

Chapter 41: What's going on, Lucy?

Chapter 41 - Pregnant With The Billionaire's Baby

“What do you mean when you mention something else?” I asked Timothy suspiciously.

“Well, I heard that your last project was delayed a few days and that because of this delay, Brown had lost a good sum of money... I was wondering if this could affect Brown's results...” Timothy murmured to me.

“But we already had delays in many other projects! It is impossible that just one project could affect the results like this!” I told him.

Timothy nodded and said: “Yes, it normally doesn't but maybe your cash flow is smaller this year. Besides, Ethan could be worried that a low cash flow could mean a drop in the price of your shares, and this could definitely sink a billionaire company like Brown's,” Timothy explained.

“So, now that you know this information, what are you going to do with it?” I asked him.

“I will guarantee that if you chose Target, people would never know about it, I mean if your cash flow is low for real,” Timothy murmured in my ear.

Target was Ethan's choice, and although I promoted the bidding, at that moment, I knew that Timothy had to have the winner's offer. That was why this auditing project was so important this year, and if I failed, I would have to bear the consequences, and Grandpa Michael's legacy would fall like a sandcastle.

The bidding winner was AC. Still, I decided to give the job to Target, as Ethan had asked previously. There would be no way that man who kidnapped me would find out, would there?

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A few days had passed by since the bidding and since I left the manor. I thought that Ethan would call me or come to my old apartment to talk but he hadn't so far.

I started a new routine with less stress. I was taking care of my food and sleeping a little better, and my belly was a little bigger. I started to wear looser shirts that would show less waistline to disguise the fact that I was pregnant.

Vincent was coming to visit us at Brown periodically by lunchtime and used any excuses to see me and check on my progress.

I was going back to my office after a meeting, and I saw him waiting for me in my office.

“Hi, Vincent! It’s good to see you!” I greeted him.

Vincent stood and said: “Hi, Hannah, I’m here to check on my patients. Both of them. You know, eventually you will have to do some more detailed exams... you have to come up with a plan to check on your baby,” he murmured.

I nodded at him and murmured: “I will. I promise.” And then, I saw a small food box on my table and a wonderful smell that I’ve learned to recognize and asked: “Is that...?”

“That famous vegetable soup that I mentioned won't upset your stomach,” he completed my phrase.

“Wow! Wonderful!” I exclaimed and started to dig in.

“So, how is the bidding?” Vincent asked me.

“It was nice, and we are finally on track,” I told him.

“And how does it feel to work with Target so far?” He asked me.

“Well, I feel that we still have a bunch of situations to face yet, but so far, so great,” I told him. In fact, we had partially collaborated, because the bidding results just came out a couple of days ago, and this project was very complex, so we were still only scratching the surface.

“Good! I hope everything goes smoothly,” Vincent said.

“Me too,” I murmured to him, and then I decided to ask: “Do you think that Ethan has an ulterior reason to choose Target instead of AC? I mean, this is something new, right?”

“I don’t know, Hannah. Why are you asking?” Vincent looked at me curiously.

“Well, there is this possibility that Ethan decided to change partners because he didn’t want to inform the public about the delay in the hospital project...” I murmured to him.

Vincent shrugged and said: “I guess you will have to ask him about it.”

“Yeah, I think so,” I told him.

I was about to finish my lunch when my cell phone rang. I saw from the ID that it was Lucy calling. Since it was past noon, I guess she had just woken up. The perks of being a bar owner.

“Hey, you!” I greeted her, but I didn’t have time to say anything else.

Her desperate voice invaded my ear; “Hannah, I’m at the police station. I got arrested again! You need to help me, please!”

“Wait a minute, what’s going on, Lucy?” I asked her, alarmed.

“Don’t have time to explain now. Downtown police station. Come quickly, please!” she urged me and then the call was cut.

Vincent looked at me and asked: “What’s wrong?” He knew from my face that everything was not okay.

“My friend Lucy was arrested. She is at the downtown police station. I’m going to check on her. I’m sorry for cutting your visit like this,” I told him.

“This is no problem. I’m coming with you, Hannah.” Vincent murmured to me.

I didn’t refuse his offer. God only knows how I needed support right now. We went to the police station, and at our arrival, we went straight to the main desk.

“Hello, officer. My friend Lucy Stuart is being held here. Could you tell me what happened to her?”

“So, you are Miss Stuart’s contact? Miss Stuart is here because we found in her possession some blue crystal in a good volume. Our investigations pointed out that

she was intending to resell the drugs. This is traffic, ma'am. She will be prosecuted," the policeman explained to me.

"Blue crystal? That's impossible, officer!" I insisted on him. "Lucy does have a bar, but she has zero tolerance for substances in her property. I have known her my whole life, she is incapable of doing this!"

"I'm sorry, ma'am, but it is what it is. We performed a police raid last night in her bar after an anonymous report and we found it. In a great amount."

My legs were shaking, and I was really nervous about Lucy's future because her odds were not good. The awkward part of the whole story was the fact that they found the drugs last night and she called me just more than 12 hours later. But I didn't have much time to think about it. After checking my connections with Lucy, the officer took me to see her.

"Oh, Hannah, thank God you are here!" Lucy exclaimed when she saw me.

"Oh, Lucy, I'm so sorry! Tell me what happened..." I asked her.

"I was set up, Hannah, you have to believe me!" She begged.

"I do. You are my best friend, and I know that you are incapable of doing such a thing," I assured her.

"I bet it was Tess who did this. She came to the bar last night with a tall man. I thought that they were just grabbing some drinks, but then they found the crystal, and she left with a malicious look in her eyes! I know that she has something to do with this!" Lucy confessed to me.

"Why was Tess with another man? Did you see who he was?" I asked her.

"He was tall with cold eyes, and she called him... Alex!" Lucy told me.

"This has to be Alexander! I'm sorry that you've got involved in my troubles, Lucy. I bet that she did this to harm me through you..." I told her desperately.

"Well, I think you are worth more than them, Hannah, and I have faith that the truth will prevail," Lucy murmured to me.

“So, why weren’t you allowed to call me earlier? I mean, all this ordeal happened last night, right? Why did you call me past noon today?”

“Well, the officers told me that they did a detailed search this morning, and after the initial amount of crystal found at the bar, they found another pack in my personal cabinet. That was when I was officially arrested,” Lucy explained to me. “I’m in deep shit here, Hannah. I need your help!”

I looked at her and asked: “Lucy, is there something else that I should know about this? I mean, I’m going to help you, but I need to see the whole picture...”

Lucy gulped and murmured: “I’m not going to hide it from you, but since we decided to leave town, I announced that I was selling my bar, and Ethan bought it.”

I looked at her curiously: “Why would Ethan buy a bar? Isn’t Brown Enterprises a huge piece of work for him already? What does he want with a bar?”

Lucy murmured to me: “Well, I’m not sure, but I believe that he bought it for Tess. I didn’t discuss it when he made an offer, after all, he offered me the double for the bar. I knew we would need the money to leave town, so I didn’t think twice! He even let me work there for a while until I knew what I was going to do. I should have told you before. I’m so sorry, Hannah!”

“Lucy! You should have told me when that happened!” I exclaimed to her.

“I know, okay? I just... With everything that happened, your divorce and your... surgery which I thought was true until a few days ago, I forgot about it.” Lucy whined at me. “Oh, and I believe that he transferred the bar to Tess, but I’m not so sure...”

I was starting to feel the start of a headache. I knew that Tess planned to get to me through my best friend, and now, I had to protect not just me, but also Lucy.

“I will do everything in my reach to help you. I promise you, Lucy.” I told her. We said our goodbyes and I left the area where she was held.

When I arrived at the waiting room of the police station, Vincent stood and asked me: “Is everything okay?”

“If convicted, what can Lucy face ahead?” I asked him.

“God only knows. From 15 years to life imprisonment, it depends on the volume of drugs that the officers found with her,” Vincent explained to me. “Do you have an idea of how much crystal it was?”

I shrugged and murmured: “not yet.” I was scared. If Tess was capable of ruining someone else’s life like this just because of me, she was capable of everything.

“Don’t worry. Police are still investigating and there is still room to defend her,” Vincent tried to comfort me.

“What do you mean?” I asked Vincent.

“I was talking to the policemen at the stand, and he said that they will investigate every possibility. Yes, they found the drugs in her office, but that was a bar. She isn’t the only one with access, right? She has a staff, and they could always be bribed for example. They will analyze and check if she has the substance in her body too. If they can’t connect the drugs to her, they will look into other possibilities,” Vincent explained to me.

“Great idea! Let’s check through the cameras who had access to her office!” I told him, a little more excited.

“I will go with you, but aren’t you forgetting about anything?” Vincent asked me.

“What?” I asked him back.

“Hannah, you have to tell Ethan about this. Maybe he can help,” Vincent told me.

Damn, he was right. Ethan needs to know about this

Chapter 42: Consider it done.

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“Besides, you have to consider that if Lucy was set up, the people who were responsible for planting the drugs in her office might have tampered with the shootings, but you know what? Ethan always has a backup of that insurance

footage. If there is someone who can help your friend, it's going to be him." Vincent added.

"Even at the cost of his mistress?" I crossed my arms in my chest and asked Vincent.

Vincent narrowed his eyes at me suspiciously. "What are you talking about, Hannah? What do you know that I don't?"

