

Ex Husband 281

Chapter 281

Nora and Theo arrive around thirty minutes later. Like I said, I haven't been outside since that short trip from the hospital

I was dying to see how the city had changed. Four years is a lot of time for a fast-moving city like this one

to stay the same.

When the doorbell rings, I get up excitedly and open the door.

"Are you and lo

you and Iris ready?" Nora asks.

She was buzzing with the same excitement as me. I let both of them hug me. Being in their arms felt so wonderful and familiar. Like it was something I constantly got from them.

"Yes, let me just get her."

I turn around and head back to the living room. Picking up my daughter, I say a hurried goodbye to Teresa,

then leave the house.

I was about to climb into their car when a bodyguard stops me.

"I'm sorry, ma'am, but I can't let you leave," he says, dampening the excitement.

I didn't know his name, though I've seen him a couple of times while he was patrolling the compound.

"Why not?"

"I'm just following orders," he replies kindly, but it honestly pisses me off.

"Call him," I demand, my voice harder than I'd expected,

Almost reluctantly, he takes his phone from his pocket and dials it. I would have called Rowan myself, but

I didn't want to admit to anyone that I was struggling to read the names saved on my phone.

"What's going on? Theo asks from behind.

I raise my hand to stop him. I wasn't coming off as rude; I was just frustrated. I hated feeling like I was

caged. Like I was a prisoner in my own house.

The guard then hands over his phone.

What? His voice is hard and gruff,

Rowen, why is the bodyguard preventing me from leaving? I ask in imitation,

“Where do you want to go? You can send him or he can drive you.”

“Nora invited me for lunch with her and Theo... I have nothing to do so I want to leave with them.”

I expected him to put up a fight, but he doesn't. Instead, he just sighs and asks to speak to Theo. I hand over the phone to him. He walks a couple of meters from us. When he is done, he comes back and hands

over the phone to the bodyguard.

“Well?” Nora asks her husband.

“He has agreed, just as long as we take extra bodyguards with us.” He then turns to the guard. “Take a couple of you, men. You'll take one car. My bodyguards will drive in front of us and you'll be in the rear.”

He nods. “Yes sir”

It doesn't take long for them to organize themselves. A few minutes later, we are on the road.

The drive is silent, and before I know it, we pull up at a fancy restaurant. The driver parks the car, and

Theo helps Nora and me out of the car.

“Is it okay if I hold her?” Nora asks as we walk.

I don't see a problem with it, so I hand Iris over to her. She smiles wide as she stares at me, daughter. Her

granddaughter.

Theo leads us inside. Some of the bodyguards stay outside, while a few enter with us.

The moment the hostess sees us, she directs us to a VIP section. It was obvious that the couple had money and were well known. It reminded me of Rowan's family.

"Can you tell me more about Ethan?" I ask them the moment that the hostess leaves after she's made sure we're settled

Theo and Nora exchange looks before they both turn to face me.

"So Rowan told you about him?"

"Yes, but only that he is your adopted son, Iris's father and that he's in prison."

Given Rowan didn't really like him. I knew that he couldn't have known Ethan well. These two have raised

him. Maybe I can get to know him better through them.

"What do you want to know about him?" Nora asks.

"Do you visit him??"

I

They both nod their heads. Iris was now awake, but I didn't take her from her grandmother. She wasn't

crying, so there wasn't any need.

"Yes, and I know most people wouldn't agree

but he's still our son despite what he did. All I pray is that

don't hate. He was wrong but I swear he isn't a bad person."

you

To be honest, I can't really hate him. It's hard to hate someone you don't know and have no recollection

of. Right now, my opini

of him is based on what others have told me.

I listen carefully as they tell me all about their Ethan. They also tell me what happened and how I ended

up with the Sharp's.

I did pay

y attention throughout, but by the time they're done, I'm still confused about Rowan. They went on

and on about how he was a good man. If I'm being honest, I feel like they were trying to sell me a pitch.

Highlighting all of Ethan's good qualities without telling me who he truly is.

All these just made me more desperate to see him. If I wanted to know what kind of man he is, then it's

better to see him face-to-face rather than ask others about him.

“Please excuse me.” I tell them needing to take a breather.

Leaving them with Iris, I ask the hostess to guide me to where the bathrooms are. My head was pounding.

It’s like I had an overload of information and didn’t know what to do with it.

I get to the

opens.

washroom and splash water on my face. Taking a deep breath, I release it just as the door

“What are you doing here?” I was surprised to see Emma.

I’m even more surprised to see her with Christine. I didn’t know they were friends. Did Emma know that Christine has been after Rowan for years?

“I’m here to warn you,” she replies, both of them staring at me with hateful looks.

“So you decided the best way to do that is to corner me in the washroom?”

“We were here having lunch when you and your parents walked in,” Christine shrugs.

Remembering how disrespectful Emma was that day, I dry my hands and move to leave. She grabs my hand and stops me.

Rowan is mine. Ava: stay away from him,” she snarls, bitterness clouding her voice.

right? enquiring. Then why isn't he with you? Why is it that he comes home to me every day? How

he sleeps holding every night and not you?

