

## Chapter 142: Hello again.

Hannah's POV:

Thinking about my relationship with Ethan was something that occupied a lot of my thoughts lately. And I knew that I couldn't reduce my existence to only focusing on making this relationship work. I was more than that.

But what was I? I asked that myself often. And that made me seriously uneasy, so I had a stress-cleansing session. I started with the kitchen cabinets, but I didn't stop there. One place in the house took me to another until I was satisfied. I think I haven't cleaned this much in years.

After that, I still couldn't sit still and decided to cook. Lucy would probably be hungry when she arrived, and I wasn't in the mood to buy food again. Homemade food would be a change in our routine.

I was at home making my dinner and taking care of my baby when I got a message from Lucy. "I forgot the keys. Are you home?"

"I am. You can come and I'll open the door for you," I told her.

As soon as I opened the door for her, I saw that her face was funny. "What happened?" I asked her.

"No big deal, just a funny feeling. Well, maybe it's the fact that I worked too hard today," she told me.

"Must be low season in the rest of town, but certainly not for coffee drinkers. It seems everyone decided that they had to have our coffee today. I didn't stop for a minute!" she exclaimed.

"Well, that's a good thing, isn't it?" I asked her.

"Yes, it sure is a good thing. But you know what would be better?" she told me.

"I don't know. What?" I asked her.

"If only my partner would help me more often," she said. I knew she wanted to tease me. We already had enough helpers, and if we didn't, it wouldn't be difficult to hire one more person.

"Oh, stop it," I told her. "But come on, dinner's almost ready," I continued.

"Oh, will we have homemade food today?" Lucy said in awe. "And what is the occasion?" she asked me.

"Nothing much. Today I just decided to clean up the house and prepare dinner. Today I was very restless thinking about my relationship with Ethan



and you know I can't calm down when my hands are still. That's why I had this stress cleaning and cooking session," I told her.

"I've said it before and I'll say it again: there's always our coffee shop. Besides, you won't be alone for a second there. Why don't you leave Michael with Patricia for a day and come work with me?" Lucy suggested again.

"Oh, stop it. You're pushing too hard," I told her.

"You have to think of it as our venture," Lucy said.

"Okay, fine. I'll consider your suggestion," I told her.

"But now changing the subject, what did you mean by having a funny feeling earlier today?" I asked her.

"I don't know, Hannah, I saw something funny today on the beach. I mean, it's not the season to have bathers there anymore, because it's winter already, and today someone spent the whole day in front of the cafe, as if they didn't had anything else to do. I don't know why, but I felt uncomfortable with this person," Lucy told me.

"Oh really?" I asked her. "Why would someone spend the whole day at the beach in such cold weather? What could that person want?"

Lucy shrugged and said, "I honestly don't know, Hannah. The person was too far away for me to see any more detail, and I've been too busy."

"Look, I have to tell you that your day was way more productive than mine," I muttered to her.

"So productive that I'm too tired. As soon as we're done with dinner, I'm going to bed," Lucy said as she yawned.

"I'm also going to bed early. Ethan is coming into town tomorrow morning and I don't know if he has plans for us, but we have a therapist appointment first thing in the morning, and since he has a lot of activities throughout the day, it had to be an early appointment," I told Lucy.

After dinner, we were doing the dishes when Lucy told me astonishedly: "I can't believe that you're making Ethan go to an appointment for therapy!"

"Well, he seems... changed," I told her.

"Good for him, I guess," Lucy told me. "Well, good night, Hannah! See you tomorrow," she said and waved me goodbye.

"Sure," I mumbled to her.

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The next day, I met Ethan outside his office.

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"Hello, good morning," he said to me and made to come over to me. However, I didn't know whether to kiss him, hug him or just shake his hand, so I waved at him from afar and said, "Hello."

I could see the hurt on Ethan's face when he saw

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that I didn't want any displays of affection, but he still respected me. He scored points with me on that one.

We entered the session with somewhat embarrassed smiles.

"Hi, Hannah. How was your week?" Dr. X asked



me.

