

## Ex Husband 211

### Chapter 0211

Emma

The day I've been dreading was here. I was afraid of the truth getting out, but never in my wildest dream

did I think that Ava would be the one to reveal it.

I've tried so hard to keep it a secret. It was my shame to bear, and now everyone knew. Rowan knew.

Among everyone, he's the one I didn't ever want to know.

"You mean Noah's best friend? That Gunner?" Gabe asks, his voice ringing in shock.

I flinch at his name. I'd tried all I could to keep my life separate from him. To not get involved in his life.

Everything was now nothing but a mess.

"Yes, Gabe. Isn't it just a fucking coincidence? If he and Cal had never moved in next to us, then I would never have figured it out, and Emma would have continued with her deception while hurting a little boy.

who craved the love of his mother."

I feel the anger that radiates from Ava. It was scorching hot. Never in my life have I ever seen Ava look at

me with such contempt.

I curse her luck. I didn't know that Cal had moved next to Ava or that our sons had become best friends.

If I'd known, I would have demanded that Cal to move.

"You're lying. Emma would never do something like that. You just want to cause us more trouble. Haven't

you

done enough? Your parents nearly bankrupted our company!" Travis yells at her.

I know my brother. I know he's just frustrated and confused. Otherwise, he would never have talked to Ava that way. Especially since he's trying to mend bridges with her.

"Like I told you before, Travis, shut the fuck up. This is between me and your bitch of a sister, and as for the company, well, you deserve it. Just for the way you've talked to me, I might just decide to sink that.

fucking company myself."

The horror in Travis eyes is real. It just hit him that he's managed to piss her off even more. That's the thing about Travis, he rarely thinks before he speaks. I love him, but it makes me wonder how the hell he

survived being CEO.

"Even though he didn't deliver his words well, Travis is right, Ava. You can't come here accusing Emma without proof. We would have known if she had a child. Damn, Kate would have been the first to know," Rowan's dad says, trying to appease Ava, who looked like she was about to blow,

He was right. My mother would have been the first to know about the pregnancy had I not been ashamed

+15 BONUS

I never wanted to carry anyone's baby except for Rowan's. When I got pregnant, I was ashamed of the pregnancy. Ashamed of how I got pregnant in the first place. So to keep that shame hidden, I never told a single person except my best friend. Molly was the only one who knew I had a son.

"The proof is staring right in front of you." Ava snarls. "If I were wrong, why the hell hasn't she said

anything? Because, knowing Emma, she would have come out guns blazing if I were lying, yet she is as

quiet as a tomb."

They all turn to me, but I have nothing to say. My brain wasn't functioning. If I could I would have called Molly for guidance. I was alone while dealing with the aftermath of Ava's revelation.

I hate her for this. For ruining everything. Everything had been going well even though we hadn't sorted.

our differences with Rowan. I know eventually we would have.

Rowan was the other reason I didn't tell anyone about my pregnancy back then. I was still hurting and I wanted him to continue hurting because he's the one that destroyed what we had. How then could I

expect him to regret losing me if he found out I got pregnant for another man?

He would have let go of the regret because we would have been even. I know it makes me selfish, but I didn't want that. I wanted him to continue hurting. It was my punishment to him for sleeping with Ava.

"You know what? I don't even care if you believe me or not. I'm not here for any of you. I'm here for that

little boy who doesn't understand why his mother doesn't want anything to do with him. Why she doesn't love him. How do you even sleep at night, Emma?" Ava's voice turns soft towards the last part.

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I'm not a psychologist, but I think Gunner's situation reminds her of her trauma. Mom and Daddy wanted

nothing to do with her growing up.

I look at the ground, not able to withstand her piercing eyes, but she doesn't let me.

"Look at me when I'm talking to you," she demands, her tone turning deadly.

Her aura demanded attention. Against my better judgment, I lift my eyes to hers. This was something I

wasn't used to when it came to Ava. She has never been dominant. She was always the weak one, and for a moment, I get scared of the inferno burning in her eyes.

