

Chapter 171: Misunderstanding.

Hannah's POV:

When I arrived at Ethan's place to pick up Michael, I greeted them with a smile. "There's my boy," I said, taking Michael into my arms.

I asked Ethan how things had been while I was away, and he replied, "Everything's fine here. Nothing new, really."

I chuckled and commented, "Well, at least there are no bad news, right?"

Ethan noticed my good mood and remarked, "I see that someone is in a good mood."

I explained, "Not actually," making a face, "Just some decisions at work that I have to make. But it's nothing major."

He asked: "Is there anything that I could do to help you with it?"

"I appreciated your support. Actually, I was invited to a meeting in another city next week. We'll be presenting for a client, and I'm considering whether to go. It's an overnight stay. I was wondering if you could stay with Michael for me," I told him.

Ethan was excited for me and commented, "Oh,

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that's good news. It's always great when they choose to represent their company in meetings like this. And of course, I got you covered," he added.

I agreed and said, "Yes, it is.

"So, when are you going to leave?" He looked eager to know more.

I answered, "I'm not sure yet because my boss mentioned it would be next week, so he needs to book rooms for us. We'll be staying overnight and returning the next morning."

Ethan was a bit surprised and asked, "Wait a minute, when you talk about 'we,' you're saying..."

I confirmed, "I'm talking about my boss and me."

His demeanor shifted, and he looked disappointed. "Which boss?" he inquired.

I replied, "My boss, Mr. Stone."

Ethan's reaction was less than positive. His face darkened, and he stated, "I don't like this guy, Hannah. I really don't like him."

I was taken aback and asked, "And why is that?"

Ethan was insistent, "He looks like a predator, Hannah. I know the type. Believe me."

I raised an eyebrow and retorted, "Of course, you

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know the type. You were one of them not long ago, right?"

Ethan's face turned serious as he declared, "How long is it going to take for you to believe me?"

I replied, frustrated, "I probably will believe you if you just take care of your own life, Ethan. I'm not interested in your opinions about my own."

Ethan was insistent, "I'm just doing that for your own good, Hannah. I don't like this guy, and I think you're going to get hurt because of him."

I asked in confusion, "Get hurt?"

"Well, I'm not saying physically, but I'm talking about your heart. He's a womanizer. I can see this in him, and you should be careful about this—for your own good and for our son's sake."

I retorted firmly, "Okay, I'm not listening to a word you say from now on. You have no right to talk about my life like this, even with the excuse that you want what's best for me."

Ethan attempted to explain, "I'm just trying to give you advice, Hannah."

I told him, "Well, you know what? My mom told me yesterday that she solved whatever problem she had in the city. So, she's good to be Michael's nanny again. So don't worry about it. I'm going on this trip with my boss. It's a chance to show my

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worth at work and possibly get a promotion. You have no say in this."

Ethan was still astonished when I pressed further, "Oh, and by the way, do you have any plans for this weekend?"

He replied, "No, why?"

And then, I revealed, "It's because Mr. Stone has tickets to see Light Attack, and you may not have noticed this about me, but I'm crazy about this band. I always wanted to see them, but my husband didn't take me. So, I'm accepting an invitation from my boss to watch the show with him. If you can't take Michael, I'll make other arrangements. See you later," I told him.

I left his apartment, slamming the door behind me. I was furious. How dare he think he had any influence in my life right now? His comments felt like he was trying to conquer me, and I couldn't believe how audacious he was being. Thank goodness Michael saw that I was annoyed and didn't fuss around a lot. We returned home quietly.

The next day, I called my boss to accept his invitation to the trip. "Hey, Hannah, what's going on?" He greeted me when he answered my call.

I replied, "Hey, Mr. Stone, I'm calling to confirm my spot on that trip to present the portfolio to our client."

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The tone in his voice changed, and he seemed more excited.

"Really? That's awesome, Hannah!" he said to me.

"Oh, and about the gig, was it too much or are you still willing to go with me?" he asked.

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"That's fine too, I'm coming with you," I told him.

"Great," he said. "I'll pick you up on Friday at 7, okay?" he suggested.

"Sure, thanks for the invitation," I answered.

It was settled, then, even though I still didn't know if he thought at it as a date. Regardless, I wasn't

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going to stop living my life just because he might have other intentions. I simply hoped that Mr. Stone would understand that I accepted his invitation as a friend with no particular romantic interest in him.

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Friday night arrived, and Michael was already with Ethan, who didn't have the right to complain about the whole thing. I got ready to go to the gig with my boss, Lorenzo Stone. He was at my door at 7:30 sharp, and he even opened the car door for me. "What a gentleman," I thought to myself.

During the drive to the arena, we talked about everything and nothing. It was a pleasant, casual conversation that made the trip enjoyable. As we arrived at the venue, I couldn't help but appreciate how he allowed me to immerse myself in the whole concert environment.

It was a night filled with great music, good company, and an atmosphere that was different from my usual routine. I wasn't sure if it was a date or just two colleagues enjoying a night out, but I was determined not to let my past experiences affect my present.

"Oh, I've dreamed of seeing this band for so long, and I never had the chance. Thank you for asking me," I told him excitedly.

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"My pleasure," he replied with those unfathomable eyes. During the concert, I noticed that he was subtly getting closer, but given the informal environment, I didn't mind. After all, we were there as friends, right? What's wrong with friends being closer than coworkers? He never made any advances; he was simply generous in letting me enjoy the moment.

After the gig, we went to a local diner for burgers, and once again, he insisted on paying. I felt a bit embarrassed about it. "I should be paying for this," I told him. "You already got us covered with the gig."

"No, no, it's my treat. Don't worry about it," he assured me.

"When are we seeing the client?" I asked him.

"I was thinking about scheduling the meeting for next Friday, so we can go see the client and later enjoy the city. What do you think?" He asked me.

I hesitated, given my responsibilities as a mother. "Mr. Stone, I have a baby, you know. This is supposed to be a business trip, right?" I didn't want anything else coming from him.

He smiled, though it didn't quite reach his eyes. "Sure, I'll check with our client again and see when he's available to meet with us."

"I really appreciate that sir," I replied, still excited

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about the possibility of climbing up the hierarchy to the design world, not even if it was just a small step.

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When I arrived home later that night, Stone walked me to my front door. I thanked him for the enjoyable evening, and he made a request. "Hannah, can I ask you something?"

I replied, "Sure, what is it?"

"Can I see you again sometime?" he asked. "I mean, understand emphasized to help me understand what he was requesting from me.

My stomach sank. It appeared that he considered our night out at the concert a date. "Sir, I'm not so sure about this, I'm sorry. I'm recently divorced, and my ex is still a part of my daily life. I don't think I'm ready for this right now. I'm sorry for the misunderstanding," I explained.

Lorenzo nodded quietly and mumbled, "First, I already asked you to not call me sir, but it's okay. It was worth a try, though. See you at work then."

"Yeah, see ya," I replied. Once I closed the door behind me, I sighed. My fears had come true.

But I wasn't ready for another relationship, not just yet.

