

Ex-Husband's Regret by Evelyn M.M Chapter 36

His remedy Present day.

L “So you see, they have a reason to hate me...I ruined their love” I mutter as tears fill my eyes.

It's always painful for me to go down memory lane. I was naïve and foolish. Thinking that I could ake him love me after I literally ruined his life. Nine years later and I'm still paying the price for loving Rowan Woods.

“It wasn't your fault?” Ethan asks me, his fingers slowly caressing mine.

“It was. I let my obsession with him take center stage and because of that I made the biggest mistake of my life” the tears fall freely now.

If only I could go back in time. If only I could change things. I've lived my life in regret. I wish I had listened to that nagging voice in my head. I wish I had payed attention to it instead of ignoring it. It would have saved me from so much heartache and pain.

Hell, I wish I had realized earlier that I was pregnant. I could have escaped earlier. I would have left and never told Rowan that I was pregnant with his child. No one would have been the wiser. I know it sounds downright evil but looking back now it would have saved Noah from seeing Rowan and I fight all the time.

I would have gone to a place where no one knew me. A place so far away from my family and Rowan. A place no one knew them. I'm sure they wouldn't even have bothered looking for me and that would have just been fine with me.

“Ava?” “What?” I ask as a response. I had gotten lost in thought again.

“I said it wasn't you fault. You were also drunk, so if they were blaming you, they should have blamed him too” he gives me a reassuring smile.

I look at him with round eyes.

“You believe me?” I ask him in surprise.

No one and I mean no one has ever believed that I was drunk. They all thought I was malicious and I took advantage of an innocent man.

“Of course I do, don't you believe you're also innocent?” his blue eyes seer into me. As if he was trying to unveil all my pain.

I sigh tiredly. “I got so tired of hearing that I was to blame. That I wasn't drunk at all, that sometimes I believe that's exactly what happened. Everyone has pounded it in me, cementing the idea that I took advantage of his drunken state that sometimes I doubt the events of my own

memory” It’s sad really. That sometimes I think that my memory is faulty. I mean if everyone says I’m guilty isn’t that the truth?

There are other times I think that the pain I went through at Rowan’s hand was my punishment. That God was punishing me for wanting and sleeping with a man that didn’t belong to me. That’s also something everyone has told me. That my pain was my punishment.

You get used to people’s words when they keep forcing their truth and beliefs down your throat. That’s what happened with me. Soon after I started believing them. Believing that I was at fault. Believing that I was at fault. My heart aches when I think of everything they put me through, Rowan especially. That a man you love could destroy you leaves you wondering if there’s truly any good in the world.

The only good thing that came out of that mistake is Noah. I would never regret my son. He was the one that saved. He was anchor during the times when I wanted to end it all. During the times when I felt so alone I contemplated suicide.

It was after he was born. I was so tired of the constant pain, the constant hate that I thought of it. I knew that Rowan would take good care of him. He fell in love with Noah the moment he was placed in his arms.

I pulled myself from that darkness when I realized what leaving Noah would mean. I didn’t want him to think I was weak. Most especially I didn’t want Emma as his step mother. I knew Rowan would get back together with her and I was afraid she would transfer her hate for me to him.

Now, looking at the vile words she spewed at me concerning Noah, I’m glad that I had chosen to stay strong I wasn’t going to let her hurt him.

“You’re not to blame, Never. You were both drunk so no one was to blame. You parents should have been ashamed for placing the entire blame on an eighteen year old girl. Rowan should have taken responsibility for his actions instead of allowing all the blame to fall on you. He was twenty “But I’m the one that sought him out” “Doesn’t matter. He gave you alcohol knowing that you weren’t supposed to be drinking” he pulls his hand from mine and runs it through his hair. “The more I know about Rowan and your family, the more I dislike them” he says more to himself than me.

I don’t say anything. After all, I was beginning to hate them to.

“Come on” he says then helps me stand up.

“Where are we going?” I ask him.

I wanted to stay a little bit longer. I didn’t want to go to an empty house.

“I’m taking you home...I don’t like seeing you trying to drown your sorrows” he answers.

He doesn't give me time to say anything before he's pulling me across the dance floor and out of the bar. I shiver from the chill. He removes his leather jacket and gets me into it.

He helps me get into his car and then he begins to drive. We don't talk, but the silence between us isn't awkward.

The way home I think about everything and nothing. Sure, Ethan helped remind me that it wasn't my fault, but the guilt of ruining three lives is still there.

Sooner than I would like, we pull into my drive way. Ethan switches off the engine and like the gentle man he is, helps me down.

I pull my keys from my bag and open my door.

"Do you want to come in?" I ask him. "I'm not planning for the night to end, I'm still not drunk enough to forget my pain" "You plan to continue drinking just to forget?" he asks and I nod my head.

I just needed reprieve even if it was for a few hours.

He looks at me and I see the moment his eyes change. The moment he makes a decision and heat fills his eyes.

"If that's the case, then I have a better remedy" Ethan says, his voice getting deeper.

He crosses the threshold of my home and closes the door. The moment he does, he seals my mouth with his and then for the next few hours he goes to show me just how better his remedy is.

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I start to internally panic so much so that I'm afraid I'll wake Ethan up. I didn't want him up now. Not when I was having a nervous breakdown. Not while my head was a mess. As slowly as I can, I get up and leave the bed.

He turns and murmurs something in his sleep, but he doesn't wake up. I heave a sigh of relief even as I put some clothes on and pick up my phone from the dresser.

Tip toing to the door, I wince a little when I open it and it creaks. I look back, my heart in my mouth. I'm immediately thankful when I see Ethan still in bed.

The sheets were down to his waist, exposing his very well defined abs and an arm was thrown over his face. Swallowing loudly, I leave the room.