To be honest, I'm surprised at my own boldness. This is so unlike me. I would have usually bowed to her

because I didn't want conflict.

She shoves me hard, and I knock my head against the wall.

"I know you planned all this to trap him again. To make him feel sorry for you so he can come back to you. I'm warning you, though, that it won't work. I'll expose you for faking your amnesia and once I do, Rowan

will come running back to me."

I couldn't pay attention to what she was saying because pain shot throughout my head right before I

collapsed to the ground.

The last thing I see is Emma's worried and panicked face looking down at me, and Christine's devious.

and evil smirk.

I still can't get Letty's words out of my head. When I came home early that day, I expected to spend some alone time with Ava. What I didn't expect was to hear Letty telling Ava that she'd been falling in love with

Ethan.

The pain that shot through my fucking heart had almost blinded me. Even though I hated the relationship Ava had with Ethan, I always thought it was purely physical. That it was nothing more than sex.

The fact that s

she'd been falling for him hurt more than knowing that she had slept with him. It nearly killed

me to know that she had started seeing a future with the man.

I had masked my pain with anger. I didn't know how to tell her that the possibility that she had felt a fraction of love for Ethan had crashed my soul into a bloody pulp. It had been too painful for me to voice.

it out.

The "what ifs" kept playing in my head. Refusing to give me peace of mind. I couldn't help but wonder what would have happened if Ethan hadn't turned out to be the bad guy. Would she be with him right

now? Would the love she had for me be replaced with the one for Ethan? Would she have been

completely over me right now?

It was driving me insane knowing that the only fucking reason that I had a chance with her was because

Ethan fucked up.

"Rowan!" The shout jolts me back to the present.

I stare at my brother in confusion, wondering when the hell he got into my office. I was so lost in thought

that I didn't hear him enter my office.

"What?" I shuffle the papers that were in front of me before pushing them aside.

He walks across the room and sits before my desk. "I've been trying to get your attention for more than five minutes."

I don't say anything. What was there to say? I've been distracted these past couple of days, and it's all because of Ava. She is on my fucking mind every second of every day.

Damn it. I was married to the woman for almost a decade, and she has never had this effect on me. Now I'm addicted to her like and addict's favorite drug.

She's embedded so deeply inside me that I couldn't fish her out even if I wanted. I wouldn't even do it: mine, and there is no fucking way I'm leaving her

"I can see you have a lot on your mind," he looks at me in that scrutinizing way I hate. "Mind sharing?"

This is so fucking hard. How do I tell him that I am so fucking insecure now about Ava's feelings towards Ethan? I've never been the insecure kind, but with Ava, I am. I'm not ashamed to admit that to myself.

Unable to sit still, I stand up and walk to the floor to ceiling window. I stare outside. One of the reasons I chose this building and office was because of the view.

My office was located on the fifteenth floor. I could practically see the whole city from here. There is also the fact that I could easily see the sun setting over a nearby lake.

“Rowan”

Sighing, I turn to face my brother. “I don’t even know where to begin.”

‘m going to take a guess and assume this about Ava?” he asks

I run my hand through my hair, messing it up in the process.

“Yes”

“You know you can tell me anything... So what’s up?”

I debate for only a second before I tell him everything. I couldn’t fucking hold it inside. Not when it was

driving me to the brink of insanity.

Just like he always does, he sits patiently and listen until I’m done. He doesn’t judge or input his opinion

until I’m finished.

I collapse back on my chair after I’m done while staring at him. His face is contemplative. I’m fucking dying to hear what he has to say. What advice he has to give because I’m at my wits end.

“Looks to me like you still jealous of Ethan,” he says after a while.

I give him the dirtiest glare I can master. “That’s already fucking obvious”

“Then what’s the problem? I don’t understand... Ethan is in prison and you’re with Ava. Shouldn’t that be enough? Shouldn’t that give you a bit of consolation?” he asks genuinely confused.

I fist my hand in frustration. Exhaling. I try explaining it to him without losing my shit.

“I know that, but I also know Ava. One way or another she’s going to insist on seeing Ethan because she’ll not only want iris to know her dad, but she’ll also want to know the man who got her pregnant

His eyes pin mine as he finally figures out where my issue is stemming from.

“You’re afraid she’ll fall for Ethan all over again, aren’t you?”

“Yes” I stand up once again and start pacing. “The slate has been wiped clean. There is no hidden agenda and Ava knows the truth about him. What’s stopping her from falling in love with him all over again? He may have betrayed her, but he didn’t hurt her as much as I did”

I honestly have no fucking idea what I would do if that happens. That possibility scares me so much because I love her so fucking much. I’m just afraid of losing her.

“What’s stopping her, is the fact that Ethan is in prison. I don’t think she would wait for him to be released. Twenty one years is a pretty long time”

“This is Ava we are talking about...her love and loyalty knows no bounds. I mean come on, she continued to love me even when I treated her like shit, do you think if she falls for him, she’ll leave him simply

because he’s in prison?”

He shakes his head and sighs. “You’re right” he admits.

I exhale in disappointment.

