

Ex-Husband's Regret by Evelyn M.M Chapter 6

Rowan There is something that happens inside you when you see your ex-wife, the mother of your son, shot and bleeding on the cold cemetery ground. Something I never thought I would feel towards Ava.

When I saw the men with guns pointing at us, I didn't fucking think. I knew Noah was safe with my parents so my instincts took over and I dived for Emma. I would die for her and I was prepared to do just that.

I was relieved when the shooters ran after seeing the police but my relief was short lived when one of the officers shouted for an ambulance. I turned around wondering who was hurt, only I didn't expect it to be Ava and seeing her hurt almost brought me to my knees.

It was a flurry of events after that. The ambulance arrived and the officer refused to let Ava go until he made sure she was safely in the able arms of the doctor.

I was pissed at his reluctance to let her go, she was my wife, I mean ex-wife but more importantly I was pissed at myself. I should have protected her. If something worse had happened to Ava, how would I have explained it to Noah? How would I justify the fact that I had failed to protect his mother?

So here I was pacing back and forth in the waiting room. So fucking worried because we hadn't gotten a word since Ava was rushed to the emergency room. No one had come out to inform us of the prognosis.

"Please let her be okay" Kate, her mother whispered.

This is the first time I've heard any emotion in her voice when she talked about Ava. I guess losing her husband and then almost losing her daughter softened her a bit.

We were all here with the exception of Noah. Travis was seated next to Kate who was next to Emma.

I sat down unable to control the anxiety inside me. I needed her to be okay for Noah's sake. I kept telling myself.

I don't know for how long we were waiting, but when I looked up I saw Ava. She was over at the nurse's station handing off papers. Her left arm was in a sling as she took her credit card and put it in her bag.

With difficulty, she managed to get out her phone, while still holding her bag. You could see that it wasn't an easy task by the frown on her face.

"Ava" I called as she was about to walk past us. Her eyes still on her phone.

She looked up. I immediately noticed that something about her was different. I couldn't place my finger on it but it was there.

"What are you doing here, did someone else get hurt?" she asked. Her voice flat and devoid of any emotion.

"How are you doing?" her mom asked instead of replying.

"Unfortunately for you, I'm not dead yet" Her answer took everyone by surprise. Not only because of how she worded, but because of how cold it was.

I decide to cut in. "Where are you going" "Home" was her only answer.

"Your hand is in a sling, you can't drive" I reason.

"That's why I called an Uber" "Ava we need to talk. It's about you father" Kate whispers making Ava turn to her mother.

There was something missing. I could see it in her eyes.

Coldly she stared at her mother. "I don't see what that has to do with me, the last time I checked, he didn't consider me his daughter" A sob tore from her mother's throat but Ava doesn't pay any attention to her. It's like she had switched off all her feelings leaving nothing behind but a cruel familiarity.

She moved towards the door but then stopped. "Where is my son?" "At mom's house" Travis answered. His eyes drilling into her.

She sighed. "Looks like you'll get that talk after all" "I'll drive you" I offered This earns me a frown from Emma but she's got to understand. No matter my difference with Ava, she was still Noah's mother and she is hurt. Not forgetting that she was my wife.

Surprisingly Ava turns me down. "No need. I'll use the Uber like I had planned and meet you there" Without saying anything else, she turned and left. We stare at the place she just stood a moment ago. Usually, she would jump at any opportunity to be close to me. So we were all surprised that she rejected my offer.

"Let's go before she gets home and leaves before we've had the chance to talk" Kate says softly. Her voice still sad.

We drove here together, so we all jump into my Cadillac Escalade and drive off. Breaking every speed limit, we get to Kate's house just in time to see Ava closing the door behind her.

I park the car and get out. Getting inside the house we find my parents, Gabe and Ava who was basically ignoring them. It was weird seeing this side of her. Most of the time she would try to make small talk with them even when they snubbed her.

“Can we just get this over with” she says in irritation as she takes a seat.

“James came to me with a business proposal that he wanted to partner with me. I agreed because I thought it was a good investment” I began.

“We signed the required documents thinking this was a solid company. It was later that we realized that the company belonged to a criminal gang. Neither James nor I wanted anything illegal to touch our companies. We knew that it would be inevitable if we continued with them so we found a way to terminate the contract, and reported them to the police” “Okaaay” Ava dragged the word, her brows were furrowed as if she was confused about where this was heading to.

I sigh, already feeling drained by the events of today. “Turns out the gang members were among the most wanted, they didn’t take it well that we had ousted them so they went into hiding. We thought that since the police were involved they would keep their distance” Kate took it from there. “They started threatening your father. They promised to make him pay then came after his wife and children. They blamed him because he was the one that had approached them even though he didn’t they were involved in illegal business. We thought that they were bluffing with their threats that’s until they gunned down your dad” Travis, Gabe and my parents already knew. I look at Emma to find shock and fear etched on her features. I then turn to Ava and the same dead and cold look is still on her face.

“I don’t see how any of this has to do with me” her voice is cool as she looks at us. Her eyes piercing us like shards of ice.

She stands up. “I’m going to take Noah and leave” “Damn it Ava, you’re not taking this seriously” I say through gritted teeth.

Didn’t she know what this meant? How much danger she was in. How things today could’ve have ended with us planning her funeral next?

“I am and like I said I don’t see how this involves me” Travis growled portraying the same frustration I was feeling. “You were shot today...shouldn’t that tell you something?” She glares at him. “All it tells me is that I was in the right place at the wrong time” “Ava...” Kate goes to speak but Ava cuts her off.