"Why would you do this to Gunner? Honestly, Emma, you're the one who always dreamed of having children, so why would you do this to your own son? Do you hate him so much that you're capable of living and pretending like he doesn't exist?" Before I can say anything, she cuts me off

"I always thought you were perfect. Even when things went sour, I still thought you were good, turns out you're nothing but a bitch, because only a heartless bitch would abandon their son the way you abandoned Gunner. I hope whatever made you abandon him was worth it, because he doesn't deserve

With that she turns around and leaves without saying another word to any of us. Rowan tries following her, but Gabe grabs his arms and stops him. He whispers something in his ear, and Rowan sags in defeat.

"Is it true, Emma? Do you really have a son?" Mom asks in a shaky and sad voice. Tears were rapidly filling her eyes "Please tell me Ava wasn't telling the truth"

Part of me wants to lie, but what would be the use? The seed has already been planted. It would simply take a DNA test to confirm what I've been trying to run away from for the past eight years.

I sigh in defeat as tears fill my eyes. "Yes. Gunner is my son."

Chapter 0212

Mom collapses in the chair after my admission. The heartbroken look in her eyes was undoing me. The disappointed look she gave me nearly made me crumble on the spot.

Travis, who had been holding me, lets go as if I had burned him. He backs away from me slowly until he's

a few feet away.

I know the rest had varying degrees of shock, but they didn't matter to me right now. Not when my family was looking at me like they didn't know me. Like I was a stranger.

"Please tell me you're playing a sick joke on me," Mom pleads. "Tell me you didn't have a child and kept him hidden from us all these years."

I want to lie to them just so the heartbroken and disappointed look in their eyes will disappear. I know that I can no longer do that. There was no hiding from this. There was no more running from the truth.

"I'm sorry. So sorry," I cry as I stumble towards her. "I wanted to tell you, but I was so ashamed."

I go to take her hand, but she flinches and pulls it away.

This is what I've been so afraid of. Ava was right. I was the perfect daughter. The one who never made.

any mistakes.

The one that thought things through before, except for that one time. Now their image of me is tarnished. Now they know that I am just like them. Human. The Ace card I had over Ava was gone.

I was in the same boat as Ava. I made mistakes that are now hunting me. Sleeping with Calvin remains

the greatest mistake of my life.

“H—How did this happen? When did it happen...did dad now?” Travis asks as he paces, frustration clear in

his steps.

“Dad didn’t know. No one except Calvin and Molly knew.” I look at the ground, unable to face the look on

my mom’s face.

“Start from the beginning and don’t leave a single thing out. I want to know why the hell you’ve kept my

grandson a secret from his family,” Mom growls, her eyes turning fierce.

I didn’t want to rehash the past, but at this point, I don’t think I had any choice. If I didn’t want them to be

even madder than they were right now, then I had to spill it.

“When Rowan married Ava, I was broken. I tried not to let it show. Tried to make you, dad, and Travis believe I was okay because you were all so worried about me. I felt like I was drowning, Mom. Like my

I fell into depression.

I sit down on the grass, feeling as small as I did back then when I learned that Rowan had slept with Ava.

“I was fading away. I didn’t eat, I didn’t sleep, and I didn’t attend classes. In fact, I rarely left my room. Molly noticed this. She started pushing, and when I refused to get better, she threatened to call you guys to let you know. I didn’t want you to know how I was struggling. I didn’t want Ava to find out how tough

things were for me.”

I was lost in memory. I had so much bitterness and resentment towards Ava back then. I thought if she ever found out how far I’d fallen, she would have been ecstatic. It was probably a year and a half later that

I discovered she had been going through her own kind of hell

“Things were going well after that. Molly became my anchor. My grades were improving, and I didn’t constantly cry or think about Rowan every second.” I take a deep breath “It was by coincidence that I met

Calvin again. It turns out we went to the same Uni and he was also Molly’s assignment partner.”

“I didn’t really talk to him. After all, we weren’t friends. I tolerated him because he was Molly’s friend, and

when he didn’t show any remnants of the obsession he had for me in high school, I stopped being weary

of him. We co-existed. He stayed out of my way and I stayed out of his.”

Chapter 0213

Fuck. This was hard. I wanted to stop, but now more than ever, I knew they wouldn't let me.