“Though I think you shouldn’t worry too much about this” he continues. “Just take it one day at a time and focus on showing her your heart. Love her so much, that the thought of leaving you breaks her heart.”

There was nothing else I could do, so he was right. Whether she stays with me or not, it’s her choice. Right now the only thing I can do is love her with everything I’ve got.

I let myself relax and ease the worry from my heart. Feeling like a fucking boulder has been lifted from my

shoulders.

Well I was starting to relax until my phone started to ring.

“What” I answer without looking at the caller ID.

“Rowan, there’s been an incident”

I recognize Theo’s voice immediately and begin to tense up.

“What happened?”

“Can you please meet us at the hospital?” he says instead. “Ava has been rushed to the ER”

Fuck. I am going to kill someone.

Chapter 0282

Rowan

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Chapter 283

“What is it?” Gabe asks as I stand up.

I couldn’t think clearly. They were supposed to take care of Ava. Why then was she at the hospital? This is why I didn’t want her to leave the compound. I don’t know what the hell happened, but I knew she was

safer at home.

“Theo just told me that Ava has been rushed to the hospital” I reply through gritted teeth.

I was pissed off and worried at the same time. I couldn’t bare it if anything happened to her. Not when I just got her back.

“Come on I’ll drive you”

I just nod my head before heading out.

“Cancel all my meetings” I tell my secretary while walking towards the elevator.

My look must have conveyed something because those who were in the hallways stepped out of my way.

They parted like the red fucking sea.

My heart pounded as Gabe and I rode the elevator all the way to the underground parking. I couldn't stop the images of the last time she was rushed to the hospital from playing through my mind like a damn

broken record.

Fear consumed me as my mind chose to focus on everything that could go wrong. Fuck, I needed to see

her. Needed to know that she was okay.

We get into the car and Gabe drives out immediately.

ver me.

“Haven't we been here before?” I ask as a sense of de ja vu washes over

I still remember how pain and fear gripped my heart that day. How I felt like my soul had been smashed

into a thousand small pieces. It's something I want to forget, but it's etched to me like a damn tattoo.

“She's going to be okay” Gabe reassures me as if sensing the turmoil inside me.

I don't say anything. I won't be able to relax until I know for sure that she's safe.

The drive to the hospital is a blur and before I know it, we were parking in front of the hospital. The

moment he switches off the engine, I get out and rush towards the entrance.

get inside. A nurse sees me and motions for me to follow her. Almost everyone who worked in the

hospital knew me. Not because I was Rowan fucking Woods, but because when Ava was in a coma!

There doctors are with her now, but her parents are in the waiting room"

Theo

neo and Nora stand up the moment I walk in. Theo's face looked like it was curved from granite and

Nora looked like she has been crying.

Iris was in her arms and was bawling her eyes out. Without really thinking, I pull her from Nora's arms and

hold her to my chest.

I whisper soothing words to her. Trying to calm down her hysteria. She relaxes a bit but continues to

sniffle.

"Can I take her?" the nurse asks gesturing to Iris. "She's probably hungry and that's why she's fussy"

I nod my head and allow her to take Iris from my arms. She was probably right.

She excuses herself and leaves just as Gabe walks into the room.

“What the hell happened?” I turn to them and growl while trying to keep my voice low. “I trusted you to take care of her”

“And we did” Theo replies. “I don’t know what the hell happened. She excused herself to go to the bathroom. A few minutes later, we saw Emma heading in our direction looking frantic. She’s the one that

told us that Ava collapsed in the bathroom”

Nora picks up from where her husband left off “We didn’t have time to question her about what happened or why she was in the bathroom with Ava. Our main concern at the time was getting Ava to the hospital”

“And where is Emma?” Gabe asks.

“We don’t know. We haven’t seen her since she told us about Ava”

Fuck. My anger was rising. I really wanted to punch something or someone

Just then, Ava’s doctor walks out.

“When I discharged Ava, I expected you to take good care of her Rowan” he begins with admonishing me. What I didn’t expect was having her back in my care two weeks after she left the hospital”

I glare at her parents before facing him again.

“How is she?”

Stable for now, She’s still unconscious but she’ll probably wake up in a few hours” he replies.

My heart calms down, but not by much. I won’t be able to relax until she is fully awake!

“Did she happen to hit her head on the floor when she collapsed?” he inquired.

“I don’t think so. Why?” Nora asks.

“Because of the wound on the back of her head. We were able to treat and stop the bleeding, but because of recording purposes, we need to know how she got hurt”

“She was laying on her side when we found her. It’s impossible that she would have hit her head when she

collapsed” Theo clarifies.

My anger becomes a fucking inferno at the implication.

This only means that she was hurt some other way and given how unstable Emma is, I bet my whole fucking fortune that she’s responsible.

“That’s strange” the doctor murmurs to himself.

“You said that she’s still unconscious?” I ask the doctor and he nods. “Good. I’ll be right back”

I turn to my brother. “Give me the car keys”

He's hesitant but finally does.

"Where are you going?" he asks me worriedly, but I don't answer.

I don't give them another look as I walk out of the waiting room, my anger blazing hotter than the fires of

hell.

