

## Ex-Husbands Regret Chapter 491 – 500

Ex-Husbands Regret Chapter 491-Giving her car one last look, she steps in. She then stops for a while as her eyes move around the space.

It's probably been years since she last stepped foot in this house. The last time I think she did was after she was shot during dad's burial.

Her eyes are haunted. I can see the shadows playing behind them. The burden of the tarnished memories she carried of this house and the people in it. Would Gunner carry the same shadows because of me? Because of what I did?

I didn't want that.

I wasn't around much after she and Rowan got married, but I was there when we were younger. I'm not proud to say just like everyone else, I ignored her. We were supposed to be sisters, yet I treated her like she didn't belong. Just like everyone else.

Looking at her now, I see what Mia was talking about. Ava was still haunted. Still scarred by how she was treated since she was a child. She didn't deserve any of it.

"I'm sorry" I whisper, my voice clogging with emotions.

Her haunted stare becomes confused as she focuses on me. "For what?"

\*The painful memories you are probably battling right now," I answer. "We didn't treat you well. You were a kid, and even though Travis and I were following our parents, we had a choice to treat you differently when we got older. I'm sorry for the pain and heartache this family has caused you, Ava. I'm sorry we scarred your heart and soul." Content belong to NôvelDrâma. Org.

She tries to fight it. It's in her eyes. She tries to push down the tears and emotions. She doesn't want to be weak. I get her. Especially in a place that has a lot of painful memories for her.

*Emma, why are you taking so-*

We turn to mom, who was now frozen as her eyes fixed on Ava.

"Ava?" she asks as if she needs confirmation. As if she's not sure if this is real or not.

"Hi" Ava gives a little wave while answering in an unsure voice.

By just looking at the way she keeps shifting from one foot to the other. Or the way her hands are trembling, and she keeps playing with her rings. Or even the way she's

holding herself stiffly. I can tell she's uncomfortable here. That it has taken everything in her to come here.

Would it be weird if I said I was proud of her for taking this uncomfortable yet needed step?

\*W-Would you like some tea?" mom asks in a trembling voice.

I know Ava being here is huge for her. For a long time she has wanted to mend things, but Ava wouldn't let her.

"No, thank you" she whispers, and mom's face falls. "This is all I can handle today, maybe next time?"

"Absolutely!" Mom all but yells in an excited voice.

The fact that she said 'maybe next time' gives mum hope. It gives me hope too.

Hope that they can fix things between them. She wasn't the best mom to Ava, but she did raise her... and she loved her in her own way.

"I'll be going, bye," with that, she rushes out as if hellhounds were after her.

I look at the door and then back at mom who has a silly smile on her face. It just showed how happy she was that Ava had come.

Like I said, it was a bold step for Ava to come here. The one place that caused her a lot of pain. If she could take that bold step, then why couldn't I do the same for Gunner? He is my son, and I'll be damned if I give up on him.

An idea strikes me at that moment, and I rush outside to catch up with Ava before she can leave. It is freaking crazy, but it's a start. One that I am hoping will bear good fruits.

"Ava, wait," I shout, just as she was starting to pull away.

"Is something wrong?" she asks, after stopping the car.

I shake my head. "I was just wondering if you still have your house. The one neighboring Calvin."

I cross my fingers hoping she says yes. Hoping she hasn't sold it yet.

"Yes," her brows scrunch down in confusion.

Breathing a sigh of relief, I close my eyes for a brief second. "Could you rent it to me? Please. It's time I fixed things."

Her eyes widen for a fraction before they begin shining.

'I could rent it to you, but there is no need. You can use it for however long you need, Emma. Just come by when you are ready and I'll hand over the keys.'

I feel my eyes tearing. "Thank you so much."

Gunner deserves to know his mother. I'm grateful that you've finally

pulled your head out of your ass and are willing to fight for a relationship with him." she beams, making me chuckle at her choice of words.

She's right though. Instead of moaning about how shitty the world.

has been to me. It is time y fought for my son, and that begins by getting my life back together and proving to him, I'm worth being his mom.

Ex-Husbands Regret Chapter 492-Harper.

It's been close to two weeks since Gabriel made me promises that shattered every reservation, I had about giving him a second chance.

I swear, I never thought I could be this happy.

My life with Liam was good, but with Gabriel, it's better. Maybe because Gabriel is the man I loved. The man my heart held on to for almost a decade.

I would be lying if I said that I wasn't scared. There was still the small part of me that expected the other shoe to drop. After all, it wouldn't be the first time in my

life that a loved one has been taken away from me.

