Ex-Husband's Regret by Evelyn M.M Chapter 16

Ava "I missed you mommy, why didn't you call me?" Noah asks me, sadness in his voice.

I wanted more than anything to hold him in my arms. Just to reassure myself that I was still with him. That I wasn't going to leave him motherless.

"I'm sorry my love, I lost my phone and I had to borrow your dad's" "Can we do a video call? I want to see you" he demands.

I know he senses that something is wrong but I can't let him see me lying in a hospital bed. He will worry and want to come home. Given that I am now a supposed target, I couldn't risk whoever is after me going after him.

I still couldn't believe that there was a chance I was a main target. That someone wanted me dead.

"Not right now baby, they don't allow video calls where I am" I lie.

"That's a st* pid rule! Who makes such st* pid rules?" He screams through the phone.

I know that he is frustrated so I was going to let this slide.

"Noah... "I just want to see you mommy, can't dad make them leave you alone? He can make them give you permission, I know he can" he was close to tears and it was breaking my heart.

I look at Rowan and he is grinning like a fool. Noah knows how his father operates. He also knows that one word from Rowan Woods, and everyone bows down.

"Not this time... how about I call you tomorrow and we can skype?" "You promise?" "I promise" I was getting discharged today so that would give me enough time to prepare for the call tomorrow "Okay mommy, talk to you tomorrow. I love you" "Bye baby. Love you too" "Grandma wants to talk..." I hang up the phone before he can finish that sentence, I know it's wrong but I just don't want to Rowan stares at me, one of his eyebrow raised A look I can't explain passes across his face. I've asked him to leave so many times but he won't budge. I even asked the nurse to throw him out and he threatened to have the entire hospital shut down.

My unwanted guest is here every day now. Being around him this much is suffocating me especially after that day when I woke up to find Emma and Travis in my room. Travis left the room a couple minutes later to get something to eat. The moment he did Emma was on me like a rayenous vulture.

Three days ago "Your little trick won't work Ava" Emma sneers the moment Travis leaves the room.

"What the hell are you talking about?" I was in no mood to deal with whatever was going on with her. She seemed hell bent on something and I wasn't well enough for whatever shit she wanted to stir up.

"This little accident of yours, I'm sure you planned it to get Rowan's attention, but I'm telling you, I won't allow you to get close to him" I laugh The vibration shooting pain to my injured ribs.

"Let me get this straight? You believe I planned for my car to be blown up so that I could end up in hospital in order to get Rowan's attention?" Man was she delusional. And everyone thought that I wasn't the brightest in the family, they should hear their perfect Emma and the bullshit she was spilling.

"Of course...I mean why would anyone want to kill you? What would they gain? Rowan doesn't love you so he wouldn't care one bit if you lived or died and we also don't care much about you. You're insignificant so you death would mean nothing to us" she looks at me with scorn.

I have never wanted to hit anyone like I wanted to hit her right now.

"So you came here to insult me is that it, Emma? Beat the dog while it's still down, that's you plan?" Why the hell was she even here? Who let her in, I wanted her gone. I didn't want her near me, who knows what she'll do once I'm a sleep. 1 "I'm not doing anything, just saying things like they are. I hope that gang doesn't kill you first, I mean, I want you to watch as I take everything away from you just like you did me, including your son. He will soon be calling me mom" How the hell were we even related? I know what I did to her was wrong but damn haven't I been "You're a nasty bitch Emma, but know one thing, Noah will never see you as his mother. don't you remember how he ignored you at the airport. You're nothing to him and you will be nothing even if you and Rowan married" Her face scrunches up. Anger taking'over the triumphant look she had seconds ago.

"That's fine...at least it's my name Rowan is screaming at night, I will make sure he pumps me so full of his cum that I get pregnant and when I do he will soon forget about you and that brat. I will make sure the only children he acknowledges are mine, after all we both know he has never loved you, every time he was touching you he was probably imagining me, how many times has he called my name while you two were in bed?" 1 I ignore the rest of what she says even though it hurts. My main concern being Noah. I see red when he calls Noah a brat. Taking the flower vase near me, I lunge it at her head. With a scream she ducks and the vase hits the wall just as Travis enters the room.

"Are you crazy?!" Emma screams.

"Both of you, get out of my room now!" I scream back.

Then nurse enters looking at us hysterically.

"Ava, what's wrong?" Travis asks gently but I don't want his gentleness.

I can't help remember all those times he treated me like trash. All those times made me feel like scum instead of his sister. All those times he rubbed his love for Emma in my face while treating me like I was nothing.

"Why don't you ask you fucking sister" I glare at him and Emma before turning to the nurse.

Please make them leave, I don't want them here" My head was pounding and my heart monitor was speeding up.

The nurse turns to face them. "I'm going to ask you to leave, your presence is clearly affecting her and she shouldn't be under any stress." "She's my sister, you can't kick me out of her room!" Travis growls, —I scoff at that. Since when has he ever considered me his sister?

"I'll call the security if you don't leave" the nurse says between clenched teeth. All traces of being nice completely gone. 1 "Ava, please" he begs, but I don't have it in me.

They have taken everything I gave them and kept throwing it back at my face. I had nothing else to give I was empty where my love for them once stood.

"Just leave Travis, and make sure you and your sister stay away from me" With that I turn to my side, close my eyes and block them out. It takes a lot of back and forth between the nurse and Travis but they soon leave and I'm left in peace. That is until Ethan comes and makes me laugh for the first time since everything happened.

"What did you say? Rowan voice pulls me back to the present.

"I asked if you're ready to leave" he repeats I stare at him for a while wondering if Emma was right Would Rowan really abandon Noah? I wanted to believe that he wouldn't but I'm not sure. Emma was and is important to Rowan Really important I just don't know if her importance weighed more than Noah's "What are you doing here, Rowan?" I ask instead of the question I really wanted to ask "What do you mean? he frowns "We both know that I'm your least favorite person, so what are you doing here? Shouldn't you be with Emma at home enjoying your reunion?" I ask bitterly, Emma's word still playing in my head He sighs "You're looking for a fight and I'm not going to give it to you. let's just get you discharged and get you home" "I don't need help from a man who hates my fucking guts! Just leave, Rowan, we both know you would rather be somewhere else" "Really? You don't need my help? Who are you going to call to help you check out? You literary have no fucking friends, Ava" "Ethan Ethan can take me home" It's true I had no friends, but Ethan would come it I asked him for help Rowan face shuts down and becomes hard as granite. His hands fists and his jaw locks.