It was time I paid Emma a little visit. No one hurts Ava and gets away with it.

Chapter 284

Hi my dear Reader. I hope that all of you are fine. I just wanted to let you know that tomorrow I won't be updating since I rarely update on weekends. It's usually my time to rest.

I also wanted to address an issue. Some of you are worried that this book will be one of those 'never ending' kind of books. I wanted to assure you that it won't be. I do plan on finishing it once I've ticked off

all the plots. It's just a matter of when not if.

I've also decided to write Noah's book after this one, though I'm yet to decide whether I'll incorporate it into this one, so it will be a two in one, or write it separately. Let me know what you think about that.

Would you want Noah's book and would you prefer if it was attached to this one?

Chapter 285

Did I mention how fucking pissed off I am? I was fuming mad. It's a wonder that smoke isn't coming out of my nose and ears like in the damn cartoons I used to watch

Getting to the car, I get in, turn on the ignition, and drive out of the fucking park.

don't think of anything apart from what Theo and Nora told me I just don't know why Emma can't get it into her fucking head that it was over between us. That I was done with her

I know that I gave her hope when I asked for a chance after my divorce, but I made it clear later on that our relationship wasn't going anywhere. That I didn't want to be with her

I would have taken anything she threw at me and handled it gently because of our history. Trying to make Ava jealous, sure. Causing a fuss, definitely. What I wouldn't tolerate, though, is her hurting Ava. That is a

line she shouldn't have crossed

My phone rings, but I ignore it. I was on a mission, and nothing would deter me from it until I fucking accomplished it

I drive like a damn maniac. Probably breaking all the road rules. I didn't care, though. Even if I were to be pulled, I would sort it out within seconds. I was Rowan fucking Woods. My family and I basically owned this damn city

When I finally get to the Sharp's estate, I park my car and stomp towards the large doors.

I pound on the door, not really caring what that says about me. My anger had yet to cool down. In fact, it seemed like it had gotten worse.

Everything Emma has done to Ava since she came back keeps playing in my head. The snide remarks, lying in order to get her in trouble, her abuse and her threats. They all flood my mind, making me see red.

I go to pound again, but my fist hangs mid-air as the door is wrenched. Travis stands at the door looking pissed. Well, he can join the fucking club.

“What the hell, Rowan?” He asks, looking at me like he’s trying to figure out what the hell I was doing
“You were pounding on the door like you wanted to break the damn thing down.”

Instead of answering. I shove past him and make my way inside. I scan the place, looking for Emma.

Did she honestly think that she would hurt Ava, then come and hide here? She was fucking delusional if that’s the fucking case.

“What’s wrong, Ro, and what are you doing here?” he says. “Not that I’m not glad to see you”

“Where’s that fucking bitch?” I answer with my own question instead.

My hands were clenched to my sides. I felt like I was going to explode with how much I was trying to

contain the nuclear anger inside me.

“Who the hell are you talking about?”

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Looks like he didn’t know what the hell had happened. If Emma is indeed here, she probably ran straight

to her room.

“Emma,” I growl. “That’s who the fuck I am talking about.”

He stares at me in shock before his eyes shut down.

“I will not have you coming to our house and calling my sister a bitch. I don’t care whether you fell out of love with her or not, you will not disrespect her.”

I laugh. The sound is chilling even to me.

“Is that so?” I scoff. “I’ll call her whatever the fuck I want. Now call the bitch down.”

“I swear, Rowan... if you don’t stop, I’m going to lay your ass out before kicking you out.”

I take a threatening step towards him until I’m right in his face.

“I’d like to see you try,” I tell him in a cold tone.

Je swallows before taking

a step back. He knows very well that he can’t beat me. I’d have his ass in the hospital before he could even lay a single punch.

Travis and I have been friends since we were both in diapers. I’d have done anything for him, but now Ava comes first. I’m willing to lose his friendship if it means that I get to have Ava in my life.

“Rowan, what are you doing here?” Her happy voice comes from behind.

I hear her running down the stairs. I try to calm myself, but it's impossible.

I turn and face her. "Just the woman I wanted to see."

She must have seen something in my eyes because she stops dead in her tracks. It's like a lightning bolt had struck her, and she was frozen.

"Are you okay?" she stammers.

I walk towards her and grab her jaw tightly.

"You tell me, Emma," I say through a clenched jaw.

"Please don't do anything rash," I hear Travis say nervously.

I shift my head without fully turning, and I glare at him. He shifts uncomfortably but otherwise remains

quiet

"What's going on, Rowan?" Emma asks, making me turn to her.

"What's going on?" I yell, finally losing my shit at the innocent look she was giving me. "What's wrong is that Ava was rushed to the hospital minutes after you came out of the washroom."

Travis mumbles a shocked "What' but I just continue ignoring him. My beef wasn't with him. Unless he

decided to interfere.

Chapter 286

"I don't know what you're talking about. I just called her parents because she fainted while in the washroom." She tries to stay calm, but I can hear the tremble in her voice.

"Is that right?"

"Yes. She collapsed and it didn't feel right leaving her there so I called her parents over."