"Like I said, things were going well for some time. They weren't perfect, but they were bearable. That is, had given birth to a baby boy and that Rowan fell until the night mom called me to let me know that Aus in love with his son at first sight. Everything around me crumbled, and all the pain I'd been hiding came to the surface." I try to breathe through the pain of the memories, but it was so fucking hard.

"I was in pain, and I was really angry. Angry at myself for turning down Rowan's proposal, angry at Rowan for getting drunk and sleeping with Ava, angry at Ava for getting pregnant and marrying the man I loved and angry at the baby for being born."

I hear a sharp intake of air. I don't need to turn to know that it is from Rowan, I still struggle with being around Noah because if everything had gone the way I wanted it to, then he would have been mine and

Rowan's child instead of his and Ava's.

"I wanted to punish Rowan. To hurt him like he hurt me. I knew he always disliked Calvin for the way he crushed on me, so that night I approached Calvin and seduced him. I knew word would probably get back to Rowan, and that would have hurt him. That's why I slept with Calvin that night, because I counted on Rowan's friend telling him. He would have been so hurt, I would have gotten my revenge, and maybe then

it would no longer hurt as much."

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I don't tell them, but it's also how I lost my virginity. I was saving it for Rowan and in the end I gave it to the guy who kept fighting for me to love him.

"I regretted it the next morning. It had been foolish of me to sleep with a guy I didn't even like just to get

back at the man I loved. I told Calvin that it was a mistake and that he should forget about what



happened between us. I snuck out of his room, and I thought that was that. That it was a terrible one-night

stand and that would be the end of it.”

Fuck had I been wrong. I hadn’t planned for what was to come next. What destiny had planned for us.

“We went back to ignoring each other like the other didn’t exist, that is, until my period was late. A cheap.

test, and later, a doctor’s appointment confirmed that I was pregnant.”

It had been the worst news I’ve ever received. Deep in my heart, I believed that one day Rowan and I would get back together. I didn’t want an unwanted baby to hinder that. I didn’t want the consequences of my mistake to always be in my face.

“Why didn’t you get an emergency pill the morning after?” mom asks, making me blush a little.

“Apart from being a complete mess, everything was new to me. To put it plainly, I was naive. It was the-

that wasn’t really enough to get me pregnant. Looking back, maybe if I’d told Molly, she would have advised me to get one, but like I said, I was so ashamed, I didn’t want anyone to know.”

“You want to tell me that during all the years you dated Rowan, you never slept together? You were still a virgin?” Travis asks in disbelief. \*

I knew

ew Rowan wasn’t. Before we started dating, which was at seventeen, he’d previously been sleeping with anything that walked and had a vagina. When I’d told him I wasn’t ready, he understood. We planned to wait till I was ready. My biggest regret was holding out on him.

## Chapter 0214

Rowan releases a groan uncomfortably. "Can we not talk about this? It was years ago."

"To answer your question, yes. I was still a virgin... Anyway," I paused. "I told Calvin about the baby. I didn't want the child and I wanted to get rid of it, but he wouldn't let me."

"You wanted an abortion?" Mom asks, her voice ringing with horror and disappointment.

I couldn't do anything, but nod my head. "Calvin threatened to tell you and dad if I went ahead with my plans. I didn't want you to know about my mistake, so I agreed to carry the baby to term and he would keep his mouth shut. It was the worst period because I was forced to carry a baby I didn't want but had

no other choice."

"That was during the time you completely stayed away." Travis whispers. "You wouldn't even allow us to

come visit you.

I'd made excuses during that time.

When I got bigger, Calvin took me to a house his grandfather owned, which he left to him when he died. I didn't want word to get back to Rowan. That's where I stayed until I gave birth.

"I convinced the school to let me take online classes, and since I was actually doing well, there wasn't a need to call you or anything. I stayed with Calvin off campus until I gave birth."

I see Mom's eyes fill. I know that it hurts her that she wasn't there when her grandson was born, but it was

my decision and I had decided I didn't want the baby.

"When I gave birth, I told the nurses to give the baby to Calvin. I didn't want anything to do with him. To me, my job was done and now I could be free from the shackles Calvin tied around me when he forced

me to keep the baby"

"You didn't even look at your own child?" Mom asks.