"Over my dead fucking body" he growls "You have two choices. Ava, it's either I take you home of you spend a few more days here at the hospital Either way, that bastard isn't taking you home" Cerignisly, Howan, what is wrong with you? You couldn't wait to get rid of me and now you're stuck to me like a bad rash the last thing I want is problems with Emina because of you I just want to live peacefully" He needed to leave me the hell alone I don't want to be accused of trying to use my unfortunate Circumstances to seduce him "Speaking of which, what happened

between you and Emma on the day of your attack and when "I'm sure she has already filled you in" with lies, I add to myself.

"I would like to hear you side of the events" I get out of the bed slowly and walk towards the bathroom. "There's no need, we both know you wouldn't believe me. Like always you will take her side" 3 "Ava..." I shut the door before he can finish.

I slowly dress up. I'm out of breath by the time I am done and so tired I can barely see straight.

Getting out, I use the wall for support. Rowan tries to help but I shake off his hand. I walk towards the wheel chair the nurse left and sit down on it. The doctor had been by to leave instructions so all that was left was to check out.

I pick my duffel bag and place it on my lap.

"Can we get going, that way we don't have to be around each other longer than necessary." I tell him, already feeling sleepy.

He sighs but doesn't say anything. He wheels me out of the room and towards the reception.

Everything from there happens in a blur. I was so tired I could barely keep my eyes open and finally they drop closed.

When I wake up, it's to find myself in Rowan's arms being carried up a familiar staircase.

"What are you doing?" I ask groggily.

"Taking you to bed, you fell asleep before we could get to my car" The warmth or his body, and the deep baritone of his voice makes me snuggle closer. He chuckles when but I don't care. He smelled great and he was so warm. My eyes close and I'm soon lost.

Feeling like I'm floating.

I feel him placing me down on something warm. Then he joins me. Turning, I place my head on his chest while his arms curl gently around my waist as he brings me closer.

As I completely give in to sleep, I can't help but think about how beautiful and right this felt. In this dream, Rowan doesn't push me away. In this dream, I'm in his arms like I've always wanted to be.

Compromising "My name is Lydia, Miss Sharp" the nurse says, her smile still in place.

I study her My eyes scrutinizing her. I then turn to Letty who was also doing the same thing "I never hired any nurse" I tell both of them "I want to say you got the wrong house, but that's moot since you know my name, so the only option left is that someone else hired you or this is

just a ruse" Don't get me wrong. Having a nurse to take care of my needs for the next couple of days or weeks would be great, but this was just weird.

Lydia sets her bag down before turning to face me. "I was hired by Mr. Wood and was told to report immediately" A groan of annoyance leaves my lips. I am surprised and pissed at the same time that he would do this The moment I decide I don't want or need his help is when he decides to be a hero Where was he all those times during our marriage when I needed him? He ignored me and treated me like I didn't exist.

"I'm sorry you wasted you time coming here, but you have to leave." I tell her, laying gently against the sofa I wouldn't accept anything from Rowan The only solid ground we had was our son and that was it I didn't want him in my life in any other capacity except as Noah's father. Besides, I was used to taking care of myself I've done it since I can remember.

"I'm sorry madam, but he told me not to leave your house despite how stubborn you get Her tone of voice was getting on my nerve She talked to me as if I was an errant child I was irritable and pissed off and I wanted nothing but to smack that polite smile off her face.

"Look, this is my damn house and Rowan has no say here. So you better leave before I decide to call the cops on you" I snap, finally reaching my limits.

An unsure looks cuts through her face She wants to obey Rowan's instructions but she is also not sure that I won't follow up on my threat Before she can answer there is another knock on my door What the hell? Is this 'come to Ava's house day or something?

"Looks like you have another visitor" Letty states the obvious before leaving the room.

She comes back with an unfamiliar man in uniform and who had a clipboard in his hands.

"Who is Ava Sharp?" he asks, and I taise my hand unsteadily 7 have a delivery for you I need you to sign some papers for me "What delivery? I ask, rubbing my temples.

I could already feel a migraine coming on. I was tempted to kick everyone out so I could have peace and quiet He checks his clipboard at my question before looking up to me.

"Your brand new Range Rover" he says as a matter of fact, with no emotion on his face "Excuse me?" I ask in confusion, just as Scarlet bolts out the room.

The man looks at me before repeating what he said a few seconds ago I just stare at him. dumbfounded, not really sure what to tell him. First a nurse I didn't hire and now a brand new car?

"Damn, it's the newest model too" Scarlet walks back to the room looking completely stunned.

I turn back to the man "Let me guess, Mr. Wood is the one that purchased it and put it in my name?" He doesn't get a chance to answer because the very man I was talking about strolls into the room like he owns the damn house.

"As a matter of fact yes, your car got blown up so I got you a new one" he then he turns to Scarlet." Hello Letty" She greets him back and I'm just left there staring at the both of them. Apparently I'm the only one who didn't know that my brother was actually dating. I wonder if I would have ever known if Letty hadn't decided to come see me herself.

I slowly stand up and turn to Rowan. "I appreciate what you're trying to do since I'm the mother of your son, but it's not necessary. I have everything sorted." Deep down I knew this was the reason why he was doing what he was doing. Not because he cared or anything but because I was Noah's mother. After all, it's not once or twice he has reminded me of that fact.

A frown mars his handsome face. "That's not why.

"I really don't need your help so could you just please tell him to take back the car and terminate her services?" I interrupt him before he can finish his sentence, pointing at the man and then at Lydia "Really, you don't need help? I don't see a new car anywhere or a phone and by just how pale you are, I can tell you're already drained... You need rest and someone to take care of you" "Like I said, I have everything under control...I'll order a new phone tomorrow and I already have a Why couldn't he just leave me alone? Ignore my existence like he used to?

"Then show me. Show me the car you already have in mind" he demands, being all domineering.

Humphing, I get my laptop from the table and turn it on. I'd already made some searches when I was in the hospital and I knew just what I wanted.

I turn my laptop around and show him the car I had settled one.

