

## **Ex Husband 261**

### Chapter 0261

I try to think, but nothing makes sense. Emma was back? How the hell was that even possible?

When she left, she'd sworn never to come back. Mother, Father, and Travis used to visit her, but she never

came home. Not even for the holidays.

In fact, my family used to go and spend Christmas with her. I never got invited. Before Noah was old enough to understand things, I used to spend Christmas alone. While my family went to be with Emma,

Rowan and Noah spent it with his family, and as usual, I wasn't invited.

Seeing her here in my home is a complete shock. He used to tell me that if he ever got a chance, he

would get back to Emma immediately. It confused me even more. If she was back, why the hell was

Rowan kissing me? Why the hell was he still with me?

I step completely out of his hand. He curses, though I don't know if it's because I stepped away from him.

or because Emma saw us kissing.

Wrapping my hands around myself, I continue to stare silently at Emma. I try to push back the pain and

hurt I've endured during my marriage to Rowan.

Sure, I might have hurt her when I slept with her boyfriends, but I've paid dearly for that mistake. Her pain

at losing Rowan is nothing compared to the ones Rowan, my family, and his family have put me through.

"Ava," he calls my name in a hoarse voice.

I shake my head. Walking around him, I start to head out of the kitchen just as Mother and Travis walk in.

I ignore them and rush up the stairs.

I get inside Iris's room and lock myself inside. She was still asleep. Careful not to make a sound, I slide

down the door and put my head between my legs, I fight the tears that threaten to fall.

Seeing them, especially Emma, just brought back the pain I've tried to hide. The hurt I've tried so

desperately to move on from.

A while ago, I'd thought that this was a chance for me and Rowan to start over. Now? Now I'm not so

sure. Not when I know that his heart has always belonged to Emma. Not when she was back in our lives.

Hearing footsteps approaching the door, I tense. They stop outside the room, and seconds later, there is

a gentle knock.

I don't open. I don't want to face Rowan. I don't want to face any of them. Not yet, anyway.

1/2

1+15 BONUS

Ava, please open the door. His voice is pleading.

I don't answer. I just needed a minute before I could face whatever was awaiting for me on the other side. I'm used to this. It shouldn't be affecting me like this.

AVE

"Just give me a minute and I'll be out." My voice comes out stronger than I actually am.

He whispers an okay, and then I hear him leave. I force back my emotions. I can deal with them later.

When I feel more composed, I leave the room and head to the master bedroom.

I shower and then change. When I'm done, I go back to Iris's room, only to find her awake and fussy. I

change her diaper, then sit in the rocking chair and feed her.

"Morning Mom," Noah walks into the room, rubbing his eyes, just as I'm straightening up my top.

I smile at him. "Morning too, Noah."

"Is she already awake? I was hoping to feed her."

1

“I already fed.”

He looks around the room before his eyes finally settle on us. “But I don’t see a bottle.”

Well, this is going to be awkward to explain. I swallow before starting.

“When she’s with me, she doesn’t need a bottle. I supply the milk for her,” I explain as best as I can.

This is probably new to Noah. I mean, he has been the only child in both families for years. He has never been around babies or breast-feeding mothers.

“I’m confused. Why doesn’t she need a bottle when she’s with you?”

“Because I breastfeed her,” I reply before asking quietly. “Do you know what that means?”

He shakes his head. “No”

“It means your mom feeds her with milk from her breast” Rowan supplies, making us turn to him.

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We hadn’t even noticed that he’d joined the room. He was leaning against the doorframe with his hands folded across his chest, which made his bicep bulge. He had a white V-neck t-shirt and black jeans. His

hair was still wet and he was bare feet.

eyes shooting

“You mean like a cow or those other animals I watch on the farm show?” Noah asks, his ey

from me to Iris then to his dad.

Iris lay contentedly in my arms after belching completely unaware that we were discussing her and her

modes of feeding.

“Yes. Exactly like that,” I replied with a smile.

His eyes turn unfocused for a while before scrunching up in distaste.

“That’s completely disgusting,” he says, taking a step back from me as if I were revolting. “I think she

ga

would much rather have her bottle.”