There is also the fear that this is all too easy, you know. Like shouldn't it be a bit harder? A bit more difficult. A bit more challenging... or is that just my self-sabotaging tendencies talking?

Maybe I am so used to not having things going my way, which just makes me question things when they do.

"What are you working on?" Gabriel pops out of nowhere, scaring the crap out of me.

With my hand on my chest, I try to calm my racing heart. "Don't sneak up on me like that."

"I didn't," he says, his eyes flashing in amusement. "I've been calling you for more than a minute. You were just staring into space."

That night at the gala, right after that first round, Gabriel continued for two more rounds. We slept and just when I thought it was over, he woke me up for a few more rounds. I swear, by morning, my legs were like jelly.

I'll forever count it as one of my best nights. There is just something about your husband whispering sweet nothings to you while buried deep inside you. He would alternate between sweet and straight up dirty talk. My mind could barely keep up, but I loved every single second of it.

\*Harper?" Content belong to NôvelDrâma. Org.

I focus on his handsome face. This is a dream come true, but there is a small part of me that keeps insisting that I gave in too quickly. It keeps insisting that I should have given it more time.

"Sorry," I mumble pulling my eyes away from him to stare at the papers in front of me. "I've just been thinking of how to take Unity Ventures to the next level,"

He takes a seat right next to me on the dining table.

"May I?" he motions to the papers that I'd been scribbling on and I nod.

"Any ideas?" he asks after a couple of minutes.

\*Not many. The only one I have is to turn it into what its names suggest. Unity Ventures. Meaning we will be all- rounded. We won't just be focused on buying and selling property. We can also incorporate architecture, building and construction, and interior and landscape design."

His flash to mine. My joy swells deep inside me at the look of pride he gives me.

I never really intended to be part of my family's company. It was never in my dreams to join it and be part of the running team. That was always Andrew's dream. It's just too bad he never got to realize his dream.

Part of me blames my father. If he hadn't run the company down, maybe Andrew wouldn't have been so busy trying to save it to realize that he was sick. By the time he did get diagnosed with stage four prostate cancer, my parents were dead, and we didn't have enough money for his treatment.

I tried begging him to seek help from Gabriel once Gabriel and I were married, but like the proud idiot he was, he refused.

So yes, I do love my father, but I also put the blame on him for Andrew's death.

Unity Venture was his dream. He may not be here today, but I'll make sure it succeeds in honor of him.

"I'm really impressed," Gabriel says, interrupting my thoughts.

\*Thank you."

\*Maybe Ava can be your first client," he says thoughtfully. "She did say she'd like you to do the interior of one of her hope houses. Working with her will push you to higher heights because her foundation is really big."

\*Yeah, but she has never mentioned it again, so that leaves me with nil."

I don't know about you, but I am not the kind of person who will go bother someone because of something like that. If you need my services, then you'll come to me.

Gabriel grabs my hand in his warm one. "Love, you are in business now and you have to understand this is a eat or get eaten kind of world. You want something, you go for it with all you've got. You don't wait for it to come to you."

"But-"

No," he silences me assertively.

'Working with Ava is a big project, one you can't miss out so don't wait for her to reach out; when you meet again for a lunch date, remind her about it. Better yet, you can call her and just ask her about."

The thought of doing that is giving me anxiety. Gabriel doesn't understand that I am not made from the same cloth that he is ! He's comfortable going after what he wants; I am not. I feel more comfortable just waiting for it to come to me, and if it doesn't, then I count my losses and move on to something else.

By the piercing look he is giving me, I know he's not going to take no for an answer.

"I'll think about it," I concede and give him the only answer I can.

"That's better than a straight no," he smiles. "And if you need anything, any help, let me know. We Woods have a lot of business connections."

I want to do this on my own without his family's name backing me up. This is my family's legacy. As bad as it may sound, I don't want any other family to take credit for its success.

I know Gabriel has taken care of it these past few years, and I am grateful, but I am now in charge of it. Going forward, I want to succeed by my own merit.

“And by the way, my parents are coming over for dinner tomorrow.”

My eyes snap to him. “And you’re just telling me now!”

I ball a paper and throw it at him. He easily dodges it.

\*I forgot,” With that, he gives me a mischievous wink before disappearing into his home office.

Ex-Husbands Regret Chapter 493-Harper.

“I want you and Lilly to accompany me somewhere,” Gabriel announces.