“No. They were after the three of you, not me. Everyone in this damn city knows that none of you considers me part of this family, so what’s the use of going after someone he wouldn’t care one bit if she died?” Her words cut through the air leaving us cold. This was so unlike her. What the hell?

She turns to look at me. Her eyes are devoid of any emotion. It’s like she was dead on the inside. Something about the way she looked at me bothered me. I hated that I couldn’t see any emotion in her eyes.

“If there’s someone you should worry about, someone whose safety should be your priority then it’s the woman beside you. She was his perfect little princess, so stop dragging me in whatever mess he created” she pauses then faces the rest. Staring each and every one down.

“Stop you fake ass concern. I don’t fucking need it and if it turns out I’m danger I will deal with it by myself. I’d rather die than accept any of your protection” she finishes in revulsion.

Her mother gasps and we stare at her in surprise. Unable to recognize the woman standing before us. Kate looks like Ava has just slapped her.

Emma springs up and stares her down, trying to intimidate her. In the past Ava would have backed down but not this time.

“Stop being such a little bitch, just like always you want everything to be about you” she seethes making Ava laugh tonelessly.

“I don’t know which hole you’ve been hiding dear sister but nothing is ever about me. It’s always you but that’s not what we’re discussing right now. I’ve lived without these people’s protection for as long as I can remember, I don’t know why they’re all of a sudden interested in my safety. It’s fake and I’d rather not have fake people around me...Now if you’ll excuse me, I need to go home” She turned and ignored Emma and the rest of us like we didn’t even exist. I couldn’t believe the words that left her mouth. She talked about us like we were fucking strangers to her. Like we were nothing to her.

“Noah” she shouted and seconds later we heard footsteps running. Soon, my son appeared in the living room.

His gasp of shock as he stared at his mother made me feel like scum.

“Mommy, what happened to your arm?” he asked running and hugging her.

She gives him a one armed hug. “Nothing my love, just hit my arm on the door and the doctor had to set it right” She caresses his cheek lovingly. The hard and cold look completely gone as she stares at our son.

“Does it hurt?” “Just a little but I’ll be fine, now come on, let’s go home so we can eat ice cream and cuddle” This brings a big beautiful smile to Noah’s lips. His face lighting up at his mother’s words.

Ava tries to carry his bag pack but Noah stops him.

“I got it. I’m a big boy now. You’ll see, when we get home I will take care of you and kiss your pain away like you always do with me” Ava smiles. Her smile transforming her whole face. Melting the ice that had encased it. We all gaze at the mother – son interaction. Unable to pull our eyes from the adoration they have for each other.

“Is that woman your sister?” Noah throws curious looks towards Emma “No. I don’t have a sister” she replied then said something else under her breath. “And neither do I have a family” I don’t think we were meant to hear that last part but we did if I was to go by the sharp intakes of air. I turn to Noah, wondering if he heard what Ava said but it seemed he didn’t because he was waving at me.

“Bye dad” “Bye kiddo” I replied hoarsely.

He bid goodbye to the rest and then they were gone.

We were left in silence each of us lost in thought. I continued staring at the door, confused on what the heck just happened. Her detached treatment unsettled something inside me. Pulling at unknown strings deep within me.

This was a side of Ava that I’ve never seen. A side that was foreign to all of me and I didn’t fucking like it.

Ava I wake up with a stiff back and an aching arm. I am in bed with Noah since he refused to leave me after we finished watching TV. I smile when I remembered him saying that he was taking his job seriously and that he would take care of me throughout the night.

With a bit of difficulty. I manage to move him without waking him up. It was around eight and I needed to prepare breakfast before he woke up.

After doing my morning routine, I went downstairs. I stood outside the kitchen for a while wondering how I was going to manage making breakfast with one arm.

As I moved to get the ingredients needed for pancakes, memories of yesterday flooded my mind. Everything that happened seemed so surreal that part of me wonder if it had happened. If it wasn’t for the fact that my shoulder was bandaged and my arm was in sling, I would have thought it was all a bad dream.

When I woke up in the hospital after I fainted I panicked. It took both the doctor and nurse to calm me down and reassure me that everything was okay. She told me that the bullet was lodged in my shoulder but it hadn’t done any serious damage. I was lucky because according to them if it had hit lower then it would have struck my heart.

They removed the bullet, cleaned the wound, stitched me up and then put my arm in the sling. I was given antibiotics and pain meds. They instructed me to keep my arm elevated till my next appointment.

As I cooked the pancakes, I thought about the man that tried to save me. I made a mental note to find out who he is so I could thank him. He was the only one that looked out for me when my family couldn’t care less if I was safe or not.

My thoughts are interrupted when a knock sounds on my door, making me wonder who it was.

I highly doubted there was anyone I wanted to see right now. The events of yesterday soured my feelings towards the people I once considered family.

I walk to the door and gently open it. I'm surprised to find the man from yesterday standing on my doorstep. The first thing I notice is his blue eyes. They were the bluest eyes I've ever seen.

I hadn't noticed this yesterday. Probably because I was in shock and in pain, but the man was really good looking. He was at least six feet tall, muscular but not in a body builder type of way, a strong jaw and a flawless complexion. His dark brown hair was tousled in a sexy way and his confidence demanded attention.

"Hey" I croaked out sounding like a smoker.

He smiled at me and I was struck by how beautiful it was. "Hey, can I come in?" "Yeah, sure" I said stepping out of the way.

He gets in and I close the door behind him. I watch him as he studies my house.

"Nice home" he says in a deep voice.

"Thank you" I mumbled. "I made some pancakes, would you like some?" He nods his head and I lead him to the kitchen. Before I can go back to making breakfast, he stops me, making me turn to face him.