His eyes keep shifting from my chest to Iris.

“And what if you’re not around? What happens then? Can we then use milk powder like I saw the nurses

doing”

“No more milk powder, breast milk is good for her. If I’m not around, I’ll just pump some milk for her so

whoever is with her can feed her”

The look of disgust quickly changed. He stares at me in horror as if I just burned his x-box

"I'm done. I don't want to hear anymore" he shakes his head before walking out of the door

"I think I just traumatized our son," I tell Rowan, grinning. "He will probably never want to hear the word. breast again

Rowan chuckles. His voice deep and sexy. "Give him a few years and he'll be singing a different tune."

I stand up and stare at him. "Did you just imply what I think you implied"

This time he laughs. The sound of it doing something to me. He never laughs when he's around me, so I Just let it wash over me.

"He's a boy, and we both know how boys are when they reach their teenage years. He'll be jerking off to cut-off pictures of half-naked women stashed under his bed soon enough."

"I'm now the one who's traumatized." I cringe, trying to get the image out of my mind. "I so did not need

+15 BONUS

I shake my head and face him. "It makes me wonder if this is exactly what you did during your younger years

No comment," he smirks devilishly as he takes Iris from my arms.

a

Yap. He definitely did that when he was a teenager.

“Are you ready to meet them?” he asks, then proceeds to take my hand.

I try to pull it away, but he holds firm. Eventually, I just give up.

We get out of the room and walk down the stairs. We find all of them seated in the living room.

“I’m sorry we ambushed you like this. I just really wanted to see you” Mother says with tears swimming in

her eyes.

I’m stunned by the emotion in their eyes. Well, all of them except for Emma. She was busy glaring at

Rowan and I’s joined hands with nothing but contempt.

I would have been happy. I should be happy. For the first in my life Travis and Mother looked caring

towards me, but I couldn’t bring myself. It’s like all I felt for them was now dead and gone.

I wasn’t even happy to see them despite asking for them at the hospital.

Instead of acknowledging her statement, I note the absence of one person.

“Where is Father? Is he still angry at me for what I did to Emma? He has her back, or does he just hate me. that much?” I ask bitterly.

They've never hidden their contempt for me. Especially Father. I ruined the relationship of his precious Emma, so of course he hated me.

They all stare at each other, something passing in their eyes. Right away, I sensed that something was wrong. By the pain radiating from them, it was something big.

"Your father passed away, sweetheart." Mother answers in a broken whisper.

I stare at them in shock. That couldn't be correct. I'm sure I didn't hear right. Father couldn't be dead. It's just not possible.

Chapter 0263

"Say something, Ave, Travis says in an almost pleading tone.

I just stare at them. I'm not really sure what the hell to feel. Father and I have never gotten along. Especially after what happened between Rowan, Emma, and me. I would never wish that he was dead, but I also can't really say that I'm sad.

Does that make me a bad person? That the man I've known as my father my entire life is dead, yet I don't feel any kind of sorrow?

"I don't know what to say," I mumble, telling them nothing but the truth.

Rowan guides me and helps me take a seat. We sit on opposite sides with the three people who are supposed to be my family members.

I look at them, then shake my head in confusion. I used to feel a lot for them. Despite their cruelty, my love for them wasn't something that I could hide. Now, though, I feel nothing. The place where my love for them used to reside is completely empty. There is absolutely no trace of any feelings towards them.

It makes me wonder what the hell happened. Why is it that I no longer feel anything for them?



I watch Rowan from the corner of my eyes. I become even more confused by his sudden affection towards me.

everything

If there is someone who destroyed me, it's Rowan. His actions hurt more than my family has ever done to me.

'So why do you still love him, yet feel nothing for your family?'

First of all, they're not my family. If what Rowan told me is true, then Nora and Theo are my parents. Second, I have no answer for that. I should hate Rowan for everything he's done to me, yet I didn't. I don't know why my love for him is still there while my love for my so-called family is nonexistent.

"I'm sure you have a lot of questions," Mother says after a stretch of silence.