I've known Emma for a long time. She might have changed, but not by much. I can easily tell that she was

lying to me.

"If that's the case, then why does she have a wound on the back of her head?"

She tries to remove my hands from her jaw, but I hold on steadfast. I was hurting her, but I didn't give a

flying fuck. Not when she'd hurt my woman.

"I don't know what you're talking about. I just found her in there, lying on the floor." She tries to defend

herself, but her eyes betray her.

"And what were you doing in the same restaurant as her?" I wanted to get the full picture.

Was this premeditated? Or was it something that happened on the spur of the moment?

"Christine and I met up for lunch." She stutters. "We didn't know that Ava and her parents would be eating

there too.”

She really wasn't doing a good job at trying to hide wrongdoing.

At the mention of Christine, and knowing now that the bitch also hated Ava, a picture of what happened

was already starting to form in my head.

“I'm giving you one last chance to tell the truth about what the fuck happened, or I swear you won't like what I do to you,” I snarl, feeling my patience reach its limit.

I swear, I don't know.”

Tell me the fucking truth, Emma!” I yell, the sound echoing throughout the room.

Travis tries to defend his sister “Maybe she honestly doesn't know.”

“Shut the fuck up, Trevor. I wasn't talking to you.

My grip on her jaw tightens. I swear I would never hit a woman, but right now I was very tempted.

eyes fill with tears, but they don't move me. Everything I had for her was now dead and gone. He

I didn't mean to,” she sobs. “I swear, I didn't mean to.”

“What the hell did you do, Emma?” Travis asks, fear lacing his voice.

I

He knows very well that nobody crosses me. Nobody hurts those I care about and gets

way with it.

“I shoved her... I can’t even remember what she said to me, but I got really angry and shoved her hard.

She hit the back of her head on the wall.”

I let go of her as if she’d burned. The action was so forceful that she stumbled a bit before righting herself.

“That wasn’t so hard, was it?” I ask with a wicked grin.

“I swear it was an accident.”

I didn’t want to listen to her damn excuse. Before anyone can move, I grab her hair with a tight fist. She

lets out a shriek of pain that does nothing to satisfy the beast inside me that demands blood.

Travis tries to get his sister out of my grasp, but it’s no use. I shove him back, making him fall on the

couch

“Now listen to me and listen well, because this is the last time I’m ever going to say this again. First, I

don’t fucking love you, Emma. In fact, I’m disgusted by you and your actions. Get it in your thick head that

what I felt for you is long gone. The woman who owns my fucking heart is the same one you decided to

hurt today, and instead of admitting your actions, you decided to be a fucking coward.”

She tries to speak, but I don't let her. Letting go of her hair, I grab her neck.

Tears continue falling down her face, as if what I said was tearing her into pieces.

“Second, you made the biggest mistake of your life when you hurt Ava. I don't fucking care if it was an accident or not. You will pay for hurting her. Third, I don't want to see you anywhere near Ava. You see her in a room. Walk out. You see her walking in your direction; you avoid her. I don't care if you have to jump in front of a bus to do it; as long as I don't find out you were in the same vicinity as her, am I clear?”

“Y–yes” she says, nodding her head eagerly as tears continue to fall down her cheeks.

I let go of her, and she gasps. Taking in as much precious oxygen as she could.

Turning around, I don't give her another look as I head out of the door.

is that it? Travis asks almost fearfully. “Is she forgiven?”

hamoreus ar dark laugh

“Not by a long shot.” I give Emma a disgusted look before looking at Travis, “You should have warned your sister not to cross me. Now she's going to learn the hard way what happens when you mess with

me.

With that, I walk out of their house and make a call. After this, if Emma is intelligent, she'll stay away from

me and mine, or I swear I will destroy her.

Chapter 287

Emma.

My legs fail me, and I collapse on the fucking floor. I'm still in shock. Still unable to believe that the man I loved would treat me so cruelly, all because of that bitch.

I've seen the ruthless side of Rowan before. It wasn't as intense as now, but it was still something to be reckoned with. I used to find it cute. What I never imagined, though, was that I'd one day be at the receiving end of his wrath.

my scalp.

My jaw hurt. So do my chin and my

He had been so cold and so mean. His eyes have always held love, but today I saw nothing but hate and disgust in them.

In his eyes, I saw death, and I just knew that if he could have his way, I would disappear from this world.

I try to think about what went wrong, but nothing makes sense.

Rowan hates me and wants nothing to do with me. Calvin cut me off and he also wants nothing to do

with me. I had both of them in the palm of my hands and now I had no one.

“What the hell were you thinking, Emma?” Travis yells at me. “I told you to stay away from Ava and Rowan. I told you that the man was in love with Ava. That he wanted nothing to do with you. So why the hell would you corner Ava in the fucking washroom like that?”

His words didn’t register at all. I still couldn’t believe Rowan would hurt me. That he would choose that bitch over me.

My heart ached. It felt like I had been shattered to pieces. Like my soul had been destroyed. It hurt so fucking much. I never thought that this day would come. That the day Rowan would choose Ava over me would ever arrive.

“Emma?” Travis calls, but I just continue staring ahead.