"Well, Lucy told me that some of your friends were at the bar last night, and what seemed to be an innocent gathering, I'm now suspecting that it was something more..." I answered him.

"What friends is Lucy talking about?" Vincent asked me confused.

"Tess and Alexander. They were at the bar yesterday. Don't you think it a little suspicious that right on the day they decided to have some drinks at my friend's bar she was arrested for traffic? Lucy barely knows how to recognize this crystal, Vincent! They are up to something. I know that!" I urged him.

"Look, Hannah, I know that it seems a little suspicious..." Vincent started to justify his friends.

"Just a little? I would say a lot!" I interrupted him.

He nodded at me and said: "Yeah, a lot. I know that Alexander doesn't like you and you don't hide that you don't like him either, or that Tess is full of poison toward you in her best days..."

"So, are you at least considering that this is possible?" I asked him.

"Yeah, it is," Vincent admitted. "Still, you'd better be careful when talking about it with Ethan. You can't mention them to him, otherwise, we still don't know who he would protect in this situation!"

"You are probably right," I murmured to him. "I will talk to him first and be careful about my accusations. Do you think that he would give me the images if I just mention to him that I want to help Lucy?"

“I believe so, Hannah. But you shouldn’t mention that Tess and Alexander were there. Besides, they probably didn’t enter her office. They would be idiots if they did so...” Vincent murmured to me.

“Right, I will be careful. Thank you for the tip,” I told him.

Vincent nodded at me and said: “Good luck. If you need anything else, let me know. I need to go back to the hospital. You know, I have rounds.”

I nodded and murmured: “thanks for coming with me,” and then, he took a cab and was gone.

I went back to my car and took a deep breath. It’s been days since I left home, and I hadn’t seen Ethan since the bidding event. I would have to face him and explain my absence, despite the obvious. Moreover, I had to be prepared because there was a chance that he might have brought Tess to the manor. I needed to speak with him alone, otherwise, she would use anything to convince him to not help us.

When I was considering my options, my cell phone rang and there were a couple of messages from Claire. She mentioned to me that she ordered the final reports on the bidding and the documents that should be presented to Target. I decided that I wouldn’t go back to Brown's after the police station. This ordeal took so much of my time that the sun was setting on the horizon when I left the place.

I decided to go back to the manor so I could bring with me some of my clothes. It was still early, so I knew that Ethan wouldn’t be there yet. I climbed the stairs and noticed that both our suite and bathroom doors were fixed.

I was packing a medium suitcase with all kinds of clothes and products that I might need. I decided to take all that I could to my old apartment, so I wouldn’t have to disguise myself when I left town, hopefully with Lucy. Thinking about her was scaring me. The accusations against her were serious, and unless we could prove that she was innocent, she would be in serious trouble.

Suddenly, my phone rang once again. I didn’t recognize the number, so I decided to ignore it, but the first call became a second one, and at the third time, I decided to answer it.

“Hello...?” I answered, hesitating.

“Your naïve girl! What have you done?” A male older voice screamed on the other side of the line.

“Who is it?” I asked, scared.

“You should have given me the job! I know that I gave the most advantaging offer!” the man vociferated.

“Mr. Welch, calm down! It’s not my fault!” I tried to argue with him.

“Of course, it is, Hannah! You choose Target over AC! I know that you did this, and I know why... You want to disguise any issues that Brown might have in their numbers! You should know that I’ve hidden your dirty stuff too! I am capable of doing that again, but now that I’m out, you will see! I will expose any information that I have on you and your firm!” Mr. Welch threatened me.

“This is a crime, Mr. Welch. I know that you know very well!” I answered him, but deep down, I was frightened of what he might reveal.

“You will regret your choice anyway, silly girl!” Mr. Welch vociferated and then he killed the call.

I stood there, frightened of his threat. My breath was shallow as I stood there considering if I had made the wrong choice. Although I didn’t want to do it, there was only one option.

I went to my study where I kept a burning phone in my desk drawer. I unlocked it, retrieved the phone, and called the only number on the contacts list. As the phone tried to connect, I felt my hands shaking. I didn’t want to make that call, but I had no other option.

“Look if it isn't my favorite little bird,” the cold voice answered the call.

“I... I’m sorry to bother you today, I promised you that I would never call you...” I spoke.

“Nonsense, child. Tell me, what do you need? You can consider it done,” he asked me.

“I need information on Mr. George Welch and his company AC Auditing. They will come after Brown Enterprises and I need to be prepared,” I answered him.

“As I said, consider it done. When are you going to pay me a visit, child?” He asked me.

I gulped, and then, I answered: “Soon. I promise you. Thanks,” and killed the call.

I put the phone back in the drawer and locked it. Ethan couldn’t even imagine me calling our informant. It was too risky, and we used to avoid it like the plague. Still, difficult circumstances demanded difficult actions.

I resumed my packing and when I was closing the suitcase, I heard a voice calling me from the suite door: “Hannah, I didn’t know that you were here.”

I turned to Ethan and murmured: “I decided to grab some clothes, and then, I was going to look for you.”

Ethan nodded and then asked me: “Have you eaten already?”

I shook my head and asked: “Have you...?”

“Not yet,” he murmured to me.

“I will cook something for you,” I offered. I was going to please him before asking him for help with Lucy’s case.

Ethan didn’t say a word and I was distracted, so I didn’t see him coming. Suddenly, he put his arms around me from behind and smelled my neck and hair. And then, he murmured: “Stay with me for a while, will you?” and rested his chin on my shoulder. His beard tickled me. Maybe he has been too busy to shave again.

I decided to not resist because I needed him to help me with my best friend. He pulled us into our bed and kept hugging me with his arms and legs. I didn’t say a word, and soon, he fell asleep. Maybe he was just tired. I decided to not wake him up for now and mention Lucy when he was well-rested.

Stuck under Ethan’s arms I had some time to think. What a mess my life was! My marriage was destroyed, I was still pregnant, and my husband didn’t know about it. My best friend who would skip town with me was arrested and I had major issues at work. It was too much for just one person.

Still, I needed this man’s help to get the information that my friend needed. Although I was still hurt by him and annoyed that he had the nerve to choose his

mistress over me, I needed him to find at least the security footage of Lucy's bar. I had to swallow my pride to help someone who always stood by my side, even if this meant that she would abandon her current life to start afresh somewhere else.

I didn't know if I was still tired or if it was the pregnancy, but at a certain point, I fell asleep too.

Later that night, I woke up and when I opened my eyes, Ethan was looking at me.

It was time to humble myself and ask for his help.

Chapter 43: Ethan, be gentle, please.

Chapter 43 - Pregnant With The Billionaire's Baby

"You're awake!" Ethan seemed pleased to see me.

"I am," I murmured to him. Suddenly, he started to stroke my hair and kiss my neck. Was this man a sex addict or has he forgotten our last public encounter? He must be insane, that is it! When he came closer to me, all that I could think was about that damn footage of him with Tess. "Stop it, Ethan! Please!" I tried to roll over and escape from him.

Ethan sighed and put back the shirt that I hadn't noticed he had taken off. He went to the balcony and lightened up a cigarette. He liked to do that when he was frustrated. I knew that this wasn't a good start if I wanted his help. I remained in bed for a while struggling with my internal conflict but then I decided to save Lucy first.

I took a deep breath and left the bed. I went to the balcony and hugged him from behind, just like he did to me before. I laid my head on his back and murmured: "What do you think of taking a shower with me?" I invited him.

His tall and slim body stiffened for a little while, but then he put out the cigarette and turned to me: "Tell me, Hannah: when did this... disgust towards me started?"

So, he knew that I wasn't in the mood.

I bit my lips and lowered my head while I murmured: “I don’t know... maybe after the abortion? I’m not sure...” I gave him an excuse because there was no way in this world that I would tell him what I saw in that tape.

He sighed and murmured: “I have work to do. Maybe another time,” and tried to leave the balcony, probably to lock himself in his office.

But I grabbed his wrist quickly, looked up at him, and said: “We need to talk, Ethan.”

“Okay, what do you want to talk about?” Ethan asked me. He didn’t look annoyed. Just frustrated.

“Well, Lucy is in trouble. Last night the police found drugs in her bar, and she mentioned that you have bought her bar for Tess. Is it true?” I asked him.

“I did,” Ethan answered. “Why?” He asked me back.

“Because we need the footage from yesterday to help her to get rid of jail. Lucy would never do that, Ethan! You have to believe me!” I exclaimed. I was trying to do that in another way, but Lucy was at the jail for too long now. I needed to do something.

Ethan crossed his arms in his muscular chest and narrowed his eyes. Finally, he asked: “Is this the reason why you came back tonight, Hannah?”

I looked back at him startled: “Of course not, Ethan! I... I...” I murmured to him.

“You can’t even come up with another excuse anymore. It’s pathetic,” He sneered at me.

I shook my head in denial, but I couldn’t say a thing.

“And you planned to use your own body to get help for your friend. You didn’t want me because I’m still your husband. You wanted to please me so I could help someone else!” Ethan thundered.

“Ethan, listen to me. That is not the truth, but look, you have Tess and many other friends. I just have Lucy. Will you help us, please?” I begged him.

“Oh, now you have no one but Lucy. How about your husband, Hannah? You surprise me sometimes!” Ethan thundered. He was completely angry, but I couldn’t discuss this matter right now. I needed him to help me save Lucy.