"Seriously?" he asks with one eyebrow raised up, and scorn in his voice. It was obvious my choice of car wasn't his taste.

"That is a piece of junk, Ava" Letty's voice comes from behind me.

I turn to find everyone looking over my shoulder, nodding their heads. I had completely forgotten that there were others in the room with us. I felt irritated that we had an audience and that they were obviously listening in..

"Excuse us" I grab Rowan's hand and drag him to the kitchen.

In my head it was all dramatic and quick, but in actuality it was slow.

I stop at the counter and lean against it while releasing his hand.

"Letty is right, that car is a piece of fucking junk" he sneers. "I mean, how are you supposed to drive it" Sure, I know that it was an old and used car; probably falling apart, but it's what I wanted. Besides, it didn't matter to me that it wasn't the latest model. As long as it got me from point A to B then it would do.

"It's my choice, Rowan" I fold my hands across my chest and glare at him.

His face turns serious. I've seen this kind of look when he is on business mode and he is in the process of negotiating.

"You refused to take a dime when we divorced, and on your teacher salary, you don't really make a lot. You probably got this house on mortgage, so there is that and the bills and now you want to add another expense by buying a car. Why don't you just accept my help? It'll save you money" With every word out of his mouth, he just pisses me off because it's an echo of what Emma said and what everyone thinks of me. They all look down on me because I'm a teacher and I hate them for that.

"I said I won't accept the freaking car" I shout. I'm almost tempted to hit him.

His face hardens and he steps into my space. "Be reasonable for once in your fucking life, Ava" ""I am being reasonable, I don't need your help. I asked for a divorce so that you can be out of my damn life...why is it that all of a sudden you're now so interested in helping me when you never gave a shit about me before?" "You're Noah's mom so of course I fucking care and in case it has escaped your mind, I can't be out of your life completely because we share a son, which ensures our lives are entangled" he growls, his eyes blazing.

"Only for the next ten years or so and besides being a part of Noah's life doesn't mean you have to be part of my life or me yours" I argue I was getting really tired so I sit on the barstool. My head felt like it weighed a ton. I just wanted to lay down.

"Take the car" he commands once again.

"Why don't you take it and shove it where the sun don't shine" I snap, feeling like I've reached my limit.

It's not that I was being ungrateful or anything, I just didn't want to be indebted to him. I also didn't want any more uncalled visits from Emma. I'm sure she wouldn't be too pleased to know what Rowan was trying to do.

Rowan was about to speak when Letty walks into the room.

"I don't see why you two excused yourself when we can still clearly hear you by how loud you're screaming at each other" We both glare at her but she doesn't back down.

"Look, Rowan, Ava is exhausted. It's been a tiring morning for her and I'm sure she wants to sleep. so just lay off the car issue, all you're doing is pissing her off more. As for you Ava,

accept the help offered to you in the form of Lydia. You can barely stand up straight so how are you going to manage on your own? You need someone to help you till you are better" I think about it. I want to argue but she made sense, I needed help so maybe this once I could accept his charity.

"Fine" Rowan and I concede at the same time.

Letty smiles and helps me down from the stool. "Seems like you're on your way to la—la land" I chuckle at that as she leads me to the living room. The man wasn't anywhere to be seen, so I'm guessing he was probably waiting outside.

Letty hands me over to Lydia.

"Looks like you'll be staying to help Ava" Letty addresses Lydia. "Rowan and I will be leaving so Lydia nods just as Scarlet steps forward and gives me a hug.

"I'll see you soon and thank you for giving me a chance" she whispers her voice full of emotion.

The only thing I can manage is a small smile. I was beyond exhausted.

She gives me one more hug before she leaves. I then turn to Rowan expecting him to follow behind her but he doesn't.

"One more thing" he says before placeing a brand new phone on the table.

Before I can say or do anything, he softly kisses my cheek and then walks off. I stand there weakly staring at his back.

"Come Miss, let's get you to bed" Lydia murmurs.

I nod distractedly, wondering why Rowan went through all the trouble. I didn't want him to show me this soft side that has never been directed at me. I wanted him to be as he was before, a villain in my story. This way, it would be easier to hate him.

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I wake up and find myself alone in bed. I heave a sigh. I just knew that it was all a dream. There was just no way Rowan would have slept with me on my bed. I don't remember everything after I fell asleep at the hospital. I was pumped so full of drugs that I actually started to imagine things that weren't real.

I get out of bed slowly, but I have to sit down when the room begins to spin. After a few minutes, I walk as carefully as I can to the bathroom and take a shower. I just wanted the overall smell of the hospital washed from my skin.

I had so much to do that I didn't know where to start. I had no phone and neither did I have a car. The police told me that my phone got smashed when I hit the ground. I had a few weeks of leave from school but I needed to figure out my car situation before I got back to work.

By the time I'm done with dressing, my head was killing me.

'F***! I needed my pain meds.' I think to myself I walk down stairs wondering how I was going to survive for the next couple of days. I was still weak and I could barely lift a finger without all my energy being drained.

Getting down stairs, I make my way to the kitchen and make myself something simple for breakfast. At this point I just wanted to go back to sleep and maybe wake up after a century.

Deciding it's better for me to sit somewhere comfortable, I ditch the kitchen island and head to the living room instead.

Who knew head injuries took a lot out of you?

I eat my food which tasted like cardboard and take my meds. I was just about to lay down on the couch and take a nap when my doorbell rang.

I groan in annoyance. I didn't want to stand up and walk to the door to open for whoever it is that's on the other side. My legs felt like jelly and I was in no mood for visitors. I just wanted my damn.

sleep.

I consider ignoring it when the bell rings again. Would it be considered rude if I did that? I mean they could just assume that I was asleep and leave, right? That was hopeful thinking on my part because the next second, the bell rings again.

1 curse a string and stand up to walk towards the door. I open it and I come face to face with a woman I've never seen standin on my porch. She was shockingly beautiful. Black hair, big green eyes, heart shaped face and full lips.

"Uh, can I help you?" I ask, leaning against the doorframe.

I was sure any minute now my legs would give out and I would collapse on the floor.

The woman gives me a small smile, tears filling her eyes before she does the strangest thing. She walks up to me and hugs me. I stiffen, not sure what the hell was happening right now.