I couldn’t stop the tears that fell down my face.

“He doesn’t love me anymore,” I whisper as things finally start sinking in. “If he did, he wouldn’t have hurt me. He wouldn’t have chosen Ava over me.

What did she have that I didn’t? How the hell was she able to win Rowan over? He used to despise her, couldn’t even stand her presence. Now, he was defending her like she was the most precious thing in

I just couldn’t understand how things had gone so wrong. How had I lost everything when there had been so much hope when I came back?

Travis pulls me up by my armpits and sits me on the sofa.

“That’s what I’ve been trying to tell you,” he sighs in defeat. “But you wouldn’t listen to a single word I said.”

“How is it possible? How can he love Ava of all people? How can he hurt me? He used to love me, didn’t

he?" I fire the questions.

I was so confused. So conflicted about everything.

"Yes he most likely did love you, but the love you had for each other was young love. I believe that his true and eternal love is Ava. I think he might love Ava more than he has ever loved you. That's why he was

hard on you."

The words were like a dagger being driven into my chest. I gasp at the pain because I swear I could feel it physically.

My heart was breaking all over again. I had no way of stopping it. No way of slowing it down or making it better. It was like I was losing Rowan to Ava all over again. This time is worse, though, because he actually wants her. He loves her.

Love. The word leaves a bitter taste in my mouth. After everything I've been through. Everything I've had

to do, and all of it for what? I still lost to Ava. Still lost what mattered to me the most.

"Emma?" Travis calls with worry lacing his voice.

"What can I do? What will I do?" I asked no one in particular.

There is nothing you can do... Do yourself a favor and let Rowan go. His heart no longer belongs to you. If you keep holding on, then you'll just cause yourself more heartbreak."

That was not the answer I wanted to hear. I can't help but wonder if he is right, though. Is it really time to let go of Rowan? Is his love for me completely gone? Is there really nothing left?

"What were you doing with Christine in the first place?" Travis asks, breaking me away from my thoughts.

thought that you were done with her."

face my brother, letting his question register. It's as if all the life inside me has been drained. Like the Flight In me has been snuffed out.

wanted to apologize and mend things with me." I answer numbly.

Why the hell did it feel like I was lost? Like I was floating through a dark abyss with nothing to anchor me.

"And you believe her?"

"Yes," I simply reply. "She looked apologetic."

"I wouldn't trust her if I were you, Emma. Christine has always been psychotic. Please stay away from her."

was about to answer when the doorbell rang. Travis gives me one final look before standing up and heading towards the door.

"What the hell?" I hear him yell, but I don't move from my spot. Not when I felt like I was dying on the

inside.

the

I only look up when two pairs of boots that I don't recognize appear before me.

"Miss Emma Sharp?"

I nod my head at the police officers in confusion.

"You're under arrest for the assault of Miss Ava Sharp."

I just stare at them emotionlessly as they grab and handcuff me. Travis tries to stop them, but they just

shove him aside and take me away.

I know that Ava isn't the one who filed a report since she was still at the hospital. So it was Rowan. It couldn't be anyone else.

As they roughly shove me inside the car, I can't help but beat myself up.

I should have just stayed at home instead of agreeing to meet Christine.

Chapter 288

Rowan.

I rush back to the hospital. My anger had yet to simmer down. It was still fucking hard to believe that Emma would stoop that low. That she would hurt Ava simply because I no longer wanted her.

Why was it fucking hard for her to understand that? Why couldn't she just accept that I didn't love her anymore?

The more I thought about it, the angrier I got. I was gripping the steering wheel so hard that it made it difficult to navigate the car. Forcing myself to relax my grip, I focus on Ava's beautiful smile. The last thing any of us needed was me getting into an accident.

I continue driving as thoughts bombarded my mind. I still don't understand what went wrong with Emma.

She used to be such a kind soul. It's one of the reasons I fell in love with her. She was an angel with a heart of pure gold.

Looking at her now, I still can't believe that she's the same woman I had been madly in love. The girl I fell

for when I was younger was nowhere to be seen.

The girl I'd fallen in love with wouldn't be so malicious that she would cause someone else harm. She wouldn't be so cold-hearted that she would ignore and push her son away. She wouldn't be cruel enough to threaten my son or make up lies just to get what she wanted.

I understand that we all change. We let go of our childhood behavior and mature. Emma had changed for the worst. She had become someone unrecognizable. Someone I could never love.

Ava had changed too, but unlike Emma, she had changed for the better. She'd let go of her childishness and matured into a mother and woman any man would be proud to call his wife.

It pisses me off that it took this long to see it. To see her worth... But better late than never.

Right now, I would do anything to make sure she remained by my side. Including burning the whole world down.

get to the hospital and park the car. Not really bothering with anyone, I head straight to the waiting room.

Where is Iris? Task Nora the moment I get inside.

All three of them were still there. Still seated, waiting for Ava to wake up. My only hope was that she'd

wake up okay with no more side effects.

ping the nursery She was fed and her diapers changed, then she immediately fell

She looked tired. Both she and Theo looked older than they were. I guess the worry of these past few months has taken its toll on them.

