

Chapter 8 He came, after all.

Hanna's POV:

I couldn't help but look around along the way. Deep down, I felt that Ethan would be here soon. He should be here. He couldn't be that heartless, could he? It was almost noon when we arrived at the cemetery, and Ethan never came.

It was a beautiful nal ceremony, and soon Grandpa Michael was buried. Everybody started to say their goodbyes quietly. Finally, Uncle Terry and Aunt Elizabeth came to say goodbye to me.

Uncle Terry hugged me. He probably pitied my situation. "Hannah is good to see you despite the circumstances, but now you should go back and talk to Ethan. You should mend things. And please, don't resent my father for what he did. He did believe that you two were meant to be together. I'm sorry it didn't work for you."

I nodded and murmured: "Thank you, Uncle Terry."

Aunt Elizabeth snorted coldly and then commented sarcastically: "Well, I guess your father wasn't a good matchmaker, after all. Look at them! Both are suffering in this relationship."

Uncle Terry glared at her comment and answered: "You don't know a thing about their relationship. Anyway, we should mind our own business." And then, Uncle Terry looked at me and said: "Well, dear girl, it is getting late, and it is a long way back to your home. Michael is nally resting, and we should be going. If you need anything, you can call us."

"Thank you again, Uncle Terry," I told him, and they went back to the Brown estate. I remained there in silence for a few minutes more, looking at them walking away from me. The Brown family was small, and now although just one member had passed away, the emptiness was huge, especially to Uncle Terry, who only had his bitter wife. Their only hope of having an heir lay absolutely on Ethan's shoulders, and he probably had lost one today.

It was a nightmare for the family.

As for me, soon I wouldn't have their last name anymore. But it wasn't the last name that worried me. After Grandpa Michael passed, all my hopes to mend my marriage vanished. It felt like the sun was setting on the horizon, and it would be a long and dark night. Just like a long winter, and I had no perspective of summer.

Everything felt so empty, and I felt so lost.

I turned to Grandpa Michael's tomb, put some owers that I had brought with me on the top of the dirt, took a deep breath, and decided to say my goodbyes: "Well, Grandpa. It was an honor to be part of your life and even part of your family. I'm sorry that things didn't happen the way you had planned, and I swear, I did my best. I will miss you, but I will carry on. Thank you for everything, and I hope to see you someday."

I bowed in a gesture of respect and turned to go back to my car and face my misfortuned life, but at the moment that I turned around, I froze in my place.

When did Ethan arrive here? Was he watching the whole ceremony from afar?

Ethan had cleaned up and was dressed all in black appropriately. That was a good thing, considering that he was dressing in colors this morning to take Tess to the boutique. His face was wiped from any emotions, as always. His eyes left me and fell on his grandfather's grave. Although his face was emotionless, his eyes had a myriad of feelings running through them.

And then he turned to look at me once again. When he saw that I was looking at his reactions, he controlled himself once again and murmured in a low and cold tone: "Come on, Hannah, let's go!"

Had he come all the way here just to pick me up? I didn't believe so. It was his grandfather who died, after all.

He never waited for me after telling me to go with him. He simply turned around and started walking toward his car. I knew that he must not be processing the whole ordeal of the day and that he should be mourning for his grandfather, but he never did that. So, I decided to suggest to him: "Ethan, Grandpa Michael is gone. You should process your own feelings about it. He was like a father to you after your own parents died in that terrible car accident. You should take some time to process everything..."

Ethan turned on his heels with his cold face marked by fury. His threatening posture was enough for me to decide not to say anything more. Perhaps the day had been too long for him, and only he could decide how to digest the feelings he was having. I braced myself for his sarcastic words that so often hit me like blows, but he just didn't say anything. He just walked back towards the car.

I followed him out of the small cemetery in silence, as a small puppy follows its owner. Since Ethan was here to pick me up, my car would be collected later by one of our employees, so it was already sent to Brown estate's garage. I had no other alternative but to hop in Ethan's car or sleep at the Brown estate, but by the way that Ethan was behaving, sleeping here was out of the question.

Ethan started the car silently once again, and it was awfully silent at the car too. It was worse than at the cemetery, and I felt the temperature drop a few degrees all because of his mood.

I thought about having a small talk at the car, but every time I looked at Ethan's gloomy face, I gave up, as cowardly as I was. Finally, after what seemed an eternity, I took a deep breath and asked him: "So, how is Tess?"

It seems that Ethan still wasn't ready for me to mention his beloved's name, and thank goodness the road was empty. He slammed on the brake, and perhaps due to the inertia of the movement, my body was thrown forward. Lucky for me, the seat belt was secure and kept me in place, but not before putting pressure on my chest and abdomen. I instinctively put my hands on it to protect it from any impact.

When I had the chance to look at Ethan, his pupils were dilated, his nostrils were open and he was beyond furious. I could feel the imminent danger, and I knew that I could cut the tension with a knife. I decided to try to explain why I was asking about her: "Ethan, I..."

"What do you want from her, Hannah? Haven't you done enough already?" Ethan interrupted me, annoyed, and then he noticed that I was still holding the small wooden box. Recognizing the object in my hand, he smirked sarcastically and asked: "Or do you think that now that Michael is gone and he gave you that damn wooden box I won't leave you anymore. It doesn't matter how many attempts you and his memory will try against me. Our marriage is dead and gone, Hannah!"

My heart sank at his words. He still didn't understand why I was asking about Tess. I knew that I wouldn't amend our relationship. I was just worried about her. But at the same time, it was hard to hear from him what he was thinking of me. I was tired of people feeling sorry for me, and Ethan pitied me, but his pity was annoyed, even exasperated. Besides, he knew what that wooden box would mean to Grandpa Michael and to us and still, he didn't care.

"I just wanted you to know that I didn't push her, Ethan. I swear to God, I did nothing to her!" He looked at me with disdain but said nothing. So I continued: "I honestly don't know what is in the box that Grandpa Michael left for me. And no, I wasn't intending to use it against you to keep you tied to our marriage. If you want to leave that much, that is okay! I agree. Tomorrow morning, we can sign the papers and le them to the court to start the whole process. I don't care!"

The weather outside got dark, reecting the discussion inside the car. Soon, thick drops of rain fell on the ceiling, making a mued noise and making the environment even colder, while reecting our state of mind.

My words seemed to surprise Ethan, who probably was expecting me to give him the box and insisted on remaining married. This surprise didn't last long, though. Soon he decided to get back on track and answer my previous question. "Tess is still at the hospital," he murmured. After a few moments, he decided to ask me: "Now that you decided to nally sign the papers, are you going to leave our house?"

And then, quickly, he was back to business. I shrugged and answered him: "I haven't thought about it yet. What do you want me to do?" After all, if the manor was really important to him and brought me so many bad memories, I didn't care to leave as soon as possible.

"I want you to take care of Tess in her convalescence. That seems to be a suitable punishment for this whole ordeal, don't you think?" Of course, he wasn't going to let this situation go easily, but if anyone asked me if I thought the whole situation was minimally fair, I would have to say no.

I didn't answer his proposal. I decided to get ready to face that vixen once again. This unhappy day seemed to have no end after all.