"I was afraid you would still be asleep" she says stepping back.

"I'm sorry but who are you?" She slaps her forehead. "Shit, I'm sorry..I should have probably started with an introduction. My bad" I find myself smiling. She was comical and I found her funny.

"Can we please get in?" she ask "I really don't know you so I'm not sure inviting you to my home is a good idea" She blinks a bit before speaking. "I know you are skeptical especially after what happened to you. but I promise I'm not a serial killer or anything" I stare at her. I wanted to send her away but for some reason I couldn't. I don't know why but I trusted her and I just got this urge deep inside me to let her in.

"Fine, but if you turn out to be a killer I swear I will gut you like a chicken and I'll dance all the way to my bedroom to take a nap" I tell her stepping aside to let her in.

"I like you already" she responds with a smile. "Do you need any help?" she asks when she sees me struggling.

I don't mean to glare at her but I find myself doing it. "No!" She raises her hand in surrender. "Okay" I lead her to the living room where she takes a seat. I sigh in happiness when I plop down on the couch. My legs were shaking at this point and I felt like a new born baby gazelle. All unsteady and weak.

"So who are you and why are you here?" I was really curious.

"I'm Scarlet but you can call me Letty...I'm your brother's girlfriend" I should have never listen to my st* pid instincts.

"Yeah, we are done here...please leave" I wanted nothing to do with anyone from my so called family. They were bound to be just like them and I was done letting such people into my life.

"Please just hear me out" she pleads and against my best judgement I do.

I don't know what it is about her but I'm at ease around her even though she is basically a stranger and I am not one to trust easily.

"Look, I know what Travis did isn't good. I may love the idiot but I can also admit that he was terrible to you. No matter what you did, you didn't deserve to be treated the way he and the rest have treated you.

I've wanted for a while to come and see you but I was afraid that you will turn me down but then I heard what happened to you and I just had to come. I know you don't know me or trust me but I'm hoping that you will give me a chance to change that" I move around and get my feet on the sofa, leaning back on the armrest.

"Does he know you are here?" "The man doesn't dictate my life but he does know that I am here, we don't keep secrets from each other" She loves him, that's obvious. Travis isn't a bad guy, to others at least, but to me he has been nothing but a thorn. Always putting me down, hating on me and just treating me like a villain.

I wanted to shut her down but a small part is against that Something tells me that if I give her a chance then I wouldn't regret it. It was time I expanded my circle. I couldn't continue shutting people out.

"I'll give you a chance on one condition" I say in defeat.

Maybe it was the drugs or maybe something else but I decide to take a leap of faith. After all, what's the worst that can happen?

'Famous last words' a voice whispers in my head "What's your condition?" "You never mention Travis or his family to me. I don't want anything to do with him or them" I can see the battle waging inside her. She is debating, deciding whether it the right call or not. If she can have a friendship with me without involving the others.

"Okay" she finally speaks. "Friends?" She holds her hand out and I take it reluctantly.

"Friends" I whisper hoping that I wasn't making a big mistake, but then agam I already made the biggest mistake of my life, what's one more on my list We smile at each other before she starts telling me more about herself. She's a secretary at father's company and she's only a year older than me "Any siblings?" I ask her.

"No, I'm an only child but that's probably because my parents died when I was three" I gasp in horror. "I'm so sorry" "It's okay, I barely remember them and I got to stay with my Nana and she's an awesome person She'll definitely love you" We continue talking. It felt different and weird at the same time because I've never really had a girlfriend. I wasn't sure what to think of it or how to feel.

"So there I was..." she was telling a hilarious story when there was a knock on my door.

I groan, not in the mood to get up.

"Could please go and check who is at the door? I don't think I can do it without face planting on the floor" I ask "Sure".

She stands up and leaves. I hear her opening the door then an unfamiliar female voice speaking.

My brows scrunch up in confusion.

I hear their footsteps as they walk toward the room. They come through the door way and I stare at the tall red head woman, who had a duffel bag in her hands.

"Hello, Miss Sharp" she greets with a smile.

"Who the fuck are you?" I ask in irritation.

I do not want any more strangers in my house, though now that I know Letty a bit better, she isnt that much of stranger. 1 Letty is the one that answers. "Apparently she's your nurse and was hired to take care of you" I never hired any nurse. So who the hell was she and what the hell was she doing in my house?

Nothing to give I fix my hoodie so that I can look presentable instead of looking like I had a one on one with death.

"Why are you wearing a beanie, mommy" Noah looks at me suspiciously.

We were skyping after I had postponed it so many times. Mainly because I could barely keep my eyes open for longer than five minutes. Today though, I was feeling much better I leaned back against my headboard. The beanie was to hide the bandage. Noah still didn't know what happened to me and I would make sure he never does.

"It's a bit cold and I'm feeling a bit chilly" I lie.

I feel guilty for lying to him, but I know it's for the best. There was no need of worrying him.

"We have a heater mom, you could've just turned it on" "It's not working and I forgot to get someone to fix it" Damn it, I hate lying to him. A part of me felt like I was being a terrible mother because it seems. I've done nothing but lie to him since father died. The other part though, understands that it's necessary. 3 "Okay then" he mumbles skeptically.

"So what did you do today?" I ask changing the subject.

Anything that he does excites me even though I'm not there to enjoy it with him. His happiness was my own and I would protect it at all cost.

The frown he had seconds ago transforms into a big smile.

"I saw dolphins today, I even swam with them...it was so fun!!" he shouts, his excitement contagious.

"I wish I was there to see you" "Don't worry mommy, grandma took a video. She said she'll send it to you" I nod my head at that. I had accepted the phone Rowan got me. Turns out he did more than buy me a new phone. He even replaced my sim card.

I've tried—avoiding Rowan as best as I can. He calls sometimes to check up on how I'm doing. I try to keep those calls short and impersonal. Like I said, I wanted to live in peace and Rowan meddling in my life would make sure I had anything but peace. Especially if Emma is involved.

"Mommy, why was Emma at dad's house?" his unexpected question pulls me back to the present.

"What do you mean?" "I skyped dad yesterday and she was there sitting so close to him and holding his hand...I didn't like it" the frown that was so like his father's was now back in place. (1 I want to pretend that those words don't hurt but deep down they still do. Knowing that Rowan was already playing house with her brings back the pain I've tried so hard to hide.