Sighing, I stare at them. "Both of you need to rest... as a matter of fact, you need a damn vacation."

+to anyone ve

I didn't want to admit but I was worried about them. These few months have brought us as close to each other as we can get. They still didn't trust me not to hurt their daughter again, but they

weren't as hostile as before.

Besides, they were soon going to be my in-laws because I was planning to make Ava my wife again. So of

course, I was worried about them.

“We’ll rest once Ava wakes up,” Theo simply answers.

The man was as stubborn as a mule. There was no point in arguing with him.

Taking a seat, I turn and face my brother.

“Don’t even think about asking me to leave,” he warns. “I’m staying until I know for sure that Ava is okay”

He knew so damn well. He didn’t have to guess what I was thinking or what I was going to tell him to do.

We were twins. He knew me like the back of his hand.

I let out a breath and lean back against the plastic chair. Closing my eyes, I try to rein in my emotions.

“Where did you go?” Gabe asks after a while.

I open my eyes, noticing the Howell’s were also staring at me with curiosity burning in their eyes.

“The Sharps’ house to see Emma... I had to confirm something.

And what would that be?” Nora asks in a sharp tone.

I glare at her distrust, but at the same time, I fucking get her. I'd hurt her daughter because of the love I used to have for Emma. Of course she would be suspicious that I'd left Ava in the hospital to go see Emma

Chapter 289

That she was the one that hurt Ava... She shoved Ava while they were in the bathroom, and Ava hit a wall. That's why Ava was bleeding. I'm also guessing it's the reason why she fainted." My tone hardens when I remember what Emma confessed.

It made me want to wrap my hands around her neck and choke the daylights out of her.

"That fuck

fucking spoilt brat," Theo thunders furiously. "What have you done about it? I hope you didn't let her

go scot-free

"Don't worry, I've taken care of things." A smile plays on my lips. Emma will think twice about ever hurting Ava again.

"Mr. Woods?"

We all turn to the nurse's voice.

"Miss Ava is awake."

We all audibly breathed a sigh of relief. I'd been afraid of her not waking up.

Her parents stand up

“Can we see her?” Nora asks eagerly.

“Maybe in a minute,” she says, turning to face me. “She’s asking for you.”

I nod my head and follow the nurse as she leads me to Ava’s room. After opening the door and letting me in, she leaves.

Walking slowly towards her bed, I notice that even though she looks drowsy, she also looks on edge. Like she is worried about something.

“I’m sorry,” she blurts out the moment I sit down and take her hand.

I’m astounded. Not really sure what she was apologizing for. I mean, she has done nothing wrong.

For what?” I ask cautiously.

might have aggravated Emma... I don’t know what came over me when I said what I said.

She looks so worried and scared. It puzzled me because I didn’t understand how what she told Emma had to do with her apologizing,

you tell her

“She kept telling me how you belong to her and that I should stop using my amnesia to force you to stay with me. I don’t know what came over me. I got angry and told her If indeed you were hers, then why did you always come home to me every day since I woke up?”

I couldn't help it. The chuckle escaped my lips without meaning to. She looked so adorable that I wanted nothing more than to kiss her.

"It's not funny," she frowns at me.

"It kind of is, Ava."

Sighing tiredly, she lets go of my hand and places hers on top of the blanket.

"I know you've never liked it when I antagonized her. I'm really sorry for that. We've been doing so great,

and I don't want that to affect us."

It finally hit me why she looked worried. In the past, I would have gone off on her for that. I would have gotten angry and said some really mean things to her. She expected that to happen. She expected me to be mad at her.

I cup her cheek softly before gently placing a kiss on her lips.

"You don't have to apologize for telling her the truth, Ava. I don't want her and if I did, I would be with her

right now. You're the one my bod

mind, and soul want. No one else. So you were right. I come home to

you every day because that's where I want to be. With you, Noah and Iris."

She visibly relaxes.

“You really mean that?”

I simply nod, letting her see the truth in my eyes. “With every beat of my heart.”

Thank you...Now I can sleep in peace. I was worried that incident would cause friction between us,” she murmurs through a yawn.

“Get some rest, my love... I’ll be here when you wake up.”

Within seconds, she’s completely out. I continue watching her as she sleeps while thanking my lucky

stars for giving me a second chance with her.

twas contemplating all the things I was going to do to make it up to when my phone rings.

Bait Task in irritation.

bbes Emma has been arrested..one of my men answers

You know what to do next.”

“Yes, boss”

“Good”

With that, I hang up and smile to myself. The arrest is just the beginning.

Chapter 290

Ava.

It's been about a week since I was discharged from the hospital. Everything so far has been great, even though I still have this small fear that everything will fall apart.

Emma wasn't wrong that day. Rowan had always belonged to her. Sure, he is a human being and not simply a damn possession, but Emma always had a hold on his heart. Something I never fully understood.

I used to ask myself what made her special. I wondered how she garnered such love and loyalty from a formidable man such as Rowan. It used to bug me. Used to annoy me. While she had his soft side, I had his mean and ugly side.

Now the tables are turned, and I'm not ashamed to say that I don't fully trust this turn of events and change of heart.