I held both of his hands. It wasn’t worth sugar coating it: “Ethan, I’m so sorry. But please, I beg you! Don’t let my friend suffer because of our private issues...” I started to cry and shake. He was my only hope.

Ethan took a sharp breath and thought for a minute or two. And then, he looked at me with his cold eyes and murmured: “Go to the shower, Hannah. I will be there soon.”

“Wha... what?” I asked, stunned. Was he still insisting on having me after all that we discussed?

“Hannah!” Ethan complained and then, he held me by my waist and lifted me to the bathroom. I was still processing what was about to happen when I heard the shower start. In less than a minute, Ethan had taken off my clothes and I was under the warm water. He came right after me stark naked.

Ethan kissed me hard as if he was a thirsty man in a desert.

“Oh, Hannah, I missed you so much,” he murmured in my ear before he started to kiss my neck.

“Ethan, be gentle, please!” I begged him.

“I will,” he murmured in my neck, and then, he grabbed my legs and lifted me from the tiled floor. Then he backed me up against the wall and I curled my heels around his waist. I squealed because the wall was freezing cold, and I heard Ethan chuckle softly in my ear.

Ethan's strong hands caressed me up and down. This man knew how to push my buttons and my body betrayed me. Even though I was hurt, I still wanted him, at least physically.

Ethan kissed me hard again and I gasped for air after every kiss.

But suddenly, I felt a sharp pain in my lower abdomen. This pain scared me. Something was wrong. Then, I looked down and saw blood diluted in the water.

"Ethan, please stop! I'm bleeding!" I begged him.

He was alarmed by the fear in my voice and looked down. The pool of blood had increased alarmingly.

"Ow," I crouched down in pain. Ethan was still transfixed looking at me. I considered my options and there was no other way, so I said, "Ethan, please get me to a hospital, quickly! I need to see a doctor!"

This type of pain was different from any other that I had from the beginning of this pregnancy. Something was terribly wrong, and I needed to be checked. Ethan snapped out of his trance when he heard my request. He nodded and turned off the shower immediately. A second later, he was wrapping me in a fluffy towel and hurriedly carried me into the bedroom.

Maybe I was just too nervous because when he sat me down on our huge bed, I hadn't noticed that he had wrapped a towel around his own waist, but now that he was hurrying toward the closet, I saw that he wasn't completely naked anymore.

A minute or two later, Ethan came out of our closet dressed and brought me a simple change of clothes.

"I'll call Vincent, he'll know what to do," Ethan told me, but before he could finish dialing Vincent, I felt another stab of pain in my abdomen.

"Ouch! It's late to call Vincent. I really need to go to the hospital, Ethan!" I could not stand the pain and decided to lie down on the bed.

Ethan nodded and started dressing me like I was a giant doll. I didn't know if I should resist or give in to the pain I was feeling, and every second my despair increased. Ethan was also becoming more tense as he was seeing my suffering.

Once I was dressed, Ethan carried me out to the car and laid me down in the backseat. He climbed into the driver's seat and screeched the car out of the mansion's driveway.

He called Vincent once, twice, until finally, he answered.

"Ethan, what's wrong?" Vincent's voice came through the car speaker.

"Where the hell have you been?" Ethan asked him in frustration. It wasn't Vincent's fault, but Ethan couldn't help it when he got nervous.

"I was on hospital rounds, Ethan, but now I'm here. What happened?" Vincent asked, used to his friend's explosive manner.

"It's Hannah. Something is wrong with her. She's bleeding. Was this damn surgery done correctly? If my wife has a sequelae, I'm going to sue this damn hospital!"

I don't think I've ever seen Ethan curse as much as he did that night, but Vincent decided to ignore his friend's threats: "Okay, bring her to the hospital immediately. I'm already informing the team so that she can be seen immediately when you arrive."

"We'll be there in three minutes," Ethan said and then hung up.

Those three minutes felt like an eternity to me. The desperation of risking losing my baby haunted me, and telling the doctors in front of my husband that I was still pregnant haunted me even more. My heart was beating fast, and my breathing was shallow.

Finally, we arrived at the hospital. As soon as Ethan opened the car door to pick me up, there was a gurney waiting for me. The doctors rushed me inside and the attending doctor asked me, "Ma'am, what's wrong?"

There was no other choice. It was now or never: "I'm nine weeks pregnant, and I've had a bleed and I'm in a lot of pain. Please, you have to help me!"

"What?" Ethan asked, completely confused.

"Please, there is no time, sir. You can discuss this matter later," the doctor said to Ethan, then turned to me and said, "Let's take you to the exam room to find out what's going on. It's going to be okay," and the medical team took me inside.

All I could see as they rolled the gurney into the exam room was a hurt, angry Ethan, but I'd deal with that later.

Now was the time to save my baby.

Chapter 44: Is the baby fine?

Chapter 44 - Pregnant With The Billionaire's Baby

After crossing the hospital doors, I felt another pang in my belly and I gradually lost consciousness.

When I woke up, I was in a hospital room. It was dark outside, probably past midnight. There was a monitor beeping around and my arm was connected to a tube. I looked around and saw him, sitting in the dark. I just could distinguish his figure from the chair, but I couldn't see his dark eyes.

Has he been here the whole time?

And then, I remembered what brought me here, and instinctively put my hand on my belly. My heart started to race, and the monitor started to beep irregularly.

“Hey, are you awake? Calm down,” Ethan said while he put his hand on top of mine. His voice was soothing. And then, I realized that the pain in my belly was gone. I breathed relief and asked: “What... what happened?”

Ethan stood from where we were and went to the other side of the room to fetch a glass of water for me. And then, he came with the glass toward me. “You should drink some water. The doctor said that you might wake up thirsty.”

I nodded, sat up, and grabbed the glass to take a small sip, but was he avoiding my question? “Is the baby fine?” I insisted.

“And were you going to hide it from me? I am the father, Hannah! I have the right to know that your baby is still there!” Ethan put his warm hand on my belly.

I didn't know how to answer it. He was right, I was trying to hide the baby from him. “I know that I did wrong, Ethan, but Tess threatened to kill herself if I didn't do it, but I just couldn't! I was pretending that I did so, but this baby and the decision are mine, not hers to make!”

I couldn't see his face in the dark, but I could feel that he had stiffened by my side, so I decided to continue: “I'm so sorry, I didn't want to lie to you, but she wouldn't believe that I've done it if you didn't suffer. If you don't want it, I can divorce you. I offered it several times. And I promise that I will go away, and we won't interfere

in your life with Tess. You are upset, I know. But I promise you, we will leave and never come back...”

“What really upsets me, Hannah, is the fact that you have already judged that I shouldn’t be part of our child’s life. In your opinion, I am worth it. That is what is bothering me!” Ethan had his hands clenched into fists.

“That isn’t the case, Ethan. I’m just worried that you won’t want it because of Tess... I just decided to get out of your way...”

“And you still have the audacity to claim that what you did was thinking about me! That you want me to be free! You take me for granted, Hannah!” Ethan sneered. I was pretty sure that he was trying to restrain himself. “Hannah, you listen to me: I want this baby as much as you want it. You keep this child safe for both of our sakes!” I didn’t know if I was reading correctly, but I bet that he was furious and bursting with happiness at the same time.

Well, at least he had answered my question and I could relax a little bit. I remained silent thinking about what he told me.

In the morning, a doctor came to check on me and explained what happened: “Well, Mr. and Mrs. Brown, what happened was that Mrs. Brown exerted herself with stress and later, you tried to have sex. You must know that in the first three months, the baby is still very delicate, so Mrs. Brown shouldn’t be exposed to a huge amount of stress, and you should be careful in the future, okay?”

I nodded, mortified about the reason why I was at the hospital. Ethan remained with an admirable poker face. The doctor made a few more exams and explained something that I should pay attention to along the way and then I was free to go. When she left my room, Ethan and I were stuck in an awkward silence.

I knew that Ethan was fighting to control both anger and exhilaration. So, I decided to interrupt his thoughts and murmured to him: “Ethan, let’s go home, shall we?”

He looked at me as if seeing me for the first time. But before he could say anything else, I murmured: “I haven’t eaten anything last night. I’m hungry, and the baby is hungry too.”

This little joke seemed to make an effect. Ethan smiled at me, stood up from his chair, and gave me his hand: “Let’s go. What do you both want to eat? I will buy anything you want!”

I smiled at him and murmured: “No, I don’t want to eat anything that the restaurants sell. I just want to go home, keep quiet and eat your famous pancakes for breakfast!” I wasn’t fond of anything in particular, but I wanted to get out of that hospital.

Ethan nodded at me and murmured: “Right, I will take care of the discharge paperwork and I will come to get you. Wait for me here.”

I was still with a tube in my veins, so I laid down and pressed the button to call a nurse. Less than five minutes later, a nurse entered the room and removed the tube from my arm. When she was about to leave, she gave me a last recommendation: “Ma’am Brown, you should rest for the day. Try to take it easy from now on, for your baby’s sake...” So, this woman knew that I was a Brown.

And then, she looked at me one last time and murmured: “Ma’am, you should know that your husband is very fond of you. When you entered the examination room, Mr. Brown didn’t leave the waiting room. He was all the time worried about your condition, and asking questions about how everything was going. He looked anxious and a little frustrated. It was kind of funny to see such a powerful man so powerless in that waiting room. I just think you should know,” she said and left me alone.

