

Ex-Husband's Regret by Evelyn M.M

Chapter 351

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“What do you mean?” he asks, clearly not believing what I was saying.

Before I could answer, a knock on the door interrupted. Brian excuses himself and goes to open the door. For some reason, I'm not surprised when Rowan walks into the room.

“You're just in time, Rowan,” Brian tells him. “Ava was just about to tell me who she thinks shot her. She believes it isn't Emma, as the evidence clearly states.”

Rowan doesn't say anything; he just turns and looks at me. In turn, I glare at him. I was still pretty angry, but slowly my anger was starting to fade.

“Look” I begin. “It's not a matter of belief but of proof. I saw who shot me, and it's not Emma. In fact, I believe she's using Emma as a scapegoat.”

Rowan studies me before speaking: “You remembered something.” He says it more like a statement than a question.

I simply nod my head. Something flutters inside my heart. How did he read me so well? I didn't even have to tell him anything. He just knew.

“Who was it?” Rowan asks almost in a pleading voice.

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“Christine.” I breathe out, still trying to come to terms with the revelation. Right before I blacked out, she lowered her mask a little. Her triumphant and evil smirk is something I will never forget.”

There is a moment of silence. Both Rowan and Brian have unreadable masks on, but I can tell that this new development has taken me by surprise.

“Are you sure?” Brian asks after a while.

I know for him, it’s hard to believe. Every evidence was pointing towards Emma. Every line was pointing at her. Of course, it would be difficult for him to believe otherwise.

“Yes. I mean, think about it: there is no one in this world that hates me as much as Christine. She’s wanted Rowan for a long time, but Rowan never paid attention to her and never took her as a mistress. copy right hot novel pub

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Rowan glares at me for that. As much as he wanted to deny and ignore that fact, it was glaring. Christine wanted him, and she didn’t mind, even if he took her as a mistress. As long as he took her.

“That’s one thing she’s always been bitter about. She couldn’t understand why,

than taking her as a mistress. We’ve had a few altercations, and it wasn’t once or twice that she threatened to make me pay. Especially after Rowan fired her because of her treatment of me.”

Thinking about it, every interaction I’ve had with Christine has left me with chills and a deep sense of foreboding. The woman was batshit crazy. I don’t know how nobody ever saw that before.

Rowan was about to say something, but I interrupted him. I needed to finish this quick so I could go home and take a long fucking nap.

“Like I told Rowan, Emma might be a lot of things, but a killer isn’t one of them. I knew that from the moment you arrested her. The issue kept bugging me, and for some reason my mind knew that she’s innocent. I didn’t understand why I believed so until I got my memories back this morning.”

“I don’t doubt you now, but the big question is: how did Emma’s fingerprints get

you?” Brian asks no one in particular.

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I’d already figured that out, so I don’t waste any time explaining things.

“The moment Emma came back, Christine befriended her. Of course they bonded over their mutual hate for me, but I believe that Christine had an agenda. Their friendship might be how she was able to frame Emma, but in order to confirm that, you’ll need to call Emma in.”

I can see the reluctance in his gaze. Finally, he sags in defeat before picking up his phone and making a call.

He requests for Emma to be brought in before hanging up.

We remain in silence until the door opens and Emma walks in, an officer trailing behind her. She looks worse for wear. This is the worst I’ve ever seen, Emma. She looked broken and lost. Like someone who’d lost everything and every will to live.

Seeing her like this leaves me feeling like a tight fist is squeezing my heart. The woman standing before me was a shadow of the girl I used to know. That knowledge broke something inside me.

“Are you okay?” I don’t know what pushes me to grab her hand and squeeze in

comfort.

She looks at me, shocked and confused, before tears start filling her eyes. She doesn’t say anything, but she squeezes my hand back.

“Emma, Ava believes you’re innocent, but I need more information before I can release you,” Brian informs her, and her eyes widen in shock.

“I need you to think really hard, Emma, because this is important, okay?” I tell her, and she nods her head.

Right now, she reminds me of a lost little girl.

“Christine is behind my shooting, and I believe she framed you because she knew that you would probably be the first suspect because of our issues.”

“W-what?”

“Now I need to know: is it possible that Christine may have had access to your clothes?” I ask gently, shaking her. She’d gotten lost in thought.