I was in our bedroom, folding clean clothes. Sure, we do have a housekeeper, but I am not used to sitting and twiddling my thumbs. It feels weird that I was used to doing everything by myself, and now there is someone else doing those things for me. I like keeping busy. I can’t spend the whole weekend doing nothing.

“Your parent’s are coming for dinner, Gabriel, or have you forgotten that?” I ask.

I carry some of the folded clothes and walk into the walk-in closet, where I put them in the respective drawers. Gabriel, just like me, is really organized. Liam wasn’t, and that used to irritate me to the point of driving me mad.

We were married, so we had to find a way to live together with each other’s flaws. It wasn’t always easy, but we found a way to compromise.

I come out of the closet to find him seated on the bed. He’s folding some of the clothes that were lying on the bed. “No, I haven’t forgotten,” he answers, placing the folded cloth on top of the other bunch. “But they’ll be here in the evening. We have a couple of hours before then. More than enough.”

I stop what I’m doing and just stare at him. There was something in his eyes. There is a certain kind of gleam that I can’t explain.

“What’s this about?” I ask suspiciously.

\*There is something I want you to see. It’s a surprise.”

I sigh. “I don’t really like surprises.”

In fact, I downright hated them. The thing I disliked about them is that you never know what you are getting. Either you like it or you don’t, and when you don’t like it, you have to pretend that you do.

It also doesn't help that, for the longest time, my dad would surprise me with things I completely hated. He thought he knew me, but he really didn't, given that he didn't spend much time with me and Andrew. Anyway, because he thought he knew me, he bought me things he thought I would like when, in reality, I didn't. He did the same thing with Andrew too.

"You'll love this one, I promise."

I look at him anxiously and doubtfully. I want to continue pushing, but that gleam in his eyes stops me. He really does want to show us whatever it is he wants to show us.

\*Fine." I finally concede, marriage needs compromise, right? This is me compromising.

I pick up the last pile of clothes and walk to the closet. Once I'm done putting them away, I come out.

"Okay, let's go," I say, pulling his attention from his phone.

His eyes slowly scan my body before they come back to my face. "You are going out like that?"

I look down at myself before looking back at him. "What's wrong with what I am wearing?"

\*You are in an oversized t-shirt and sweat pants," he says hesitantly, his words measured. I narrow my eyes at him. "Yeah, so?"

"Shouldn't you change?" His voice is hesitant, but I can immediately feel my hackles rising.

"Are you trying to tell me what I can and can't wear, Gabriel?" My hands are fisted on my waist, and my eyes are glaring at him.

He swallows. "No!"

"Good," I smile. "Now, are we going or not?"

I was just turning, giving him my back when he muttered. "I swear you have me by the balls."

"What did you say?" I swivel back around and narrow my eyes.

His hands shoot up in surrender. "Nothing."

I don't say anything else; I just spin on my heels and leave, or else I'd burst out laughing. It was comical to see Gabriel so nervous. I had trouble keeping a straight face

for those few minutes. Of course I wouldn't have changed, but it was fun playing with him.

"Lilly," I call her while entering her room. "Your dad wants to take us somewhere, are you good to leave or should we give you a couple of minutes to get ready."

"Where are we going?" she asks, putting her novel down.

Thanks to Sierra, Lilly had started reading Harry Potter. Last week, she came home and insisted that I get her the first two books in the series. She told me they planned to read all nine books before moving to Percy Jackson.

It still catches me off-guard any time I find her reading Harry Potter. She growing up so fast. She hasn't touched any of her Dairy of a Wimpy Kid series or Dork Dairies.

Ex-Husbands Regret Chapter 494-Shaking myself, I push those thoughts back. "I don't know. He says it's a surprise.\*"

"I love surprises!" she screams.

"That makes one of us," I mumble. "Let's just go."

Lilly carefully puts her book down before jumping down from her bed. She takes my hand and pulls me from her room. We find Gabriel waiting for us by the door, his legs crossed at the ankles while his hands are folded across his broad chest.

He is wearing a black V-neck t-shirt that hugs his shoulder like a second skin. His thick thighs are encased in a Calvin Klein pair of jeans. There is something about him in that pose that makes him more attractive.

\*Like what you see?" Gabriel teases with a smirk, his words pulling me from my thoughts.

"Hmm," I murmur.

Lilly makes a clicking sound that reminds me that she's present. "I know daddy is good-looking, but you two are disgusting."

"Wait till you grow up and meet the man that makes your heart race," I tease her, pinching her cheeks softly. "Every time you look at him dreamily, I'll remind you of this day."