I walk down my stairs feeling like I was doing the walk of shame even though I was in my own house. The soreness between my legs, a testament of how Ethan took his job at remedying my pain seriously.

The moment I get the kitchen I let loose. All the panic and anxiety I tried stifling in my room rushes through me like an Avalanche.

“Call down, people have sex all the time” I try telling myself but instead of calming down it only increases the pace of my wildly beating heart.

I start pacing the tiled floors. Still unable to believe that I had sex with another man. I always thought that the only man who would ever touch me or see me naked is Rowan. Here we are though, not only did I let Ethan kiss me, but I also allowed him into my bed.

Tired of pacing, I sit on the kitchen stool. My feet tapping nervously on the floor. What am I supposed to do now? How am I supposed to act? I didn't know what the protocol after these type of things happened is.

Am I supposed to make him breakfast? Would he even want breakfast? Is it something that will happen again or is it a one nightstand?

I place a hand on my beating heart. I felt like my chest was going to explode. I've never done something like this before. Even if I hadn't been in love with Rowan, I always believed that I would currently not strong.

“You don't have to love someone to have sex with them...you just have to be attracted to them”
A voice whispers.

I want to argue with it but my phone vibrating stops me. I unlock it.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY.

I read the simple message, wondering who could have sent it. That is until I lift my eyes and see it's from Rowan. I'm shocked and then angry. 4 He has no right at all to send me that stupid message. Not when he has never wished me a happy birthday during our marriage and especially not after the disgusting things he said to me.

I stand up and go back to pacing. I mean why now? Why now when we are divorced? Why today of all day? A few hours after I have slept with another man.

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The only time Rowan ever took me like that was the first time we had sex and it was only because he thought he was sleeping with Emma, the love of his fucking life.

I always wanted it to be like that between us. Always thought that something was missing. It wasn't bad, but I just wanted more.

Now after my night with Ethan I realize what has been missing between Rowan and I was the passion. I also realize that it had been missing because I wasn't who he had wanted I push the pain that tries to resurface away. I didn't want to think that Rowan was holding back even when we were having sex simply because he'd wanted another woman instead.

I go back to my phone. Just to distract myself from the turmoil of what was happening inside me.

I find more text wishing me a happy birthday. They were from Travis, Letty, mother and even Gabe ignore the rest and make a mental note to reply to Letty's later.

I just didn't understand. Why now? What did they wish to gain from it?

"Your forgiveness?" the same voice whispers.

Forgiveness. Such a simple word yet so complicated.

How can I give them that when they didn't give it to me? How can I forgive them when they broke me? How am I supposed to let it all go when they didn't let me live in peace for what happened?

Ethan was right. Both Rowan and I were drunk but I'm the only one who got punished. The only one who got blamed was me. I was the one that was called names, the one that was looked down on. The only one who got bullied.

I am the only one that got the emotional and verbal abuses. I took all of it. I took the blame even though I shouldn't have because I loved Rowan The more I thought about it, the more I got angry. I can feel the angry tears trying to fall and this time I don't want to push them back.

I'm so tired. So fucking tired of being the bigger person. I lost just as much as Rowan did because of that night.

No one wanted to see how the guilt broke. No one wanted to see how I was breaking or how I struggled. It was always about Rowan and Emma It was always about him. How come I had to break just to keep us working? How come I had to break for them to feel good about themselves? They broke me and yet no one wants to acknowledge that. No one wants to acknowledge my pain.

I feel a dam explode inside me. All the pain that I have been holding back. All the pain I've been pushing down I can't contain it anymore. It all comes rushing to the surface as my world unravels The guttural scream that leaves my mouth is animalistic even to my own ears. It

reverberates off the walls, echoing my torment. I lash out, my fist colliding with any fragile object around me. The sound of shattering glass and splintering wood fills the air. Mirroring the chaos within my soul. My fragile heart was breaking all over again. The pain swallowing me. Destroying me from the inside out.

With each passing moment, the anguish that had been buried deep continues to surface up. Clawing its way out from deep inside me.

I hate them I hate Rowan for what he put me through “Aya” I turn at his voice.

Ethan stands there shirtless. He looks at me in shock. The kitchen was destroyed, including the bar stools.

Seeing him there, I fall down on my knees in surrender, not caring if I hurt myself on the shattered glass. What’s physical pain compared to an emotional one?

“I hate him. I gave him my all. He took and took and I continued to let him. He left me with nothing Ethan. I’m empty, so dark and cold. How do I live like that? How do I let go. I’m so tired of fighting, all these weights I’m carrying are getting heavy” I cry.

Why didn’t I see that I was trying to hold on to something that wasn’t supposed to stand? That I was living in a waste land that they banished me to?

I feel his hands around me. “Let it all go, let the pain go, Ava. It’s the only way” he says and I do exactly that.

My nails dig into his flesh as I cry my heart out and I transfer all that pain to him. He doesn’t complain. He doesn’t say a word. He doesn’t wince.

He continues to hold me as the remnants of my past, my unhealed scars, lay scattered on the floor. A physical manifestation of the emotional turmoil that had finally consumed me.

My inner demons tear me apart as I breakdown and all the pain I have endured finally erupts. I finally sink against him. Completely and utterly drained. He gently picks me up bridal style and leads me up the stairs. My eyes were beginning to close as I feel a certain peace settle deep inside me. Even if God had deemed me guilty of my past sins, I think I’ve already paid enough for those mistakes. It was time to leave the past where it belonged. It was time to heal. I was done hiding. It was time to come out of the shadows and live my life.

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I push the pain that tries to resurface away. I didn't want to think that Rowan was holding back even when we were having sex simply because he'd wanted another woman instead.