I nodded at her and stood there thinking about what she said to me. The first time that I was at the hospital, Ethan didn’t stand the whole night. Was he doing this because of me or because of the baby? I bet it was because of the last.

“Earth to Hannah,” Ethan called me. He was leaning against the threshold with his arms crossed, but relaxed. He had a small bag in one of his hands. I looked at him, and he asked me: “What were you thinking about?”

I smiled at him but didn’t answer his question: “So, what do you have in your hands?”

“A lot of prescriptions, hormones, and other types of medicine that a pregnant woman needs. Let’s go home, you’re good to go,” Ethan told me, and then, he came to me and lifted me in his arms.

I was embarrassed because he was carrying me bridal style through the hospital corridors. “Ethan, let me go, I can walk on my own,” I murmured to him.

“Well, if you want to go home, you are going to remain where you are. You aren’t supposed to make any effort today, and I am willing to fulfill the medical orientation!” Ethan exclaimed to me.

I was red as a tomato by the time we crossed the corridors, and he sat me in the passenger seat of his car. And then, Ethan sat by my side on the driver’s seat and looked at me. He inclined himself toward me and I thought that he was going to kiss me, so I said: “Ethan, there are people outside. You are not very fond of PDAs. Someone could take a picture of us!”

But then, he fastened my seatbelt. That was the reason why he came closer. I was so embarrassed again!

“What were you thinking that I was going to do, Hannah?” Ethan asked me just to provoke me.

I looked outside and murmured: “Nothing, it was a misunderstanding,” I murmured.

I heard Ethan chuckle by my side, but it wasn’t a mocking chuckle. He seemed almost... pleased. And then, I felt his fingertips hold mine. I looked at him and he was driving with his left hand and holding my hand in his right one. He lifted my hand and kissed each one of my fingertips.

“Do you have any other cravings beyond my pancakes?” He offered.

My heart skipped a beat from the way he was looking at me. It was as if he was seeing me for the first time.

“I don’t think so,” I told him.

“Well, let me know if something else comes to your mind,” He answered me.

Back at the manor, Ethan stopped the car and left. He was at my door even before I could open it. He opened it from outside and offered me his hand.

I refused his help and said: “Don’t bother. I can do it by myself.”

“Nonsense,” he murmured and carried me bride-style once again. He carried me inside and sat me on the sofa. And then, he started to separate the doses of medicine that I should take in the morning. A few minutes later, he came back with them and a glass of water and said: “Come on, take them!”

I made a face, and he raised an eyebrow at me. And then, I murmured: “fine,” and took the pills.

“Good girl,” he said excitedly when I finished taking the medicine.

“You don’t move, I will prepare my pancakes and we can eat breakfast together,” he told me and left the room. “Oh, I almost forgot! I have a surprise for you later,” he winked at me and left me alone.

What kind of surprise could it be?

Chapter 45: Surprise!

Chapter 45 - Pregnant With The Billionaire's Baby

Ethan went back to the kitchen, and I could hear the noise of pans and pots over there. Yet, he would come back every five minutes to check if I was really resting on the sofa. Twenty minutes later, a sweet aroma started to come from the kitchen. It was mouthwatering, but I was still feeling morning sickness, so I was kind of wary of eating breakfast. Suddenly, he appeared from the kitchen and carried me to one of the stools on the island.

“I’m not that hungry anymore, Ethan...” I tried to warn him. I didn’t want him to get disappointed if I threw up the whole food.

“But you have to try, Hannah. For our baby’s sake...” Ethan insisted. “Maybe small bites and sips?” he offered.

“I will, but I won’t promise to keep it in,” I murmured to him. But that seemed to be enough to cheer him up. He put a plate in front of me with pancakes and fruit, and a cup of black coffee, the way I liked.

“I didn’t know you noticed how I liked my coffee,” I murmured to him.

“You would be surprised if you knew the number of things I know about you,” Ethan answered mysteriously.

“Such as...?” I asked him.

He simply chuckled and shook his head. He was in such a good mood that I didn’t insist. I simply tried the pancakes and they really were fantastic. Tess was right, although I didn’t want to admit it.

“You didn’t eat everything, Hannah,” Ethan murmured by the end of our breakfast.

“I’m taking it slow, just as the doctor said, you remember, right?” I told him.

“Touché,” he answered me and chuckled. “So, what are you going to do now?” Ethan asked me.

“I have so much work to catch up... you see, my best friend is in prison, and I left work earlier yesterday because of her...” I started to list the things that I had for the day.

“No way! You are going to rest!” Ethan crossed his arms in his chest.

“Ethan, I need to work. You gave me this task, and as a director, I need to fulfill my duties,” I insisted.

Ethan thought for a while and then murmured: “Fine, just because if you don’t catch up, we will deliver our auditing numbers late. But I will ask Claire to come here and work from our home today, so you can relax anytime you want.”

It was a compromise, so I nodded at him and said: “Right, but it doesn’t resolve Lucy’s case. I have to help her, Ethan. She only has me.” I used the opposite to not upset him.

“Leave Lucy to me. I will find a way. You have my word.” Ethan told me.

I nodded at him and emphasized: “I will trust you with this, okay? Don’t let me down.”

Ethan raised his hands in a surrender gesture and said: “I won’t.”

I nodded at him and murmured: “right.”

Ethan stood from his stool and started to clean up the mess he did while preparing breakfast. "Leave it there. You cook, I will clean. It's fair." I told him.

"No need, I will just let them in the sink, but you don't have to wash them. I will explain later, it's part of your surprise," he said.

I nodded at him, but couldn't help my curiosity: "What is this surprise?" I asked.

"You will see soon," he murmured to me, kissed my forehead, and left for our bedroom. I could hear the sound of water running from the shower. He was getting ready to go to Brown's. At that moment, I received a message from Claire. She would be here in one hour. I decided that I should go and have a shower after Ethan and get ready to receive her in my private office.

I climbed the stairs and entered the suite. I chose something comfortable to wear. Summer was starting, and the weather was getting warmer by the day. I chose a short dress and separated the hanger from the dress for the day.

"What is this?" Ethan asked me. He left the bathroom with just a towel hanging dangerously from his hips. His chest was glistening with water drops that he hasn't dried yet.

I blushed furiously and murmured to him: "Well, this is my dress for today. I decided to get comfortable to work from home," I explained.

"But this dress is too short!" Ethan exclaimed. "I never liked it!" He complained.

"Don't be like this! I'm going to work from home!" I argued.

"But there will be someone else here!" Ethan insisted.

"It is just Claire!" I answered him and crossed my arms in my chest.

Ethan sighed but then he murmured to me: "Alright. Just promise me you will put on a coat if you decide to go somewhere, okay?"

Another compromise, I thought to myself. I looked at him for a second or two and murmured. "Fine," and this seemed to lighten up his mood once again.

I took a quick shower, put on my dress, and put on light make-up. Claire didn't know that I'd been at the hospital last night, so I tried to disguise the tiredness from

a night that I slept away from home. Ethan was waiting for me to say goodbye before he left for Brown's.

When we went downstairs, I heard an awkward sound that came from our kitchen. I was alarmed thinking that this might be a burglar, but Ethan seemed calm. I looked at him and whispered: "What is this?"

Ethan chuckled and murmured: "Your surprise, dork." I could help but chuckle with him. His good mood was contagious.

I went to our kitchen and found Patricia cleaning the countertops. Ethan knew that she was coming! That was the reason why he told me to leave the dishes where they were.

"Surprise!" Ethan murmured in my ear.

"Thanks!" I smiled at him.

"It's so good to see you again, Patricia!" I entered the kitchen and hugged her.

She hugged me awkwardly, trying to not throw soap on my dress.

"Oh, dear girl. It's good to be back serving the Brown family. You know, after old Michael passed, I was completely alone on that farm. Ethan's invitation was like a breath of fresh air for me." Patricia affirmed. I always liked her, and now she was here!

"So, how long are you going to stay? I need to enjoy every moment of your visit." I asked her.

"I'm here to stay, child. Ethan hired me to take care of you and later, your baby. You won't be alone here anymore," Patricia said.

Ethan cleared his throat from the kitchen doorway.

"Er, I mean, you'll have someone other than your husband to stay with you during that time," Patricia clarified.

"Well, it's really nice to have you here," I told her before there was an awkward silence between the three of us.

Patricia nodded and told me, "Well, today I'll just clean up after breakfast, but starting tomorrow all meals will be prepared by me."

"Yay! I love your food!" I exclaimed. When I was brought to Grandpa Michael's house, I used to eat Patricia's food every day, and it was something else, especially because I'd lost my grandma recently. She was like a second mother to me.

"How about my pancakes?" Ethan demanded.

"Oh, they were good too, don't be jealous!" I told him, and Patricia chuckled.

Ethan nodded and murmured: "Good, that was all I wanted to know. I have to go now, you ladies have a good day," and left the kitchen.

"You have a good day too!" I shouted at him and turned my attention to Patricia.

A minute or two after Ethan had left, Patricia asked me: "So, do we have an heir or heiress on the way?" she could barely contain her excitement. Patricia wasn't technically family, but some people always commented that she was more than an employee for Grandpa Michael. In fact, part of his testament was dedicated to her, and she definitely wasn't left destitute by his death. Besides, when my own grandmother passed away and left me with Grandpa Michael, I lived with them before I got married to Ethan, so she was special to me, and knew that she was free to ask me such a thing.