"We haven't been formally introduced, I'm Ethan" he gently grabs my hand, turns it around and kisses it.

For some reason I feel flushed. I wasn't used to this kind of attention and charm from men. I was the one that was always looked over. The boring and unattractive sister.

"I-I'm Ava" I stammered.

"I already know that, beautiful" he says giving me a wink while taking a seat at the kitchen island.

I give an awkward laugh because I didn't know how to behave. He oozed masculine energy and it was directed at me. I've never been in such a spot before. It was so disconcerting.

"So Ethan, with no last name... what were you doing at my father's burial?" I asked while placing a cup of coffee before serving him a plate of pancakes.

I take my own plate and cup and sit next to him. He chuckles as he looks at me.

"A threat had been reported and given your father was dead because of that threat, the chief wanted us on the look at incase the same people tried anything with the mourning family" he says right before he takes a bite.

“So you’re an officer? I’ve never seen you before and I know almost everyone.” “Yes I’m an officer...I just moved here a couple of months back. I’ve been swamped with work so I haven’t had much time to mingle” he replies after swallowing.

I smile at him. “Well you can consider me one of your friends...I was wondering how to find you just this morning actually.” “What for?” “To thank you for saving my life. I don’t remember everything but I remember you putting pressure on the wound and shouting for an ambulance” I also remember the way that he rushed towards me. I actually believe that if he hadn’t pushed me out of the way, the bullet would have hit my heart. So I owed him my life.

“I was just doing my job, besides it’s not every day you get to have a beautiful woman in your arms even though she faints at the sight of her own blood” he teases giving me another dashing smile.

Blood rushes to my cheeks. I laugh, trying to hide my embarrassment. By the way he behaves I just know he’s a charmer. It’s obvious with his smiles and winks. He’s also a breath of fresh air. Something I haven’t had in my life in quite a while.

“And what brought you to my doorstep and how did you know where I live?” “I’m an officer remember? It was easy to find you. As to why I’m here, I wanted to make sure you were okay. I wasn’t able to stay with you yesterday because I was called in to give a report. I went back to the hospital and was told you had been discharged. I didn’t think it would be appropriate coming to your house at night” I’m struck to be honest. This stranger had shown more care and compassion to me than anyone else around me has ever shown me my entire life. With the exception of Noah of course. I didn’t know what to do with that because I wasn’t used to it.

“Thank you” I say slowly emotions clogging my throat.

He gazes at me strangely but I ignore the look and change the subject.

From there we talk and eat. It was weird that I was completely comfortable around him, though he was a stranger. I couldn’t remember being this relaxed around anyone but Noah.

Around forty minutes later he leaves. We exchange numbers but I’m doubtful he’ll ever call or text even though I had a wonderful time. I was just not the type of woman men text back or look for their company a second time.

I was just cleaning our plates when there was another knock. Noah had yet to wake up and I was in no rush to wake him.

“Did you forget something?” I asked opening the door.

My emotions shut down when I realize that it was Rowan and not Ethan. Seeing his face just brought a rush of pain. Remembering how he abandoned me to save his precious Emma brought a bitter taste to my mouth.

There was no denying that I meant nothing to him. Yesterday just showed me the extent of his disregard and hate towards me. I push the hurt and pain away. Locking them together with the love I had for him in the deepest and darkest parts of my soul.

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Rowan.

I see the moment she shuts her emotions down. The moment the warm look she had just a few seconds ago turns cold. Which leaves me cold.

"What are you doing here?" Ava asks her voice monotonous as I push my way into her house.

It's like she was talking to a stranger. Like I was nothing but a speck of dust and nothing more. I stare at her unable to come up with anything. I've lived with this woman for almost a decade and yet right now I can't find the right words.

I look at her hand still in a sling. I came to check up on her and also to pick Noah. It was the weekend so it was my time with him.

Remembering the man that I saw leaving, my brows furrow. He must be who the smile was for.

That little piece of realization makes my jaw clench.

"What was he doing here?" I ask instead of answering while trying to hide the unreasonable anger I was feeling.

I get the guy is an officer and that he saved her life but he was crossing a line. I didn't fucking like him and I didn't want him anywhere near Ava.

"That's none of your business" she retorts.

"It is my business when you're entertaining men this early in the morning with my son in the house....did he sleep over? Is that why I saw him leaving?" The thought of that leaves a bitter taste in my mouth. The last thing I want is for her to be exposing Noah to men months after we separated. It wouldn't leave a good impression on the type of woman she is.

She gives a humorless laugh, pulling me back to the present.

"It's not any of your fucking business...do you see me meddling in your life while you're busy entertaining Emma? And isn't it hypocritical of you to stand there judging me?" I glare at her. "Emma is different" "How so?" she first feigns puzzlement and then her face lights up as if she figured out something, but I know it's mockery. "Oh, I forgot she's the love of your fucking life" I grind my teeth She was starting to piss me off. What the hell was wrong with her? It's like she has something against me.

“I’ll never do anything that would affect Noah but I’m a single woman and I will have whoever!

Beside I’m bound to start dating I’m not planning to stay single forever” My hands clench into fists at the last part. For some reason heat starts rising up in my core making me want to hit something or someone.

She turns and leaves me in the hallway. I take time to breathe in and calm myself. I follow the sounds of pans banging while I survey her house.

In all honesty I’ve never been here. It looked different from the house we shared So very different that I was momentarily left speechless.