Why is it that we always fool ourselves into thinking we've moved on? Then the moment we're hit by a trigger all that pretense crumbles and the pain is a hundred times worse.

"I don't know, my love. You're going to have to ask your dad" I mumble, trying to hide how shaky my voice is and how affected I am by his words.

I wasn't going to explain things to Noah. Rowan saw it fit to flaunt his relationship with Emma in front of our son, so he'll be the one to explain things to him.

"I want you and dad back together. So we can be a family again" he is sad and it breaks my already broken heart.

"Noah, you have to understand that your father and I are just too different to stay together" We pretended in front of Noah. Trying to give him the illusion that we loved each other. That we were okay. It was all a sham though. Rowan could barely stand me, but Noah never caught on Thinking back, I wish I had refused him when he said we should get married after I accidentally got pregnant. I was naïve back then. Thinking that I could make him love me. That it would only be a matter of time until he was in love with me like I was with him. He never did though.

He locked his heart and the keys were with Emma. Even when we were intimate, it meant nothing to him. It was a biological process. While my feelings were involved, his weren't. We never made love because he didn't love me. What we did was fucking and even then he was careful not to get me pregnant. Not to make the same mistake twice.

"Don't you love him?" Noah asks the same question he demanded of his father a couple of weeks ago.

I want to lie to him but I've done enough of that.

"I do, but sometimes loving someone isn't enough. You won't understand it now but one day, when you're older, you will" it's the only response I can master.

I hope to God he never has to go through what I'm going through. I want him to love and be loved. As much as I hate to say this, I hope one day he gets the kind of love Rowan and Emma have. One that has stood the test of time and it's still burning bright. I pray that one day I'll also find that kind of love. 1 A knock on my open door makes me look up.

"There's someone here to see you, Ava" Lydia said.

I'd finally gotten her to call me by my name instead of Miss or Madam. I am thankful that Letty convinced me to let her stay because, she's been such a huge help. She even does some of the chores for me. I don't know how I would have survived without her.

"Who is that, mommy?" I tell her to let whoever it is in before I turn to my precious son.

"It's a nice lady called Lydia. She's here to help me with chores" I answer him. My mind on who had come to visit.

If my guess was correct then it is either Letty or Ethan. Both have stopped by a couple of times to check up on me.

"Why do you need help? You've never needed it before, you're super Mom" he looks at me suspiciously.

He was right of course. I always did everything by myself. Even when I lived at Rowan's mansion. I thought it would make him see me in a different light. That he would see that I am not as spoiled as Emma who couldn't even boil water. That it would be a point against Emma.

How wrong was I. It didn't fucking matter to him. I was so st* pid to think that he would stop hating me a little less if I made sure that all his meals were home cooked. That I could take care of my family and home and still be a working woman.

"Mommy?" he calls out.

I know that he wanted answers, but I'm saved from that when Travis walks in to my room. He was the last person I wanted to talk to, but that doesn't mean that I can't use him as a scapegoat.

"Noah, I'll call you back...you uncle just arrived and I need to talk to him" He sighs. "Okay then mommy" We say our goodbyes and he signs off. The moment he does, my smile slips from my face.

"I thought I told you, I never want to see you again" I school my features. Blocking out all my emotions.

He shifts nervously from foot to foot. "You're my sister, I wanted to see how you're doing" I laugh humorlessly. "Sister? Are you sure, Travis, because as far as I remember I haven't been your sister for the past nine years... Hell, it's been longer than that if we're being honest. In your eyes you had one sister and you never failed to remind me of that little fact" It still fucking hurts. Being rejected not only by your husband and in—laws but also your very own family. Rejection hurts like a mother—fucker and I've had enough of that to last me a lifetime.

"Ava..." I cut him off. I don't want to listen to what he has to say.

"I've stayed away from your sister and the love of her life like you asked me, now I'm asking you to reciprocate, stay away from me and we won't have a problem." "We're family" I raise my

hand. "I'll have to stop your there. You, mother and Emma are family. I'm not part of it, I've never been part of it and you've all made sure I knew that, time and time again" It pains me to say those words but we both knew they were true. They excluded me in everything and made me feel like I was nothing but an outsider.

"You gave Letty a chance, why can't you give us too?" he asks angrily, his temper flaring.

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⑤ I can't help the tears that hit my pillow. He wanted too much from me. I gave them my all. I loved. them even when they were nothing but hateful towards me. I continued hoping and praying Pouring out my love to them, thinking that one day they would reciprocate and treat me as one of their own. Instead they trampled over that love and destroyed my heart over and over again.

Now he wants to be a part of my life but doesn't he realize it's too late? They shattered me to pieces and now I had nothing to give them. I was emptied when it came to them"

Ex-Husband's Regret by Evelyn M.M Chapter 18

Compromising "My name is Lydia, Miss Sharp" the nurse says, her smile still in place.

I study her My eyes scrutinizing her. I then turn to Letty who was also doing the same thing "I never hired any nurse" I tell both of them "I want to say you got the wrong house, but that's moot since you know my name, so the only option left is that someone else hired you or this is just a ruse" Don't get me wrong. Having a nurse to take care of my needs for the next couple of days or weeks would be great, but this was just weird.

Lydia sets her bag down before turning to face me. "I was hired by Mr. Wood and was told to report immediately" A groan of annoyance leaves my lips. I am surprised and pissed at the same time that he would do this The moment I decide I don't want or need his help is when he decides to be a hero Where was he all those times during our marriage when I needed him? He ignored me and treated me like I didn't exist.

"I'm sorry you wasted you time coming here, but you have to leave." I tell her, laying gently against the sofa I wouldn't accept anything from Rowan The only solid ground we had was our

son and that was it I didn't want him in my life in any other capacity except as Noah's father. Besides, I was used to taking care of myself I've done it since I can remember.

"I'm sorry madam, but he told me not to leave your house despite how stubborn you get Her tone of voice was getting on my nerve She talked to me as if I was an errant child I was irritable and pissed off and I wanted nothing but to smack that polite smile off her face.

"Look, this is my damn house and Rowan has no say here. So you better leave before I decide to call the cops on you" I snap, finally reaching my limits.