"How did he die? What happened? Was he sick?"

He was a healthy man, but sometimes sickness just strikes without warning. Maybe that was what happened.

"He was shot," Travis answers.

I

Well, I did not see that coming. At all. Of all the things I thought would cause his death, I never imagined

172

18 BONUS

proceeded to tell me everything that happened and how father ended up dying. When they're done, feeling from the information overload.

let me get this straight lean forward and look at Rowan Dad convinced you to enter into a

deal with this Reaper guy, then he turned against them, and in retaliation, he ordered a hit on

Yap That's pretty much the answers

Ins begins hissing, so I take her from Rowan. Laying her gently on my chest, she calms down. It still

surprises me how we've managed to bond. It was so easy and so effortless.

"Reaper," I murmur "I heard you mention him yesterday."

Mother, Travis, and Emma's looks turn frosty.

"Turns out you are friends with the bastard that killed my father," Emma snapped

I feel myself getting angry at her damn attitude. She hasn't talked much, but the little she has, she's been nothing but nasty. Not to mention the hateful looks she kept throwing my way

“I’m sure I had my reasons for being friends with him, and if you don’t like it, there’s the door. You can see yourself out.” My voice is cold even to my own ears as I spear Emma with a look before turning to Mother and Travis. “Both of you too.”

“You’re just saying that because it wasn’t your dad that was killed Emma doesn’t back down, but neither do!

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“You’re just saying that because it wasn’t your dad that was killed.” Emma doesn’t back down, but neither

do

Chapter 0264

Like I’ve been told multiple times, you aren’t my family, so he wasn’t my father. Despite the fact that that man treated me like a damn abomination, I would never wish him harm, and besides, he should have had them investigated before entering into a contract with them.”

“So you’re saying it’s his own fault he’s dead?” Travis asks between clenched teeth.

I shrug. “What the hell did you expect? You don’t betray a criminal organization and expect to walk away

happily.”

“I can’t believe you would say that,” Mother whispers, fighting back tears.

I

“And I can’t believe you’re here. What are you even doing here? I would have expected you three to be praying for my painful death.” I retort with bitterness in my tone

else was i

I'm surprised at the words coming out of my mouth. This isn't really like me. It's like someone else total control of my body. I couldn't stop the venomous words that were pouring out of my mouth.

in

Emma stands up in a fluff of anger, throwing her hands in the air. "I told you. I tried warning you. She's still

a fucking bitch, even with her memories gone."

pure fury

"Emma" Rowan growls, standing up. His face was contorted in pure

Before any of us can do anything, we are all surprised when we see a fast movement before Emma is shoved back. She falls on the couch, luckily. Though I wouldn't have shed a tear if she fell on the floor.

"Don't you ever talk to my mom like that again." Noah screams at her, his fist firmly on his side.

This startles Iris, and I try to soothe her before she can burst out crying.

Noah looked ready to commit murder.

The way he looked at her with so much hate let me know that there was something more to this. It wasn't

just because Emma was rude to me.

“Noah...” mother tries to say something, but Noah cuts her off.

“No!” Noah shouts angrily. “You just sat there as your daughter disrespected my mom.”

“Ava wasn’t nice to her either,” Travis tries to justify.

“And you have never been kind to her either,” he breathes. “It took some time, but after what Grandpa Theo said at the hospital, things started making sense in my head. You’ve never liked my mom and made sure to treat her badly.”

you

1/2

+15 BONUS

They all freeze. I don’t know what the hell happened, but it looks like Noah came to some realizations on

his own.

Noah, it’s okay.”

What they did to me wasn’t okay, but this was my battle. Not his. I would never drag him into whatever was wrong between them and me. He loved Mother and Travis. I would never get in the way of that.

“No, it is not,” he clips. His stance and his mannerism remind me so much of his father.

He is, after all, his father’s son.

“You have two options: either you play nice or get out of our house.”

“You don’t mean that, Noah,” Mother says with a teary frown.

“Yes, I do,” he growls. “No one, and I mean no one, hurts my mom. You get that?”