I shake myself from those thoughts and continue walking. I find her in the kitchen wiping down the counter She looks up, glaring at me. “I had hoped you would leave. In case you haven’t guessed it, your presence is unwanted” Damn it. Why is it that everything out of her mouth these past few days is nothing but pure venom? It’s like all she wants is to strike at me and her family “It’s the weekend Ava, I came for Noah” I growl!

“Well he is not awake yet and you could have done what you always do Honk You didn’t have to come in” I take a seat on one of the barstools She frowns at me and opens her mouth to speak I was sure she was about to say something that would probably piss me off so I cut her off “That’s okay I can wait for him while we talk” Her frowns deepens, and she fists the dish towel in her small hands.

“But that’s the thing Rowan, we have nothing to talk about As long as we follow the terms of the custody agreement then we can live like the other doesn’t exist *

I sigh Why was she so stubborn and difficult all of a sudden? It was getting on my fucking nerves Where the fuck was the agreeable and subdued woman I was used to?

“Isn’t this what you wanted? For me to be out of your life” she asks I pinch the bridge of my nose in frustration “I’m not the one who asked for a divorce” I don’t know what the hell has gotten into her but I was beginning to regret coming into her house. It seems all she wants to do is light. I wasn’t in the fucking mood. Not when I was supposed to meet with kanta later on in the day.

True but that doesn’t mean you didn’t want it and look, it came at the perfect time, just when Empia comes back to town Now you can be with her the you’ve always wanted” she says bifted I know it’s always a sour subject but I never lied to her. Never led her on. She knew that Emma always had my heart and if it wasn’t for the mistake nine years ago, then she is the one that would have been my wife.

“What do you want me to say? You know I never lied to you. You always knew I loved her.” She throws the dishtowel down angrily. “That didn’t stop you from using my body did it? Gosh I hate you. I don’t know what I saw in you to begin with. I don’t know why I wasted so much of my time and energy on you” I grind my teeth at her words. Her words angering me. Yes we did

sleep together during our marriage but it was just to scratch an itch. I took vows and despite the fact I didn't love her. I wasn't going to break them by cheating on her.

"I'm not here to talk about the past, I'm here to talk about Noah" I say changing the topic.

It was draining going round and round. I needed to say what I came here to say then leave before I said or did something I would regret later.

Noah's name gets her attentions. She doesn't fire back. Instead she opens one of the cabinets and takes out a bottle of medicine. Uncapping it using one hand, she pops two pills into her mouth and swallows.

Reading the label, I realize it's pain medication.

"How's the arm?" I ask.

"You came here to talk, so talk Rowan... we both know you don't care about me so quite with the fake concern" she snaps. I clench my hand and all but yell. "Damn it Ava!" "What? I'm just stating the truth. Are you going to talk? If not you can leave. I'll text you when Noah is wakes up" She stands up and goes to leave but I clump my hand around her uninjured hand. She immediately wrenches her hand from me as if my touch burned her.

"Don't touch me!" she snarls.

I raise my hand. Damn it! Is this how she was going to behave from now on? Are we forever going to be at each other's throats? We had a son for fuck's sake.

"This childish behavior is one of the reasons why I always preferred Emma. Why I fell in love with her" I ground out, my temper getting the better of me.

Her face twists. Her eyes growing colder than I could ever thought possible.

"Say what you came to say then get out of my fucking house. I won't have you insulting me and comparing me to Emma. My behavior doesn't concern you, we are divorced...so if you want to give lectures on anyone about behaviors go give them to the love of your life" I don't say anything for a while. We glare at each other. Each one refusing to back down. Looks like she finally grew a backbone.

"Look I'm sorry" I concede.

"She's fucking right. I shouldn't have said that. I shouldn't have compared her to Emma.

We couldn't be fighting. It would affect Noah seeing us at each other's throat. It would hurt him and I couldn't have that.

“You can take that st* pid apology of yours and shove up it up...” I cut her off warningly. “Ava...” “Fine...what did you want to talk about, hurry up I don’t have a lot of time” she gives me a devious smirk. “Since I’m busy entertaining men” she throws my words back at me.

I groan but ignore her.

“Your mom and my parents will be going into witness protection because of the case with the criminal gang. I want Noah to go with them” She turns serious. “Why?” “Because I played a part in reporting them and sinking their business. I also got threats from them. and they know my weakness is Noah...” “And Emma, let’s not forget your precious darling” she interrupts me. Her voice dripping with sarcasm and disgust.

I ran my hand through my hair in frustration. Heaven’s knows it’s been a trying morning and Ava is hell bent on pushing my fucking buttons.

Ignoring her I continue. “Seeing as your father is already dead because of this, I can’t risk Noah getting hurt” “Why didn’t you tell me this yesterday?” “You left before we could tell you everything” I point out.

“For how long will he be gone?” “Till the threat has been eliminated and the culprits caught” She nods her head and sighs. “When will he be leaving?” “The day after tomorrow” I can see she doesn’t want to be parted from Noah But she also knows that this is the only way to make sure he is safe. One thing we had in common was our love for him. We would both do anything for him.

“Okay. I’ll start packing for him. You’ll spend the today with him and I’ll spend tomorrow with him. I think that’s fair” “Alright then” I agree.

She then leaves to go and wake up our son. It’s as I was waiting for them that I realized what had been missing in Ava’s eyes since yesterday The love that used to shine in her eyes when she looked at me was completely gone.

There wasn’t anything there anymore. In fact, she now looked at me like I always looked at her. With nothing but resentment.

Ex-Husband’s Regret by Evelyn M.M Chapter 9

Ava “I still don’t understand why I have to go. Why can’t I just stay here with you?” Noah complains. A frown marring his handsome face.