The air around us changes.

\*She's not dating anyone until she's eighty," Gabriel growls, all traces of fun and games completely gone.

I fold my hands across my chest and mimic him. "She'll probably start dating when she's around sixteen or seventeen."

\*Not gonna happen,"

I ignore his chilly tone and continue riling him up.

\*She'll probably have her first kiss in middle school," I continue. "I had my first when I was twelve."

\*I'll blow their faces if they so much bring their disgusting disease-filled little lips near her," he hisses, the sound so terrifying.

This time, I can't stop the laughter that bubbles from deep inside me. Gabriel looked like he was going to have a heart attack just from the thought of Lilly dating.

I would have added other things, like the fact that she might lose her virginity way before she joins college, but I stopped myself. She doesn't know about sex yet, and that is not something I'm willing to talk to her about until she's older. Old enough to understand.

Plus, that would probably push Gabriel over the edge. I can honestly see him locking her up and scaring any boy within a mile radius of our daughter.

I've thought a lot about how I'll approach the birds and bees talk. Honestly, I'll just tell her like it is and when she's old enough, I'll give her options. It's not that I'll be encouraging her to have sex, but I honestly feel giving her safe option is better than her ending up as a teenage mom. (No offense to teen moms.)

Besides, teenagers are usually high on hormones. They'll do whatever the fuck they want. You can warn them all you want, but if they want to have sex, they will. I'd rather it be safe sex.

"Hold your horses, guys," Lilly's voice pulls me from my thoughts. "I'm not going to get a boyfriend any time soon. I want to be a boss and run a company one day. I can't focus on that if I am busy chasing stupid boys."

"That's my girl!" Gabriel shouts, then pulls her into his arms and pecks her grinning cheeks. "Boys are stupid. Money isn't."

I just shake my head at the duo and start for the door. They follow me and soon we are on the road.

The whole ride is filled with chatter. Mainly from Lilly. Sometimes she scares me with how super focused she is. I don't want her to be just another cold businesswoman who thinks about nothing else but work and making money.

Sure, I want her to achieve her dreams. I want her to succeed in life, but I also want her to find love. I want her to have the warmth of a loving and cloting husband and children.

She reminds me so much of Gabriel and that scares me because the Gabriel I knew before was nothing but cold and ruthless.

"We are here," Gabriel announces I look outside to find we were in front of a huge mansion.

"What is this, Gabriel?" I ask, getting out and staring at the majestic house.

\*This is what I'm hoping will be our home," he answers, making my heart skip at the wishfulness in his tone.

Ex-Husbands Regret Chapter 495-I stare at him, dumbfounded. I try to speak but nothing comes out of my mouth as my eyes keep shifting from Gabriel to the house.

\*This house is beautiful," Lilly screams, her excitement evident as she bounces from foot to foot, almost as if she is dying to leave us and go explore it. "Is this where we will be staying? Is this our new house?"

Gabriel's eyes leave mine and move to our daughter, who is grinning from ear to ear. "If your mother loves it, then yes, this will be our new home."

My eyes move back to the house, staring at it with a bit of awe.

The mansion stands majestically against a backdrop of rolling hills, its grandeur evident from every angle. It is harmonious blend of classic and modern elements, featuring a pristine white marble exterior that glistens in the sunlight. Intricate stonework adorns the corners and arches, adding a touch of timeless elegance.

The entrance is dominated by a pair of towering wooden doors, carved with ornate patterns and flanked by fluted columns. Above the doors, a gracefully arched window with decorative wrought-iron grille allows natural light to spill into the grand foyer.

Lush, manicured gardens surround the property, with vibrant flowerbeds creating a colorful mosaic against the green lawn. A cobblestone path leads up to the front entrance, bordered by neatly trimmed hedges and framed by clusters of blooming roses. Tall, stately trees and carefully arranged topiaries lend a sense of privacy and seclusion, creating an enchanting atmosphere that invites both relaxation and admiration. It gives an impression of refined opulence, where every detail has been crafted to exude sophistication and charm. Exclusive ©

"Gabriel..." I murmur, unable to form the words.

I've always wanted a house in a huge estate. I always imagined my kids playing in a massive backyard and running around with the dogs. I wanted a big family because it was just Andrew and me growing up, so a big estate played an important role in the dreams I had. I also imagined having barbeques with friends and family along with their kids.

How did Gabriel find out that this is the house and estate of my dreams?

"Let's first look inside before you make decision," he all but begs. "If you still don't like, then we can find another house."

