

Chapter 133: Let's work on it.

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Hannah's POV:

"You love me? Is that what I heard?" I asked Ethan at that time.

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"Yes, I absolutely love you, Hannah," Ethan restated what he'd told me seconds ago.

I sighed. Half of my heart was happy. The other half, not so much. Ethan's smile at that moment fell, and he looked at me seriously...

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"Hey Hannah, what's going on?" Ethan asked me worriedly.

"It's nothing, Ethan. No need to worry," I replied to him.

Ethan gently took me by the chin and lifted my face to look at him, then he said, "I know you, Hannah Brown. I know when you want to avoid a subject. You can say whatever you want to me, love. I'm just here to listen to you," he told me.

I looked away from him, but eventually replied, "Oh, it's just... well, it's just that you'd hardly look at my face before, and a few months ago, I became relevant to you. What happened during this time?" I asked him.

"What do you mean by that, Hannah?" Ethan asked me cautiously.

"I mean...how much of your love for me is true love for me and how much is it just because of our son?" There. I asked him what was really bothering me.

Ethan looked intently into my eyes and was silent for a minute or two. My stomach sank. Why didn't he just answer me? That silence of his was never a good thing. So he finally told me, "I'm going to be honest with you, Hannah. I wanted to invest in

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our relationship in the first place because of Michael."

"I knew it! It was just impossible for you to love me for who I am, wasn't it?" I asked him. My heart was in tatters from the admission he had just made.

Ethan looked at me scared and said, "It's not like that, love! I love you! And it's not about our son!" he exclaimed.

I crossed my arms over my chest and asked him, "And how do you expect me to believe that Ethan?"

Ethan scratched the back of his neck. He did this when he was reflecting on life or when he didn't want to admit something he found embarrassing. Then he finally said, "Well, I would be a liar if I told you that I loved you from the start. You know I didn't, and unfortunately, the whole world knows that wasn't true either. And when Tess told me she was pregnant with my baby, I was ready to ignore any old Michael's desire to keep her and the baby. But then, things happened, and you were pregnant too. At that point, I felt like I owed you more than I had imagined. Do you believe me?" He asked.

"This still isn't love, Ethan," I told him and looked

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away. I didn't know if I was more irritated by his confession or his admitting that this was all about baby Michael.

Ethan raised his hands in a gesture of surrender, and then said to me, "Please calm down, Hannah. I'm not done with my story yet."

"Then go on," I told him, my patience starting to run short already.

Ethan nodded and continued, "Well, you broke my heart when you came back from your fake surgery to abort Michael. And it wasn't because Tess had lost the baby. The possible loss of our baby opened my eyes to the fact that I wanted children with you, Hannah, and not with any other woman," Ethan said.

I arched my eyebrows at him and said, "Me, Ethan? Why precisely me?"

Ethan smiled sweetly at me and said, "Because you're good. You have a heart the size of the world, Hannah. You're patient and give your love to people without any agenda. When we first got married, I thought you were just a gold digger, and that old Michael was pushing me into this arranged marriage for some debt to your grandmother, or whatever, something like that. I

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thought that it wouldn't be too complex of a task, after all, you'd buy whatever you wanted, and I'd be left alone. But that's not what happened, is it? You gave me your love, even when I despised you and deserved none of your affection. You taught me that love is patient and selfless and that it expects nothing in return. You suffered in silence what would have been unbearable to me and only thought about yourself when you were no longer alone but with Michael inside your womb."

"Okay, that's all nice and all, but so what, Ethan?" I asked him.

"So, I was pissed and happy at the same time when I found out that you had pretended to abort our baby. I was beyond happy knowing that maybe, just maybe, I could have another chance. And I still think we have this chance to rebuild our family. And when you decided to have the baby showed me that you might be willing to give me that chance too. Am I right about that?" He asked.

I considered Ethan's question for a few seconds, and then I said, "Look, Ethan, when you told me that Tess was finally arrested and I was safe again to go back to town, the first thing I thought of doing was to work on rebuilding our family. I don't want Michael to grow up in a broken home, but I

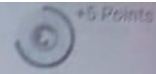
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also don't want to be stuck in a relationship with someone just because of a child. I want to be loved, respected, and valued for the person that I am, and I know that if the two of us agree to work on our marriage, it will take effort on both sides. But you'll have to excuse me if I say that I still don't fully trust your love, okay? We spent more time having problems than we had times where we understood each other, and I need more than that, you understand?"

"Of course, love," Ethan told me. "I already promised God when you were in a coma after giving birth to Michael that if I had to, I would do something every day to prove that I love you, and I'm still up for it. That was the main reason why I did what I did. I've decided to go after Tess' conviction and your innocence. And now, we're closer than ever to being safe again. And with that safety, we can focus solely on us. Who we want to be for each other, and what we're going to do to get there," Ethan told me.

"Working on our relationship isn't going to be easy," I warned him. "We have a lot to discuss. There are a lot of past hurts in this relationship," I said.

Ethan swallowed hard but nodded. "I know that,



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love. And I know that the healing process goes through pain, but I think our relationship is worth it. I want to be someone of worth, like you are to me, Hannah. I want to measure up to you.," he said.

"And it's going to take time too," I told him. "You

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won't regain my trust overnight."

Ethan sighed and said, "I know that love. And you don't know how sorry I am for breaking your trust in me. So, take your time, I'll wait. I just want to ask you to not make me be away from you like the last time. That was painful as hell, and if I can, I

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want to prevent that from ever happening again in my life," Ethan said.

I nodded at him carefully. It felt like for the first time in his life he was listening to me. So I decided it was time to make my demands. "Well, since we're getting everything out on the table, I'd like to say one other thing," I told him.

Ethan opened his arms in a gesture of invitation and told me, "Say what you want, love."

"If we're going to try it again, let's do it my way now. Obviously, your way didn't work. So, it's time to try something new," I told him.

"Let's try it any way that you want. I'm trying to get you back here, not the other way around," he told me.

"So, the first thing I'd like you to do is to be honest. When we get into an argument or something, I'd like to stop and think about it. Oh! And I also want you more in our lives. Baby Michael needs you and I could rely on your support a little more," I suggested to him.

"Noted," he told me. "But then you need to make room for me in your life. I would literally like more space in your cottage, and I'd also like to spend more time with you. Would you consider doing


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that for me?" Ethan asked me.

"Well, it's a concession I'm willing to make," I told him.

Ethan smiled at me and muttered, "Excellent. Let's work on it."

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