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I stand up and go back to pacing. I mean why now? Why now when we are divorced? Why today of all day? A few hours after I have slept with another man.

I don't think it's fair to compare two men sexually, but Ethan thoroughly fucked me. Simple and clear. There was passion and heat, something that lacked with Rowan. Ethan took me in positions I didn't even know were possible. I loved that but I also hated it because it proved how stale my sex life with Rowan was.

The only time Rowan ever took me like that was the first time we had sex and it was only because he thought he was sleeping with Emma, the love of his fucking life.

I always wanted it to be like that between us. Always thought that something was missing. It wasn't bad, but I just wanted more.

Now after my night with Ethan I realize what has been missing between Rowan and I was the passion. I also realize that it had been missing because I wasn't who he had wanted.

I push the pain that tries to resurface away. I didn't want to think that Rowan was holding back even when we were having sex simply because he'd wanted another woman instead.

I go back to my phone. Just to distract myself from the turmoil of what was happening inside me.

I find more text wishing me a happy birthday. They were from Travis, Letty, mother and even Gabe I ignore the rest and make a mental note to reply to Letty's later.

I just didn't understand. Why now? What did they wish to gain from it?

"Your forgiveness?" the same voice whispers.

Forgiveness. Such a simple word yet so complicated.

How can I give them that when they didn't give it to me? How can I forgive them when they broke me? How am I supposed to let it all go when they didn't let me live in peace for what happened?

Ethan was right. Both Rowan and I were drunk but I'm the only one who got punished. The only one who got blamed was me. I was the one that was called names, the one that was looked down on. The only one who got bullied. I am the only one that got the emotional and verbal abuses. I took all of it. I took the blame even though I shouldn't have because I loved Rowan.

The more I thought about it, the more I got angry. I can feel the angry tears trying to fall and this time I don't want to push them back.

I'm so tired. So fucking tired of being the bigger person. I lost just as much as Rowan did because of that night.

No one wanted to see how the guilt broke. No one wanted to see how I was breaking or how I struggled. It was always about Rowan and Emma.

It was always about him. How come I had to break just to keep us working? How come I had to break for them to feel good about themselves? They broke me and yet no one wants to acknowledge that. No one wants to acknowledge my pain.

I feel a dam explode inside me. All the pain that I have been holding back. All the pain I've been pushing down. I can't contain it anymore. It all comes rushing to the surface as my world unravels.

The guttural scream that leaves my mouth is animalistic even to my own ears. It reverberates off the walls, echoing my torment. I lash out, my fist colliding with any fragile object around me. The sound of shattering glass and splintering wood fills the air. Mirroring the chaos within my

soul. My fragile heart was breaking all over again. The pain swallowing me. Destroying me from the inside out.

With each passing moment, the anguish that had been buried deep continues to surface up. Clawing its way out from deep inside me.

I hate them. I hate Rowan for what he put me through.

“Ava” I turn at his voice.

Ethan stands there shirtless. He looks at me in shock. The kitchen was destroyed, including the barstools.

Seeing him there, I fall down on my knees in surrender, not caring if I hurt myself on the shattered glass. What’s physical pain compared to an emotional one?

“I hate him. I gave him my all. He took and took and I continued to let him. He left me with nothing Ethan. I’m empty, so dark and cold. How do I live like that? How do I let go. I’m so tired of fighting, all these weights I’m carrying are getting heavy” I cry.

Why didn’t I see that I was trying to hold on to something that wasn’t supposed to stand? That I

was living in a waste land that they banished me to?

I feel his hands around me. “Let it all go, let the pain go, Ava. It’s the only way” he says and I do exactly that.

My nails dig into his flesh as I cry my heart out and I transfer all that pain to him. He doesn’t complain. He doesn’t say a word. He doesn’t wince.

He continues to hold me as the remnants of my past, my unhealed scars, lay scattered on the floor. A physical manifestation of the emotional turmoil that had finally consumed me.

My inner demons tear me apart as I breakdown and all the pain I have endured finally erupts.

I finally sink against him. Completely and utterly drained. He gently picks me up bridal style and leads me up the stairs. My eyes were beginning to close as I feel a certain peace settle deep inside me.

Even if God had deemed me guilty of my past sins, I think I’ve already paid enough for those mistakes. It was time to leave the past where it belonged. It was time to heal.

I was done hiding. It was time to come out of the shadows and live my life.

A banquet Rowan I was getting ready for a banquet. It wasn't something I wanted to do but I had to go. none the less The founder of Hope foundation was holding the banquet in thanks giving and honor of all its donors. Given I was one of its many donors, I was invited "What is it, Brian. I'm busy?" I answer after checking the caller ID "We were able to get a DNA match from the blood sample we collected from Miss Sharp's house" he goes straight to the point.

Her name makes me take a sharp intake of air. The last words I flung at her still echo in fucking mind I shouldn't have said all those hurtful things but I was so fucking pissed that she put her hands on Emma "And?" I urge, wanting him to continue.

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"Most likely. That or they have an accomplice who is close to Ava and therefore feeding him or her information" Brian finishes.

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"Yes...for now" "Keep me updated" with that I hang up and get back to tying my tie.

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I find her ready when I ring the bell to her apartment. She looked beautiful, but for some reason I couldn't appreciate her beauty as much as I did when we were younger.

"You're quiet" she tells me.

She was seated across from me, looking elegant and poised. I stare at her, not really knowing what the hell I was looking for in her blue eyes.

"I just have a lot on my mind" I answer.

"Care to share?" Not really How could I tell her that the thoughts that were plaguing me were mostly of her sister?

Her mouth thins. She isn't happy that I turned her down, but she doesn't say it. Instead she keeps quiet and stares out the window.