"No. I didn't want to. To me he was the symbol of my worst mistake. I didn't want to see him, hold him or

be in his life"

I know it makes me look like an absolute bitch, but I honestly don't care. It was my decision, and it's what

I wanted.

I left the hospital the morning after. Calvin worked two jobs just so he could afford the bill for the hospital. I didn't care about how the baby was. How he was doing, what he was eating, and so on. All I wanted to do was forget that I'd had another man's baby.

"And you continued living your life like he didn't exist, right? Like he was nothing at all?" Mom asks,

standing up

"Mom..."

“Just shut up!” she yells before repeating softly. “Just shut up. Today, you’ve managed to destroy the remaining piece of my heart. As if losing your father and Ava wasn’t punishment enough, now I find out what a cruel daughter I really have...I can’t even look at you right now; I just can’t.”

With that, she walks away. Leaving me sobbing on the floor.

I look at the rest, and one by one, they walk away too. Travis is the last to leave.

He shakes his head in what I think is disgust.

“Of all the people, I never expected this from you, Emma. Not you,” he says, and then he too walks away.

I stay on the ground, crying. Everything had been perfect before she walked here and ruined everything. This was Ava’s fucking fault. Her and her big mouth. I will never forgive her for this. Never.

Chapter 0215

103.

Calvin.

I wait. I wait patiently for her to come back. I didn’t know where she went, but I can take a pretty damn good guess. She was mad; I understand that more than anything. If anyone is pissed off and hurt at what Emma has been doing, then it’s me. She has caused me and Gunner more hurt than I’m ever willing to

admit.

I hear the door unlock, but I don’t move. I’m not even sure what the hell I am doing here. The boys are at

my house with the nanny. For some reason, I feel like I should be here.

Ava stops dead in her tracks. "Cal, I didn't expect you to still be here."

Her eyes were red and puffy. She has been crying: that much is clear. Words honestly fail me. I have no fucking idea what the hell to tell her.

"I thought I would wait for you," I say as she takes a seat. "Where have you been?"

I knew where she went after she realized that Emma was Gunner's mom. That was hours ago, I don't know where she went after. I'm sure confronting Emma didn't take almost three hours.

"I needed to think, so I just drove around," she whispers. "Gosh! This is so hard for me. Not only because I love Gunner like my own and it kills me to watch him hurt, but also because I see myself in him."

I don't know much about Ava. I was about two years ahead of her in school. We weren't friends back then, and I didn't pay attention to any girl that wasn't Emma.

Even now, I don't know much about her. I kept myself closed off. I felt it would be unfair to dig deep into her life when I barely told her anything deep about mine. All I know is that Rowan hurt her pretty badly. Just like Emma destroyed.

"Why?" I ask curiously.

"Because I suffered the same fate as him when I was younger. I was unwanted. For me, it was much harder because I was unwanted by both my family and Rowan's family. I didn't understand why they didn't like me. I tried so hard to get them to love me, but they never did. In fact, it got worse as I got older."

I didn't know that about her Unlike other boys who tried getting close to her so they could get close to Emma, I didn't. I thought their tactic was downright cruel. Using one sister to get another was utterly disgusting

I'm so sorry, Ava

There was nothing else I could say to comfort her. I don't even know how to comfort Gunner when he asks about Emma, so how can I comfort Ava?

"It's okay. It was a long time ago, and I'm slowly starting to heal" she pauses. "In any case, this isn't about me. I want to know the truth. How did Emma end up being Gunner's mom?"

I sigh. I was dreading this question. Not because I don't want to tell her what happened, but because I don't want to remember the painful memories.

"Well, you know about my love for her from high school," I start and she nods.

"Yes, definitely. Everyone knew it, just like everyone knew I wanted Rowan."

This was so messed up. We both somehow ended up with the people we wanted, but in the end, it turned out to be a nightmare. Both of us got hurt really, fucking badly. Maybe we should have stayed away from them. It seems like Rowan and Emma were meant to be. It's like Ava and I got punished for getting in the

way of that.