I didn’t know whether to be proud of him or scared of his forceful nature. I just hope that one day it won’t

be a problem.

They all nod. For Mother and Travis, it’s because they would do anything for Noah, but for Emma, it’s

because she didn’t have a choice.

Her eyes kept swinging to Rowan, meaning she was agreeing because of him. I don’t know how to feel

I

about that because she was still clearly in love with him, and part of me is afraid that the feeling is mutual.

Chapter 0265

It’s been a few hours since Noah went off on the three unwanted guests. They were now outside in the back, enjoying the sun. Noah seems to have calmed down, but I knew him well. He was sharp. His gaze remained on them, scrutinizing, as if he were waiting for them to put a foot wrong.

Iris was currently sleeping in her room, and I was in the kitchen trying to catch my breath. Mother and Travis kept trying to hold Iris, but for some reason my heart just wasn’t in agreement with that.

That wasn't even the main thing that bothered me. It was Emma's disregard for me and my feelings. Her complete disrespect in my own home.

I get that I did her wrong when I slept with Rowan, but Rowan is now my husband. It shouldn't bother me that she's trying to get close to him. Giving him coy and seductive smiles. Swinging her hips when she walks by him. Brushing against him when she's near him. I didn't want to be jealous, but I am.

I am angry and completely pissed at her blatant behavior. Sure, Rowan glares at her and walks away when

he notices her behavior, but I can't help but think that it's just a show.

The way she behaves lets me know that she's been back for a while. That and also that they may have gotten together for a while. Maybe before I was shot.

I keep thinking that maybe Rowan is just trying to be respectful. He is a public figure and heads one of the largest companies in the city. It wouldn't really look great if he's seen entertaining another woman immediately after his wife wakes up from a coma..

News of me being alive and waking up from the coma had leaked. He was probably just biding his time as

things settled before he asked for a divorce and got back to Emma.

"Hey, are you okay?" His voice startles me, making me jump.

"Um, yeah," I mumble, avoiding his gaze.



I was so conflicted about him. I didn't know what to think or feel. Part of me thought that maybe this was

a second chance. That, with his new behavior, he was finally ready to accept me. The other part, though, was afraid of hoping.

"Do you want me to ask them to leave?"

"If you don't mind" I sigh in relief. "I feel like I've reached the limit of my tolerance"

They've been here since morning. They've had breakfast and lunch with us. I just feel like it was time for them to leave.

1/4

Besides, my head was already pounding. I've had enough of watching Mother and Travis try to be sweet to me and watching Emma shamelessly throw herself at Rowan.

"As you wish," he pulls me towards him and places a gentle kiss on my temple.

After letting me go, he walks back outside. A minute later, they all walk back inside.

"Rowan tells us you're not feeling well, are you okay?" Mother asks with concern.

Do you see this? This is what I don't get. They used to hate me so much, so where was all this concern coming from? Why are they now so nice to me? Was it because of the accident?

I think I get Rowan's behavior. Sure, he was laying it on a little bit too thick, but we were used to pretending in front of Noah.

"Yeah, I have a headache." I reply as I watch Emma closely. She could at least try to be subtle while

looking at Rowan hungrily.

I turn to Rowan. "Isn't Noah coming in?"

"He's asked to stay outside for a little bit," he answers. "He has already said his goodbyes."

I just nod my head. Aside from video games, Noah also loves the outdoors.

"Well, we'll get going." Travis says after a while.

He comes to me and hugs. Mother does the same. The hug is awkward to say the least and I'm sure we

all felt that.

Emma doesn't say goodbye to me. Instead, she steps forward and places a kiss on Rowan's lips right in

front of me.

My mouth hangs open as I stare at her, unable to think straight.

"Bye. I hope we can see each other soon."

Everyone looks in shock at her audacity. Rowan pushes her away, and she almost falls, but Travis catches

her.

“What the fuck is wrong with you?” He booms, clearly angry and fed up with her. +

She looks a bit taken aback, but she soon composes herself.

“What did I do?”

“Are you out of your goddamn mind? Ava is standing right beside me, and you decide to kiss me?”