I know he is nervous. Nervous that I'd reject this grand gesture. That I wouldn't be on board with him on getting the house. The fact that I am quiet probably makes it seem like I'm not happy with the house. What he doesn't know is that my lack of speech is because this is exactly what I've always dreamed of since I was a little girl.

I nod my head, eager to see what the inside has to offer. Lilly runs ahead of us, following the cobblestone path. She reminded me of Dorothy from The Wizard of Oz as she followed the yellow brick road.

Gabriel links our hands together as he basically leads. I can feel his excitement radiating off him in waves. He's like a little child, excited to show his parents his new toy. It made me smile because this is a big contrast to his dominant, serious and cold side.

"Slow down, Gabriel" I tell him in amusement. "I'm going to trip if you keep rushing like that."

He turns, not breaking his steps. "I could just carry you," he says, giving me a teasing smile.

"Definitely not,"

We finally catch up to Lilly, who was at the door, practically bouncing on her feet. It made me laugh at how both father and daughter are excited.

Gabriel pushes the wide doors open.

Stepping inside the mansion, I am immediately enveloped in an atmosphere of understated luxury and elegance. The grand foyer sets the tone with its soaring ceilings and intricate moldings. A magnificent crystal chandelier hangs from the center. Rich, dark wood paneling contrasts with the marble.

I let go of Gabriel's hand and step further into the house.

The open layout flows seamlessly into a series of opulent living spaces. To one side of the foyer, the formal living room is spacious and airy, with tall windows that frame views of the gardens outside. The room features a grand fireplace, its mantel adorned with intricate carvings and topped with a large, ornate mirror.

Adjacent to the living room, the formal dining area exudes elegance with a stunning chandelier that echoes the design of the one in the foyer, while a large, tasteful rug anchors the space. Floor-to-ceiling windows provide natural light and a view of the manicured gardens.

Turning I am greeted by the mansion's gourmet kitchen, which is a blend of functionality and style, featuring top-of-the-line appliances seamlessly integrated into custom cabinetry. A large central island with a marble countertop serves as both a cooking and casual dining area. The kitchen includes a walk-in pantry, a wine cellar, and elegant pendant lighting that adds a modern touch.

Ex-Husbands Regret Chapter 496-I spin around, just taking things in before finally facing Gabriel, who has an expectant look on his face.

"This is huge, Gabriel." I could tell there were more rooms, but I would explore them later. "How many bedrooms does it have?"

He crosses the short distance to me. "Eight bedrooms and two guest rooms."

I am stunned into silence as I stare at him. Sure, growing up, we had a big house, but it was a five-bedroom house. That was more than enough.

\*Ten bedrooms is too much, Gabriel," I chuckle nervously. I mean, what the hell would we do with the rest of the room?

He steps into my space before his arm wraps around my waist, pulling me to him. I place my hands on his chest, feeling his heartbeat underneath them.

"I was serious when I said I wanted more children, Harper." His eyes bore into mine. "This is me making plans ahead."

\*Oh my gosh! I'm going to have a sibling?" Lilly screams, interrupting the intimate atmosphere.

We both turn to her, though Gabriel doesn't let go of me. Her eyes are gleaming as she looks at us expectantly.

"Not yet, but hopefully soon," Gabriel answers with a smile and a confidence that scares the crap out of me, especially when I remember we've been having unprotected sex.

Lilly's shriek nearly leaves me deaf. She launches herself at both of us.

"I'm going to be a big sister!" She runs around screaming, her voice echoing through the empty house.

I glare at Gabriel, who is smiling. "You do realize you've just raised her hopes."

"Yes," he smiles and winks. "That's because I know I can deliver."

Sighing, I step out of his arms and look around me. "The house is still too huge."

\*I've thought about everything, Harper. Between us, my brother, and our friends, we will have a huge brood of children. Where will they sleep when there is a sleepover? Or one of them begs us to watch their kids so they can have some alone nights?"

It made sense, honestly. I've gotten close to Ava, Connie, and Letty. Ava has two kids and another one on the way. Connie is currently pregnant, and from what I've heard of Reaper, he's probably like Gabriel and Rowan. He'll want more kids. Letty isn't expecting yet, but I know she wants a family.

Like Gabriel just said, between all of us, we will have a brood of children. There needs to be room for them to sleep in case those barbecues I was dreaming about run late. Or if the other couples decided to spend the night.

\*Can Sierra have a bedroom of her own for when she sleeps over?" Lilly, who was running around, comes skidding to a halt in front of us.