I sigh. The atmosphere was now fucking awkward. I don't do awkward so I start drumming a finger on my thigh. Praying that this fucking trip would end already.

We get there in time and I let out a breath of relief. The car stops and I get out, then I help Emma get out. The cameras begin flashing the minute we step onto the red carpet.

'Mr. Woods, is it true that you're now with Emma Sharp, your ex-wife's sister?' one reporter asks 'Some say that Miss Emma is the love of your life while circumstances forced you to be with Ava sharp' another flings.

'Where is your ex-wife, Mr. Woods?' 'Miss Emma, how does it feel to be with a man that was once married to your sister? They even have a son together' I feel Emma's grip tightening on my forearm when they ask her that question. I lead her away as they throw question after question at us. Finally we get to the entrance and are welcomed in.

The organizer did a wonderful job. I wasn't into this kind of shit but the place looked amazing. We are led to our table. We find Gabe, Travis, Letty and Christine already seated.

I don't bother greeting anyone unlike Emma. I just help Emma into her seat then I take my own. My mind wasn't here. My thoughts revolved around Ava and her safety. I couldn't even focus on the conversation around the table, that's until her name is mentioned.

"What the fuck is Ava doing here?" I look up to find Emma staring daggers behind me.

I turn in that direction to find Ava standing with Ethan. She looked like a fucking goddess with her long curled brown hair, and a gold glittering dress. I've never seen her like this. She looked absolutely breath taking. As much as I tried I couldn't take my eyes off her.

She walks forward and Ethan walks by her side. His palm on the exposed flesh of her lower back. She passes by our table. A part from Letty, who she smiles and waves at, she ignores the rest of us.

Ethan leads her to the table a few feet from ours and pulls out her chair for her. She gives him such a radiant smile that I feel it deep inside my soul even though it wasn't directed at me.

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"The cop probably invited her, Rowan did some digging and found out that he is from a wealthy family up north. His presence makes sense, as for Ava we all know she isn't the kind of person to be invited to such fancy things" the snide remarks pulls me from my anger I turn to look at Christine just as she and Emma burst out laughing.

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Ex-Husband’s Regret by Evelyn M.M Chapter 38

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Underneath the surface “What?” Emma whispers besides me in shock The whole room is quiet. Everyone is completely surprised. No one saw this coming. No one imagined that Ava would be the founder of such a large organization.

Hell, I was married to the woman and I had no clue That leaves a lot to be fucking said about me if I didn’t know this about Ava ‘Did you know this?’ Gabe asks, eyes and mouth wide.

“No” I growl pissed that I had missed such a thing.

I watch as she pushes back her chair She stands up and Ethan stands up with her while offering her his hand with a smile she places her hand on his and he walks her towards the stage. I clench my jaw when he places his hand on her exposed back when he helps her up the stairs.

Once she’s there, he steps down. She gives Mary a hug before she steps up to the podium She smiles before clearing her throat “Hi” she chuckles nervously “For some reason it’s easier for me to address a room full of rowdy teenagers than a room full of adults” This earns her a couple of smiles and laughs from people.

I don’t think there is anyone here who doesn’t know me and it there is, my name is Ava Sharp Like Mary said, the reason we are here today is to celebrate all of you for your continued help in Hope Foundation Being a teacher, you see a lot of things at school Kids with bruises inflicted by abusive parents, kids going hungry because they don’t have lunch money, kids with tattered clothes and shoes because their parents are so poor that even coming to school is a luxury and kids who are homeless and live on the streets” she says, her voice captivating her audience i have never seen the elites pay this much attention to a speech before Seeing those children go through such hardships broke my heart, so I started helping the best way i could fetarted with one boy in my class, then another, and another Behere kurmit I hat mote dono dozen children t was helping That’s where I got the idea to build a foundation wanted a safe haven for thein A place where they did have to worry about worth the t being Rids I started with buiding The Hope House and God blessed me by bring in sare #

“Since we began four years ago, we have expanded The Hope Houses and we are proud to say that we have a house in every major city in the country. We have helped thousands of kids get

into universities. We even have some in prestigious ones such as Harvard and Princeton. We have thousands of more under our care all ranging from a few months old to eighteen. We make sure that they don't lack for anything and we even give the older ones allowance" She pauses before pointing to the tables at the center which were full of kids ranging from all ages.

"This foundation is to help them. To give them hope for a better future. To give them hope that it doesn't matter where they came from, they can still make it. To back them up as they make their way through life. So from the bottom of my heart I want to say thank you for the continued support and for every single donation. I pray for more blessings upon you" she finishes and steps away from the podium.

Claps ring from every corner of the room as people stand up to appreciate her. They continue to clap until she steps down from the stage.

Mary soon after takes the podium. "That's all for today, please have a wonderful evening and enjoy yourselves" I watch Ava completely mesmerized. Who would have thought that there was so much more underneath her surface?

"Damn, never in my wildest dream did I imagine that she was the founder of the largest children's organization" Travis mutters, his eyes darting between Ava and Letty.

Letty was still seated at their table, but Ava was talking to some kids who had been waiting for her. One of them was a young man and he looked quite familiar.

"I know right?" Gabe adds, the shocked look still plastered on his face.

It was still hard to grasp. It was like she had this whole secret life that I never knew about. I never miss a thing, yet I completely missed this whole life Ava had.

Someone drops on the seat that Christine had exited. I turn to glare at them only to find Mary seated.

"Don't mind me, I'm just exhausted, you're Ava's family right?" she asks and Travis numbly nods his head.