“Yes,” she answered. “She has a key to my apartment. We used to hang out sometimes.”

Brian takes over. “Good... and is there a way that you might have touched a gun she gave you?”

She thinks for a while, and she’d just begun shaking her head in denial when she stops.

“Oh my god,” she breathes in disbelief. “That fucking bitch”

“I’m assuming you remembered something?” Rowan pushes.

She nods her head. “There’s this one time a few weeks ago, I think, when she invited me to her family ranch as a way to help me get out of my head. She was giving me a tour of the house when we came across a glass case full of guns. She told me that her family loved hunting. She asked me if I would like to hold a gun. I loved the guns during the time we were practicing shooting, so I agreed. She wore white clothes and pulled a gun out of the case. I was too lost in my sad and depressed state to notice anything weird or to question why she wore gloves yet let me hold the gun without a pair.”

Damn. Christine was a clever bitch. She knew exactly what she was doing. She knew what she wanted when she invited Emma to that so-called ranch.

“Can you describe to me the gun she gave you?” Brian turns to her, his eyes shining with expectancy.

Without missing a beat, she describes the gun that she was given. When she is done, we all turn to Brian.

Sighing, he looks to the ceiling before facing us. “It seems you are right, Ava. The gun she described is the exact same one that was used to shoot you. Only me and two of my officers know the model of gun that was used. Emma was able to describe, meaning she’s innocent, and we need to catch this Christine before she

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I sigh in relief. Finally, I was able to prove that Emma isn’t as evil as others believed. My head was killing me, and I just wanted to sleep. o

“Are we done now?” I asked Brian. “Can I leave? And can she be released?”

“Yes. As for Emma, she’ll have to wait a little bit in order for us to process her release papers, but you can leave. I can tell you’re tired.”

He had no idea just how much he was right. I felt like my damn head was about to explode and leave tiny brain splatters everywhere.

“Come, I’ll take you to the hospital first.” Rowan rises up and gives me his hand. I am hesitant at first, but I place my hand in his. “I don’t want to go to the hospital, Rowan. I want to go home and rest.”

He was about to argue when Emma interrupted in a timid voice. It was so unlike her. The changes that she’d undergone kept surprising. Emma isn’t the same girl who ran away from her heartbreak years ago. She also isn’t the same woman who came back years later. This new version of her just seemed defeated and lost.

“Can I please talk to Ava privately?” She finally asks.

Rowan turns to me, and I nod my head. I was interested in knowing what she wanted to talk about. Let’s just say my curiosity got the better of me.

They walk out, and soon it’s just me and Emma. It feels kind of weird, given that we haven’t exactly seen eye-to-eye since she came back.

“I just wanted to thank you, Ava. You didn’t have to; you could have believed I was guilty just like everyone else, yet you didn’t. I’ll always be grateful for what you’ve done for me today. I know if it wasn’t for you, I would have probably gone to prison,” she finally says after a while.

“It’s nothing, Emma. I was just doing the right thing. You didn’t deserve to go to prison for something you didn’t do.”

“You don’t get it; it’s not nothing,” she announces fiercely, standing up. “After everything I’ve done to you since I came back, you could have hidden that information. copy right hot novel pub

You could have pretended like you didn’t know the truth. You could have kept quiet about your discovery, yet you didn’t. So I thank you for that.”

I get what she was saying. If I were a malicious person, I would have done the same, but with my memory back comes the remembrance of that day she took a bullet for me. She didn’t have to, but she did anyway.

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Instead of arguing, I just nod my head. I guess we are now even.

“I also wanted to say I’m sorry.” Now that shocks me, stupid. I didn’t expect that.. “I’m sorry for everything I put you through since coming back. The threats, snide remarks, and being an overall bitch. I just hated you so much, but more than that, I was jealous of you. You had Rowan’s attention without even trying, while I had to struggle to keep it on me.”

“Emma...”

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“No, Ava. It’s true. I behaved like a total bitch because I wasn’t Rowan’s center of attention. I should have realized that whatever we shared was long dead. I should have let go the moment I realized that his heart no longer belonged to me, instead of taking it out on you.”@

I squeeze her hand, and then she continues. “I know we’ll never be best friends or anything like that, but I hope our enmity can end. I don’t want to keep hating you for something that happened a decade ago.

