

## Chapter 172: Jealous.

Hannah's POV:

The next day, Ethan noticed my change in demeanor. "You're acting strange," he told me. I knew he was eager to find out what had happened, even though he didn't push me for details.

I finally admitted, "It's just that, maybe, even though I don't want to admit it, you might be right about my boss."

Ethan asked with concern, "How so? Did something happen? Did he cross the line?"

I reassured him, "No, it's not like that. He just made his interest clear but didn't overstep boundaries. Don't worry about it."

Ethan, with a furrowed brow, grumbled, "I told you I didn't like that guy, Hannah. I told you."

"Yeah, I know, and I also told you that it's not your business whether you like him or not," I replied, growing frustrated. I didn't understand why I felt compelled to share this with Ethan. He no longer had a say in my personal life.

Ethan crossed his arms and questioned, "So, what are you going to do now?"

I asked in exasperation, "And do I have to do something about this?"

I just wanted some peace in my life. It seemed that every guy in my life was complicating matters. I was fighting to be a good mother and an efficient employee. Couldn't they just leave me in peace?

Ethan tried to offer some advice, "Well, maybe that's the problem, Hannah. Maybe you should consider making a decision. Either choose to let someone else into your life or keep things as they are."

I raised an eyebrow at him. "Are you telling me this because you think I'm going to choose you?" I inquired.

Ethan defensively replied, "I'm not making any assumptions here, Hannah."

"Yes, you are. I know you well enough to know when you're assuming things, and right now, Mr. Brown, you're assuming that I'll choose you over Mr. Stone," I affirmed. If he thinks that I didn't know him, he was completely wrong.

I intended to refer to Stone by his first name, but it felt unnatural. Using his last name emphasized the unease I felt around him. Despite my discomfort, I didn't appreciate Ethan bossing me around, just like he used to. I didn't want people to assume

things about my life that I hadn't explicitly stated.

"Well, maybe you should consider making a decision after all. The longer it takes you take to make a decision, you'll continue to feel this pressure," Ethan advised.

I snorted at his simplicity. "So, you think making a decision about my love life is as easy as buying shoes?"

Ethan shrugged, seeming to think it was that easy. "It was easy the first time, at least with me. You accepted my proposal quickly," he added.

"Yeah, I did that because I was young and in love. Besides, I was so naïve. Something that I am not anymore," I told him.

"It was easy because you were in love with me. That's why," Ethan retorted.

"Maybe precisely because it was easier the first time, I should be more careful the second," I countered, crossing my arms.

"That's not fair, Hannah," he said, sounding upset. "You can't just minimize the love that you felt for me like that. Wasn't that real?" Ethan asked me.

"Oh, yes, Ethan. That was real for me, but apparently, it wasn't real for you for a long time. Just right now, when you come to me saying that you regret everything you did to me," I told him. "

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+10 Points

Besides, you're using too much reason, Ethan. Love isn't that logical."

"You can't live based just on love alone, Hannah. You need reason too," he argued.

I declared, "This discussion isn't getting us anywhere, and I'm definitely not deciding anything today."

Ethan seemed frustrated and came up with an offer. "Fine, you're not deciding, so I guess I'll give you something that will help you decide."

I was annoyed and asked, "What is it?"

Ethan replied, "I'm giving you some space."

He seemed to do it with the expectation that I'd regret my decision, but I was firm. "Well, thank you. It's the first time you're actually listening to me. I've been asking you for space for a long time now. Despite enjoying your help with Michael and not minding our current proximity, I need time to think about myself. I need space to take care of myself."

Ethan sighed, clearly upset with my outburst. I felt regretful about my harsh reaction, even though I had no interest in Stone at the moment and wasn't ready to give Ethan another chance. But I believed that being vocal about my needs was the best policy.

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Mumbling to him, I added, "Thank you. Even though we're doing fine, you understand that I need some space, and that means a lot."

Ethan nodded and left, and I couldn't help but hate myself for losing my temper.