She pushes her hands up and links them together against her chin in a prayer gesture. She gives her puppy eyes that are so adorable and irresistible. She doesn't use this move a lot, but when she does, she knows she gets whatever she wants.

Gabriel looks at me as if asking if I am okay with it. It makes my heart skip a little that he's asking for my opinion instead of just doing as he wishes, like before.

\*Sure, sweetheart, if that's what you want and if your mom agrees to make this our new home," Gabriel answers her.

Her smile widens, her happiness radiating through her, soaking the air around us.

Both father and daughter turn to me.

"What do you say, my love? Do you see us turning this house into our home?" Gabriel asks, his eyes looking at me expectantly. Property I just stare at him. His eyes are my favorite part of him. The way those grey orbs stare at me with so much emotion right now. So much expectancy. So much hope for our future. It honestly leaves me breathless.

“Please, mommy,” Lilly begs. For a moment, she slips, calling me mommy instead of mom.

I pull my eyes away from them and look around the room. I can see it as if it were real. Lilly and her siblings are running around the furniture, playing. They scream in happiness as they tackle their father to the ground while watch from the kitchen.

I smile. “Yes, I can see us turning this house into a home.” I say this before adding. “Our home.

Ex-Husbands Regret Chapter 497-“Why did I let you two talk me into staying?” I ask in frustration while glaring at Gabriel and Lilly. “Now we are late.”

The two didn’t look apologetic at all. Lilly was smiling, her eyes shining in happiness, while Gabriel was grinning. They both look satisfied with themselves.

I sigh in defeat, wondering what I’ll do with these two. I can clearly see it. The father-daughter duo will always work together to overwhelm me. They’ll always gang up on me.

I mock-glare at Lilly, “Where’s the loyalty?”

“You have to admit that it was fun, right?” She says instead, placing her hand on both mine and Gabriel’s seat.

She’s so happy. In fact, she’s been a lot happier since we came back here. Sure, we used to be happy, but not this happy.

Lilly had a relationship with Liam, but it was nothing like what she has with Gabriel. Maybe it’s because he is her real father. Maybe it’s because they have a lot in common. I don’t really know. All I know is that their relationship just flows easily, unlike what she had with Liam.

It’s hard to explain honestly, but I am so happy to see this free with Gabriel. She hasn’t forgotten Liam, though. She has his picture on her bedside table, and I once found her talking to him. It broke and mended my heart at the same time when I heard her telling him that she missed him, but he shouldn’t worry about us because we were happy. I went back to our room and cried for like an hour.

She was right, though. We were happy, but most importantly, she was happy. Lilly is coming out of her bubble shell, and it’s beautiful to watch.

“Mom?”

I twist and look at her. “You are right, it was fun.”

Gabriel and Lilly had convinced me to stay and have lunch in celebration. We were celebrating that I had agreed to make the house our home.

It had been fun to order food and eat it on the floor in an empty house without a single piece of furniture. I think it will be one of my treasured memories. Gabriel had not minded sitting down on the floor with his expensive clothes when Lilly suggested that we should have lunch there.

After that, we spent the rest of the time exploring the estate. Lying on the grass and just basking in the sun. Playing hide and seek with Lilly. It was fun, and, at that moment, I completely forgot about the dinner.

“This is so bad,” I murmur, pulling myself from the memories. “What is your mom going to think of me? I am the host, yet we are late.”

“Stop worrying,” he assures me, a smile still firmly in place. “She isn’t going to think anything except that we all look happy.”

I want to believe him, but I can’t. The worry is still there. Still nagging at me. We’ve met twice with his parents, but we didn’t spend that much time with them. This dinner is supposed to be intimate, and I didn’t want to give her a bad impression of me.

Thirty minutes later, we were pulling into the building. Gabriel parks the car, and the three of us get out. We ride the elevator up all the while, I am praying that they haven’t arrived, given that we were minutes late.

“I’m not even decently dressed for diner,” I murmur, my heart pounding so hard that I’m sure the whole damn building can probably hear it.

“Harper, you are worrying too much,” Gabriel tells me, his hand on the door handle. “Just relax. Everything is going to be okay.”

The moment he opens the door, I dash to our bedroom to change into something more suitable. It isn’t a formal dinner, so I settle for a pair of loose-fitting jeans and a camisole.

I finish and get out of our bedroom just as I hear the door open. I take a deep breath and calm down before heading towards the living room.

I reach there in time to see Gabriel hugging his mom.