"Perfect" She doesn't say anything else, just picks up her tablet and begins typing something on it "Hey" Emma begins. "Isn't that Caleb Kingstone of Kingstone technologies? What's he doing with Ava? Does he know her?" I look at where her gaze was directed. It was on the young man with Ava. No wonder he looked so familiar Kingstone technologies started about two years back. He is the youngest CEO and already has made a name for himself in the business world. At only twenty, he was already a success story. His techs were increasingly popular and he had earned himself a spot at the big boys table.

If I was vain, I would have been worried about him taking my number one spot as the top entrepreneur in the country. The boy was giving a lot of the other business men a run for their money.

“Oh yes...he is a beneficiary of the Hope Foundation. He’s an orphan and Ava took him under her wings. She’s the one who noted that he’s a tech genius. She encouraged him to start something with his talent. When he came up with the idea of having his own company, Ava backed him up. She gave him the startup capital he needed. No one believed in him back then, except for Ava. Now his company is fast growing and it’s earning him millions. As a thank you to Ava, he gave her shares in Kingstone technologies. Ava is the second largest share holder after him” Another shocking revelation. We stare at her. Each of us trying to absorb what she just told us.

Emma interrupts the moment by snorting. “So in other words you’re saying she’s taking advantage of the kids under her care to make herself rich?” This time I’ve had enough of her.

“Will you stop with the fucking snide remarks” I growl, hitting the table in anger.

People turn to us but mind their business when I glare at them. Emma looks at me like she’s never seen me before, but I was just so fucking sick and tired of her venomous mouth.

“Which hole have you been living?” Mary asks Emma in a sneer. “Ava doesn’t need anyone to make her rich, the woman was a millionaire.” “What are you talking about?” Travis asks.

Mary shrugs her shoulder. “She was rich way before she even started this foundation. It’s only that she likes to keep her things private and away from prying eyes, but I’ve calculated her assets and the woman is fucking rich. If she was to be in the ranking of the richest women in the city, I do the math in my head. That would place her around the number five or six spot of the richest people in the whole country. I’m still reeling from that shock when Mary speaks again.

“The thing I love about Ava is how down to earth she is. She’s so rich yet so simple. She doesn’t dress in expensive brands, drive expensive cars or live in a huge expensive house. Looking at her you would snub her. You would look down on her and write her off” Fuck and isn’t that what we have done countless of times. What I have done countless of times.

Even when I bought her that range rover, I looked down on the car she chose because I thought she couldn’t afford the latest one.

No wonder she turned the fucking range rover down. I made a fool of myself that day. Not only that day but also on the day I told her to take the divorce alimony because I thought she would suffer now that I wasn’t providing for her.

“What you’re saying is impossible” Emma whispers.

Among all of us, she’s the one that has looked down Ava more. That much I can fucking tell. Now the truth was hitting her and she didn’t like that Ava was wealthier than her.

“I’m telling the truth...seriously, shouldn’t you all know this about boss lady given you’re her family?” Mary asks frowning.

We all look down in shame. She's right, she was family and yet we excluded her and treated her like shit. No wonder she never told any of us of her status.

We were drowning in our shame when a commotion caught my attention.

Ava was standing head to head with Brenda. She was a socialite and an influential one. She was the self-appointed head of the women in our social rank.

Ex-Husband's Regret by Evelyn M.M Chapter 39

Underneath the surface "What?" Emma whispers besides me in shock The whole room is quiet. Everyone is completely surprised. No one saw this coming. No one imagined that Ava would be the founder of such a large organization.

Hell, I was married to the woman and I had no clue That leaves a lot to be fucking said about me if I didn't know this about Ava "Did you know this?" Gabe asks, eyes and mouth wide.

"No" I growl pissed that I had missed such a thing.

I watch as she pushes back her chair She stands up and Ethan stands up with her while offering her his hand with a smile she places her hand on his and he walks her towards the stage. I clench my jaw when he places his hand on her exposed back when he helps her up the stairs.

Once she's there, he steps down. She gives Mary a hug before she steps up to the podium She smiles before clearing her throat "Hi" she chuckles nervously "For some reason it's easier for me to address a room full of rowdy teenagers than a room full of adults" This earns her a couple of smiles and laughs from people.

I don't think there is anyone here who doesn't know me and it there is, my name is Ava Sharp Like Mary said, the reason we are here today is to celebrate all of you for your continued help in Hope Foundation Being a teacher, you see a lot of things at school Kids with bruises inflicted by abusive parents, kids going hungry because they don't have lunch money, kids with tattered clothes and shoes because their parents are so poor that even coming to school is a luxury and kids who are homeless and live on the streets" she says, her voice captivating her audience i have never seen the elites pay this much attention to a speech before Seeing those children go through such hardships broke my heart, so I started helping the best way i could fetarted with one boy in my class, then another, and another Behere kurmit I hat mote dono dozen children t was helping That's where I got the idea to build a foundation wanted a safe haven for them A place where they did have to worry about worth the t being Rids I started with buiding The Hope House and God blessed me by bring in sare #

"Since we began four years ago, we have expanded The Hope Houses and we are proud to say that we have a house in every major city in the country. We have helped thousands of kids get

into universities. We even have some in prestigious ones such as Harvard and Princeton. We have thousands of more under our care all ranging from a few months old to eighteen. We make sure that they don't lack for anything and we even give the older ones allowance" She pauses before pointing to the tables at the center which were full of kids ranging from all ages.

"This foundation is to help them. To give them hope for a better future. To give them hope that it doesn't matter where they came from, they can still make it. To back them up as they make their way through life. So from the bottom of my heart I want to say thank you for the continued support and for every single donation. I pray for more blessings upon you" she finishes and steps away from the podium.

Claps ring from every corner of the room as people stand up to appreciate her. They continue to clap until she steps down from the stage.

Mary soon after takes the podium. "That's all for today, please have a wonderful evening and enjoy yourselves" I watch Ava completely mesmerized. Who would have thought that there was so much more underneath her surface?