I’m tired of carrying that burden.”

I search for the place where my bitterness towards Emma used to be, but it’s completely empty. I no longer hate her or feel jealous of her. I’m at peace.

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“And I’m sorry, Emma.” I tell her sincerely. “I never should have slept with your boyfriend.”

“I was immature, and I loved Rowan so much I could barely see straight. I shouldn’t have let my obsession go that far. I was drunk that night when it happened, but that’s no excuse. I’m really sorry; I know you probably won’t believe it, but I never meant to hurt you.”

This time, she falls into my arms and hugs me, crying. I can’t stop myself when my tears start pouring. After a while, we pull away from each other.

“That’s all I ever wanted to hear you say,” she tells me, trying to master a smile.

“I’m sorry it took so long” I chuckle- cry “But you didn’t make it easy for me when you ran from this city for ten years, and when you came back, you were a complete bitch.”

She laughs, and this time it’s genuine. For a while, it’s like she’s forgotten her problems.

“Thank you, Ava.”

“Hey, you saved my life and that of Iris... I’ll always owe you for that.” I smile and

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Unable to hold it in, I yawn. I was so freaking tired.

“I should let you go; you look pretty tired,” she says, standing up.

I stared at her for a while before saying anything. “Have faith, Emma, and stay strong. Everything will eventually work out.”

She nods her head, and I stand up. I open the door and leave, feeling a little lighter than when I came in.

“You’re ready to go,” Rowan falls into step next to me.

“Yes”

“I’ll drive you.”

“I’ll drive myself, Rowan. Besides, I’m not going to your house; I’m going to mine,” I inform him. “I’ll be by to pick up Iris and Noah later.”

“Please, Ava.” He begs, his unshed tears grinding my heart into minced meat. ” Don’t leave, please.”

“I need time, Rowan,” I breathe out. “I need to think. I can’t do that with you around me.”

I don’t wait for him to say anything. I climb into my car, tears running down my face.

I never stopped loving Rowan, even when I pretended I did, but now I needed to make a decision. Can I truly forgive him, let go of the past, and move on with him? Or is it better to leave him and the past where they belong?

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It's been a week since I asked Rowan to give me time. He's tried to keep his distance, but it hasn't been easy for both of us.

I won't lie, I really miss him. I miss being around him. I miss our talks. I miss everything about him. It's been quite an adjustment trying to merge the Rowan I was used to and the Rowan I woke up to after my coma.

It doesn't take genius to know that he loves me, but is it enough? Part of me wants to forgive him and move forward; the other part is afraid that the

memories of the past will always be a thorn between us. I mean, how can we be happy if I haven't been able to let go of the past?

It's also been an adjustment for Noah and Iris. They haven't made it a secret that they miss Rowan. Noah talks about him all the time and keeps asking when we are going to go back and live with his father. Iris has been irritable since we left.

She cries a lot and is restless. The only time she settles down is when Rowan calls and she hears his voice. The bond those two have despite Rowan not being her father amazes. It's something else that I don't know how to deal with.

I could go back for the sake of the kids, but I don't want that. That is not the basis for building the relationship. If I'm to go back, I want it to be because I want to. Because I want to give us a try.

A knock on the door pulls me from my thoughts. Since the day I went to the station, I haven't been out much. I've also just hidden myself away, withdrawing from those around me. My mind hasn't been able to settle, especially knowing that I have to make a decision soon.

I carry a crying Iris and open the door, surprised to find Rowan's mother on the other side. copy right hot novel pub

"Hello, Ava," she greets with a small and warm smile. "Is it alright if I come in?"

I was completely speechless, so I just nodded my head instead. I take a step back and let her in.

I keep bouncing Iris up and down, trying to comfort her and get her to quiet down, but it doesn't work. I was at my wits end on what to do.

"Is she growing a tooth?" she politely asks. "Is that why she's crying?"

I take a moment to compose myself before answering. This is a situation I never thought I'd find myself in. Rowan's mom never liked me. I do understand her,

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caused my son to lose the girl he loved. I would even be more bitter knowing it's because of her that my son was living in a miserable marriage.

"It seems she misses her home and Rowan," I calmly and simply reply.

She nods her head as if she understands. It's quiet between us for a while. The atmosphere is heavy with awkwardness. I didn't know how to deal with it. Part of me just wanted her to say what she came to say so I could relax.

