

Chapter 176: The decision.

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Hanna's POV:

I loved my new career, don't get me wrong. But even with the possibility of having a promotion at the end of this project, I suspected that this move

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had much more to do with Stone than with the client and the firm. In our last few interactions, he made it clear that he wanted to have a relationship with me despite Katrina and my complicated life. But after having a huge discussion with Ethan last night, my decision was made. Well, at least a

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shallow decision: I had no deep feelings for Stone, but I still had feelings for Ethan, and I think that I shouldn't ignore whatever that was for someone that I barely knew.

So, on the next time that we met, I decided to communicate with Stone about my thoughts.

"Excuse me, Mr. Stone, do you have a minute?" I knocked on his door and asked him hesitantly.

"I do, Hannah. Come in," he said.

I entered his office. Mr. Myers wasn't here yet, but I heard that he would be back from another project this week. I believe that since Myers was so amicable towards me, this would make things easier at the office after I tell my decision to Stone.

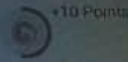
"Please, sit down, Hannah," Stone told me while he pointed to a chair on the other side of his desk.

I didn't want to sit down. I was as brave as the Cowardly Lion in The Wizard of Oz. I wanted to drop the bomb and run for my life. Still, I gulped and sat on the tip of the chair that he pointed to me.

"So, what brings you here, Hannah?" Stone asked me immediately. "Do you already have an answer to my request?"

I nodded slowly and mumbled: "I do, sir." Actually,

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I had the decision but didn't think properly about how I would communicate it to him. "I... I..." I mumbled again. Damn it! Why it was so hard to refuse him?

His smirk vanished and was replaced by a serious face. "Oh-oh," he said. "I see that I will be denied," he observed.

"I'm sorry, sir, but I can't do that," I told him. "It is too soon, I have not enough experience in design to accept such a big responsibility. I feel that I need to learn much more before assuming this kind of responsibility," I told him.

"I see..." Stone told me. "What a shame," he lamented. "I honestly believed that you would be perfect for this challenge," he said.

"Well, I don't think the same, sir. I'm sorry. Besides, I have a baby and all my support is here. I can't ask them to move along with me, can I?" I told him.

"Yeah, you probably can't," Stone told me. "Well, too bad. I will be out working with the client, and I will need someone on the field with me too. I guess I will have to take Katrina then," he mumbled.

I didn't know why he was telling me this. Would it be because he thought that I would be jealous of Katrina by chance? I nodded at him and said: "She

definitely has more experience than I do with this matter."

"But I still want you to visit the project from time to time, Hannah. I still think that this would be useful for your career as a decorator," he said to me.

"You mean visits like last week's?" I asked him.

Stone nodded at me and said: "Yeah, just like last week's. Of course, when Katrina is back here. I can't let the firm without you both," he explained.

I smiled weakly at him and said: "Of course, sir. I think that this type of visit will be manageable."

Stone nodded again to me and said: "I'm sad to hear your decision, but I'm glad that you will manage to visit the project from time to time."

I stood up wanting to go back to my desk. When I reached the doorknob, he said: "Oh, and Hannah,"

"Yes, sir?" I replied.

"Even though you're not coming to this project with me, I want you to know that I'm here for whatever you need me, ok?" He said.

"Thank you, sir," I replied to him.

I was almost outside his office when he said: "I'm here even to talk about what we discussed that day in the show, ok?"

I widened my eyes. He was talking about us having a relationship. Luckily, I was with my back turned to him when he said that. I got myself together, turned at him and said: "I see... Thank you, sir." That was the most generic answer that I could give him. After that, I went silently to my desk and tried to understand all that happened in that brief conversation.

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Later that day, I went to Ethan's to grab Michael back.

"You seem different. What happened?" He asked when he opened the door of his apartment so I could get in.

"Recently, you decided to observe my different moods, didn't you?" I told him.

He just chuckled and shrugged, so I continued talking: "I made my decision, and communicated my boss about it," I told him. "Even though right now I think that I just wasted a huge chance to be promoted, I have to be honest with myself and say that I wasn't ready for all this."

Ethan didn't say anything about my professional status, but deep down I was pretty sure that he agreed with what I just said. I was still a freshman at work. I couldn't be promoted for any other reason but being in a relationship with my boss.

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That was a promotion that I didn't deserve, just like the first one at Brown's. Just the first one, because I really fought for all the others. But if I wanted to do things differently this time, it would be better to do different things to achieve different results.

Ethan finally said something about it: "I think that it is for the best, Hannah. I mean, all your support is here at the shores. You would be either alone with Michael there or completely alone if you wanted to leave him with the people that he knows."

"Well, that's something that I don't need to think about anymore, so never mind," I told him.

"So, how are you feeling now after that?" Ethan asked me.

I thought for a couple of seconds and then I told him: "Relieved in a certain way. You know how I struggle to make a decision, but after that, it's kind of easy to stick with it."

"That's good to know," Ethan told me with a small smile on his face.

After that, I went home with Michael.

Ethan's POV:

I didn't have the nerve to ask Hannah if that decision means that I would have a chance. It

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feels like I would rush her somehow, and I don't want her to think that because this might ruin any chances that I could have to get her back.

But one thing was clear to me: I want her back and I would fight for that. And if I needed to take it slow until she realized that she was still in love

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with me, I would take it slow. With her decision to stay here, I virtually eliminated my competitor, so we probably have a lot of time for me to get her back.

I just needed a good strategy now. One solid and constant strategy that makes her see that I'm the right guy for her. I knew that our baby was the first

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gate for me to talk to her often, but he couldn't be the only one. She already sees it as if I wanted to stay with her because of Michael. I need her to separate things. I needed to have time with her alone.

But how to do that without her seeing this as me hurrying her up?

It wasn't just her who had decisions to make. I have a decision to make too. Casual encounters with her were our thing now, but she didn't realize that I want to evolve into something more romantic. I needed a grand gesture.

I needed to plan something different that she could enjoy and thus I could make my intentions clear and she would know that I'm still in love with her. Luckily I Patricia would be back soon, so we have someone to take care of Michael.

Because now, I would give his mom the attention that she deserves.



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