"We'll I tried everything to get her to notice me, but she never did. It wasn't even possible when the person I had to compete against was Rowan. Like you said when we met again, I was nerdy, Cal. There was nothing sexy about me," I began, but Ava interrupted me by chuckling.

"Have you seen yourself in glasses? You're like a woman's nerdy fantasy. You probably star in ladies dreams as either a hot professor or a librarian."

I laugh at that despite myself.

“Maybe now, but not back then. Emma was probably disgusted with me. I mean, come on, even I have to admit I looked terrible back then. I wouldn’t have wanted to date myself” I continued.

“We finished high school, and in the summer before college, I decided to work on myself. It took a lot of effort, but I got to the point where I was actually proud of how I looked. I even started getting appreciative

glances from girls”

It had been the highlight of my life at that age. It felt good to be attractive. It felt fucking great.

Chapter 0216

“I joined college and continued working further on myself. I became unrecognizable. I drowned in college life. The girls, parties, and booze. Life was great. I had girls all over me. I had my pick from a large pool. Soon, I started to forget about Emma. There was no use crying over a girl that didn’t want me when I

could have someone else’

Ava nods her head in understanding. I know she didn’t enjoy college life. Not after she fell pregnant at eighteen. She then became a mother and wife. She didn’t have time to be a normal college student with no worries or responsibilities. At least I got to have that experience before Emma appeared back in my

life.

“Everything was going great until my grandfather had a stroke and became paralyzed. My grandfather raised me after both my parents died in an accident. He was all that I had given; I didn’t know any other family member alive. I changed schools so that I could be closer to him. It was easier to take care of him

that way”

Ava’s eyes widens as she swings her finger back and forth. “You transferred to the university Emma and

Rowan were”

“Yeah.” I simply answer. “I saw them around campus, but unlike before, I kept my distance. I didn’t want trouble, and besides, I had a lot going on. I didn’t have any time for meaningful relationships except for hookups, and that was totally fine with me. I had locked my heart after Emma’s constant rejection. I wasn’t willing to let anyone in”

I still loved her, and it killed me seeing her and Rowan almost every day, but I accepted it. She simply didn’t want me. There was nothing I could do about that.

“My grandfather passed away, and it was the most challenging time of my fucking life. I took a few weeks

off school only to come back to the news that the campus’ IT couple had broken up. I honestly couldn’t believe it. Especially when I learned that Rowan had cheated on Emma. It was honestly unbelievable.”

I never expected that. Everyone was sure of their love. Sure that they would stay together and get married. No one ever thought that Rowan would sleep with someone else.

“After that, Emma came back as a totally different person. It was like she was dead on the inside. The few times you saw her outside her dorm, she looked like a fucking zombie. I wanted to comfort her, but I knew she wouldn’t let me near her. It was a coincidence that my project partner turned out to be her best friend and roommate.”

didn’t want to be involved with anyone in Emma’s life. When Molly was assigned as my partner, I dreaded it. It turns out it didn’t have to. She was actually a chill girl.



My eyes shift to Ava. She looks captivated. Like she couldn't even remove her eyes from mine, even if she wanted to.

"I tried to stay out of her way. I didn't want to be a nuisance like I had been back in high school. I realized you couldn't force love and Emma definitely didn't love me"

It had been a sad realization, but a much-needed one.

"You're right," Ava says sadly. "If only I'd realized that earlier, like you did. It would've probably saved me

from a lot of heartache." 1

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Grabbing her hand, I squeeze it. "Well, it didn't work out for me... One day, out of the blues, Emma showed up at my dorm room and kissed me. It was unexpected, but it was the best kiss I've ever received. I thought it was a dream when she asked me to make love to her, but it wasn't she actually wanted me"

I still remember that day like it was yesterday. She had been a virgin, and even though I'd slept with countless girls, she had been by far the best. Probably because I had feelings for her.

"I went to sleep thinking that finally it happened. That, finally she had noticed and wanted to build something with me. Only I had been wrong. We woke up the next morning, and she was disgusted with herself. I tried talking to her. I tried telling her that I still loved her, but she said she'd been using me to get

back at Rowan for sleeping with you"

That was the first time I found out that the girl Rowan slept with and knocked up

I

ip was Ava.