"Damn, never in my wildest dream did I imagine that she was the founder of the largest children's organization" Travis mutters, his eyes darting between Ava and Letty.

Letty was still seated at their table, but Ava was talking to some kids who had been waiting for her. One of them was a young man and he looked quite familiar.

"I know right?" Gabe adds, the shocked look still plastered on his face.

It was still hard to grasp. It was like she had this whole secret life that I never knew about. I never miss a thing, yet I completely missed this whole life Ava had.

Someone drops on the seat that Christine had exited. I turn to glare at them only to find Mary seated.

"Don't mind me, I'm just exhausted, you're Ava's family right?" she asks and Travis numbly nods his head.

"Perfect" She doesn't say anything else, just picks up her tablet and begins typing something on it "Hey" Emma begins. "Isn't that Caleb Kingstone of Kingstone technologies? What's he doing with Ava? Does he know her?" I look at where her gaze was directed. It was on the young man with Ava. No wonder he looked so familiar Kingstone technologies started about two years back. He is the youngest CEO and already has made a name for himself in the business world. At only twenty, he was already a success story. His techs were increasingly popular and he had earned himself a spot at the big boys table.

If I was vain, I would have been worried about him taking my number one spot as the top entrepreneur in the country. The boy was giving a lot of the other business men a run for their money.

“Oh yes...he is a beneficiary of the Hope Foundation. He’s an orphan and Ava took him under her wings. She’s the one who noted that he’s a tech genius. She encouraged him to start something with his talent. When he came up with the idea of having his own company, Ava backed him up. She gave him the startup capital he needed. No one believed in him back then, except for Ava. Now his company is fast growing and it’s earning him millions. As a thank you to Ava, he gave her shares in Kingstone technologies. Ava is the second largest share holder after him” Another shocking revelation. We stare at her. Each of us trying to absorb what she just told us.

Emma interrupts the moment by snorting. “So in other words you’re saying she’s taking advantage of the kids under her care to make herself rich?” This time I’ve had enough of her.

“Will you stop with the fucking snide remarks” I growl, hitting the table in anger.

People turn to us but mind their business when I glare at them. Emma looks at me like she’s never seen me before, but I was just so fucking sick and tired of her venomous mouth.

“Which hole have you been living?” Mary asks Emma in a sneer. “Ava doesn’t need anyone to make her rich, the woman was a millionaire.” “What are you talking about?” Travis asks.

Mary shrugs her shoulder. “She was rich way before she even started this foundation. It’s only that she likes to keep her things private and away from prying eyes, but I’ve calculated her assets and the woman is fucking rich. If she was to be in the ranking of the richest women in the city, I do the math in my head. That would place her around the number five or six spot of the richest people in the whole country. I’m still reeling from that shock when Mary speaks again.

“The thing I love about Ava is how down to earth she is. She’s so rich yet so simple. She doesn’t dress in expensive brands, drive expensive cars or live in a huge expensive house. Looking at her you would snub her. You would look down on her and write her off” Fuck and isn’t that what we have done countless of times. What I have done countless of times.

Even when I bought her that range rover, I looked down on the car she chose because I thought she couldn’t afford the latest one.

No wonder she turned the fucking range rover down. I made a fool of myself that day. Not only that day but also on the day I told her to take the divorce alimony because I thought she would suffer now that I wasn’t providing for her.

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"How dare you?" the anger in Ava's voice was palpable.

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The girl I they were talking about was cowering behind Ava. She couldn't have been more than five years old. She was cute, with a pretty pink dress, a heart shaped face, round lips and long black hair cascading down her back.

I can imagine having a little girl with my grey eyes and Ava's shiny brown hair.

I freeze in my seat. What the hell? Where the fuck did that thought come from? Shaking my head.

and banishing those thoughts, I focus on Ava. Looks like Ava was finally putting her in her place.

"Are you kidding me? That's a really stupid reason to hurt a child especially given we're here because of them" Ava admonishes, a frown marring her beautiful face.

"It's not a stupid reason" Brenda stomps her foot like a petulant child. "I'm not going to allow an orphan child who doesn't know the meaning of what it is to be rich ruin a dress that costs more than she'll ever see in her life" Shocked gasps fill the room. Brenda turns and realizes that she had an audience and that they aren't happy with her.

"That's not what I meant..." she rushes to save face after noticing the angry gazes that were directed at her.

"You know what? Leave. Given your attitude towards these children, I don't see the need for your presence here" Ava says then motions for one of the many bodyguards stationed around the entrances "What? You're kicking me out?" Brenda stammers.

Ava just rolls her eyes, "Obviously" "You can't do that, I've donated lots of money to this stupid foundation, you can't just kick me out" Ava smiles. A wicked smile. She then calls for Mary who rushes to her.

*Check how much she's donated to the foundation" she instructs and Mary begins tapping on her tablet.

"One million dollars" Mary answers after a while.

Ava turns to Brenda, looking at her coolly. "You see, what we don't need in this foundation is someone like you. Someone arrogant enough to think that we can't do without their money." She then turns back to Mary. "Transfer the exact amount back to her account" Everyone watches in surprise. No one says anything and no one moves.

"It's done boss" Mary says smiling.

"Now that you have your money back, get the hell out of my banquet and from now on you are banned from any event I or my foundation hosts" There was steel in her voice, a tone I have never heard Ava use.

Brenda starts cursing at Ava and the foundation. Ava nods at the bodyguard and he drags her out kicking and scream. After she's out, Ava turns to the room.

Just like with Christine, this was going to affect Brenda's social standing alot. This was the best fucking revenge Ava could take on her.