An unsure looks cuts through her face She wants to obey Rowan's instructions but she is also not sure that I won't follow up on my threat Before she can answer there is another knock on my door What the hell? Is this 'come to Ava's house day or something?

"Looks like you have another visitor" Letty states the obvious before leaving the room.

She comes back with an unfamiliar man in uniform and who had a clipboard in his hands.

"Who is Ava Sharp?" he asks, and I taise my hand unsteadily 7 have a delivery for you I need you to sign some papers for me "What delivery? I ask, rubbing my temples.

I could already feel a migraine coming on. I was tempted to kick everyone out so I could have peace and quiet He checks his clipboard at my question before looking up to me.

"Your brand new Range Rover" he says as a matter of fact, with no emotion on his face "Excuse me?" I ask in confusion, just as Scarlet bolts out the room.

The man looks at me before repeating what he said a few seconds ago I just stare at him. dumbfounded, not really sure what to tell him. First a nurse I didn't hire and now a brand new car?

"Damn, it's the newest model too" Scarlet walks back to the room looking completely stunned.

I turn back to the man "Let me guess, Mr. Wood is the one that purchased it and put it in my name?" He doesn't get a chance to answer because the very man I was talking about strolls into the room like he owns the damn house.

"As a matter of fact yes, your car got blown up so I got you a new one" he then he turns to Scarlet." Hello Letty" She greets him back and I'm just left there staring at the both of them. Apparently I'm the only one who didn't know that my brother was actually dating. I wonder if I would have ever known if Letty hadn't decided to come see me herself.

I slowly stand up and turn to Rowan. "I appreciate what you're trying to do since I'm the mother of your son, but it's not necessary. I have everything sorted." Deep down I knew this was the reason why he was doing what he was doing. Not because he cared or anything but because I was Noah's mother. After all, it's not once or twice he has reminded me of that fact.

A frown mars his handsome face. "That's not why.

"I really don't need your help so could you just please tell him to take back the car and terminate her services?" I interrupt him before he can finish his sentence, pointing at the man and then at Lydia "Really, you don't need help? I don't see a new car anywhere or a phone and by just how pale you are, I can tell you're already drained... You need rest and someone to take care of you" "Like I said, I have everything under control...I'll order a new phone tomorrow and I already have a Why couldn't he just leave me alone? Ignore my existence like he used to?

"Then show me. Show me the car you already have in mind" he demands, being all domineering.

Humphing, I get my laptop from the table and turn it on. I'd already made some searches when I was in the hospital and I knew just what I wanted.

I turn my laptop around and show him the car I had settled one.

"Seriously?" he asks with one eyebrow raised up, and scorn in his voice. It was obvious my choice of car wasn't his taste.

"That is a piece of junk, Ava" Letty's voice comes from behind me.

I turn to find everyone looking over my shoulder, nodding their heads. I had completely forgotten that there were others in the room with us. I felt irritated that we had an audience and that they were obviously listening in..

"Excuse us" I grab Rowan's hand and drag him to the kitchen.

In my head it was all dramatic and quick, but in actuality it was slow.

I stop at the counter and lean against it while releasing his hand.

"Letty is right, that car is a piece of fucking junk" he sneers. "I mean, how are you supposed to drive it" Sure, I know that it was an old and used car; probably falling apart, but it's what I wanted. Besides, it didn't matter to me that it wasn't the latest model. As long as it got me from point A to B then it would do.

"It's my choice, Rowan" I fold my hands across my chest and glare at him.

His face turns serious. I've seen this kind of look when he is on business mode and he is in the process of negotiating.

"You refused to take a dime when we divorced, and on your teacher salary, you don't really make a lot. You probably got this house on mortgage, so there is that and the bills and now you want to add another expense by buying a car. Why don't you just accept my help? It'll save you money" With every word out of his mouth, he just pisses me off because it's an echo of what

Emma said and what everyone thinks of me. They all look down on me because I'm a teacher and I hate them for that.

"I said I won't accept the freaking car" I shout. I'm almost tempted to hit him.

His face hardens and he steps into my space. "Be reasonable for once in your fucking life, Ava" ""I am being reasonable, I don't need your help. I asked for a divorce so that you can be out of my damn life...why is it that all of a sudden you're now so interested in helping me when you never gave a shit about me before?" "You're Noah's mom so of course I fucking care and in case it has escaped your mind, I can't be out of your life completely because we share a son, which ensures our lives are entangled" he growls, his eyes blazing.

"Only for the next ten years or so and besides being a part of Noah's life doesn't mean you have to be part of my life or me yours" I argue I was getting really tired so I sit on the barstool. My head felt like it weighed a ton. I just wanted to lay down.

"Take the car" he commands once again.

"Why don't you take it and shove it where the sun don't shine" I snap, feeling like I've reached my limit.

It's not that I was being ungrateful or anything, I just didn't want to be indebted to him. I also didn't want any more uncalled visits from Emma. I'm sure she wouldn't be too pleased to know what Rowan was trying to do.

Rowan was about to speak when Letty walks into the room.

"I don't see why you two excused yourself when we can still clearly hear you by how loud you're screaming at each other" We both glare at her but she doesn't back down.

"Look, Rowan, Ava is exhausted. It's been a tiring morning for her and I'm sure she wants to sleep. so just lay off the car issue, all you're doing is pissing her off more. As for you Ava, accept the help offered to you in the form of Lydia. You can barely stand up straight so how are you going to manage on your own? You need someone to help you till you are better" I think about it. I want to argue but she made sense, I needed help so maybe this once I could accept his charity.

"Fine" Rowan and I concede at the same time.

Letty smiles and helps me down from the stool. "Seems like you're on your way to la—la land" I chuckle at that as she leads me to the living room. The man wasn't anywhere to be seen, so I'm guessing he was probably waiting outside.

Letty hands me over to Lydia.

"Looks like you'll be staying to help Ava" Letty addresses Lydia. "Rowan and I will be leaving so Lydia nods just as Scarlet steps forward and gives me a hug.

"I'll see you soon and thank you for giving me a chance" she whispers her voice full of emotion.

The only thing I can manage is a small smile. I was beyond exhausted.

She gives me one more hug before she leaves. I then turn to Rowan expecting him to follow behind her but he doesn't.

"One more thing" he says before placeing a brand new phone on the table.