7/3

was fuming. I could feel the anger as it rolled off him in waves.

It was clear that Emma wanted to hurt me. That she wanted to witness as my heart broke. Everyone knew

was in love with Rowan. She knew kissing him would hurt me.

Chapter 0266

So what?

He grabs her arms and shakes her. “So what?” he fumes. “She’s my wife. My wife and you’ve been nothing

but rude and disrespectful to her the entire fucking time”

“Rowan” Travis tries to step in, but mother stops him.

I honestly don't understand why she did it. She was always on team Emma. My feelings be damned.

Emma always came first, and what Emma wanted, she got.

"Your wife?" she scoffs. "She's nothing but a hoe who stole you from me, and as if that wasn't enough,

she trapped you when she got pregnant. You belong with me, Rowan. I'm the one you love, remember?"

I don't hear what he says next because I walk out of the kitchen. I was completely fed up. I also didn't

want to hear it if he did say he loved her.

It isn't a damn secret that he does. Yes, he's attentive right now, and he even gave me a kiss or two, but

his heart has always belonged to Emma. She is right. Rowan belonged to her mind, heart, and soul.

When I get to the master bedroom, I immediately enter the bathroom. I needed to catch my breath. I feel

like all these shouldn't bother me, but it did. A lot.

Once I feel like I'm more in control, I leave the bathroom. I stop in my tracks when I find Rowan seated on

the bed.

"I'm sorry about Emma's behavior" he looks up at me. "She shouldn't have kissed me in front of you"

I don't get why he was apologizing for her. It's not like he is responsible for her behavior.

I shrug tiredly. "It's not your fault, she loves you so I guess it's just hard for her to stay away from you."

"It's not..."

I cut him off before he could finish his sentence.

"Look, I know you've been separated for years, but please tell her to tone it down. The last thing I want is

things to him."

Noah finding out before we can explain

"What the hell are you talking about?"

I

"You and Emma obviously. I know that now that she's back you'll want to be with her and I promise! won't stand in the way, but just give me time to get used to things." I pause. "On that matter, I think we

go back to how things were. No more kissing me and we shouldn't sleep in the same bed."

should

+15 BONUS

see anger flash in his eyes before he stands up and walks to me.

Why the hell would stop kissing you?"

Gleering at him, I take a step back, but he advances on me.

"Because of Emma, of course."

"Emma means absolutely nothing to me."

I scoff. This is the same man who has professed his undying love for her over the years. Does he really expect me to believe him?

"You don't believe me," he states as a matter of fact, all the anger drains from his face.

"No"

"Why?"

"Isn't it obvious? You've held on to her for years. You hurt and punished me for the part I played in your losing her. You've told me over and over again that I will never be the woman you desire because she owns your heart. Of course I find it hard to believe that you suddenly want me and not her."

It's painful for me to rehash everything, but I must show him just how absurd he wounds. Waking up from

the coma, then coming into contact with this new version of him, threw me off my axis.

Now that I've seen Emma though, I'm reminded of every hurtful thing he's ever flung my way. It has reminded me that this is all an illusion. People don't suddenly change.

I watch as the fight leaves him completely.

"You've lost your memory of the past five years Ava. Things changed. I changed. My attitude and feelings

towards you changed"

my hand.

I want to argue, but I see the truth in his eyes. I continue studying. I know Rowan like the back of

Yes, he's telling me the truth about things changing, but there is also something he's hiding from me.

"I just don't know if I can trust you/You nailed it in my head that I'll never be good enough for you. It's hard to reconcile the you I knew and who you are now."

Pulling me close to him, I feel as my heart rate begins to pick up. Being this close to him was a dream I never thought was possible.

He places gentle kisses on my forehead, cheeks, and finally my lips.

swear, I'll prove to you that I have changed and I want no one else."

just nod my head. I hope he did, because I don't know how I would survive if it all turned out to be nothing but an illusion.

Chapter 0267

Emina

I hated every moment of being at Rowan's house. I hated seeing Ava act as if Rowan was still her husband. I mean, come on, amnesia? You've got to be kidding me.