He’s been sore about this whole thing since I told him that he’ll be leaving with his grandparents. At first he was excited about it but then he became saddened when he realized that neither I nor his father would be joining him.

His school had been understanding of our situation His teacher even agreed to send lessons to mother so that he isn't left too behind.

"I already told you baby, this is a grandparents–grandson kind of vacation... it's just for you and you grandparents." After talking to the chief he assured me that they'll be sent somewhere tropical.

"You're going to a beach. Haven't you been begging us to take you for a vacation?" I add with a mischievous smile.

The word 'beach' immediately catches his attention. All the complaints he had, now lost.

Noah is obsessed with the ocean. He loves beaches so much that he once cried for a whole week after we returned from a vacation in the Maldives. He'd wanted us to move there . When we refused he'd pleaded for us to just leave him there.

I smile at the memory. So grateful for the happiness and joy Noah has filled my life with.

"You're not lying to me are you?" he asks, pulling me back from my thoughts.

"Would I ever lie to you?" "No" his frown turns into a full blown smile. His grey eyes shining in happiness. "I guess it's okay then. I'm not mad at you anymore" "Why were you mad at me?" I ask "Because you refused to come with me, but it's okay now. You can always join us later" I wanted to tell him I won't be joining him but I stop myself. I wasn't going to risk him going back.

to being sad and moody again.

"Now, come on let's go or we'll be late" I take my handbag and sling it over my uninjured shoulder While I grab his small suitcase, he grabs his duffel bag and rushes downstairs Carefully, I bring I was just about to order an Uber when my door bell rings. I rush to open before Noah can. He has a tendency to open the door without first asking who is on the other side. No matter how many times I caution him. No matter how many times I tell him to ask first and not to open if the person on the other side doesn't answer or he doesn't recognize his or her voice. He just never listens.

Opening the door, I groan when I see who is on the other side.

Why did it seem like that the moment I decide to get over Rowan is when he sees me to be everywhere I turn?

"Dad!" Noah rushes past me and throws himself on his father.

"Hey buddy" Rowan greets him then hugs him close.

He sniffs him. Breathing his scent in. I once asked him why he does that and he told me Noah's scent just calms him. Like how fragrances calm other people down.

He puts him down and faces me. Noah rushes back to the living room. His excitement making him hyper.

"What are you doing here?" seems like I've been asking him this question a lot in the past few days.

He shrugs his shoulder.

"I'm here to take you to the airport" he says as he gestures to my injured arm as a way of explanation I stare at him. Like always, his face gives nothing away. I now understand that he is like that when it comes to me. I'm the only one he looks at coolly. Even with his business partners, he manages to give them a sort of friendly gaze.

"There's no need for that. I've already called for an Uber" It was lie. The last thing I wanted was to be stuck with him in a moving car for whatever long it would take us to get to the airport.

"Cancel it" he commands. His cold voice sending shivers down my spine.

Sometimes I look at Rowan and just wonder why I fell for him. He is cold, arrogant and a jerk especially towards me. I should have ran for the hills screaming when I first started to have feelings for him instead doing everything in my power to make him notice me "Not gonna happen asshole... Now leave, I'll meet you at the airport" I whisper yell Who the hell did he think he was coming to my house and throwing out commands? This was my domain. I won't allow him to rule here.

He steps into my space so we're chest to chest. His eyes flash and his nostrils flare, I stand my ground. Refusing to let him intimidate me.

"I'm not leaving. Now cancel that fucking order and get your ass into my car" he growls through clenched teeth. A storm brewing behind his stormy eyes. My temper begins to rise and I clench my fist. Usually I would push it down because I didn't want to anger him but I no longer give a fuck.

"You arrogant son of bitch... who the hell do you think you're, hmm? I'm not some fucking puppy you think you can fucking command" my voice was starting to rise. I was so fucking pissed.

For years I let him dictate me. For years I kept my mouth shut because I didn't want to fracture what I thought we had. But what did it bring me? What did pushing down and containing who I am give? Nothing. It gave me nothing but pain and heartache. "Ava..." he says in a warning tone.

"Are you two fighting again?" Noah's voice cuts through the tense atmosphere.

I turn around to find him looking at us sadly. Damn it! I hate Noah seeing this side of us. He shouldn't deal with us fighting all the time.

"No we aren't. We just can't agree on something" I side eye Rowan. "Right?" Just like me, the anger and coldness on his face has disappeared. Just like me, he would do anything for Noah. Including tolerating my presence.

"Sure, your mom wanted to go with an Uber since she can't drive but I wanted to drive you two." He says with a lazy smile.

"Why can't we just go with dad, mommy?" I take a deep breath and cast my eyes heavenward. Damn him for throwing me under the bus. I look at my son and he looks at me so expectantly.

I sigh in defeat. "Alright, fine" I grumble.

The things I do for love.

"Yay!" Noah screams and rushes back to the leaving room before coming back with his duffel "Wait here" I tell Rowan and then leave to get Noah's suitcase and my handbag.

I tidy the living room a bit and then pick things up. I give the room one last glance to make sure everything was in place before turning around.

Bumping into a hard chest, my handbag falls from my hand. Rowan wraps an arm around me and steadies me before I can fall. I jump away from him and quickly put some distance between "I told you to wait at the foyer" I glare at him "I don't like to be told what to do you know this" he glares back.

"Let's just go" I move to take my handbag but he grabs it before I can. Then he picks Noah's abandoned suitcase, turns around and leaves I watch him wondering what has gotten into him. Not once has he helped me before. He was acting strangely and I didn't like it.