Before I can say or do anything, he softly kisses my cheek and then walks off. I stand there weakly staring at his back.

"Come Miss, let's get you to bed" Lydia murmurs.

I nod distractedly, wondering why Rowan went through all the trouble. I didn't want him to show me this soft side that has never been directed at me. I wanted him to be as he was before, a villain in my story. This way, it would be easier to hate him.

Ex-Husband's Regret by Evelyn M.M Chapter 19

Nothing to give I fix my hoodie so that I can look presentable instead of looking like I had a one on one with death.

"Why are you wearing a beanie, mommy" Noah looks at me suspiciously.

We were skyping after I had postponed it so many times. Mainly because I could barely keep my eyes open for longer than five minutes. Today though, I was feeling much better I leaned back against my headboard. The beanie was to hide the bandage. Noah still didn't know what happened to me and I would make sure he never does.

"It's a bit cold and I'm feeling a bit chilly" I lie.

I feel guilty for lying to him, but I know it's for the best. There was no need of worrying him.

"We have a heater mom, you could've just turned it on" "It's not working and I forgot to get someone to fix it" Damn it, I hate lying to him. A part of me felt like I was being a terrible mother because it seems. I've done nothing but lie to him since father died. The other part though, understands that it's necessary. 3 "Okay then" he mumbles skeptically.

"So what did you do today?" I ask changing the subject.

Anything that he does excites me even though I'm not there to enjoy it with him. His happiness was my own and I would protect it at all cost.

The frown he had seconds ago transforms into a big smile.

"I saw dolphins today, I even swam with them...it was so fun!!" he shouts, his excitement contagious.

"I wish I was there to see you" "Don't worry mommy, grandma took a video. She said she'll send it to you" I nod my head at that. I had accepted the phone Rowan got me. Turns out he did more than buy me a new phone. He even replaced my sim card.

I've tried—avoiding Rowan as best as I can. He calls sometimes to check up on how I'm doing. I try to keep those calls short and impersonal. Like I said, I wanted to live in peace and Rowan meddling in my life would make sure I had anything but peace. Especially if Emma is involved.

"Mommy, why was Emma at dad's house?" his unexpected question pulls me back to the present.

"What do you mean?" "I skyped dad yesterday and she was there sitting so close to him and holding his hand...I didn't like it" the frown that was so like his father's was now back in place. (1 I want to pretend that those words don't hurt but deep down they still do. Knowing that Rowan was already playing house with her brings back the pain I've tried so hard to hide.

Why is it that we always fool ourselves into thinking we've moved on? Then the moment we're hit by a trigger all that pretense crumbles and the pain is a hundred times worse.

"I don't know, my love. You're going to have to ask your dad" I mumble, trying to hide how shaky my voice is and how affected I am by his words.

I wasn't going to explain things to Noah. Rowan saw it fit to flaunt his relationship with Emma in front of our son, so he'll be the one to explain things to him.

"I want you and dad back together. So we can be a family again" he is sad and it breaks my already broken heart.

"Noah, you have to understand that your father and I are just too different to stay together" We pretended in front of Noah. Trying to give him the illusion that we loved each other. That we were okay. It was all a sham though. Rowan could barely stand me, but Noah never caught on Thinking back, I wish I had refused him when he said we should get married after I accidentally got pregnant. I was naïve back then. Thinking that I could make him love me. That it would only be a matter of time until he was in love with me like I was with him. He never did though.

He locked his heart and the keys were with Emma. Even when we were intimate, it meant nothing to him. It was a biological process. While my feelings were involved, his weren't. We

never made love because he didn't love me. What we did was fucking and even then he was careful not to get me pregnant. Not to make the same mistake twice.

"Don't you love him?" Noah asks the same question he demanded of his father a couple of weeks ago.

I want to lie to him but I've done enough of that.

"I do, but sometimes loving someone isn't enough. You won't understand it now but one day, when you're older, you will" it's the only response I can master.

I hope to God he never has to go through what I'm going through. I want him to love and be loved. As much as I hate to say this, I hope one day he gets the kind of love Rowan and Emma have. One that has stood the test of time and it's still burning bright. I pray that one day I'll also find that kind of love. 1 A knock on my open door makes me look up.

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"I thought I told you, I never want to see you again" I school my features. Blocking out all my emotions.

He shifts nervously from foot to foot. "You're my sister, I wanted to see how you're doing" I laugh humorlessly. "Sister? Are you sure, Travis, because as far as I remember I haven't been your sister for the past nine years... Hell, it's been longer than that if we're being honest. In your eyes you had one sister and you never failed to remind me of that little fact" It still fucking hurts. Being rejected not only by your husband and in—laws but also your very own family. Rejection hurts like a mother—fucker and I've had enough of that to last me a lifetime.

"Ava..." I cut him off. I don't want to listen to what he has to say.

"I've stayed away from your sister and the love of her life like you asked me, now I'm asking you to reciprocate, stay away from me and we won't have a problem." "We're family" I raise my hand. "I'll have to stop your there. You, mother and Emma are family. I'm not part of it, I've never been part of it and you've all made sure I knew that, time and time again" It pains me to say those words but we both knew they were true. They excluded me in everything and made me feel like I was nothing but an outsider.

"You gave Letty a chance, why can't you give us too?" he asks angrily, his temper flaring.

"Letty has been nothing but nice to me. Unlike all of you, she hasn't treated me like shit for the mistake I made when I was eighteen and st* pidly in love with someone I failed to see would never love me back" Scarlet told me that she knew the truth. That Travis opened up to her when their relationship became serious and after she noticed I was excluded to some family dinners and get together. 2 "Please leave, Travis, and don't come back. In fact consider me dead and forget you ever had a sister named Ava" With that I turn and lay down on bed. Facing away from him. He's quiet for a while, then I hear his footsteps as he walks away.

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Ex-Husband's Regret by Evelyn M.M Chapter 20

Eye opener Rowan.

I sat at my desk going through some papers that needed my attention. I try to focus but I can't. My mind still on the fact that Ava ignored my call yet again. If it wasn't for hiring Lydia, I doubt I would ever know how she was fairing.

I still can't believe how much she's fucking changed. It was safe to say that the AvaI knew was long gone and in her place is a total stranger.