It pissed me even more that Rowan was so fucking attentive to her. He was mine. He is still mine, and I refuse to let him go.

When he shouted at me after I kissed him, it completely shocked me. Rowan has never raised his voice at me. It makes me wonder if, indeed, he was done with me. It made me wonder if he actually loved Ava. e past

I shake my head at that. That couldn't be possible. Everyone told me that he hated her. That for the nine years, he has done nothing but hurt her because of breaking us up. So how could he be in love with her all of a sudden? It just didn't make any sense.

"Miss?" the chauffer calls.

It was only after looking up at him that I realized that we were already home and that Mom and Travis had already left the car.

Don't even get me started on how mad I am at those two...

They were fawning over the bitch like puppies starved of affection. They even wanted to hold her little bastard baby. Not to mention how quick they were to listen to that brat, Noah. As if his opinion of them was important.



I mean, what the actual hell is wrong with them?

I get into the house fuming. Ready to rip into them. They were my fucking family, yet they treated me like an outsider. Ava used to be nothing to them. She was the damn enemy, and now all of a sudden everyone was on her fucking side.

“What the hell was that at Rowan’s house?” I shout at them as I enter.

Travis was seated while Mom stared out of the large windows. Through her reflection, I could tell she wasn’t happy with me. The feeling was mutual.

She turns, her face a mask of anger. “I could ask you the same thing.

“This isn’t about me.” I snap. “It’s about your behavior towards Ava. She’s not part of this family, so why

the hell are you kissing her damn feet? We should be celebrating that she’s out of our damn lives!”

Emma

NOTH

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1/2

+15 BONUS

Chaled Ava so much: She took so much away from me. She took the one person that was important to (ne and now she was doing it all over again. Now she was also taking away my family. My support system. The same people who stood by me when I got my heart broken.

"Is that why you tried seducing Rowan right in front of our eyes?" Travis asks with a sneer.

"I wasn't seducing him. I was simply staking my claim."

Mom laughs, but the sound is humorless. It's cold and completely void of any emotion.

I

She then turns and slaps me. I didn't expect it, so I stumbled back a little. I face her in surprise. My hands are on my throbbing cheek. This is the second time she's slapped me.

"You were behaving like a cheap whore. A slut," her lips are curled in disgust as she stared at me.

I

I continue staring. I can't believe that she would call me that. She knew I was in love with Rowan, so why would she call what I did whoring?

"I don't think you took what I told you seriously," she says after a while. "Three months and you still haven't patched things up with Calvin, nor have you seen Gunner. I'm getting sick and tired of your foolish behavior.

I tried telling them that I wanted nothing to do with Gunner, but they wouldn't listen. What did she expect me to do? Just do as she says, even if it's something I don't want.

"Now, you're going to do as I said Emma or I swear on your father's grave that you'll be out of this house and my life before you can even blink."

She turns to leave and then stops. "One more thing: stay away from Rowan."

"You can't ask me to do that," I shout at her, frustration fueling me. "I love him."

I can and will do anything she asks me except for that.

She looks me up and down with a look I've never seen directed at me.

Chapter 268

In case you haven't noticed, his feelings aren't mutual," she says, "You will not stand in his way of Winning Ava, end that is a warning. We coddled you without realizing we're turning you into an entitled brat, That ends today. You're thirty, for heaven's sake, grow the fuck up."

Both Travis and I stare at Mom in shock. She has never, and I mean, never cursed.

With that, she leaves the room. We hear her footsteps, and she climbs up the stairs before a door bangs in the distance.

I turn to Travis. He's my big brother. He's always had my back against Ava.

"Please tell me you don't think and feel the same as mom," I plead as tears fill my eyes.

He couldn't also be against me. He has always been my pillar of strength. I don't know what I'd do if he also turned his back on me.

but mom is right

I'm sorry, Emma, You're a grown-up. You have a child and responsibilities, yet you're chasing a man who no longer wants you. You're still living in the past, not realizing that everyone else has moved on and moved forward. You have to let go of Rowan. His heart no longer beats for you"

Getting angry at his words, I shove him hard. "How would you know that? How do you know he doesn't love me? I know he does. Deep down, I know he loves me."