“You can’t imagine the pain that hit me. I felt crushed. I loved her with my body, only to find out that she didn’t feel a thing. That she was only using me. The betrayal I felt nearly destroyed me. We kept our

distance again, that is until she told me she was pregnant.”

Chapter 0217

I’d been scared, to say the least. I didn’t know how to be a father. For heaven’s sake, I’d never even been near any babies. It was overwhelming, but I knew I loved the baby already.

“She wanted to get an abortion. I couldn’t let that happen, so I threatened her.” I take a deep breath, feeling my throat close tightly against the bubbling emotions. “I took her to my grandfather’s house. I’d hoped things would get better. That she would learn to love the baby and me, but I was wrong.”

“She was hell to live with. I won’t lie to you; during that time we still had sex when the mood struck her, but it didn’t make up for the ugly way she behaved towards me. She would curse me, call me names and sometimes even slap me. She said I ruined her life and that she hated both me and the baby”

I look at the floor. I tried to understand that she was going through a lot. That she was pregnant, heartbroken, and still in love with another man. That’s why I let her let out her frustrations on me.

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“It was hard. I wanted to walk away so many times, but then I would remember my child. Sometimes I would remember the times she was sweet, or when she cried and begged me not to leave her. I was

hurting while trying help her with her pain.

Ava takes my hand and squeezes it. Lending me her strength as I felt mine diminish.

“When Gunner was born, she refused to see him. She went back to being a stone-cold bitch. She told me she never wanted to see me or him again. I took my baby and left the hospital. I didn’t hear from her until

probably a year later.

“What did she want?” Ava asks.

I didn’t want to tell her this part because I’m ashamed of it. Ashamed of how I let Emma use me for years.

“Sex.” I breathe, “She wanted sex. She said she tried sleeping with other men, but she couldn’t bring

herself to. I was overwhelmed with being a single father so I gave in. I wanted the release. Ther

next

morning, when I woke up, she was gone. She didn’t even want to see her son, nor did she say goodbye.”

I continue. “It went on like that for years. She would drop by just to have sex with me. I let it go so long because I’d hoped she would change. That she would learn to love me and our son, but she was only interested in what my body could give her.”

I feel sick to my stomach as I tell Ava everything. I feel disgusted with myself for allowing her to use me for so long. Most of the time, I hated both her and me. Her, for hurting me and myself for being weak.

The day Gunner saw her, he was about seven years old, and she was sneaking out in the morning. He had been awake. Gunner asked me if she was his mom. I couldn’t lie to him, so I told him the truth. She got

+15 BONUS

I'd felt so angry and bitter toward her. So resentful because I had to pick up the pieces of my son's broken

heart.

"I called her and told her to give her relationship with Gunner a chance. When she refused, I cut all communications with her. I could no longer allow her to string me along while she hurt Gunner."

"I wanted a fresh change for me and Gunner, so we moved here, where I was born and raised. I wanted a

fresh start with him. I just didn't know that you would be my neighbor or that Emma too had moved back

home."

"I'm sorry for everything you've gone through, but I'm glad you saw your worth. You're a great guy, Cal, and

you deserve someone who'll love you wholeheartedly," she says with a smile.

I smile back at her.

"Thanks Ava, you too deserve the world after what you went through with Rowan."

I pull her into my arms and hug her. I feel so lighthearted. Like a burden had been lifted from my shoulders.

I didn't want to tell Ava this, but I was glad when I realized that she would be my neighbor. I wanted her to figure it out. I wanted her to tell everyone the truth because I was so sick of Emma keeping him a secret. I i was glad that now everyone knew what kind of woman she truly is.

Chapter 0218

Ava

My brain cells were totally fried.

I've been sitting here since Calvin left about an hour ago. I asked him if Noah could stay the night at his house today and he agreed.

I was still trying to grasp all that I learnt today. It was too much information all at once. I didn't know how

to handle all of it.

My phone rings. For a second I think of ignoring, but decide against it. It might be an emergency.