"Yeah, long story short, now Ethan knows, and this will turn my life harder from now on," I murmured to her.

"What do you mean, child?" She asked me.

"I mean that now that Ethan knows, he will probably not let me leave. You see, I was planning to live on the shores, away from him, Tess, and their friends, but yesterday I thought that I was miscarrying, and now he knows," I explained to her.

"What are you saying, darling? He is the father. He has the right to know about it, even though you were willing to hide the baby from him," Patricia advised me.

"I know that what I was doing wasn't completely right. Yet, I can't stand this situation anymore. This triangle between us and Tess. It's not healthy for me and building a family on this kind of foundation wasn't what I had imagined for my life," I explained to her.

“I got it,” she murmured. “Well, I’m not here to take sides. I’m here just to take care of you both. Starting with your favorite foods. You have no idea what I am planning to do for lunch!” Patricia exclaimed excitedly.

“Coming from you, it can’t be bad!” I exclaimed to her.

“So, did you give Ethan the wooden box that I gave you at the funeral?” Patricia asked me.

“Not yet, we had a serious discussion after that, and everything went south. I still have it, though. By the way, what’s in there?” I asked her, curious.

“Well, first, you have to understand that…” Patricia was nervous but still decided to start to explain to me, but the doorbell rang. Claire arrived.

“You are busy right now, so am I,” Patricia dodged answering me. “Maybe at another time,” she offered, relieved.

“This conversation isn’t over, lady!” I warned her and went to open the door for Claire.

Chapter 46: You are not the only one, Timothy.

Chapter 46 - Pregnant With The Billionaire's Baby

“So, how is Brown?” I asked Claire.

“Same old,” Claire murmured. “Just that annoying Mr. Brown’s friend talking behind your back that you left early yesterday and didn’t appear today as always…” Claire wasn’t a gossip, but she couldn’t stand Alexander just as I couldn’t.

“Alexander? Now he thinks that he works for HR. He is so pathetic,” I murmured to her.

Claire chuckled and said: “Yeah, I’m glad you are a director and don’t have to justify yourself to him.”

“Me too,” I told her, and we both laughed.

“So, what do we do first?” I asked her.

“Well, Mr. Chesterfield called you in the first hour. I told him that you were unavailable, but he’s been calling every fifteen minutes,” Claire told me.

I sighed. Timothy was too persistent for his own good. “Fine, I will give him a call,” and I held out my hand for her to give me the corporate phone, but as she handed me the device, it rang, and predictably, it was him.

"No need," she mumbled and laughed softly. "I'll wait outside," she said and left.

"Thanks," I murmured to her as she closed the door behind her.

“Hello?” I answered Timothy’s call.

“Hey, Hannah! Nice hearing from you!” He greeted me excitedly.

“Hi Timothy, I hope you are doing fine,” I greeted him.

“Sure,” He answered. “Listen, I was hoping to catch up with you so we could sign the documents to celebrate our agreement, but your charming secretary said you weren’t at Brown’s...” Timothy said.

“Yes, I decided to work from home today,” I told him without any further explanation. “But I still can send someone to your office to send you the contract so you can sign it,” I offered.

“Or I could go visit you and sign it personally,” Timothy offered excitedly.

“No need to,” I cut him.

“Well, I must insist, so we can discuss other things. Just give me your address,” Timothy told me.

I sighed and gave him my address. I knew that this wasn’t wise, but at the same time, I couldn’t displease the company's newest business partner.

Half an hour later, Timothy was driven to my personal office at the manor. I was reminded of Ethan's demand and put on a coat to disguise the fact that my dress was too short for a business meeting.

"Hello, Hannah! Casual! I like it," Timothy murmured when he greeted me. I could see that he was checking my whole body and mentally cursed myself. Ethan was damn right.

"It's good to see you too, Timothy. So, straight to the business to not take so much of your time. Here is the contract, and I believe that you will find everything in order," I offered him the mountain of papers and sat back down on my chair. "Did you already start the project?" I asked him.

"I did, and we are at a good pace," Timothy answered me. Great! At least something in my life was on track.

Timothy didn't wait for my invitation to sit in front of me. He took the papers, nodded, and made himself at home by sitting down on the chair in front of my desk. This man was impossible!

"Excuse me, Hannah. Mr. Welch is on the phone. He insists on meeting you. Are you available soon?" Claire asked from my office's door.

"Not in the near future, Claire. Our business with AC is done. Our new auditing firm is Target," I told her, pointing to Timothy.

"Wait a minute, Hannah, maybe your business with AC isn't done, after all," Timothy said.

"What do you mean?" I asked him curiously.

"I mean that Target Auditing is responsible only for Brown's Enterprises auditing. I never mentioned that we would be auditing the satellite companies," Timothy explained.

"But some of them are part of Brown's now! Alexander's firm, for example. They merged with us last year. They are Brown's now!" I demanded.

"I'm sorry, Hannah, my proposal was for the original company, not related to mergers and acquisitions that happened recently. This is out of my jurisdiction," Timothy raised his hands in a gesture of defense.

Seriously, this guy was giving me a headache!

I sighed, and Claire asked me: “So, what can I say to Mr. Welch?”

“Tell him that I will call him later. I need to check on this matter with Ethan,” Claire nodded and left the room. Right when I thought the auditing was working properly, Timothy said something like that to me. And to think that I had circumvented the bidding to give Timothy the job as per Ethan's wishes. Had I jeopardized the project?

I looked at Timothy and he seemed as if he hadn't told me something serious five minutes ago. “Look, Timothy, you don't have to sign the contract right now. Let me discuss this whole ordeal with Ethan and I will send you a new copy of our agreement,” I told him that but deep down what I wanted was for Ethan to convince him to audit all of Brown's, satellite companies included.

“Sure,” Timothy dropped the contract on the table, crossed his fingers under his chin, and looked at me expectantly.

“Is there anything else?” I asked him clueless.

“Aren't you going to invite me for lunch? From what I can smell, your maid is making a delicious lunch and I'd like to try it.” He asked me.

I was pissed at him. How dare he call Patricia my maid, and moreover, how dare he to think that he could invade my lunch like that at my own home?

“Claire,” I called, and she appeared immediately. “Please, ask Patricia to prepare a takeout for Mr. Chesterfield here.”

Claire nodded and didn't say a thing. This girl knew when to remain quiet.

“I'm not asking for a takeout, Hannah, I'm asking to have lunch with you,” Timothy clarified, and continued: “Do you think I'm that boring? I asked you to dinner and then to go to the movies, and now to have lunch with you, yet you ignored me. I'm trying to get to know my business partner better!”

I knew that he was full of bullshit, so I turned to him and said: “Look, Timothy, I appreciate your consideration to come over here to sign the papers, although that didn't work the way we planned. But let me make this crystal clear: I'm married,

with no intention to divorce my husband. We can cooperate in business, but that is all, okay? Can you please respect me?"

Timothy stood there as if I hadn't said a thing. Five minutes later, Claire came in with a small food container and murmured: "Your lunch, Mr. Chesterfield."

Timothy glared at her but took the container from her hand and murmured: "thank you." And then, unbelievably, he sat down on the couch in the back of the room.

Since he was pretending that I wasn't there, I believe that there wouldn't be a problem for me to pretend that he wasn't there too, so I remained silent analyzing the documents at hand.

"Look, Hannah, I'm sorry for the trouble, but I had to inform you. No one can guarantee that Alexander's company hasn't had any problems prior to the acquisition. I can't guarantee that last year's balance for his company was masked to cover an issue. That is why I am making this clear. Maybe next year, after this project, we can include them in our project," Timothy offered. "Besides, including all the satellite companies, I won't be able to deliver the auditing on time," he explained.

"But you never performed Brown's auditing either!" I exclaimed at him.

"But I have Ethan's confidence. I don't trust Alexander..." Timothy murmured.

Well, you are not the only one, Timothy, I thought to myself.

"Okay, Timothy, you gave me a lot to think about, but now I need to be alone," I told him and called Claire. "Claire, could you accompany Timothy to the door?" I asked her. "I'll talk to you soon, Timothy," I told him and started massaging my temples to ease the headache.

"Okay, take care, Hannah," Timothy murmured and was finally gone.

Claire came back five minutes later and murmured: "He is finally gone. Look, Hannah, I know that he is charming and everything, but don't you think that he is too young to manage a huge auditing firm like his? Do you trust him? Besides, this story of auditing one company and not the other, this is odd..." she murmured. Claire knew that she could talk to me freely like this.

“Well, I won’t make any decisions right now. I will talk to Ethan about all this. He was the one who chose Timothy’s company, after all,” I murmured to her.

Claire nodded at me and said: “Right. So, lunch is ready, do you want to come down and have a meal?” She invited me.

“I will,” I told her, and we went down for lunch.

Patricia’s food was, as always, delicious. I was considering taking food from home to work from now on for as long as she would be here, but I wasn’t with my heart at the food today. I looked at my cell phone and there weren’t any messages from Ethan about Lucy, and this was making me worried.

After lunch, I told Claire: “You continue working on the auditing project. All the papers are on my desk or my computer, and you have access. Don’t wait for me.” Then I took my purse and my car keys to leave home.

“Hey, child, where are you going? Aren't you supposed to rest and work from home today?” Patricia called me on my way out.

“I was, but I am more worried about my friend Lucy. I’m going to see her at the police station,” I explained to her and went outside.

