

## Chapter 4 Over my dead body!

Hannah's POV:

Well, it was obvious that Ethan only had eyes for Tess. Not just tonight, but during our whole marriage. Our marriage was dead and gone, and we had no solution. I decided that I was done for the night and that I wouldn't suffer for it anymore. So, I went back to my bedroom.

When I was going towards my room, I met Vincent who was running down the corridor. He must have been in a hurry because he was still wearing his pajamas and slippers, which were soaked. Soon we would have not one but two people suffering from fever caused by this damn storm.

The hallway was not too spacious and soon we were stuck in that awkward situation when one is in the middle of the path of the other. Before I could move out of the way, Vincent decided that he should tell me the reason why he was at the manor at that late hour.

"Hannah, I came to see Tess. Ethan told me that she is sick."

Vincent was Ethan's best friend from childhood. The type of friend that if Ethan asked him to jump, Vincent would ask Ethan about how high. Although they were close, this courtesy was never extended to me. Vincent was always formal with me, never giving me any space for any kind of friendship.

I guess I knew who had his loyalty.

Either way, I wasn't in the mood to show anyone how Ethan's attitude toward Tess hurts me, so I put a small smile on my face, nodded, and murmured: "Sure, this way." I pointed towards the guest room where the lovey-doves were and headed to my own bedroom.

Honestly, sometimes I really envied Tess. She had Ethan wrapped around her little finger without any effort. No matter how hard I tried, Ethan never gave me a fraction of the attention he gave Tess.

Back in my room, I remembered that Vincent was soaked to his bones, and just like Tess, someone should offer him some clothes and a few towels so he could warm up after being under the storm. I went to my husband's closet and found some clothes that I bought for Ethan that he solemnly ignored and brought to the living room for Vincent.

Vincent quickly took care of Tess, probably measuring her temperature and some other basic exams and then he probably prescribed some medicine to help her with her fever. It didn't take long and soon he was down in the living room again.

When he was descending the stairs, he saw me standing in the living room waiting for him. He smiled a little confused and murmured: "It is already late, Hannah. Why are you still up? You should get some rest. Tomorrow will probably be a tiring day for you, right?"

Yes, he was probably right. Still, I didn't want to recognize my defeat. So, I decided to put another smile on my face and change the subject: "Well, I don't need too many hours of sleep." I handed him the clothes that I had for him and told him: "Your clothes are soaked, and it is still raining outside. You should change your clothes and get warm, or you will catch a cold."

Vincent seemed a little stunned by my offering. It seemed to me that nobody cared about him for a while, so he wasn't used to this kind of gesture. He smiled lightly and decided to refuse my offer: "Thank you, but I will be fine. I'm strong enough to handle the wetness and not be sick."

Still, I pushed the clothes in his hands, insisting that he would wear them to avoid being sick, and told him: "Don't worry, Ethan hasn't worn those. They are still with their tags. You two are about the same size. What kind of hostess would I be if I let one guest like you be sick? Please, wear them if not for me, for yourself."

I didn't wait for his answer to my plea. I simply went upstairs and back to my bedroom. I was not so kind towards Vincent just because I had a generous heart or something like this. Vincent was an internationally famous surgeon who took care of my grandmother when she was at the hospital, but she wouldn't be treated by one of the best surgeons in his area if it wasn't for my family's name. So, you could consider that these clothes were nothing but gratitude for what he did for my nana.

When I arrived back at my bedroom I was completely drained. Today has been a roller coaster of emotions and I didn't want to be awake for another minute, so I popped in my bed and I was basically asleep when my head reached the pillows.

I woke up the next day and realized that the storm was finally gone, and it was sunny outside. The sky was clear, and it would probably be a good day to remember Grandpa Michael. I smiled to myself melancholically because I knew that this was the kind of day that he would have chosen for himself if it was the case. This feeling gave me a little comfort to face everything that I had for the day.

I took my sweet time while I was having a shower because I knew that I would probably face tension downstairs. I chose a simple black dress that was elegant and at the same time demonstrated the decorum that the occasion demanded. I took one last look in the mirror and sighed, trying to delay my appearance in the common areas of the house as long as I could.

To my utmost surprise, when I arrived at the kitchen, Ethan was wearing a black apron. His silhouette was close to the stove, and he was frying eggs. He was chattering happily with Tess, and there was a slight smell of smoke coming from him. He must have lit one of those stinking cigarettes recently.

Tess's bright eyes were looking at him in sheer adoration. Her face was flushed and she didn't look tired anymore. Probably her fever had subsided. Her delicate figure was a presence to be reckoned with in the big kitchen.

"Oh, dear Ethan. I'd like scrambled eggs, please. Just be careful to not burn them again, ok? Last time it was impossible to eat them!" Tess exclaimed excitedly while she fed Ethan a fat strawberry.

Ethan chewed the fruit and looked at her with the same adoration that she showed towards him. Although he hasn't opened his mouth to tell her anything, everyone could see the way he cherished her with just one look.

They were so sweet with each other and weren't paying attention to anyone but themselves. It was quite a beautiful scene like one of those you see in a romantic movie. Too bad I was the third wheel in this affair. Maybe handsome men and beautiful women were made to fall in love with each other.

"They are such a beautiful couple, don't you agree, Hannah?" a voice called from behind and startled me. Vincent crossed the kitchen's threshold and moved towards the big island in the kitchen. I had completely forgotten about his appearance last night. Of course, Tess still needed medical care. Ethan would never let Vincent go back home after a brief examination.

I decided to ignore his comments about Tess and Ethan and smiled at him: "good morning!" Then I noticed that he had changed his clothes to the ones that I handed him.

Noticing that I saw the clothes, Vincent smiled and murmured: "These fit just like a glove. Thanks."

I shook my head to show him that he didn't need to thank me: "My pleasure. I bought these for Ethan, but he never bothered to use them. You should keep them, though."

Our small interaction seemed to finally break the spell between Tess and Ethan. Noticing us standing close to the door, Tess exclaimed: "Hannah, Vincent! You are both awake. Look, Ethan just fried some eggs. You should join us for breakfast. Wouldn't that be wonderful?"

Her tone was excited as if I was the guest and she was the hostess in my own damn house. I was annoyed by her lack of self-awareness, but I knew that she would use my weak spots to win this battle. So, I put a smile on my face before I could answer her. There was no way that I would eat the eggs that Ethan fried especially for Tess, so I decided to answer them: "You shouldn't be bothered by me. I bought some bread and milk yesterday. I will be fine without the eggs."

How dare she act as if she was the manor's owner? After all, it was my name and Ethan's in the house deed. She was nothing but his mistress.

I might be weak, but there was no way I was going to give up and let her take the space that was rightfully mine. Over my dead body!

Still, after my denial, I saw Tess's eyes glint with mischief. She was getting ready to strike again, and I should definitely prepare myself to face it.