I see the gentleness and affection in his eyes for me. He looked at me like I always wanted, but there is this nagging feeling that something isn't really right.

I mean, when did this change happen? Is it before I was shot? Or after? Did the thought of losing me bring

him to his senses? Making him see what was always right in front of him, or was it something else?

He did tell me he was jealous when I started dating Ethan. So maybe that is it. Men are jealous and possessive creatures. He probably didn't like it that another man was taking his place in my life when I'd worshiped him since I was a kid.

"Ava, should I prepare a bath for Iris?" asks Teresa from the doorway to the living room.

"Yes, please"

It was a beautiful day, and the sun was shining. It was the perfect day for my little angel to have her bath.

Minutes later, Teresa informed me that everything was ready. Picking Iris up, I head to the bathroom, where I check the temperature of the water before stripping Iris naked.

Noah, as usual, was at school, and Rowan was at work. Don't get me wrong. I love spending time with Iris,

but I was bored like hell.

I'm not used to just sitting around doing nothing Iris sleeps most of the time, and apart from the times

when she wakes up hungry or wet, she rarely throws a fit

soart from along care of lfe who is not a demanding baby, I have nothing else to do with my days.

ke to go back to work, but for now, that is out of the question

I smile when I realize that she's actually enjoying the bath. She seems oddly fascinated by the bubbles floating around her.

Once we are done, I dry her and place her on the changing table. Blowing kisses on her belly, my heart fills with happiness as I watch her smile in ecstasy. I dress her after a while, then decide to go outside with

her.

We both needed some much-needed vitamin D.

We had not even been there for long when Teresa came rushing towards me.

"Madam, there is someone here to see you."

I sigh in exasperation. "How many times will I tell you to call me by my name?"

"I'm sorry, I sometimes forget," she smiles sheepishly.

I couldn't stay mad at her. She was just too sweet and kind-hearted. She was a whole lot better than our previous house manager. That woman fucking hated me. For some reason, she couldn't stand my guts. I honestly think it's the only reason Rowan kept her around. He knew how it bugged me that she

disrespected me at every turn despite being Rowan's wife.

"Who is it?" I ask her, pulling myself from the memories.

"It's Mr. Sharp."

There was only one Mr. Sharp now. I honestly don't know if I can handle him. Travis tormented me for years. His disregard and coldness broke my heart. I didn't get how he could treat me so badly when I was his flesh and blood. Now, though, I understand. I wasn't his sister at all. That's why he didn't mind hurting

me.

"Okay, let him in," I instruct her against my better judgement.

Looking at the sky above, I pray that I haven't made a mistake. With a nod, Teresa leaves.

"Hi Ava"

I turn to face the man that I've believed was my brother for years. Only problem is that he never regarded me as his sister. Even when we were younger. Emma was his beloved darling sister, while I was nothing

but the bitch that ruined his sweet sister's relationship.

Hello, I simply replied, not really sure what he was doing here.

How are you?

+15 BONUS

"Cut the crap Travis, we both know you don't really care for me. So what really brought you here?"

Again, I'm astonished by this new and bold personality I'm rocking. It's so weird, but rejuvenating at the same time. I guess the old me got tired of being a doormat. It's clear from how, at times like this, I don't

hold back.

He looks hurt, but I can't bring myself to care. Not when he never cared for me. He knew how much he fucking hurt me, but he didn't give a damn.

He hesitates for a while, but finally speaks up. I sigh when I finally understand what brought him here.

"Please talk to Rowan for me. You're the only one he'll probably listen to right now," he pleads, making me

really curious.

"Talk to him about what exactly?"

"Emma was arrested after she hurt you that day. I know what she did is wrong, but it's been two weeks.

She isn't doing well."

I'm shocked. I honestly didn't give much thought to her after the incident. It never crossed my mind that she might be in prison.

"And what does Rowan have to do with that?"

"He's the one who pressed the charges against her," he inhales, taking a deep breath and trying to calm himself. "I know you and Emma don't see eye to eye, but please, Ava, she's suffering in there. The other prisoners are making her life a living hell."

He was on the verge of tears. I could tell that he had tried everything, including talking to Rowan. Nothing

has worked so far.

“What about Mother? She has connections, doesn’t she?” I question him.

“She doesn’t want to get involved. She’s hoping that this experience will teach Emma a lesson. That it’ll wake her up to reality.”

Wow. That is not what I was expecting at all. If anything, I thought she would be doing everything she could to get her beloved daughter out of prison.

“Emma is a lawyer. Can’t she get herself out of this? Or at least get one of her associates to do it?”

He shakes his head before sighing in defeat. “I wish it was that easy. Rowan’s word is law. Going against him is like going against god. It’s a losing battle. We’ve tried everything. Nothing has worked so far

I bounce Iris up and down when I realize she’s beginning to get fussy.

Please, Ava. I know we’ve treated you horribly in the past, and we don’t deserve your kindness, but I’m begging you. Please speak to Rowan.”

I remain silent, not really knowing what to do or say. Should I really talk to Rowan on their behalf, or should I let Karma have her wicked way?