

There is not enough money in the world to make dealing with some people worth the effort.

That was Sam's initial impression of Hannah Randolph, and it came to

her five minutes into their FaceTime conversation.

She, however, was going to make every attempt to forge a relationship,

with her first line of attack being a bonding sesh over their mutual col- league.

"So, I actually went to Columbia with Amy."

"Who?"

"Your editor, Amy."

"Oh, her," said Hannah as she flipped back her bouncy curl blowout.

"She bit the dust long ago. I couldn't stand her. I mean, she acted like she was the one who wrote the damn book. I told the publisher it was her or me."

There was no love lost between Sam and her one-time classmate, but she was extremely put off by how cavalier Hannah sounded about taking another person's job away, especially since, if she recalled correctly, Amy had been the one who got her published in the first place.

Sam attempted to get out of her mind the mental image of Hannah racing through the publisher's halls like the Queen of Hearts in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, shouting, "Off with her head." Now that her go-to strategy had bitten the dust, Sam switched gears and

focused on explaining how important it was for her to meet with Hannah, feel her out, and get a firsthand impression of her before designing the marketing program for *The Anti-Wife* show.

Hannah, as Sam was quickly finding out, always had another idea from what was being presented to her, and it didn't even matter from whom the idea was being generated. No matter what anyone came up with about anything, even choosing a shade of lipstick, Hannah's next sentence would begin, "Yeah, but what if . . . ?"

The budding reality star had already flat out vetoed Barry's suggestion for a sit-down in the Applause conference room with Sam and the team, where they would watch and dissect the current show footage while eating a catered lunch.

Sam's first assignment for this project was to turn that "no" into a "yes," but was unprepared for what Hannah's "yes" would entail.

"I don't want a meeting with the team. I want you—doing a deep dive into my day-to-day."

Sam would be required to shadow her, the reasoning being that only then would the marketing consultant be able to understand the guru, her credo, and the Anti-Wife movement.

Sam translated “shadow” in a wishful-thinking way, meaning “spend a little time,” and tried to negotiate a few dinners peppered with *SATC* girl talk-cum-talking points that could translate into ad copy, but the Anti-Wife again was having none of it.

“So, starting Monday, you’ll stay at my house in East Hampton for a couple of weeks.”

“Ex-excuse . . . I mean, what a generous offer, but—”

“No buts. I host these dinners with a different bunch of friends; each

group is an eclectic mix—actors, models, politicians, business people, artists, writers. I invited my mail carrier once and had one of the cater-waiters join in another time. We talk about the movement and the reality of marriage as opposed to the fantasy most people have. Everybody agrees that marriage adds an unnecessary burden to life. I love getting feedback from everywhere and everyone.”

Sam thanked Hannah Randolph for the chance to learn her business in-depth, then asked if she could call back to confirm.

Seconds later, Sam turned into a whirling dervish screaming for Katie to “get Rogers on the phone,” her sense of urgency usually reserved for a 911 emergency.

“Sounds fun,” Barry said nonchalantly upon hearing of the invite. “You, though, sound upset. Don’t you like the Hamptons? Don’t you like Hannah? Don’t you want this job? We already signed a contract.”

In lieu of a paper bag, Sam breathed into her cupped hand while Katie laid a cup of ice water in front of her using her left hand and momentarily blinded Sam as the sunlight reflected off her diamond ring.

When the entrepreneur took the assignment, she had no idea how all-consuming it would be and feared that what was turning out to be a glorified babysitting job would cut into and perhaps jeopardize the work she needed to do for her other clients.

“Of course. I guess I was just taken aback. She’s a bit much.”

“No, she’s too much. And that’s why Hannah Randolph will make great TV; that’s why everyone who works on this potentially rewarding project will placate her.”

The exaggerated way he said “everyone” made it clear that Sam would need to pack her bags for the East End. And as Katie noted: “Buckle up.”