By the time I get my feet moving and lock the door, Rowan and Noah were already seated in the car. Reluctantly, I approach the car and get in Ten minutes into the drive and the atmosphere is awkward. Noah was busy on his tablet watching some cartoon. Once he's focused on something it's hard to get his attention. Another ten minutes in and I was going crazy. I'm almost tempted to throw myself out of the moving car just to escape the tense atmosphere.

I move my hands to turn on the radio but Rowan stops me when he speaks.

"How's the arm?" he asks His eyes were on the road but he looked at me briefly when he asked. the question I'm the only one who finds it S**y when a man does the one arm driving? Shaking those thoughts from my mind I focus my eyes forward.

"Fine" "Can you give me more than just a one word answer?" he asks through clenched teeth.

“Why should I? You’ve never been interested in anything I’ve said before. In fact you would go to great lengths to tune me out” I say as a matter of fact. “So why are you all of a sudden interested in what I have to say?” He doesn’t say anything. He knows that I’m right. The familiar pain threatens to rise up but I push it back down. I’m set on healing from those past hurts and it starts by forgetting about it and about the man sitting beside me.

I look out the window. Praying that we would just get where we are going quickly .

“Your mother was asking for you, haven’t you spoken to her of late?” I groan in annoyance. “You’re awfully chatty and it’s getting on my nerve Rowan.

Can you just ignore me and pretend like I don’t exist like you usually do?” His grip on the steering wheel tightens. I see his jaw clench. He was getting pissed. Probably because I wasn’t acting like the meek lamb he was used to. The tables had turned and he didn’t I used to break my back trying to make him happy. Trying to be what he wants.

Trying to be like Emma. I did everything I could to be the wife he could fall in love with. Now I had shed that skin and he didn’t like that I wasn’t falling at his feet like a dog. I smile at that Pissing him off eased. something inside me.

From there the drive is quiet. Both of us brooding in our seats while Noah laughs and follows his cartoons. An hour later we arrive at the airport. I hold Noah’s hand and as Rowan get his bags from the trunk “I’m so excited to see the ocean” Noah says bouncing up and down in frantic energy.

“Then let’s get going... we wouldn’t want to keep you waiting” Rowan playfully tells him.

Taking my good arm, Noah drags me towards his grandparents. There were cops present I knew some of them.

When we get to them, Noah greets everyone but I don’t. There wasn’t any need playing nice with people who obviously hate me.

Rowan get the bags and then walks to us. He hands them over to one of the officers before going to stand next to Emma, Travis and Gabe. He greets his two bestfriends before turning to Emma. Right before my eyes he wraps an arm around her and brings her close before kissing forehead I ignore that. Refusing to acknowledge the disrespect or the pain I felt. Like is it a must he rubs his relationship in my face? Couldn’t he have the decency to wait until our son was on the plane “Five minutes before we leave” A man I’m guessing is the pilot says.

Everyone is giving me strange looks. I bet they’d expected that I would fall at their feet like I usually did That I would beg for a scrap of their affection Instead here I was ignoring all of them like they didn’t exist.

I watch as Noah says goodbye to Rowan, Travis and Gabe Is it weird that I felt happiness when Noah totally ignored Emma?

“Noah, say goodbye to Emma” Rowan commands with a bit of irritation in his voice “I don’t know her, so why should I say goodbye to her?” he asks with a shrug leaving everyone staring at him in shock Before Rowan can say anything else, Noah runs to me His body colliding with mine as he hugs “I’m going to miss you so much my love” I tell him, tears filling my eyes “I’ll miss you too mommy, promise you will call me every day?” “I promise The pilot calls out again and an officer comes to take Noah.

“Bye Mommy, see you soon” “See you soon” I watch as the officer gets into the plane with Noah. Mother finishes saying good bye to the others. and comes to me “Please don’t” I stop her when she goes to hug me.

I don’t remember her ever hugging me, so I didn’t understand why she wanted to do so now She steps back and looks at me. Tears swimming in her eyes. I turn away not wanting to see them I wasn’t going to fool myself into believing that she cared for me or loved me. Years have proven that she didn’t “Take care of yourself Ava, and don’t worry we’ll look after Noah” she finally says.

I just nod at her. When I don’t say anything else she turns and walks towards the plane where Rowan’s parents had already boarded.

A few seconds later I watch as the plane carrying my son takes off Once it’s off the runway, I turn and leave. My heart feels heavy but I know this is the best decision for Noah.

Just as I get outside the airport, my phone rings with Rowan’s name flashing I reject it and hail a cab When he continues calling, I switch off my phone completely and head home, where I’ll be alone for an unforeseen time

Ex-Husband’s Regret by Evelyn M.M Chapter 10

Cut and about It’s been a week since Noah left and I can’t find a pattern to live life without him This is the longest we’ve been separated and I’m not ashamed to say that I am not handling it well Noah is my anchor and without him I feel slightly lost Like I’m just drifting through life like a stop wreck at sea Every day I eagerly wait for his calls because that’s what keeps me calm. Those calls and his sweet voice keep me grounded I haven’t heard from Rowan since that day at the airport A part of my heart still longs for him but I know that this is for the best. There was no future between us and I couldn’t go on living with a man that didn’t love me So far everything has been quiet. Not that anyone has tried to keep me informed or anything.

Since there hasn’t been any more shoot outs or people dying, then it’s safe to assume that those criminals have gone underground All of a sudden I bump into someone Jolting me out of my thoughts.

