

## Chapter 169: Stay away from him.

Hannah's POV:

After having lunch with Ethan a couple of days ago, he sent me a message asking if he could visit me at work from time to time. He mentioned that Michael enjoyed spending time with both of us, and since our baby seemed to benefit from seeing us together, I agreed. This meant that we spent more time together at my workplace, and it didn't take long for office gossip to spread. People couldn't help but notice Ethan's good looks, and soon, rumors about him and me started circulating. However, only the higher-ups in the company were aware that Ethan and I were no longer together. Mr. Myers was often away, leaving Mr. Stone in charge of the day-to-day operations. Stone was discreet and didn't draw attention to our personal lives, understanding that it was none of his business. Nevertheless, he began asking some questions, particularly as we worked closely together.

One day, after we had just finished a portfolio for a client, he inquired, "So, Hannah, do you mind if I ask if you and your ex-husband are seeing each other again?"

I felt compelled to respond, mainly to ensure my job position, but all I wanted to say was that our

Chapter 169: Stay away from him.

personal lives were not his concern. "Actually, no, Mr. Stone," I replied. "We're just spending time together for the sake of our baby. We don't want him to grow up in an environment without both his parents. I was an orphan myself, and I only found my mom as an adult, so I don't want him to grow up without his parents."

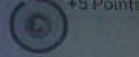
Stone looked at me thoughtfully but didn't press the matter further. This interaction left me wondering what he was getting at. However, he clarified his intentions with his next question, saying, "Oh, that's good then. So, I won't feel guilty for asking you something."

Curious, I asked, "What is it?"

Stone explained, "You see, we have a meeting in another city. I wanted to take you because I believe you could learn a lot from it. But the meeting will be followed by a dinner, and that dinner will end late in the night. We'd have to spend the night out of town. I was wondering if you would like to come with me. I just thought it might be a bit uncomfortable to have a jealous husband around, given the circumstances."

He sounded sincere, but there was a certain look in his eyes that made me uneasy. While I trusted him not to disrespect me, he had an aura that felt somewhat predatory. Despite knowing about his affair with Katrina, judging by how they interacted,

Chapter 169: Stay away from him.



it didn't seem entirely stable. In other words, it wasn't set in stone (no pun intended) whether she was okay with it or not, and I didn't want to provide her with any additional reasons to complicate my life further.

I needed to clarify Stone's intentions. "Are you asking me to go with you on the trip to visit a client, Mr. Stone?" I asked for confirmation.

Stone affirmed, "Yeah, of course I am. You mean a lot to me, Hannah, and I believe you should be introduced to our clients." I wasn't sure of what to think about it, so I asked: "Can I have one or two days to think about it, sir?"

He asked me back: "And why is that, Hannah?"

I explained, "It's because I don't have a husband, but I still have a baby, sir. I need to make some arrangements, and I need to see if they're going to work."

Stone nodded and mumbled, "Sure, Hannah. Well, don't take too long to give me an answer because we need to make reservations."

I assured him, "Don't worry, sir."

I was both excited and apprehensive about the prospect of being introduced to many clients on the trip. Leaving my baby behind for a couple of days made me uneasy, even though Patricia would be there to take care of him. I had a lot to think

Chapter 169: Stay away from him.

about, so I decided to take a day to consider my options.

As I pondered, I received a message from Ethan: "Hey, do you want to grab a bite today? I'll bring Michael with me so we can enjoy the good weather." It was a tempting offer, and I had no

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appointments for lunch, so I replied, "Sure." Ethan quickly confirmed, "Good! I'll pick you up at noon."

The first time Ethan brought Michael to lunch was fun, but it was still an adjustment for me. From then on, he often invited me to lunch with him and Michael, perhaps in an effort to win me over since Patricia had returned to town, making him feel

Chapter 169: Stay away from him.

+5 Points

less needed to take care of Michael.

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Back at the office, as I left the building, Stone approached me with a smile on his face. "Leaving for lunch right now?" he asked.