Ethan's POV:

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I couldn't shake the feeling that even though I could be the bigger person at the moment, I didn't feel like one. That's what upset me about the whole situation. I feared that Hannah would choose her boss over me, and I despised this feeling of being rejected. I wasn't used to it. I was

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determined to win her back, but how could I do that when she told me that someone else was in the picture right after I expressed my willingness to try again?

I didn't want to waste my time, but I also had to admit that it was a first for me to feel this way about love. I knew I was being spoiled about that. I had taken Hannah for granted for too long and this was my pay for that.

I wondered how she had endured all these years. I was getting wind of the other guy, and the mere possibility that he might sweep her off her feet made me blatantly jealous. It was hard for me to admit, but this was a wake-up call. I was finally understanding how Hannah felt all this time, and it was a tough lesson to learn.

If she needed time, I was willing to give it to her. I wanted to ensure she wouldn't complain that I was pressuring her too much. Whether I was feeling upset or jealous, my pride had taken a hit. It was a good thing she was taking care of Michael for the day, as I needed some time to myself to figure out my next steps. So, I drove along the shoreline, trying to clear my head and figure out my next steps.



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Comments



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Vote

## Chapter 173: At least one more time.

Hannah's POV:

The travel week had arrived, and it was time to accompany my boss to another city. I thought he might ask someone else to join us, but I was wrong. I was the sole companion for this trip.

The day before our departure, I noticed Katrina's angry expression. Her eyes practically bore holes into the back of my neck. She was furious. When I mentioned this to my boss, he was irritated by Katrina's interference in his life. I was still pondering how to talk to him about not being ready for a relationship with someone else. However, I was fortunate because my boss didn't attempt any inappropriate advances again.

It was Ethan who was acting strangely recently. He was distant and didn't want to engage in conversation. In my view, it was his loss because I had done nothing wrong, and he was blaming me for my boss's actions.

The following day, I boarded a plane, leaving the shores for a couple of days. The journey took a few hours, and we landed in a city that has a promising nickname: Sin City. I could sense that this was probably why Ethan didn't like it when I told him about the trip. But it wasn't my fault that

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the client had an office there. I wished the client could come to us instead, as the city made me feel uneasy, especially coming from the serene shores. Leaving my baby behind weighed heavily on my conscience too. Michael might need me, and not just because of him, but also because I questioned if I was truly ready to be apart from him.

Now, I had to focus because our meeting with the client was imminent, and we needed to present our results. My boss asked: "Are you ready?"

I replied with uncertainty: "As ready as I can be." I wasn't entirely sure if I was completely sure about everything.

Stone then tapped my shoulder reassuringly and said: "Don't worry, we're going to be fine." So, I took a deep breath, put on a smile on my face, and entered the meeting room.

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The meeting went reasonably well. The client posed a couple of challenging questions, but we managed to provide preliminary answers that could be refined later. The group appeared mostly content with our solutions, and they seemed relieved to move forward with the project. After the meeting concluded, it was already the end of the day, so they invited us to a bar for a happy hour.



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When they offered me something to drink, I politely declined. The waiter appeared a bit perplexed by my refusal, and the clients started to look at me with confusion. "Thank you, everyone, but I'm breastfeeding, so I cannot drink," I explained to them.

Janet Ross, one of the people from the client's team, asked about motherhood. "How is maternity?" she inquired.

I shared, "Well, I don't know if you're a mom or not, but sometimes my son seems determined to drive me crazy."

She chuckled and replied, "Oh, I know exactly what you're talking about. I have twins."

I expressed my amazement, saying, "Oh my God, I think I couldn't function if I had twins right now."

She then asked, "And how old is your baby?"

I answered, "He's still really small. He doesn't even have a year yet."

She sympathetically remarked, "And you have to leave him behind to come here, right?"

I nodded and admitted sadly: "I miss him already."

She sympathized, saying: "I know exactly what you're talking about. You'll probably be back tomorrow, right? So, you're definitely going to be fine. Don't worry about that."

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I looked at her curiously and inquired, "How do you manage all of this?"

She replied with a sad smile, "You have to prioritize everything that you're doing at the moment that you're doing. If you're making dinner, prioritize that. If you're staying at home, be there. If you're in a meeting, you're a professional. Dedicate yourself, and you will see the results."