When Emma decided that she was moving back, I was afraid that Ava would cause us problems.

That she would be a nuisance like she was back when she was a teenager. She proved me wrong though.

I should be happy that she was keeping her distance. That she wasn't causing me trouble, but a part of me was bothered by it. It was so fucking strange how bothered I was and I hated how she was now constantly on my fucking mind.

I eventually give up on trying to focus and stand up. Moving to the windows, I stare outside, trying to clear Ava from my mind.

"Sir, the chief inspector is here" Christine, my secretary tells me.

I was so lost in thought that I didn't even hear her entering my office.

"Let him in" I turn to face her before going back to my chair.

Brian, the chief enters just as I was settling down. We shake hands and then he takes his seat.

"Do you have anything for me?" I ask him.

Brian was around sixty years. Despite his age, he was still fit and on top of that, he was still sharp.

He was a retired detective and had also served in the army when he was younger.

"Nothing yet...we can't find the gang and we don't have anything that connects them to the two incidents when your ex—wife was hurt" I've been working closely with him since James was shot and killed. The gang seemed to disappear underground after that and no one can find any of them.

"There's got to be something, anything that could help us figure out why the fuck they were targeting Ava" I was frustrated.

When Ava said that the gang shouldn't be going after her, she was right. If we're being honest, given how things are with her family and me, the one they should target is Emma. It made no sense at all.

"I wish I had good news for you Mr. Wood but I don't. These people whoever they are know what they're doing. They're professionals. There hasn't been a single clue at the crime scenes so we don't even have a starting point" he says through clenched jaws This whole situation clearly affects him too. He is the best at what he does and there has never be an unsolved case in his files. The fact that he is yet to find any piece of information that points us to the right direction, pisses him off.

"Do you think something like what happened last time could happen again?" "I can't say for sure but if we're to follow the pattern of what has happened in the past few weeks, then yes....there is a chance that whoever it is will keep coming after Miss Sharp, until she's either dead or the persons involved are caught" 3 His words chill me to the bone. I don't want to think of the two times she almost died. Or that she still has a fucking target on her back.

I stand up and dismiss him "Keep me updated if something comes up" He also stands up and shakes my hand once again, "Sure, I will" He then leaves and I'm left once again alone, with the thoughts of my ex—wife occupying my head.

Taking my phone, I ring Christine. She picks up immediately, not wasting time.

"Send Drake up" I command her before hanging up.

Within minutes, Drake, the head of my security team enters my office.

"You called boss" His voice is unnaturally deep, but it might be because he once got his throat slit. The doctors were able to save him but his vocal cords were irrevocably damaged.

"I want you and two others on Ava twenty four seven. Close enough to step in if there is any danger but far enough that she won't notice that she's being tailed" "She's still in danger?" he asks.

"According to Brian... let her not leave your sight even for a second, am I understood? I want her –safe and protected at all costs" He looks at me strangely but he agrees, "On it, boss" he says then he's out the door.

I know he was probably wondering what the hell was happening. Everyone knows I never really cared for Ava. I mean damn it, we were married. I am influential and have enemies but I never even assigned a bodyguard to her, while Noah had two.

Hell, Ava herself had asked me what was wrong with me. Why I was all of a sudden interested in her safety and wellbeing. Everyone could join the club because I was also as confused on why she all of a sudden mattered to me.

I sigh feeling worn out.

Checking my watch, I realize it was six. I was supposed to meet with Travis and Gabe for drinks at six thirty before heading home.

Taking the files with me, I leave my office. I was in a mood so none of my employees even dared to bid me a good evening.

I get to the club just in time and immediately head to the private section. This was one of the many exclusive clubs that Gabe and I owned.

"Finally you're here can you fucking deal with him because I can't stand him being a pussy" Gabe grumbles before gulping his drink and looking at Travis in disgust.

"What's wrong?" I turn to Travis.

He looked like shit.

"I went to see Ava a couple of days ago and she kicked me out after telling me to consider her dead and to forget I had another sister he answers miserably.

"What the hell is wrong with her?" I was fucking puzzled because this was unlike her.

Gabe shorts at us. "What the hell did you guys expect? Years of treating her like shit, do you honestly think that she would continue taking your bullshit like she's thankful for it?" My frown deepens as I stare at my brother. Although Gabe wasn't warm towards Ava, he never treated her like shit. He mainly ignored her but he never went out of his way to be mean to her.

"You guys have basically broken the camel's back, so of course she wants nothing to do with you after everything that has happened" Gabe takes another gulp of his drink.

"But I'm trying to make it up to her How can I fix what I broke if she doesn't let me?" Travis asks "You people are total idiots. It doesn't matter. You guys have hurt her more times than she can ever count, right now she's doing the obvious thing "And that is?" I cut Gabe off.

"What happens when an animal is wounded and you try getting close to it?" his eyes slices through us like a damn sword. "It lashes out as a form of protection. All Ava is doing is trying to protect the remaining pieces of her broken heart and she will lash out at anyone who tries getting near her heart." "Especially those who hurt in the first place" I conclude.

"Exactly, so you can't blame her for her reaction" Gabe finishes and we stay in silence.

The weight that settles over my heart and soul is fucking heavy. I don't know what to say so I keep quiet What else can I even say? I knew my actions hurt her back then but I didn't care. I continued doing it because I rationalized that she deserved it after costing me the love of my life.

'How does it feel to have a taste of your own medicine?' my inner voice asks Bitter, that how it feels, because now I was getting the same cold indifference I used to give her. When she needs to be taken care of, she's adamant on pushing us away. Pushing me away, and I just don't know how to bridge the gap that I had created.

"Emma is here" Gabe announces, pulling me out of my thoughts "Who the fuck invited her?" I growl and both Travis and Gabe turn to face me, confusion written all over their faces.

"She heard I was meeting up with you guys so she said she would stop by to see you" Travis answers with a shrug.

I groan in annoyance. She was the last person I wanted to see right now.

It's honestly funny, I couldn't stop imagining me and Emma back together. Now that we are, she's become more of a nuisance. Don't get me wrong, there are times when things just flow and I can't help but think that that's how things were supposed to be.

Most of the times, though, things aren't flowing and they feel forced. She is supposed to be the love of my life so why the fuck did being with her feel so wrong?