"Anyone else share in the same opinion as Brenda? Like I said, we are here because of these kids and I'll go through anyone who thinks they can mistreat them" her voice rings across the room, steady and strong even without a microphone.

Right then she looked like a damn avenging angel. Ready to strike down anyone who even so much as looks at the children wrong When no one says anything, she smiles. "Well then, sorry for the interruption and I do hope you have a lovely time" My eyes zone in on her as she turs around and walks away. She disappears outside, to the balcony Emma says something to me but I ignore her. My eyes fully focused on my ex-wife.

I stand up and push my chair back, then leave. Emma calls my name but I don't turn back. I take long strides in Ava's direction, Soon I'm outside the room.

She stands at the balcony. Her face facing the now darkening sky, her hair blowing in the wind Now, that I was here I didn't know what to fucking say. I haven't spoken to Ava since that day at her house. All my text and calls for the past two weeks have gone answered.

I step forward. My steps probably alerted her because she turns slightly. When she sees it's just me, she tenses.

"What do you want Rowan?" she asks in a sigh.

I step further forward until I'm standing beside her.

“Why didn’t you tell me?” I was puzzled. She was my wife and she never said a thing.

“Tell you what?” “Everything... The Hope Foundation and the fact that you aren’t hurting for money. Why did you let all of us look down on you?” She snorts before turning to fully face me. “And when was I supposed to tell you? You barely wanted to be around me and you would even go to great lengths to make sure we aren’t together for long.” I stare at her. Looking deep in her brown eyes. There was something new in them. Something that wasn’t there before. There was also something missing.

She continues as she looks outside towards the garden. “Besides would you even have been interested? As far as I can remember, you didn’t particularly care about anything that concerned me” My eyes drift as I watch people walking in and outside of the garden. She was right. I had been a cold bastard. I rationalized at that time that I didn’t need to care about what the woman who had destroyed my life was doing.

I resented Ava and it showed in the way I fucking treated her for years. I always prided myself in being a good person, but looking back I have to admit that I had been prick. So much so that my wife kept a whole part of her life a secret to me.

“About Emma...” I go to apologize for the words I carelessly threw at her but she cuts me off.

“Don’t worry about it, I’m not after you Rowan and I don’t plan to come between you and Emma, you can rest assured that all the love I had for you is dead. You managed to kill it She takes a steadying breath “Loving you was the biggest mistake I have ever made and I don’t plan on continuing with that mistake” Fuck, why the hell did it feel like someone took a fucking sledge hammer to my heard at those words?!

“I will always be thankful because you gave me Noah. He’s the only good thing you’ve given me since I’ve known you. I regret falling in love with you but I will never regret our son.” She turns around and faces the door to the room. She smiles and I swivel around to look at what she’s staring at. Her eyes were on Ethan.

“I’m sorry for the trouble I caused you” she says her eyes still on the fucking bastard. “I’m sorry that my mistake tore you from Emma, I know no one believes me especially you, but I was drunk that night. Anyway, I wish you the best with your new relationship” As if feeling eyes on him, Ethan turns and fucking smiles at Ava.

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Ex-Husband’s Regret by Evelyn M.M Chapter 40

“How dare you?” the anger in Ava’s voice was palpable.

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Something’s changed Ava I was dead on my feet and I wanted nothing more than to soak in a bathtub before going to sleep.

We had been planning this banquet for weeks. At first I wasn't supposed to come. It was supposed to be like always where Mary represented me. After my breakdown in the kitchen that day, I decided it was time to stop hiding.

Mary was excited when I told her that I would be attending the dinner party. For five years my identity had remained a secret. Not because I was afraid of anyone finding out but because I just wanted to live my life in peace.

I didn't want to be in the limelight. I didn't want people all of a sudden sucking up to me because they realized I was rich. Now, though I could come out of the shadows. I knew those that are genuine and those that are not.

I mean fuck, there are already people here tonight who were trying to get on my good graces. Men and women who had looked down on me and treated me like shit before, simply because I didn't have a high paying job and according to them. Because they believed I didn't have a dime to my name.

It was fucking frustrating. I just wanted to be away from them all.

"I still can't believe that you're the founder of Hope Foundation" Letty says awe in her voice. "Why didn't you tell me?" It was hours after my talk with Rowan. I stood next to him and told him my mind. Told him how things were going to be like and I felt nothing.

There's just something so rejuvenating about letting the past go. I wasn't fully healed, but my heart didn't hurt every freaking second like it used to. Iteel nothing towards Rowan and my so called family. No anger. No bitterness. No hatred. I was sort of numb and I liked that I liked that I could now breathe easily without the constant feeling of drowning "Ava?" I turn to Letty "Yes?" "You haven't answered my question" Letty says with a pout "I didn't tell you because no one else knew except for those who work at Hope foundation, the children and Noah I had requested them to keep it a secret till I was ready for my identity to be made public" She nods her head in understanding Then she grows quiet. Her eyes shift to Rowan's table Landing on Travis and staying there for a while before she pulls them away Since Rowan was our biggest donor, our tables were close to each. I heard everything that was said earlier From Christine and Emma mocking me to Letty defending me and calling out their childish behavior When Travis told her to leave, I knew I couldn't let her I asked Mary to tell the bodyguard to stop her and bring her to our table. As for Christine, it was just a little payback for all those times she was cruel to me. It was so satisfying seeing her leave with her tail tucked between her legs.

"You can go to him Letty it's okay. I don't mind I tell her nodding my head towards Travis direction He also threw glances at Letty once in a while She didn't notice it, but I did.