I nodded and said, "Yeah, I am."

He extended an invitation: "Do you want to join me? We've been spending a lot of time together recently, and I think you'd enjoy sharing a meal with me."

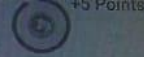
I smiled lightly at him but had to decline his invitation, "I'm sorry, but I can't. I have an invitation for today already."

Stone graciously accepted my response, "Rain check, then?"

"Sure," I told him. However, as we reached the front door of the office, he observed my interaction with Ethan. Stone raised his eyebrows and made a slightly sarcastic comment: "And you said you don't respond to anyone anymore, right, Hannah?"

He touched my shoulder while he was telling me that. It was a gesture that made me slightly uncomfortable, especially considering our professional relationship. I didn't want to have a confrontation with him right then, so I let it slide.

Chapter 169: Stay away from him.



After that, we went our separate ways.

Ethan was waiting for me there and noticed Stone's presence. He didn't seem pleased. This raised questions in my mind. Could Ethan be jealous of my boss? It was a strictly professional relationship, so why would anyone be jealous of it? Moreover, why would Ethan even care? After all, he wasn't my husband anymore.

When I got to Ethan's car, he asked me, "Hey, who is this guy?" He was direct, not beating around the bush.

I replied firmly, "This is Lorenzo Stone, my boss." I made it clear that I wasn't going to discuss the matter further.

Ethan, however, pressed on, asking, "And why is he so close to you?"

Raising an eyebrow, I responded, "Even though there's nothing happening, and I don't owe you an explanation, let me just be clear: my relationship with my boss is strictly professional, OK?"

Ethan wasn't convinced and said, "This is what you say, Hannah."

I made a face and questioned him, "You don't trust me, Ethan?"

He didn't answer my question, but instead he replied: "Oh, Hannah, I might not know him, but

Chapter 169: Stay away from him.

what I do know is that this guy definitely wants to sleep with you."

I was taken aback by his comment. "How dare you say such a thing?" I asked, clearly annoyed.

Ethan defended his statement, saying, "I'm just informing you about a fact!"

"About the fact that you don't like him, right?" I shot back.

Ethan made a face. "What I like and what I don't is not the question here. But if I were you, I would be careful about him because he doesn't want to be only professional with you, Hannah," he said.

Ethan's remarks were frustrating because he was making assumptions that weren't real. I wanted to put an end to the conversation. "I don't want to talk about this anymore," I told him, clearly annoyed.

Ethan grudgingly agreed, trying to have the last word "Fine. Let's talk about something else."

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Later, when I returned to the office after lunch with Ethan, I was still annoyed with him when I found Katrina waiting for me. Her expression was murderous. She didn't bother disguising her anger. She headed straight for my desk and said, "Hey, can I talk to you for a second?"

I replied cautiously, "Sure," and followed her to one

Chapter 169: Stay away from him.

of the small meeting rooms. When we arrived, she locked the door behind her. I took a deep breath, preparing to ask her what was going on. However, she immediately confronted me: "Stay away from him."

I played innocent, asking, "From whom?"

"Oh, Hannah. Don't play innocent here," she retorted. "I said stay away from Lorenzo, or you're going to face consequences."

I looked at her and retorted, "More than I already have? You unleash hell on me from time to time, Katrina."

Katrina then said: "Oh, Hannah. Don't test me with that. You're going down for it."

I wanted to confirm what she just said, so I asked: "Wait, is this a threat?"

She responded, "Well, I'll leave it to your interpretation, but don't push me, or you will face the consequences." With that, she left the meeting room and marched back to her desk.

I returned to my desk slowly, still in shock from her threat. As I sat down, I could hear whispers throughout the office. It was that feeling when you know people are talking about you. Today, I was the subject of gossip in the office.

Oh, Joy! It seemed that things couldn't get any



Chapter 169: Stay away from him.  
worse at my workplace.

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