"I know because he's my best friend," he pauses, and then continues gently. "He himself also told me that he loves Ava. He wants her."

My heart shatters, and I begin to shake my head. I try wiping the tears from my face, but they just keep falling down.

This can't be happening. Rowan can't love Ava. I was back. Everything was supposed to fall into place. We were supposed to continue where we left off. He was supposed to be with me. To want me. To love me. Not Ava. Never Ava.

I

"You're lying." I whisper.

"I'm not," he says, trying to pull me into his arms, but I step back. "Deep down, you know I'm not lying. You've felt the shift in him, but you're fighting it because you don't want to accept that he no longer wants."

Why the hell did it feel like my heart was breaking? Like my soul was being ripped apart? The pain this time was much worse than it was when I found out Rowan had slept with Ava.

4+15 BONUS

Back then, It hurt, but I knew deep down that he still loved me. That I was always his choice. This time, Though, 's different. I'm not his choice. Instead, he is choosing the woman who tore us apart in the first place

I turn around and begin walking out of the door. Travis calls my name, but I ignore him. He was the last person I wanted to talk to today,

I immediately call Molly. She picks up immediately.

"What's wrong, babes?" she asks, sensing my emotional state.

"Travis." I stammer his name, "He told me that Rowan doesn't want me."

I hear her sigh on the other end. "I told you this before, but you wouldn't believe me. From what you've told me, I tried telling you that his concern for Ava went much deeper than just worrying over the mother of his son."

I hated hearing her confirm this, I didn't want Ava with Rowan. She broke us apart. I can't simply let her win. I can't let her take Rowan from me.

"So, what can I do?" I ask anxiously, running my hand through my hair. "How do I get him back?"

"There is nothing you can do, Emma. Just let him go. His heart no longer belongs to you," she says kindly, but I'm not having it. Seems like she was also on the Rowan and Ava ship.

"That is not a fucking solution!" I fling my phone across the front yard and watch it as it smashes against the fountain.

I felt like I was going crazy. Like my world was being turned upside down all over again. I felt so alone.

Angrily, I wipe my tears. I'm not giving up on Rowan, but for now I needed to let out my frustrations. There

is only man for that job. Calvin.

Chapter 269

as hell. Honestly, I salute all the single mothers out there. Being a single parent isn't easy at all. collapse on the couch, feeling drained. It had been a busy morning. With having to do all the chores and everything. Gunner helped, but I had to take him to football practice today.

He didn't want to go, and he was pretty clear on that. It's not that I was forcing him into a sport he didn't like; It's just that he knew that Noah wouldn't be present like he usually is.

I made him understand why. Ava woke up, so of course Noah would want to be around her. I'm sure it will be like that for a while. He'll stop being clingy after being assured that Ava isn't going anywhere.

Gunner finally understood, and he accepted to go only if I promised that we would make arrangements to visit her soon.

He was bummed out when he learned that Ava, Noah, and Iris wouldn't be returning to their house next to

ours.

My mind drifts to Ava. I feel fucking horrible that the last time we talked, I walked out on her all because I felt a sting after she rejected me. Thinking about it now, I get where she was coming from. After what Rowan did to her, it would have been stupid to enter into a relationship with yet another man who was in love with Emma.

She was also right. I was still in love with Emma, even though she has broken my heart more times than I could count. You just don't get over more than a decade of love. I was looking for someone to ease the pain. A rebound...and we all know that rebound relationships never end well.

Ava welcomed me. She became my friend. She embraced me because she fucking understood my pain. She understood how painful it is to love someone who could never love you back.

Instead of appreciating her, I became like most other people in her life. I pushed her away because I didn't get my way. And now she doesn't even remember me

That's what fucking hurts. That I could lose her for good because she doesn't remember me, and she may just decide that she doesn't want to get to know me.

Sighing I get up and head to the kitchen. I was hungry, but honestly, I felt too lazy to cook anything. Maybe

I should order takeout. It would be easier, and I wouldn't have dishes to clean.