I sighed and said, "Well, it's like every other week, Doc. A little bit of routine and a little bit of chaos. You do understand, right?" I asked him.

"I see," he said and then smiled as he told me, "But today you brought Ethan. That's a good thing, isn't it?" He asked.

I shrugged not knowing how to respond. Dr. xxx stared at me and said, "That's a sign that you're both trying. You're both fighting for your marriage."

Ethan then decided to take a firm stand and said, "I'll do whatever she wants, doc."

The doctor nodded and said, "Well, agreeing to therapy is a start. Now, how would you like to work on your relationship? Would you like to talk about the points that bother you the most?"

Ethan looked at my face uncertainly. So, I decided to work up the courage to discuss what bothered me the most about him.

"Okay, doc. There's something that's been bugging me for over two years now..." I told the psychologist.

"And what is it, Hannah? You can tell us. This is a safe environment," the psychologist told me.

I took a deep breath and then said, "I want to talk about the fact that for the past two years, Ethan has openly cheated on me. He had been in a relationship with another woman since the beginning of our marriage and all of our friends knew about it." So I turned to him and said, "You humiliated me in every way possible and still I stayed married to you. That hurts so much, Ethan!" I exclaimed.

Ethan grimaced and said, "I recognize I've wronged you and I've hurt you in many ways, but you're only stuck in this marriage because of old Michael. Your loyalty has always been with him, not me."

I arched my eyebrows and then said, "Speaking of Michaels, isn't our baby the reason you're insisting on our marriage? How am I to believe you don't just want to stay married because of our child?" I asked him.

Ethan made another face and told me, "Michael has nothing to do with my reasons for insisting on our marriage."

"Oh really?" I asked him. "So prove it!" I challenged him.

Ethan opened and closed his mouth a couple of



times but didn't say anything. When I started to get irritated with this attitude, however, the doctor looked at us and said, "Well, unfortunately, you're out of time for today. We'll continue working on that next week. How about that?"

None of us liked that our time was up. "But I have some homework for you. Before the next session I want you two to think about all of this," he said pointing at the two of us. "I want you to consider your motivations for staying married. Hannah, I want you to question why you're still married to Ethan after he cheated on you for two years. Ethan, I want you to question yourself about why you want to stay married to Hannah. Why do you think now is a good time for you to invest in your relationship? I want you to think about your motivations and I also want you to think about what the other might think of these motivations. What other questions can the other ask you? Can you think about that?"

I nodded weakly, and Ethan muttered, "Of course, Doc."

So a few minutes later we left the office. Ethan looked at me embarrassed remembering what we had discussed just now, and I in turn was also embarrassed by the things I had thrown in his



face. There was no mood to go out for coffee, for example. We needed to process that ourselves.

"Well, I guess I'll see you later then," I said to Ethan, who just nodded, and I continued on my way.

Since Patricia was with the baby, I exchanged a few messages with her to see if everything was okay, and when she told me that it was and that I could take as much time as I needed, I drove aimlessly across town.

I know it was a stupid thing to do, but I just couldn't go home right then. Those walls were suffocating me these days.

So I did the only rational thing I could think of: I went to the cafe.

When I arrived, Lucy looked at me with a smile on her face and said: "It's great to see you here!"

I opened my arms and told her, "I'm all yours today. Maybe I need some time working to tire me out and make me forget about my problems today."

"Well, you've come to the right place. We've got a lot of work to do here today," Lucy told me and then dropped a huge box of supplies that needed

to be replenished into my arms.

\*

I worked during the whole day at the café and honestly, it was good to take my mind out of the mess that was in my life. At the end of the day, Lucy asked me to throw the garbage in the container in the alley.

I was getting close to the container when I heard something out of place. It was a baby cry, and I swear to God that it was my baby. But this can't be. Patricia had him with her, right? Maybe I was imagining things. I just decided to follow my way and go home to him. Just to be sure that everything was all right.

But then, I turned the corner and saw the most terrible scene in front of me. My baby was there, in Tess's arms.

She looked like a maniac. And she had a gun.

"Hello again, Hannah," she said to me.



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