"I don't mean to be rude," I begin. "But is there a reason why you're here?"

She takes a deep breath. "Yes. First of all, I want to apologize for everything that has happened over the years. You didn't deserve our scorn and you definitely didn't deserve what we put you through."

"It doesn't matter; it's in the past." I immediately cut her off. The last thing I want is for us to rehash the past.

I was so tired of it.

Things happened that were beyond my control. They did what they did, and there is no use crying over what has already happened. It's not like any of us can go back and change the past.

Then why can't you forgive Rowan and let go? The nagging voice asked.

"No, it does matter," she breathes out. "I believe that part of the reason why you won't forgive Rowan is because of what we did to you."

"Rowan?"

"Yes, he's the other reason why I'm here."

I sigh tiredly. I should have seen this coming. "I see"

By this time, Iris had quieted down and was now struggling not to fall asleep. She still had the stubbornness of her drawn-down eyebrows, but at least she'd stopped crying.

"I don't think you do," she says softly. "Rowan has become a mess without you. He truly loves you, and now he thinks he's lost you for good. It's like the mere realization of that fact has made him lose the life inside him. He has become a zombie. The only time we get a reaction from him is when you, Noah or Iris are mentioned." o

It pained me to hear all this. I really didn't think that my leaving would have this impact on him. In my head, I rationalized that yes, he did love me, but was it too much for his life to stop simply because I'd left?

I did love him. I fucking loved him even after everything, but I just didn't know

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“Sarah...” I go to say, but she cuts me off.

“We were wrong, Ava. We were wrong, and I believe that it’s because everyone held on to what could have been between Rowan and Emma that made it hard for them to move on. Looking back, I see it as clear as day. You were all still kids. If we had moved on, they would have followed suit and moved on too. We held on tightly to the past, and so they did, which caused Rowan to hurt you as badly as he did,” she pauses, then continues.

“I’m not justifying what he did, but I also want to understand that his actions were probably a direct result of how we behaved as parents.”

I understood her, but that doesn’t explain his actions later on. Yes, we married young, but we grew up. His actions and cruel acts continued for nine years. That’s what I can’t move on from.

“I know that I’m asking you a lot, but please give him a chance. I know my son, and I know once he loves, he loves deeply. He’ll spend the rest of his life loving you and treating you like you deserve if you give him a chance. He’ll bleed on the floor just to rectify the mistakes he’s made and fix what he’s broken. I promise you, Ava, if you give him a chance, he’ll work his butt off to be deserving of the chance you gave him and to be the man you deserve. I promise you won’t regret it.”

I remain quiet. Everything I’ve ever wanted is there for the taking. All I have to do is reach out and grab it, yet I am scared to do that.

“Do you love Rowan, Ava?” she asks. “Because that’s the most important thing right now.”

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“Yes. I shouldn’t after everything he’s done, yet I can’t stop my heart from wanting him. I should let go of the past, yet I can’t seem to.”

She is silent and then smiles at me warmly. “I know why you’re having a hard time... You’re scared”

I turn to her sharply.

“You’re scared of him hurting you again. You’re scared that giving him a chance will lead to more heartbreak. You’re afraid of being vulnerable because you’ve been hurt so many times. You’re simply scared to love him again”

At first, I wanted to refuse, but the more she talked, the more her words resonated with me. She was right. What was holding me back wasn’t the past and

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chance, I’ll end up getting hurt.

“Look, I can’t promise that he won’t do something to hurt you. Men can be clueless and stupid. But I can assure you that he won’t ever do anything to intentionally hurt you. I believe he learned his lesson when he almost lost, first to another man and then to death. At this point, he’d rather rip out his heart in an hurt or cause you pain. Love is about taking risks in the unknown. Will you let fear hold you back from grabbing your happiness?”[Ⓟ]

I mull it over. Everything she said was the damn truth. Could I really let him go? And Sarah was right again: Will I let the fear of getting hurt stop me from being happy? Rowan has already shown his remorse and that he’d move mountains for; he even sent Emma to prison for fucks sake. What more confirmation do I need that he’s truly moved on from her?

But above all of that, he’s proven his love for me. Sure, he can be an asshole, but that doesn’t stop my love for him.