If Ethan wasn’t willing to solve this matter as he promised, I would help my friend.

Chapter 47: An interesting dinner

Chapter 47 - Pregnant With The Billionaire's Baby

I drove straight to the police station with no other worries in my mind but to set Lucy free. I found the same policeman that talked to me yesterday and asked for further details of the investigation, but it wasn’t fruitful:

“I’m sorry, ma’am, but since you are just her friend, I can’t give you more details, but I would be happy to share them with Miss Stuart’s lawyer.”

I nodded at him but insisted: “I got it, officer. But can you at least inform me if the surveillance tape was analyzed?”

“We couldn’t find anything, ma’am. The bar surveillance system was down that night, probably because of what was happening at the bar.” Of course, they wouldn’t give a chance for anyone to find out what they did, right?

“I understand, officer. May I at least see Lucy?” I asked him.

“I’m sorry, ma’am, but due to no new evidence, I’m not allowed to let you visit Miss Stuart.”

I sighed. This incursion was fruitless, and I was still risking making Ethan angry with me for disobeying his request to rest at home. I left the police station thinking about what kind of influence my husband could have on this case. Well, at least, we could offer Lucy the best lawyer the money could afford.

I decided to go to Lucy’s bar to see if I could find something in the place that could indicate who planted the crystal there, but after the police research in the last twenty-four hours, the bar was sealed by the investigators. I sat down on the sidewalk trying to decide what to do next when Ethan called.

I picked up the phone and murmured: “Hey, Ethan,”

But he didn’t give me time to say anything else: “Where are you now, Hannah?”

“I’m at home! Working as I told you that I would do,” I told him.

“Liar!” Ethan murmured, and I saw him pulling the car up in front of the bar. Was he tracking me down? “When did our home become Time’s bar sidewalk?” Ethan asked me after lowering the car window.

“Are you tracking me, Ethan?” I asked him. I didn’t want to explain myself to him. I didn’t promise him that I wouldn’t leave home.

Ethan got out of the car and walked over to me, “Why are you here, Hannah?”

“Why are you here, Ethan?” I asked him back.

“I came to do exactly what I told you I would do, Hannah,” Ethan snorted. “But apparently, you can’t contain your anxiety, can you?” He asked me.

“And did you find anything?” I asked him hopefully.

"I still haven't gone in to look! You beat me to it, Hannah!" Ethan exclaimed.
"Anyway, I'm the only one who can enter the establishment. Well, at least, the one authorized. But I decided that I could come back here later. Let's go!" Ethan called to me and opened the passenger's door.

"Oh, I drove all this way, Ethan..." I mumbled to him.

"Leave the car there. I'll have someone drive you home," Ethan insisted with the door open for me, and I had no choice but to accept his proposal.

Inside the car, Ethan asked me, "So, did you actually work today or just play detective?" He didn't seem upset about the fact that I had left the house.

"Of course, I worked!" I exclaimed. "By the way, we have a problem, Ethan," I told him.

"What happened this time?" Ethan asked worriedly.

"Timothy went to sign the contract and informed me that Target will be solely responsible for auditing Brown's," I told him.

"What does that mean?" Ethan asked me confused.

"That means that our satellite companies won't be audited by Target. What do I do now?" I asked Ethan.

Ethan shrugged and muttered, "Well, give the rest of the audit to AC and everything will be taken care of," Ethan answered my questions.

"Wait a minute, can the two companies work together?" I asked Ethan surprised.

"Well, the alternative is to break the contract with Target, and at that point that would cause us more trouble than it would help us because I gave my word to Timothy and his family," Ethan told me.

"Okay, I'll get in touch with Mr. Welch and arrange everything. That will probably assuage our old associate's rage," I told Ethan. In a way, that would make the person who blackmailed me walk away and I might even give up on collecting all possible information about Welch that I had asked my associate yesterday.

It was then that I realized we weren't going to the side of the city where our house was. "Where are we going, Ethan?" I asked him.

"We're going to a special place to have dinner," Ethan told me.

"Okay, but where?" I asked him.

"First, we go shopping for a new dress," Ethan told me as he looked at me.

"Why? What's wrong with me?" I asked him. Was my dress dirty? Was I inappropriate?

"I told you your dress was too short!" Ethan exclaimed.

"But that's why I'm wearing the coat!" I insisted.

"And that's not enough. Where we're going, you'll need a cocktail dress," Ethan explained.

"Where are you taking me?" I asked Ethan. He simply pulled up in front of an elegant boutique and opened the car door for me.

Inside the boutique, I tried on nearly a dozen dresses until one pleased both of us. It was a dress that matched my original coat, and it called for killer high heels.

I felt beautiful that way until Ethan looked down at my feet and said, "No way! Pregnant women can't wear heels this high!"

I crossed my arms and mumbled, "That's ridiculous, Ethan! I feel good this way!"

"But it can hurt your legs!" Ethan insisted.

"I'll worry about that when my belly starts to weigh," I snapped. But I couldn't help thinking that his concern was a bit...romantic.

As we left the boutique, I noticed that several people were staring at us, especially women that were eyeing my husband. Ethan always commanded attention, and now I felt beautiful and fit to walk beside him. It was the first time I didn't mind all those stares that had bothered me so much for two years. Perhaps it was because it was the first time I had imposed my will on this relationship.

Still, I was a little angry because he wanted to decide what I should wear or not.

“What is this face now?” Ethan asked me.

“What face?” I asked him while I crossed my arms in my chest.

“You’re mad. I can see that,” Ethan told me.

“Yes! I am!” I exclaimed at him.

“But why are you mad, Hannah?” Ethan asked me.

“I...” I didn’t know how to explain it to him. After all, I left the boutique with the heels that I wanted. I won the discussion, but I was still angry.

“You should calm down, Hannah. It isn’t good for a pregnant woman to get stressed,” Ethan held my hand and kissed the tip of my fingers.

I was silent trying to calm down. I was angry, but I didn't know if I was right to be like that anymore. It was then that Ethan entered a private residential area. A few minutes later, we entered the gates of a European-style mansion. Just the gravel road the car was passing was wonderful, and I began to wonder who we would be visiting.

Something about that path felt familiar, like the memory of another life... The life of someone who had been happier than I was. Maybe I’ve seen this place somewhere like in a movie or something.

As we approached the mansion, I couldn't contain my curiosity: "Ethan, what are we doing?" I asked him curiously.

"We're visiting some friends," he answered me.

A butler opened the car door for me and helped me out. I thanked him and soon Ethan was at my side offering me his arm.

As we entered the doors of the mansion, a woman with an elegant figure and brown hair greeted us at the entrance.

"Ethan! It's so good to see you!" The woman told Ethan.

"Hello, Georgie. It's great to be here too!" Ethan exclaimed at her.

Then she looked at me and widened her eyes a little, "Is this Hannah?" She asked.

"Georgie Chesterfield, this is my wife, Hannah Brown," Ethan introduced us.

Wait a minute, was this Timothy's mother Georgianna?

She held her hand and I shook it, "Oh, it's so nice to meet you, darling. You're beautiful, and so elegant!" She greeted me.

"Thanks! It's nice to meet you too," I smiled at her and mentally thanked the heavens that Ethan had taken me shopping for an outfit earlier.

"Oh, come on you two. It's time for dinner," Mrs. Chesterfield invited us in. We were ushered into a wonderful dining hall that was already practically full. There were several high-society couples there, most of them middle-aged.

I was introduced to several names in high society that night, and people were in high spirits at the pre-dinner cocktail hour. Several side conversations were going on and I discovered that one of the guests was the state police commissioner. Maybe if I had the opportunity to talk to him about Lucy, he might be able to help.

But before that could happen, Georgie Chesterfield called everyone's attention: "Everyone, please! Let's sit down! It's time for dinner. I believe everyone has arrived."

"Not everyone, Mom," Timothy said and entered the dining hall.

I saw Ethan's smile fade from his face.

It would be an interesting dinner...

Chapter 48: The Commissioner and the Kidnapping

Chapter 48 - Pregnant With The Billionaire's Baby

"Hi, Tim! I thought that you wouldn't come," Georgie exclaimed, surprised.

“And I wouldn’t, Mom. But I found out that you invited my good friends, the Browns, so I decided to come and say hi,” Timothy told her and then, he walked straight to me.

Timothy took my hand in his and kissed the back of it: “You look stunning, Hannah. It is wonderful to see you,” Timothy had a mischievous smile on his face. Then he finally looked at Ethan and murmured: “Ethan.”

Ethan nodded seriously to him and murmured: “Timothy.”

“Oh, you know each other!” Georgie exclaimed.

“Yes, we do. I am currently having the opportunity to work closely with Hannah,” Timothy explained.

“An opportunity that I am regretting every day,” Ethan murmured. Georgie looked at him curiously, and he explained: “Now I have a competitor,” and we all laughed, although Ethan’s laugh didn’t get to his eyes.

“So, let’s all sit down!” Georgie urged us, and we took our seats at the table.

“Everyone, thank you for coming tonight! I know that we all have busy lives, so I understand that this is an occasion that is getting rarer and rarer. So, I propose a toast: to our friendship!”

“To our friendship!” Everybody exclaimed and raised their glasses. I had an orange juice glass at hand, different from the rest of the table that had champagne in their glasses.

“Orange juice?” Timothy, who sat by my side, asked me.