I swipe the screen sightlessly. I put the gadget to my ear, but don't say a thing. My mind was completely blank so I wait for whoever was on the other side to speak.

"Ava" she breathes. "Thank God. Are you okay? Travis told me what happened today"

Immediately I recognize her voice. Letty.

"I'm not sure, honestly" I reply in a whisper.

I still didn't understand how Emma could be so cruel to Calvin and Gunner. I know that she always wanted to carry Rowan's children, but to reject her own flesh and blood because he doesn't have Rowan's

DNA is downright malicious.

Travis told me you're the one that discovered the truth and exposed Emma's

lie"

Knowing how a parent's rejection feels like, I completely understood Gunner's pain. I took his pain a own because he reminded me so much of myself. 1

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He didn't choose Emma to be his mother, yet she hurt him as if he was nothing. That pissed me of and broke my heart at the same time.

"Yes. It was just by coincidence I guess

How? How were you able to figure it out" she asks, her voice in disbelief.

I don't know whether it's from finding out that Emma has a son or It's from her inability to understand

how I came by the truth.

alle breathe. "He's smiled at me many times before, but there was this day it just hit me hand, helend me for days because it looked so familiar. Then today Emma's Images

head His smile was similar to hers

"Cal never said anything before?"

"Never, but when I mentioned Emma's name, he completely froze. That gave everything away. Also the fact that he didn't correct me"

It still seems so surreal. I can't imagine my life without Noah so I don't understand how Emma was able to live like her son didn't exist.

"Tell me everything" she insists and I proceed to tell her everything from how it started to how we got here.

By the time I am done, I'm crying once again. I didn't want to project my pain, but it was really hard.

"I didn't know where I was going until I was at Kate's house" I tell her. I had stopped calling her mother a few months ago. "I felt so angry on his behalf and mine. I wanted to do something for him. Something no one did for me when I was little and they treated me with cruel disdain. I wanted to stand up for him and

call Emma out on her behavior"

It was something I'd prayed for when I was growing up. Other parents noticed how Kate and James treated me, yet they said nothing. Hell, even Rowan's parents kept quiet and followed their friends' lead.

No one stood up for me or what was right. So I decided to do it for Gunner.

"I understand you babe. No child should suffer through how your Kate and James treated you or how

Emma treated Gunner. You were right for exposing what a bitch she is

I felt so relieved. There was this part of me that felt like maybe I shouldn't have done it. Like I could have

handled it better, but I was so angry that I couldn't even think straight. I couldn't help it. All I thought

about as I drove is; Like mother, like daughter

Chapter 0219

I was about to say something when my doll bell rung.

"Someone's at my door, Letty. I have to go"

I felt so tired and drained. Both emotionally and physically.

"Okay. We'll talk tomorrow. I know it has been a tiring day for you"

We both say our goodnights and hang up. I consider ignoring the person on the door. Like I said, I was



tired. I didn't want to see anyone.

I slowly rise up and go open the door.

"Rowan, what are you doing here?" I ask in surprise.

I am s

surprised to see him. If I am being honest, I was expecting him to be by Emma's side, comforting

her. I'm shocked that he is here instead.

"Can I come in?" he asks instead of answering.

Something must be wrong with me because I step aside and let him in. He gives me a small smile as he

enters my house.

"Is Noah asleep?" he asks while taking off his coat.

"Probably, though he's not here. Today he'll be sleeping over at Calvin's"

I see anger flash in his eyes at his name. For a moment I think he's going to start a fight over Cal, but he literally forces himself to calm down. I almost clap for him at his show of control.

"Fuck. It's crazy how today turned out." He pauses. "How are you holding up?"

I know and I've seen some massive changes in him recently, but today it's just sort of hitting me hard.

Before he wouldn't have cared. In fact he would have lashed out at me for hurting Emma. Could it

honestly be possible that he has changed?

I shake my head to push away those thoughts. I'm being absurd. He had nine years to change yet he never

did. It's not possible for him to have a change of heart all of a sudden. E

I'm good I say, then take a while to consider what I just said. "Scratch that, I'm definitely not okay, I feel

like I've been scraped raw

He wells closer to me and pulls me in his arms. I feel his body heat. I feel him entirely. He is hard in every

I should be pushing him away, but for some reason I am not. My mind was completely empty and numb from exhaustion. If I had been thinking clearly, I would have told him to leave.