*I can't. Not after his abominable behavior. He says he wants you to be forgiven by you and yet he lows Emma and Christine trash talk you" her anger lises just a little, showing just how mach in still passed her off a "I'm thankful that you stood up to me, but as you can see I don't need anyone fighting my battles I give her a soft smile "You love Travis, I see that You're my friend Letty My bestled if I was being howest and that means i want the best for you I want you happy

and if Travis makes you Sappy then I can accept that She stares at the, before her eyes grows big “Something has changed” What do you mean?” I ask trying to hide my smile There is just something different about you, now that I’m looking at you what is whats I dont know Head be that I just got thed of living in bitterness of could be that that sex with it I san ? Tot my chip in thought “It’s definitely the cer “What cerns, making some people tom taus I I laugh at how comical she looked.

“You had sex with Ethan?” she repeats as if she just couldn’t comprehend what I was telling her.

“Yes” I smirk remembering it. “Multiples times actually” (1 “When you say multiples times, do you mean in one night or more than one night?” I can’t help the grin that takes over my face “I mean multiple times a night for several days” Her jaw drops open before her mouth curves and she grins at me like an idiot.

“Damn woman! I mean if him sexing you is what is bringing that goofy grin on your face then continue doing you babe. You deserve to have great sex and be happy” 2 This is one of the reasons why I love Letty. She didn’t judge and she was so supportive.

I throw my hands around her and bring her in for a hug. “Thank you Letty, for just being you” She’s caught off guard for a while, but then she recovers and hugs me back.

“Now, go and talk to Travis. I know you want to” I tell her.

This time she doesn’t wait around. She excuses herself and leaves our table just as Ethan comes back. He takes his seat before turning and kissing my lips “You’re truly addictive” he whispers in my ear.

I swallow as his warm breath and words ignite a new kind of heat inside me.

“Ethan...” the words come out as a breathy moan.

“Your dress leaves nothing to the imagination, Ava...I want nothing more than to have those beautiful legs wrapped around my waist as I bury my cock so deep inside you, you’ll be feeling me for days“>

I clench my legs at the image he painted.

It was safe to say I was truly fucked when it comes to Ethan. He has taught me so much about myself and my desires. My likes and dislikes in bed. I didn’t even know there was so many ways of bringing someone pleasure.

With Ethan, I was slowly rising from slumber. I was finally accepting my sexuality I came to the realization that I loved sex a lot. Ethan taught me to accept that. He taught me to never be ashamed of that. To never be ashamed of asking and to never be ashamed of initiating it.

With Rowan, I tried pushing my needs down because deep down I knew he was sleeping with me out of need not because he wanted to. He's the one that always initiated sex. I never once did for fear of being turned down. So even when the need arose, I used to push it down until he came to me.

I was just about to ask Ethan if it was possible to find a private place when my phone rings.

I see mother's name flashing, the mood was instantly killed.

"Excuse me, I have to take this" I tell him.

Having seen the calls several times and knowing they were Noah, he nods his head with a smile.

I walk out to the garden and answer.

"Hey mommy" my sweet boy greets.

"Hello, my love...how are you today?" "Bored" he grumbles. "How's the party? I feel so bad I couldn't come" I did want him to attend, but I was afraid of putting him in danger. The chief officer called me earlier today and told me that the man who had attacked me was killed.

He also told me not to let my guard down. He said that just because the guy was dead, it didn't mean that there wasn't any more danger.

"I know honey. It is a wonderful party and I will send you pictures." I pause. "Your friends also told me to say hi to you" We used to go with Noah to the foundation houses on Saturdays. He hit it off with the kids there, even the older ones. They all loved him and even asked for him today.

"Is Kingstone there?" he asks in excitement.

"Yes he is...I gave him your grandmother's number, he said he will call you soon" Caleb and Noah had a relationship like I had never seen before. Caleb viewed Noah as his baby brother and vice versa. Even though they had a huge age gap between them, they were close Those two could fall for bound "Yes" he screams through the phone. "I've missed him so much." "And he has missed you too" I smile even though he can't see it.

"Alright mommy, it's time for me to sleep...I just wanted to hear your voice before I do" he tells me sweetly and my heart warms at that.

It was now night. The children had already gone back to Hope House a couple of hours back. Just like with any other house with children. Hope House had curfew "It's okay. Goodnight and remember that I love you so much" I felt my eyes moisten. Damn it, I miss him so much. It's been months and I just want him with me.

“I love you too, mommy. Goodnight” It’s after I hang up the phone that I feel eyes watching me. I look around, but I see nothing. I hadn’t realized that I’d walked a bit far away from the hall. That I had gone deeper into the darkened garden, where there were no people around.

I start moving.

I could still feel those eyes burning at my back. Picking up the hem of my dress, I increase my speed. The moment I do, I start to feel heavy footsteps behind me.

My heart starts racing and I start running. Shit, how could I have been so stupid? There was still a target on my back and yet I walked to a secluded place.

Whoever the person is, increases their pace also. I wanted to look behind me, but I knew that would be a mistake. I was running in heels. The possibility of tripping was great and that’s the last thing I wanted.

I start panicking when I feel them gaining on me. The air was filled with something dark and sinister. Something dangerous. I knew I was good as dead if I don’t get to the hall quickly.

I push myself to run faster. The person was right on my tail when I crossed into the glittering lights illuminated by the hall.

The moment I do, I feel the suffocating presence recede. I stop and breathe heavily. When I don’t see anyone after surveying the place, I turn and quickly walk towards the hall.

I was thankful but confused The person could have easily killed me. Even when I was running All it would have taken was a bullet to the baali- Deep in thought, I wasn’t focused on where I was going.

“Sorry” I mutter after bumping into another person.

I look up after steadying myself. My whole body freezes. I had bumped into Emma.

She the last person I wanted to be around right now. I wanted to ignore her but the look on her face told me she wasn’t about to let me go. She was out for blood and it was mine she was desperate to spill.