“Yes, I’m avoiding alcohol,” I murmured to him without further explanation.

“So, Commissioner, have you met Ethan and Hannah Brown? Ethan, Hannah, this is Commissioner Chilton,” Georgie introduced us. There were several parallel conversations happening at the same time, so there weren’t many people paying attention to us.

“It’s nice to meet you, ma’am,” Commissioner Chilton greeted me.

“It’s nice to meet you, Commissioner,” I answered him. “So, being in such an important position at the police must be hard...” I incentivized him to talk about work. He seemed like someone who liked to talk about business.

“Not as much as being a director of your own company,” Commissioner Chilton murmured. But still, he started to explain a lot of the perks of being in the police.

It didn’t take long and soon he was talking about drug traffic. That called my attention, but not many invitees wanted to talk about it.

“The fight against drugs must be endless work,” I murmured to him.

"Certainly, young lady," the commissioner murmured. "We recently had a massive crystal seizure, and we are still investigating it."

"Unfortunately, I heard about it. The accused is a longtime friend of mine, but unfortunately, the investigation is not moving forward quickly," I commented to him.

"And do you think she would be able to do that?" The commissioner asked me, interested.

I looked into his eyes and replied firmly: "I don't believe it, sir. I believe someone set her up to take the blame, but little evidence was found."

"Unfortunately, no. Estella's case shook the country, although I don't remember it very well. I was a kid back then too."

I nodded at him, and he continued: "All I know is that our family helped in the search as much as they could, but neither the police nor the richest and most influential families in the country were able to get anything done. Georgie’s marriage with the Baron ended, even though Timothy was still small. The Baron no longer trusted her for losing his daughter on the beach and died of grief a few years later." While he was telling me this story, Ethan was stroking my belly unconsciously, as if trying to protect our child from kidnapping.

I paid attention to his gesture and decided to ask him: “Ethan, are you especially fond of children?” He had never been this sweet with me before. Not in two years of marriage. And now, he was so careful toward me. I think the news about my pregnancy caused him a change of heart.

He never answered me, though. He simply reached out to me and said, "Are you feeling better? If so, we need to get back or people will think we're taking too long."

I held his hand and let go of the fact that he didn't answer my question.

By the time we got back to the lounge, thankfully it was dessert time, and that platter of fish was already gone. Timothy looked at the two of us holding hands and a shadow passed over his eyes. His mother noticed the interaction and murmured something in his ear, and he smiled slightly at her.

We stayed for about another hour, chatting and having fun with the guests while we ate what I began to think were the best desserts in the country. Around ten o'clock at night, the guests began to leave, and we all left.

"Thank you again for your hospitality, Mrs. Chesterfield," I thanked her as we said goodbye.

"Honey, call me Georgie, and you're always welcome in my house. Come another day, we can have ladies' tea!" She invited me.

"It will be a pleasure," I told her and then went to say goodbye to Timothy.

"Well, I guess I'll see you at work then," Timothy said and again kissed my hand. His sass was under control today, but never far away.

"I guess so. Good night, Timothy," I told him and got into our car.

I didn't see the trip back to the manor because halfway through it, I fell asleep.

I woke up the next day and I was alone in bed. It was almost eight in the morning and Ethan had already left for work. I dragged myself into the bathroom and took a quick shower, and as I was stepping out of the bathroom toward my closet when I heard my phone ringing.

I couldn't believe my eyes. The caller ID indicated that the call was from Lucy. But wasn't she arrested?

"Hello?" I answered a little hesitantly.

"Hi babe! It worked! I'm out of prison!" Lucy answered me.

Oh, thank heavens for the good news!

Chapter 49: Hey, you!

Chapter 49 - Pregnant With The Billionaire's Baby

“Hi, babe! It worked! I’m out of prison!” Lucy answered me.

“Wait, what?” I asked her, relieved. I could hear the sound of the streets in the background of the call. This was real. Lucy was free!

“That’s right! I got out today! I can answer my inquiry in liberty!” She answered.

“Oh, Lucy! I’m so happy for you! Tell me, did anybody tell you what happened?” I asked her.

“Well, the investigator told me that the pack they found in my office might be planted, because there were no fingerprints on the shelf, cabinet door, or even my office, and this was awkward. It was as if someone had sanitized my office. Lucky me I didn’t have time to go there between the last time that I was there and the time they planted the crystal.” Lucy explained to me.

“Oh, thank God!” I exclaimed. “So, what’s next in this case?” I asked her.

“Well, they are still looking for the surveillance footage, but the evidence is circumstantial, so I will respond to this process in liberty,” Lucy explained to me.

“Wait a minute. Are you telling me that this footage exists? The officers in the police station mentioned that the surveillance system was off that night!” I questioned her.

“The hell they were off! I never switch that thing off. Besides, the system has a backup in the cloud. The only problem is that I gave Ethan the password and I bet he already changed it. So, I don’t know if the footage still exists in there,” Lucy explained.

“We have to keep looking and keep hoping for the best, Lucy. There is still hope!” I exclaimed to her.

“Yeah, a tiny one, but there is still hope,” she murmured to me.

“Oh, Lucy, I’m so happy for you! I’m so relieved!” I exclaimed to her.

“Still, I can’t leave the city, Hannah. It means that I can’t go to the shores with you, I’m so sorry,” Lucy sighed.

“I know, darling, but we still have a lot ahead of us, right?” I agreed with her.

“Besides, things changed for me too, Lucy. Ethan found out that I am still pregnant, so I’m not so sure how things will develop from now on,” I explained to her.

“What? I’ve spent two nights in prison, and you are the one who has huge news?” She asked me. She was in an excellent mood, even though her problems weren’t even close to ending.

“Well, long story short, I went to him after I visited you at the police station because if he owns the bar, he owns the footage. One thing led to another, and suddenly, I felt a pang in my lower belly and was losing blood. He was the one who took me to the hospital, and I had to confess in front of him that I was still pregnant,” I explained to her.

“Oh, my God! Ethan must be pissed with you!” Lucy exclaimed like someone who just heard a good piece of gossip.

“Yeah, he was. Now, he is... different,” I told her.

“What do you mean by different?” She asked me, curious.

“It’s hard to explain, but I will talk to you about that later. I believe that I’m staying here for a while just like you. Well, at least until you are all clear to go and my situation with Ethan is solved too,” I explained to her.

“Whoa! I need to see you! It’s been just a couple of days and we already have so much to catch up!” Lucy exclaimed.

“I agree. I need to see you too, but I think you need to rest properly, and I have work to do. Will I see you tonight? We can catch up while having dinner,” I suggested to her.

“Great idea! Being a prisoner made me hungry for things they can’t provide at the jail! I will call you later after making the reservations!” Lucy exclaimed and killed the call.

I chuckled at myself. I didn’t know if it was a result of my conversation with the Commissioner last night or if this was Ethan’s doing, but I was relieved anyways. Now was the time to get Lucy a good lawyer, search for this footage, and evaluate her chances in court.

Well, there was much to do before meeting her at night, so I continued with my daily tasks. I chose a light dress to go to work today. It wasn’t as short as yesterday’s dress, so I didn’t choose a coat to cover my legs. I also decided to wear shorter heels today because honestly, my poor legs were tired from yesterday, and I was hoping that Ethan wouldn’t notice my choices and tell me that he was right. By the way, where was he?

When I went downstairs, I was hoping to find Ethan at his study or at the breakfast table, but the only person in the kitchen was Patricia. When she saw me, she opened a wide smile to greet me.

“Good morning, Hannah! I hope you are doing fine today!” She told me.

“I’m good, and you, Patricia?” I asked her.

“I’m good,” She smiled sadly at me.

“What is it?” I asked her.

She sighed and murmured: “It’s nothing, really. I just saw Ethan this morning and he reminded me of old Michael,” she explained to me.

“You really miss him, don’t you?” I asked her.

She nodded and said: “Every day, especially when I was alone on that farm. You see, you were like the granddaughter he never had and one of the few who visited him often when he was close to the end. And since you were so special to him, you’re special to me too, girl. Besides, it’s good to be here, still working for the family...”

“You are family, Patricia. You are someone who accepted me in the family better than his blood relatives,” I told her, and then, I squeezed her hand and said: “Well, maybe if I have a boy, we could baptize him Michael, after his great-grandfather.”

A single teardrop came from her green eyes, and she murmured: “That would be beautiful.” She shook her head as if coming out of a trance, and continued: “But now, it’s time to live the present. So, I made this breakfast, especially for you!” Patricia exclaimed.

I looked around and saw the whole table covered with all sorts of breakfast foods: “But this is food enough to feed an army battalion!” I exclaimed to her.

“I decided to do a little bit of everything, and you can try all this. I will cook the things that you like most often,” Patricia explained.

“But you can’t expect me to try all these things today!” I exclaimed to her. “Why did you cook so much food?”

“I did it because Ethan told me so. He says that pregnant women should eat more...” Patricia explained to me.

“He is so bossy sometimes. If he only knew how difficult it is to hold the food inside...” I sighed at her, but since she was still looking at me with puppy eyes, I told her: “Fine, I will try everything I can and give you a score. The rest we leave for tomorrow.”

Patricia smiled at me and murmured: “Good.”

“Speaking about Ethan, where is my husband?” I asked her.

“Well, he left earlier today. There was someone calling him nonstop. I believe that he had an emergency at work,” Patricia explained.