"What can I do to ease your pain? I know this must be hard for you and not just because it concerns

Gunner

My heart skips a bit. I'm shocked that he understands that not all of what I am feeling right now, because of Gunner, but also because of my own pain.

I look at his feet, but he cups my cheek and makes me look at him.

"I don't know, Rowan" I whisper.

He caresses my cheek softly. His fingers skimming over my cheek and neck. He then pushes a lock of my

hair behind my ear.

His

grey eyes clash with mine. He stares at me in a way that I used to dream about. He stares at me like

he wants. Like I am his world, which is impossible, right?

“I know of one way to distract you” he starts. “If I bend and take those pretty pink lips, will you let me?”  
he

ask, as my heart begins to race. 1

I just stare at him.

Tell him no’ I whisper to myself.

Say no, Ava. Push him away

I know I should, but I can’t think straight and my mouth won’t move to form the damn words.

His head descends as if in slow motion. Finally, his firm and soft lips touch mine.

Something must really be wrong with me because I slowly open my mouth and let him slip his tongue in. I close my eyes at the fiery emotions that take over.

I feel him in every fiber as our mouths mold and our tongues dance together. My legs weaken and I almost collapse to the floor, but his arm around my waist hold me up.

## Chapter 0220

I always wondered what authors talked about when they said “earth shattering kiss”. This was it.

My senses really have left the building because I grab the back of his head and deepen the kiss. It’s like I couldn’t get enough of him and I just wanted more. Even Ethan’s kisses didn’t feel this way.

I get lost in his kiss as he devours my mouth. This was exactly what I always dreamed of. I always wanted Rowan to kiss me like he wanted me. This was what I’d wanted from him every time he came home from work or left in the morning. This was what I wanted every time we made love. We never got that though. Not

because I didn’t try, but because he never wanted me.

“You tried being a descent fuck but you weren’t even good at it. Every time I was inside you, it’s Emma I wanted, it’s Emma I imagined beneath me. Every time I cummed, it’s her face I saw. You were nothing

special, just easy and so I used you. I used you like the fucking slut you are

The words he flung at me a couple of months ago hit my head like a wrecking ball. I wrench myself from

his hands, as the words play over and over in my head. Tormenting me now, like they did when I first

heard them from his mouth.

I was breathing hard as I stared at him.

“Ava?” he calls in confusion

“Every time I was inside you, it’s Emma I wanted, it’s Emma I imagined beneath me” I quote his words. You were nothing special, just easy and so I used you like the fucking slut you are”

“Ava” he tries again, his voice barely above a whisper.

My tears start filling and obstructing my view of him.

That’s what you said to me. You said I was nothing but an easy fuck and a place holder for your precious Emma

Why the hell did it still hurt? Is it because he kissed me like he wanted me when in reality we know that he never cared for me?

“Listen to me, Ava. Please” he begs, but I don’t see him. The only thing I see is his face twisted into a mean glare as he shattered my heart with those words.

Please leave, Rowan

No he stands his ground. “Not until you listen to me”

I just wanted him to leave me alone. I just wanted to go to sleep and forget that we kissed.

“Fine then” I turn around and take my car keys.

“What are you doing?” he asks.

“If you won’t leave, then I will.”

I was just about to step into the hallway when his voice stops me.

“I’ll leave. It’s late and you shouldn’t be out by yourself”

I don't say anything. Just wait for him to leave.

He starts to and I begin breathing relief. That stops when he steps next to me. Before I can do anything.

he tips my chin up and places a gently kiss on my lips then on my forehead.

I glare at him.

Instead, he gives me a small smile before he quietly leaves. The moment I hear his car leave, I lock my

door and rush upstairs to my room.

After changing I get into my bed and will my tired mind to sleep. I still couldn't believe that I kissed

Rowan. It felt so damn good and that's what scares me.

It's easy to give in to this new version of him, but I can't because no matter what I can't risk getting hurt

by him again and we all know if there is something Rowan is good at, it's hurting me.