“I hope we didn’t keep you waiting,” his mom tells him with a soft smile.

“Not at all, mom. We had a sort of family outing and didn’t realize that time had flown by. Harper was worried about you guys arriving before we did.”

I sigh and roll my eyes. Did he really have to tell his mother that? He could have just pretended that we were here on time.

Taking another deep breath, I walk in.

“Hello,” I greet, and both his parents turn to me.

“Hello to you too, Harper,” his mother says, pulling me into a tight hug before kissing both my cheeks.

She pulls away, and her husband takes her place. I give him my hand; he takes it, but then he tugs it and pulls me into a hug while patting my shoulder.

“Grandma, grandpa!”

Lilly comes out of her room, running and shouting. I step away from Gabriel’s dad in time for Lilly’s body to crash into his.

He lifts her up and hugs her. Gabriel’s mom steps beside her husband.

“Give me my grandbaby,” she demands, before pulling Lilly out of her husband’s arms.

After hugging her, she walks with her to the sofa, Gabriel’s father following behind. Once they are seated, they begin chatting.

\*Seems like they’ve completely forgotten our existence,” Gabriel whispers, standing next to me with a big smile on her face.

“Of course, Lilly is their grandchild.”

“But I am their son,” he complains.

I roll my eyes at his childishness. A side of him that I didn’t even know existed.

“An overgrown baby, if you ask me,” I murmur.

“Yes, I am their precious baby boy. That should trump the grandchild card.”

\*Seriously? You have a twin brother. There is nothing special about you. You and Rowan are both equal.”

He turns and glares at me as if I have offended him. “No, we are not. I’m younger “By three and a half minutes.”

He shrugs. “Still younger. Which makes me their precious baby boy.”

"I can't deal with you right now. I am going to check on the food." I say this before walking away with a little smile.

Like I said, this childish side of him is new. I didn't know that it even existed. Is it weird that I like it? His cold and hard exterior made him seem untouchable. This side of him makes him more human, and I love it.

Ex-Husbands Regret Chapter 498-"Is the food ready?" I ask our housekeeper once I step into the kitchen.

She answers with a kind smile "Not yet, but it will be in a few."

"Okay, let me set the table then."

She goes to argue, but I shut that argument down quickly. I wanted to help. Since she is cooking, this is the least I could do.

\*Do you need any help?"

I look up to find Gabriel's mom on the opposite side of the dining table. I place the plate I was holding down and give her a smile.

"Sure, but I am almost done."

She walks towards me and begins helping with the glasses and spoons.

\*So, Harper, how has my son been treating you?" she asks out of nowhere.

I don't answer immediately. I take some time to just think about her question, not because I don't know what to say, but because of the tone of her voice.

She isn't just asking to make conversation; she genuinely wants to know how Gabriel has been treating me.

I must have taken too long to answer because she stops what she's doing and adds.

"Don't take it the wrong way. I am not butting into business, but given how he treated you before, I just want to make sure that he is treating you like you deserve.

The concern is evident in her voice and in her eyes. She's genuinely concerned about my treatment.

I place the final plate down and smile. "You don't have to worry; Gabriel is treating me really well. I am not complaining. Trust me when I say, If he were, I would have left him; everything else be damned."

“You would? Why now, though? Why didn’t you leave during those first three years you were married?”

“Honestly, I guess because I was young, naïve, weak and scared. Being a mother and going through what I went through changed me. When I was away from him, I learned about my self-worth and how to stand up for myself. I had a daughter and I needed to teach her how to be strong and stand up on her own two feet.”

“And you did an amazing job with Lilly. I see her and I know she’s going to go places. Those two, Lilly and Noah, are like our boys. They’re going to take the company further than their dads did.”

Hearing her say that made my heart swell with pride. I’ve heard Gabriel say the same thing about Lilly and Noah too. I believe them because I know my daughter, and I know she’s more than capable.

“Thank you,” I whisper.

“Do you know that my marriage to Antony was arranged by our parents?”

My jaw drops, and I stare at her in shock. That is something that I didn’t know. Whenever I saw them, they always looked so in love. I always thought they married for love, just like my dad and mom.

“I didn’t know.”

\*Few people do. Rowan and Gabriel don’t either,” she says.

“You look so in love and happy.”

She sighs and puts down the spoons before pulling out a chair and sitting down. “We weren’t always like that. In fact, Antony hated me. I would actually say that the word hate is mild. He detested me, and his hate nearly destroyed me.”