“I’m so sorry, I did not see you” I apologize and bend down to pick up my books I’m heading home from work Today has been a rather tiring day I just wanted to go home and sleep “It’s okay. I was also not paying attention to where I was going” The familiar voice makes me snap my head in his direction. I wasn’t wrong Ethan was the one [had bumped into He helps me pick my books up and we get up together He gives me a charming smile and I find myself smiling back at him “What are you doing here?” I ask him He was in his officer uniform and damn did he look good. I might have sworn myself off men but that didn’t mean I couldn’t look, and there was a lot to look at “We got a report that someone was selling drugs to kids” he pauses before continuing “And I’m guessing you’re a teacher here?” he asks with his eyebrow raised “Yeah” I reply feeling conscious all of a sudden.

It’s not a career that you would expect the wife of a billionaire to have but I loved teaching My parents had been against the idea, preferring I got a high class job like Emma who was a fantastic lawyer or Travis who was an entrepreneur. I guess that had been another mark against me in their books “So what do you teach?” Ethan asks, and he genuinely looked interested in knowing.

I can’t say there was any time during our marriage that Rowan had been interested in what I did. In fact I’m sure he doesn’t know what subject I teach.

“Biology” “So beauty and brains...I like that” he winks, making me blush.

“Uh, thanks” I replied tucking a wayward piece of hair behind my ear.

Ethan made me feel flustered for some reason. Mainly because I wasn’t used to getting attention from good looking men. Men don’t look at me twice. Unlike Emma who is a beautiful drop gorgeous blonde, I was a mouse compared to her.

I had nothing going on for me. Brown hair, brown eyes and a petite body. I wasn’t attractive and I got used to that since it was hammered into me over and over again when I was growing up.

Boys never payed attention to me when we were growing up and if they did it was so they could.

get close to Emma. It used to piss me off but after a while I accepted the fact that I just wasn’t attractive to the opposite S**. 2 “So, I’m sorry I haven’t been able to call, we’ve just been busy I haven’t gotten any free time” he says after a while.

Smiling at him, I reply. “It’s okay, I totally understand...I know being a police officer is demanding” And I did understand. I understood that that was just an excuse. He wasn’t planning on texting or calling when he left my house that day.

We stand there after that. I was shifting from one foot to another feeling hella awkward. He stares at me, his blue eyes searching my soul. I shift my gaze to avoid his penetrating one.

“Ethan” Someone calls and I turn to see another officer motioning to him.

“Coming” Ethan shouts before turning to me. “I’m happy to see you beautiful, I’ll see you around, yeah?” “Yeah” I mumble.

With that he, gives me an unexpected hug before walking away. I’m left there wondering what the hell just happened.

I shake myself from the stupor after a while and begin walking. I needed to buy some grocery and since the store wasn’t that far from school, I decide to walk.

The sling was removed and even though my shoulder was sore and sometime ached, it was still functional. I thought about everything I needed to Buy but at the forefront was my interaction The way he treated me was so different from how Rowan treated me that I wasn’t sure what to make of it. I’ve never had anyone tell me I’m beautiful. Nor have I ever had a man even wink at me.

The few interactions I’ve heard with Ethan made me feel like I was actually attractive but I also knew I couldn’t count on that. I mean if my own husband didn’t find me attractive then how could other men think that I am?

‘Stop being silly’ I laugh at myself, Ethan was probably just trying to be polite or something like that. There was just no way such a hot guy would even look at me twice when there were millions of truly beautiful women he could choose from s With that I shake myself from those thoughts. No use in dwelling on them when I knew very well how I looked.

I finally get to the store. Since it was just me, I didn’t need that much. I finish shopping for my things then quickly pay up. With my goods I leave the store planning to immediately go home.

Today, I had not driven to work. My shoulder ached and I had not felt comfortable driving like that.

I was just about to hail down a taxi when I saw them. Rowan and Emma.

They were holding hands, while walking. I wasn’t sure where they were headed but I didn’t even care. Emma said something and Rowan threw back his head and laughed. A deep and rich laugh that screamed happiness.

The pain that I tried burying surfaces again. It hurts seeing him like this. Knowing that he was never like this with me. If only he had given me a chance. I would have made him happy. Instead he held Emma in his heart and refused to let go.

It honestly fucking hurts. I thought that I was past this but I wasn’t. I felt like my heart was breaking all over again and I didn’t know how to stop the hurt that threatened to drown me As if sensing my gaze on him, he turns and looks in my direction. His laugh dies and the smile he once had disappears and a frown takes its place. I guess that I bring nothing but sorrow to him. No wonder he never smiled around me.

He faces my direction, looking as if he was about to cross the street to come towards me. I push those thoughts away. That was just wishful thinking on my part.

Quickly averting my gaze, I get inside the nearest cab and we drive off. I don't look outside the window. Refusing to watch them anymore.

It was clear he already moved on. So quickly at that. But then he never loved me so I guess it's easy for him. It was time I moved on too. I don't care how long it'll take but I will eventually move on and find my happiness. Rowan was my past, it was time to accept that.

Shooting range "So how's your day sweetheart?" I ask Noal The phone is between my shoulder and ear I was trying to maximize by talking to him while doing some cleaning. It wasn't an easy but at least my shoulder was doing so much better now.

"It's awesome"" he shouts through the phone almost bursting my eardrums "We just had ice cream and now we are going to the slides, they have slides here and they lead straight to the ocean" His excited chatter makes me happy. His happiness in my happiness The fact that he is safe and enjoying himself was enough for me.

"That's great baby...see, I told you that you would have lots of fun" Giving up on cleaning, I take a seat on the couch. It would be better to finish talking to him first.

"What about you mommy, how's your weekend?" What could I say? It was boring as hell. My eight year old son was having more fun than I was. I didn't have anywhere to go or anyone to hang out with since I had no friends.