I nodded at her and murmured: “Right.” But then, I looked at the hour and saw that it was already getting late.

I ate a few mouthfuls of some of the dishes and murmured: “Okay, that’s it. I’m already full and I don’t fancy getting nauseated in the morning. Besides, I will get late if I don’t run.”

“But you just ate a few mouthfuls!” Patricia complained.

I raised my hands at her and said: “I’m sorry. I can’t take it anymore.”

“Let me at least put some fruit in a container, so you can take it to go!” Patricia exclaimed and hurried to fetch a small plastic container. When she filled it with fruits until it reached the top, she gave me them.

“Thanks, Patricia. I promise you I will wake up earlier tomorrow so I can try more of your food.” I told her.

“Anytime. You have a great day at work, Hannah,” she told me, and I left for Brown’s.

Traffic wasn’t stuck but it wasn’t easy either. I didn’t want to arrive at the company in the nick of time, especially because in the last few days, Alexander was acting as if he was from the human resources department. I was getting annoyed by his attitude and was about to have a word with Ethan about him.

It was 8:59 A.M. when I crossed Brown’s Enterprises Hall that morning. I wasn’t at my office, but I was at the building already. Well, at least I wasn’t late.

I was waiting for the elevator to arrive on the first floor when I heard a commotion happening behind me.

“Excuse me, Miss! You must wait in the hall! You can’t do that!” One of the receptionists exclaimed.

I heard the click of high heels crossing the hall in a hurry, and a scream: “Hey, you!”

I turned to see who was causing the mayhem, but the person was too close.

The last thing I saw was a hand hitting me in the face and my vision blurred.

Chapter 50: This can’t be good

Chapter 50 - Pregnant With The Billionaire's Baby

“Hey, you!” a female voice exclaimed. It was Tess who was coming full force toward me.

Smack! She slapped me on the face and my vision blurred. But I wasn't that weak, so I stood and prepared myself to retaliate against her attacks. If she wanted war, today she would have it.

“You lied to me! You're so ridiculous, Hannah!” Tess roared at me.

Did I lie to her? Was she talking about my baby? I didn't even know that I should warn her that I was still pregnant. My baby was my concern. Mine and Ethan's only.

I was still confused and processing that when she raised her hand once again and prepared to hit me once more.

Not today, Satan, I thought to myself and held her hand in the air.

“You don't look like your usual fake saint, do you, Tess? Be careful, or your mask will fall off completely,” I whispered to her.

This warning made her even angrier, and she roared: “You...” She tried to release her wrist from my hand and attack me once more. She was going to curse me again but decided to stop when she heard hurried footsteps coming through the corridors.

I stopped to pay attention to who was coming down the halls because it didn't look good for a director and the CEO's wife to create a scene in the company lobby, but Tess was quicker. Before I knew it, she had let go of my hands and thrown herself onto the first coffee table she saw next to her to pretend that I had pushed her.

This act was getting old and frankly, it was wearing me out. The day was not far off when I would actually do what she so often accused me of doing.

Some people came from all the corridors, Ethan and Alexander included. When they found us, I was standing in front of Tess while she was slumped on the floor, with a nasty cut on one of her hands as a result of throwing herself into a vase of flowers on the coffee table in the hall.

Alexander ran towards Tess, bent down, and asked her: "Tess! What happened? Are you okay?" He had an overly concerned look on his face. Almost like an actor

overacting his performance. I narrowed my eyes looking at him. Something seemed out of place...

Then he turned to me and snapped, "You've gone too far this time, Hannah. Do you think it's okay to hurt Tess like that just because she's your... rival?" If this was a word game, he was choosing theirs carefully.

Did I go too far? She was the one who slapped me! Would I now have to go after not one but two security footage to prove my and Lucy's innocence?

I decided to ignore Alexander because his opinion didn't matter to me. Instead, I turned to Ethan and asked him directly: "Tell me, Ethan, If I say that I didn't push Tess, or better if I tell you that she was the one who slapped me in the face and was trying to attack me again would you believe me?"

Ethan's eyes were cold but still, he analyzed me. I bet that my face was still pink from Tess's slap. Still, he murmured: "Let's not cause a scene at the company hall, and you shouldn't have lost your mind like this, Hannah..."

I must have been having an out-of-body experience... My skull began to tingle as if someone had thrown an ice bucket at me. It couldn't be that Ethan was believing this nutcase more than he was believing me.

It seems that all the tenderness of the last few days was completely fragile when it came to Tess.

I laughed at him, not because I was amused by what was happening, but in a fit of hysteria. "Oh my God, how naive I am!" I murmured.

Ethan grimaced and muttered, "What are you talking about?"

"I can't believe I let myself go for a moment..." I told him, and then my face hardened, "Don't worry, I won't believe that anymore, and I'll stick to my original plan."

I felt ridiculous, but at the same time, it felt like my eyes were open for the first time. Without waiting for any response from Ethan, I took off walking toward Tess.

I fought back nausea, crouched down where she was still lying, and told her, "Next time you try your tricks on me, be careful of being aggressive. I'm still pregnant."

I said this to throw this information in her face. She was filled with fury and tried to insult me once more: "You..."

Smack! I didn't give her time to insult me and slapped her across the face with gusto, just as she had hit me earlier. My hand even hurt from the force I did. And then, I smiled sweetly at her and whispered: "This is for you, since you've decided to behave like the mistress you are, you don't deserve my respect, you homewrecker. Oh! And don't you dare walk around here like you own the place! I'm still here!" I exclaimed and got up.

Our little scene was attracting curious glances from several employees. I noticed that the office was becoming a whimpering mess. I didn't feel like staying there anymore, so I decided to go back home and work from there.

I walked alone through the halls until I reached the building's parking lot. And that's when Ethan caught up with me.

Ethan caught me by the wrist to stop me. I turned to him and said, "Let me go! You have no right to hold me like this. You can go comfort the love of your life as I know you want to."

My words and attitude were serious, and he immediately let go of my wrist as if he'd been shocked. I walked back to my car without looking back again.

Inside the car, however, I changed my mind about going home. Ethan would definitely look for me there, and Patricia would ask a lot of questions. I considered going back to Lucy's house, but I knew two things: First, there would be no food in her house. Normally her diet was already careless, let alone after spending a few nights in jail. Second, she would be sleeping, and I didn't want to wake her up then.

I wandered for an hour or two through one of the city's parks until I decided to stop at a supermarket around lunchtime and stock up on Lucy's fridge.

Shopping was not something alien to my life. I was used to it because before I married Ethan, I was responsible for doing the shopping in my small house with my grandmother. But to my infinite surprise, I found a figure that seemed extremely out of place in that mundane environment: Timothy.

Timothy looked as if he had walked into that market just to get rid of someone, and that was even more evident when a petite woman with an angelic face chased him

down aisle after aisle through the market. I followed them from afar, reveling in his misfortune. What I didn't count on that would happen was that Timothy had seen me, and he hurried towards where I was standing.

"Oh, no. This can't be good," I muttered to myself.

"Help me!" Timothy exclaimed to me. "Act as if this was no news to you," he told me and held my hand.

"So, Natasha, this is the one I've been telling you. Natasha, this is Hannah. Hannah, this is Natasha. You know, I loved her for over ten years now, and she finally gave me a chance. You see, we are even engaged!" Timothy grabbed my hand to show her the expensive ring Ethan gave me on our engagement occasion. "So, please, you have to let me go, darling," Timothy pleaded with her.

Natasha looked me up and down, and her eyes had the redness of holding back a cry of rejection. So, she finally looked at Timothy and said, "I can't believe you dumped me for her, Tim! She's old! What does she have that I don't?" She asked.

Was I really looking that old? And why was I meddling in those two kids' arguments?

I tried to pull away from Timothy, but he held my hand and wouldn't let go.

Timothy continued: "Natasha, remember when we were still studying in high school, and you found that picture in my wallet? If you look closely, it's her... It's Hannah. I loved her from the beginning. I'm sorry."

The little angelic face then turned to me with those big brown eyes and a silent tear rolled down her cheeks. She had believed Timothy's lie. Then, suddenly, she turned and walked away without another word.

"What the hell do you think you're doing?" I asked Timothy. I looked at our hands and he was still holding me.

Timothy dropped my hand and murmured: "Look, I'm sorry, Hannah. It's just... I broke up with Natasha, but she insists on not acknowledging that our relationship is over. So, I saw the opportunity and I took it," Timothy explained without an inch of remorse.

I sighed and decided to ignore Timothy. I took the items that I chose to the closest cashier, but he didn't understand that I didn't want to talk to him. He continued following me everywhere. I looked at him and asked annoyed: "What is it now?"

Timothy looked a little embarrassed. He scratched his neck and muttered, "Well, part of what I said is still true. I like you, Hannah. And honestly, I don't understand why you're still insisting on this marriage to Ethan. Come on, I can make you happy. I'm younger, and I'm even richer than him if you're worried about your finances," he said.

This guy had no idea how much this conversation was pissing me off. I simply glared at him until he realized he would be better if he shut up. But his reading of my posture was completely wrong.

Then he smiled and said to me, "Look, I'm not saying this so that you'll ditch Ethan tonight and go to my place. Just...think about it, okay?"

Then, slowly as if he were a predator and I was his prey, he wrapped his arms around me. I knew what he wanted before he even got close enough.

That boy was going to kiss me.