I just finished ordering when my doorbell rang.

1/2

delivery guy couldn't be that fast.

+15 BONUS

My blows pull together. I don't really have a lot of friends because I prefer solitude, so I wonder who was

Fat the door.

I pad to the door and wrench it open. My heart stops when I come face to face with the beautiful face of

Emme



Before I can react, she pushes me inside and starts kissing me. I hear the door close as she walks me

backwards, her lips and mine locked.

can't think. I can only feel... and what I feel is her lips on mine and her soft palms on my skin.

"Where is your bedroom?" she asks with a voice full of desire. "I need you right now, Calvin. I need to feel you inside me."

I was about to grab her hips and haul her up on my body when her next words stopped me.

"Is Gunner around? I hope not; I don't want to se

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"Is Gunner around? I hope not; I don't want to see him, and I don't want him interrupting us," she whispers breathlessly.

I stop kissing her and push her away from me as I come back to my senses.

Fuck. I can't believe that I fell for her tricks again and almost fucked her.

This is always the pattern. She'll come to me when she needs to scratch an itch. When she wants to be fucked. She'll use me. Use my body. Then she'll walk out like it meant nothing. Like, I meant nothing.

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Chapter 0270

hell did you stop?" she looks at me questioningly as if she didn't understand.

you really have the nerve to ask me that?" I growl, feeling fed up with the way she treats me. "Get out"

"No. I'm not leaving. Not until you tell me what I have done"

Damn. Was she really clueless, or was she just playing dumb? I can't believe that she would even ask me

that. Didn't she see anything wrong with what she was doing? Or how she's treating me?

"Calvin" she calls and goes to take my hand. I step back and glare at her,

I am disgusted in myself. I can't believe I've allowed her to treat me and Gunner like shit for years.

"Tell me one thing" I take a deep breath. "Do you love me?"

She looks at me for a split second before she looks away, It fucking hurt. So much, but that was the

confirmation I needed.

“Do you feel anything for me apart from lust?” My voice is thick and strained, even to my own ears,

I have never asked her this. Never asked her directly if she cared for, I shouldn't have, because it's clear

that she doesn't.

“What about our son?”

I can handle anything. If she doesn't fucking love me, I can deal with that. What I can't deal with is her

refusing to love Gunner. He wasn't a stranger, or a boy I adopted. He was her fucking son, yet she refused

to acknowledge that.

My heart continues to break when she remains silent. The silence between us speaks louder than any

word that would ever be uttered.

“I'm fucking talking to you.” Grabbing her chin forcefully. I make her look at me. “Do you care about us?”

Her eyes fill with tears as she stares at me with an emotion I can't comprehend. Her tears would move

me before, but not anymore.

I am just fucking tired. Tired of being just a warm body that she uses on occasion to get off.

Sighing, I release her as if she'd burned me. I was fighting my emotions, and I was precariously close to

losing my shit.

Fuck, why does it hurt so badly?

+18 BONUS

er, grounding my teeth against the pain that was threatening to swallow me whole.

I don't give her the chance to finish her sentence.

"Fucking leave my goddamn house, Emma, before I say or do something I'll regret." I yell, the need to shake her filling my bones.

How can she not see the pain she's causing me? Causing Gunner...Or is it that she just doesn't care that

she's hurting us?

"Please just listen to me."

"So that you can spew bullshit? Or is it so you can manipulate me in order to get me to sleep with you?" I try to calm myself down. "You're a selfish little bitch, and I am done letting you play games with mine and my son's hearts. Get out of our lives, Emma. We don't need you. We never have, and we never will."

"You and I are done. I don't want you anywhere near me or Gunner. I hope the fucking love you held on to for Rowan keeps you warm at night when you're lonely and he's with Ava. She's a woman you'll never

measure up to, and I hope you feel the same pain you've put me through when you see her with Rowan. Now get out of my fucking house."

With that, I grab her hand and kick her out of my house and life.

Ava was right. I deserve better than Emma. It was time I let go of my love for her because she wasn't

worth it.

From now on, she means nothing to me. She could rot in hell for all I care.