“I see you’ve reached a decision,” she smiles wide at me as if sensing my choice.

Or maybe it’s the goofy smile I know I’m wearing.

I take my phone and shoot Rowan a quick text.

[Can we meet? I’m at home I want us to talk.]

His response is immediate. I mean, not even a minute after I sent mine.

[Sure. I'll be there in forty-five minutes.]

I look at Iris and smile.

“I can take her if you want; I'll even pick Noah up from school so that both you and Rowan can have enough time to talk.”

“Thank you, Sarah. If you don't mind”

“I don't,” she says, taking a sleeping Iris. “She's an angel and we all adore her so much.”

I nod and rush upstairs to pack a bag for her. I would get her once Rowan and I were done talking, but I wanted her to have enough diaper changes, clothes, and

some toys.

When they leave, I rush to clean myself up. I haven't put much effort lately, but today I wanted to look good.

I was just finishing when I heard a door open and close. I rushed downstairs, thinking it was Rowan, but I was dead wrong.

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“Hello, bitch. Long time, no see,” Christine sneered, her contempt.

her eyes

full of hate and

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“What are you doing in my house?” I ask in fear.

I could see the look of contempt in her eyes. Today she was out to get blood, and I knew it was mine she was after.

She was disheveled in a way I’ve never seen her. Behind her eyes lay a kind of coldness that scared the crap out of me. She looked unhinged as bloodshot eyes. stared at me with nothing but malice.

“Isn’t it obvious? I came for a visit,” she sneered, pulling a gun from her waistband. “After all, I wanted to see the woman who ruined my life one last time. before I ended her miserable existence.”

I take a step back with my hands raised in the air. Fuck, I knew it. She’d completely lost it. She’d just admitted that she was here to fucking kill me.

I mean, come one. She picked the worst timing. This is definitely not how I wanted to reconcile with Rowan. Plus, what if I didn’t make it out alive? From what I could tell, Christine was going to kill me.

“What are you talking about, Christin? I didn’t destroy your life.” I tried playing it cool.

I know what she meant, but I was playing dumb so as to buy myself some time. After I’d left the police station that day, Emma had been released, and a manhunt for Christine had begun. It was during that time that they found more evidence, not only linking her to my shooting but also to other various crimes.

“Yes, you did,” she shouted angrily, waving the gun in the air. I was afraid she’d shoot me by accident. “Let’s start with how you took my man from me. He loved me, yet you couldn’t let him go because you’re fucking selfish and a bitch.”
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Rowan was mine, but you brainwashed him to love you.”

I stand there in complete and utter shock. Did I hit my head by accident when I was getting ready for my talk with Rowan?

“Rowan never loved you, Christine.” I try to tell her gently so as not to be upset. The last thing I wanted was to end up with a bullet because she got angry. Well angrier than she is right now.

“Of course he did. How else would you explain his behavior towards me?” She asks with a dreamy look. “He has never looked down on me; he never asked me or forced me to have sex with him just so I could keep my job. He always smiled at me, talked to me gently, and he also took me on his business trips.”

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+15 BONOS

I stare at her, not sure what to think. It was obvious that the woman was delusional. How was she able to fool everyone? And how the hell did she think those things equated to Rowan loving her?

“He respected me, something most men never have. He even showed how much he’s loved me by always taking my side over yours.

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I wait for the familiar pain to come, but it doesn’t. I search, but there is nothing tangible. Just remnants of the pain that used to be there.

I go to speak to dispel her fantasies, but she gives me a scathing glare.

“But you just had to ruin all that, didn’t you? It wasn’t enough that you got pregnant and trapped him; you had to have him all to yourself, so you made him fire me all because you couldn’t accept that he fucking loved me!”

Again, I ask, how the fuck did no one see how unhinged this woman was? She was batshit crazy, and it was now showing. It was scaring me because I was home alone with a fucking lunatic.

“Christine, please calm down,” I plead. The more she talked, the more heretic she became.

“Don’t fucking tell me to calm down,” she screamed. “You ruined everything, you stupid bitch. Why couldn’t you mind your fucking business, huh? Why couldn’t you just let things be as they were? We had everything planned out; we staged everything, and Emma would be the one to take the blame and I would be scot-free, but you had to ruin that by opening your fucking mouth, and now the cops are after me.”