seemed determined and clung to it.

"Ethan, you are scaring me. What is wrong with you? Let me go, please!" I told him.

He looked deeply in my eyes and asked me: "Are you going to reject me?" his vision looked blurred, reecting his level of drunkenness. He was acting boldly, but he didn't need to be drunk to do so. It was to challenge me.

"Ethan, what are you talking about? Reject you? How?" I asked him. For a brief moment, I didn't know what he was doing. But then, I realized that he was looking at me and his hands started to explore my body, and suddenly I realized what he was intending to do.

Instinctively, I grabbed his hand to stop him from doing what he was trying to and raised my eyebrows. "Ethan, please stop. It's Hannah, not Tess. Look closer!" I reminded him. Wasn't he paying attention or was he too drunk to mistake me for his mistress?

But even though I had warned him, he insisted on kissing me. He didn't say a single word, but in one second, he looked at my lips and in the next one, he was kissing them. His rst kiss had a strong taste of alcohol, and it burned up my lips. He was drunk for sure.

"Hey, Ethan! It's me, Hannah! I am not Tess. Look closer!" I told him in the moment that his lips left mine. I held his head in both my hands and tried to make him pay attention to my words.

Ethan seemed to stop for a little while, but then he ignored my plea, and resumed kissing me, murmuring just a "Hummm." He decided then to take us to our large bed, leaving his wrinkled coat at the foot of the bed in his way. He was sloppy and reckless and didn't care about anything.

He tossed me in the bed and was hovering above me while he was getting ready for some action, and for a brief moment, I felt as if my husband really wanted me, but then I remembered about my baby, and I knew that I couldn't oblige him. My baby comes rst in my life now, and I was afraid that Ethan could hurt him.

I put my hands on his chest and told him rmly: "Ethan, stop. You are drunk, and I don't want it!"

Ethan raised an eyebrow in a challenging tone and murmured: "Oh, really?" and tried to invest one more time.

"I mean it!" I exclaimed to him. I was feeling unprotected, so I covered myself with the blankets to get a little more comfortable. And then, I realized that to be left alone, I should leave our bedroom, or maybe even our home. So, I grabbed some clothes from my closet and locked myself in the bathroom, but not before I told him: "I will leave you alone now so you will be able to cool your head. A good cold shower could be useful too," I suggested.

He never answered me, but I wasn't expecting him to do so. Locked inside our bathroom, I took a quick shower to calm myself down. I felt both humiliated and heartbroken. I couldn't shake off the instinct to please Ethan, sacrificing my self-esteem to take care of Tess at the hospital. But even after I couldn't stand the atmosphere at the hospital and escaped, Ethan still caught up with me. He treated me casually, only seeing me as an object for his drunken desires, he didn't need me otherwise. Even when he was with me, all he could think about was Tess.

Yet, even so, every time he touched me, I hoped that my husband truly wanted me.

My humble heart crumpled up, tears streaming down incessantly. I knew that I should let go right now. Actually, I should have let him go a long time ago. But I couldn't. There was still hope inside of me. That type of hope that persists in living when everything else in the world is dying.

I forgot about these thoughts and focused on the tiny human being that was growing up on my belly. He would be my new reason for living from now on.

Encouraged by this feeling I cheered up and decided to leave after the shower so I can be away from Ethan for a while. Then, I decided to visit my friend Lucy. She was my best friend in the world, and she would understand me. I took a deep breath before opening the bathroom door, fearing what I would nd: maybe an angry husband, maybe his standard indifferent version. Finally, luck was on my side because Ethan was fast asleep in our bed. I looked at his peaceful sleep face and whispered the last words to him, "Ethan, I'm gonna run away from you now. Hope you will never nd me."