My colleagues used to invite me to things but they stopped after I kept turning them down Deep inside I knew they invited me as a formality, because I was there when they were inviting others. Not because they genuinely want to know me or hang out with me.

"Uh, it's okay...just doing some cleaning" I murmur I hear him sigh. "Mom, you need to go out and have fun like I am. Since I'm not there, I don't want you to stay at home all alone" Why the hell did I feel so chastised right now?

"I will, I just have to finish my chores first" I lie.

After cleaning I would probably just watch a movie and drown myself in junk food. Or I would just catch up on sleep. Both options didn't seem that bad.

"Fine...I have to go mommy, Pa is calling for me" "Okay my love, talk to you at night" "Bye, and grandma says hi to you" Noah calls mother grandma and used to call father grandpa. As for Rowan's parents, he calls them Pa and Ma "That's good be careful on the slides" I say, completely ignoring the greetings from my supposed mother.

He hangs up after that. Good thing he's so excited about the slides to realize I ignored his grandmother's greetings. Noah is usually in tune and nothing escapes his notice. A character he got from his father, but not today. Today his mind was completely on having fun.

I smile and put my phone down. I get back to cleaning but soon I'm finished. Instead of watching a movie like I had planned, I decide to go through the biology essays of my students. So far the ones I've marked have done really well! I don't mean to brag but I am a damn good teacher and it shows with my subject being the best performed in school.

I was almost done when my phone rings. My heartbeat lurches when I see Ethan's name flashing. This was totally unexpected.

"Hello" I answer unsure, part of me afraid that he had dialed my number by mistake.

"Hi, Ava...are you busy?" he asked.

I guess it hadn't been a mistake like I had thought.

"Not particularly, why?" "I was told you aren't at the station's shooting range. I thought maybe we could drive there together" I frown in confusion. None of the things he said were making any kind of sense to me.

"Why would I be at a shooting range?" "Because the rest of your family is there. They were all advised to train in shooting and to get a firearm license just in case they ever got in trouble" Well that was news to me but I guess it did make sense. I mean having a gun when dealing with a dangerous gang could come in handy.

I wanted to be pissed that no one told me about this but I couldn't bring myself to care. They could all go fuck themselves for all I cared.

"Can I come pick you up?" Ethan asks interrupting my thoughts.

I had nothing better to do. Plus this could be fun. Not to mention that I get to hang out with Ethan again.

"Sure" "Great! I'll be there in ten minutes" He hangs up and I rush to my bedroom to find something decent to wear. Seeing we were going flats. Ethan arrives in ten minutes like he said and we immediately leave.

"So, what made you decide to become an officer of the law?" I ask turning to face him.

The atmosphere was comfortable and I felt at ease around him. It was nice. I haven't felt this comfortable around another adult for a long time.

"My dad was killed by a cop" he answers with a shrug.

I frown, a bit surprised. “That would turn most people off from being cops” “I know, but my dad wasn’t a good man and neither was he a good father. When the officers gunned him down for selling illegal firearms I was actually relieved. Seeing those cops taking out trash like my dad who thought was untouchable made me want to do the same thing. Make the area I was living in a safe place” He goes quiet but I can tell there was something more. The way he talked about his dad with disdain let me know that his father wasn’t just bad, he was a terrible man.

I’ve had such kids in my class. Students who had really abusive parents. I try to help as much as I can because no child needed such parents. Abuse was abuse. Whether it was physical or emotional.

“And what made you become a teacher?” I usually hold myself back but I find myself opening up to him, something that takes me by surprise.

“My parents weren’t the best and I was neglected as a child. When I was around nine years, I had this amazing teacher. She was everything I wanted my mother to be. She cared, praised me, hugged me when I needed a hug, supported me. She was kind and not only to me. I never forgot her and when I grew up I wanted to be like her. It also helped that teaching just felt right” Miss Olivia had been my support system when I was young. Her class had been my safe space.

Even though it’s been years, I’m still grateful for the kindness she showed a nine year old girl who was extremely sad and lonely.

“Wow” he simply says, awe in his voice.

We are quiet for a while before he surprises me.

“I know you have a kid, but are you single?” he asks.

I wasn’t sure why he was asking. Maybe it was to make conversation.

“Divorced” “Well, I guess that gives me permission to shoot my shot” he lips forms a smirk.

I laugh at that because I was sure he was only joking. There was no way he was serious about shooting his shot. Even if he was he would soon lose interest the moment he saw Emma.

If ‘my family’ is here like he said, then like all the boys back when I was teenager, he will take one. look at my sister and completely forget I exist.

We soon get to the shooting range. We get out and Head instead. Ethan greets and introduces me to some of his friends and colleagues and finally we get to where the actions takes place.

The rest are already there. Rowan, Emma, Travis and Gabe.

Gabe and Travis were shooting. Emma was seated down and Rowan who was facing her turns to us when we enter the arena.

His brows turn downwards and I roll my eyes at that.

“Who invited you?” he ask coming to stand next to Ethan and me.

“Not you obviously” “I tried to call to let you know but you never picked up” he argues, irritation marking his voice.

“You obviously didn’t try hard enough” I snap.

I was already irritated and I hadn’t been in their presence for more than five minutes. I was starting to regret my decision on coming here. I should have asked Ethan if we could reschedule.

Before Rowan can say anything else, Ethan pulls me away. “Come, let go get you fitted” I look back for a split second and see Emma glaring at me. If looks could kill, i would already be an ancestor.

I sigh. This was going to be headache inducing, I should have just stayed home.