I commented, "It sounds simpler than it is, right?"

She agreed, "Darling, you get to the point. It's not easy. But it is doable, and then you have to make a huge effort to make things work. But in the end, it will be fine, I promise you."

I thanked her for her advice and began mingling with the other clients.

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By the end of the night, I had a great deal of fun. On the way back to the hotel, Stone appeared to have consumed a bit more alcohol than he should have. He wasn't shamefully drunk, but he was tipsy. He turned to me and suggested, "Hey Hannah, we should do this more often."

I suggested: "Yeah, maybe next time, we can invite everyone from the office."

He made a face and clarified, "No, you silly. I'm talking about you and me. We should do this more

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often, even though I know you haven't drunk a drop of alcohol because you're breastfeeding." He then glanced at my breasts as if he expected to find milk.

I felt a little irritated by his gesture, so I crossed

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my arms over my chest, and muttered, "Ok, that's enough. Besides, now it's time to go to bed, sir. We have a flight to catch tomorrow morning."

As we reached his hotel room, he asked, "Would you like to join me in bed?" and raised his eyebrows, seemingly awaiting my response.

I reproached him, "You're crossing the line right

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now, sir."

He insisted, "How many times do I have to tell you to call me Lorenzo?"

I retorted, "At least one more time. Good night."

He nodded, appearing a little disappointed with my response. Eventually, he sighed, saying, "Fine, I'm going to bed alone tonight. Maybe next time." I didn't reply to his comment this time; instead, I simply turned away and headed to my room.

That's when he gently held my wrist, and I raised an eyebrow in surprise. He explained, "I was just hoping to give you a proper goodnight." Before I could react, he kissed me. It was unexpected, and yes, he was drunk and crossed the line, but he turned out to be a scandalous good kisser. It was a passionate, intense kiss that left me breathless. Butterflies fluttered in my stomach, and a shiver ran down my spine. It was so good that I wasn't even outraged anymore. In that moment, I kissed him back while I started to wonder if I might be missing out on something by not giving him a chance.

When we finally broke the kiss, I was left breathless, and so was he. He rested his forehead against mine and asked, "Did you like it, Hannah?"

Still a bit speechless, I didn't reply, but his smile was smug; he knew he had affected me. "Well, I

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think now it's going to be a good night," he said before heading into his room.

I went to my room, my legs still feeling wobbly, and locked the door. As I entered the room, I was still catching my breath and sorting through my emotions when I received a message on my phone – it was him again. In the message, he said, "I'm still thinking about our kiss... and I think that I will dream about it later."

I wasn't sure how to respond. My life was already complicated and adding him to the mix didn't seem like the best idea. I chose to pretend I hadn't seen his message and went to bed.

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The next day, he didn't attempt anything funny, nor did he seem eager to discuss what had happened the previous night. He acted as if everything were normal. Could someone be that drunk to forget about a kiss? I wondered.

"Good morning, Hannah," he greeted me before our flight. "I have something to discuss with you."

I thought he was finally going to talk about the kiss, but instead, he said, "Listen, the client really loved your presentation and the project proposal you made. He wants us to handle the project personally."

I asked, "What do you mean?"

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+10 Points

He clarified, "I mean that this is going to be a long-term project for you, Hannah, and for me too. The firm is going to earn a lot of money from this, and it might even lead to your promotion. Isn't that exciting?"

I was puzzled. "So, you mean I need to come here with you?" I asked and he nodded. "How often?" I asked immediately after that.

He replied, "That means you'd need to move here during the project, and I'd be here too. The client asked for one of the partners to be present all the time, and Myers is older; we shouldn't burden him with this project."

I asked, "You're asking me to move here?"

Stone nodded and said: "Well, yes. At least while this project happens."

"And when will this moving happen?" I asked him.

"Soon. Wouldn't it be nice?" he inquired. "We'll spend a lot of time together," he said.

I made a face, and he continued: "Just think about it, okay?" Then, he guided me toward the airplane without waiting for an answer.

During the flight back to the shores, we didn't talk much. He allowed me to contemplate everything on my own. My thoughts were in turmoil; What the hell am I supposed to do now?