Just like she did, I pull a chair out next to her and take a seat. My focus is completely on her.

“It’s so unbelievable. No one can tell that he hated you.”

“It’s something I don’t like talking about because it’s in the past.” Staring into her eyes, I see the pain that has been masked for years. The pain that scarred her. “Don’t get me wrong, we do love each other. He pulled his head out of his ass when he realized he loved me and begged for my forgiveness.”

I continue to stare at her, not really sure why she was telling me this.

Ex-Husbands Regret Chapter 499- \*I know you are confused, but the reason I am telling you this is because I want you to give Gabriel a chance. I know he messed up, but looking at him now, I can tell he is in love with you. My sons took after their dad in idiocy when it comes to the women they love. Though part of Rowan's idiocy is because of us, as parents-both me, Antony, and Emma's parents-we messed him up."

"Sarah..." I start to say but she cuts me off.

"It seems it runs in the family. I guess the adage 'the apple doesn't fall far from the tree' is true because both sons have managed to hurt the women they love, just as their dad did with me. All I am asking is that you give him a chance, because the same adage applies in a positive light. When the Wood men love, they love with their whole hearts, and they love fiercely. If you give Gabriel a chance, he will love you like no other man."

I smile in amusement at her effort to get me to forgive her son.

"Sarah, like I tried telling you, you don't need to worry. I already forgave Gabriel, and I decided to give our marriage a real chance."

This time she's the one shocked. Her jaw drops as her wide eyes stare at me, completely stunned.

"You forgave him?"

"Yes"

"So, you are a real couple now?"

"Definitely."

She squeals before standing up. She then pulls me from my chair and hugs me in excitement.

\*You have no idea how happy I am to see that my sons are with the women they love. It fills me with so much joy and peace," she says, pulling away from me, her eyes filling with tears.

Gabriel and his father burst through the door, their panicked eyes scanning the room.

"My love, are you okay? Why are you crying?" Antony crosses the room and pulls Sarah into his arms. He then wipes away her tears, his eyes staring lovingly at her.

It's hard to imagine that their marriage had been arranged and that he once hated her.

There is no hate in his eyes right now. Just love and adoration. It's like the mere thought of Sarah hurting, hurts him.

Gabriel comes to stand next to me. He wraps his hands around my waist, plastering me to his side. His eyes question me, but I just shrug.

“Stop worrying. I am just happy.” Sarah smiles at her husband. “Harper just told me that she decided to give Gabriel a chance. It makes me happy that my sons are getting their happy ever after.”

Antony’s confusion clears. \*Thank God. I thought something happened to you.”

“No. I’m just happy to have another daughter-in-law.”

“You’re beautiful, you know that?” He tells her, his eyes staring at her as if he’s captivated. It’s like he is falling in love with her all over again.

Not caring, Antony bends down and captures Sarah’s lips in a scorching kiss that honestly leaves me blushing. The heat from it is scorching.

\*Seriously, dad?” Gabriel asks in disgust. “Must you do this in my house, and in front of me?”

They pull away from each other, with Sarah breathing hard. She looks flustered and a bit embarrassed. Antony, on the other hand, is grinning and looks totally unapologetic.

“Dinner is ready. Should I serve?” Mrs. Dobbs, our housekeeper, asks, interrupting the moment.

“Yes,” I answer.

Antony had sat Sarah down and was now playing with her hand while whispering something close to her ear. Something that was making Sarah blush like crazy. Gabriel was staring at his parents and looked like he was seconds away from puking.

I look from my husband to his parents, and I can’t help but pray that we will still be that in love when we are that age.

Ex-Husbands Regret Chapter 500-Emma

I walk into Mia’s office for yet another therapy session. Just like we always do, I first take off my shoes before sitting down.

“Hi Emma,” Mia asks, smiling at me. Her smile, just like always, is inviting and warm. It makes you calm and relaxed.

“Hi Mia”

“Okay, you know what we have to do first, right?”

She asks and I nod my head.

I take a deep breath before closing my eyes. I sort through my thoughts. I don't hold onto them for long or dwell on them. Instead, I let them go without trying to dive into them.

I push out the thoughts about Calvin, Gunner, my brother, mom and Ava. I clear my head until there is nothing. Until my head is empty and I am at peace.

Once that's done, I open my eyes.

"Are you ready for us to begin?" Mia, who was watching me, asks.

I nod "Yes."

"When we talked the last time, you told me you are ready to get your life back together. How's that going on for you?"

Taking a deep breath, I fully focus on her and let her question bounce in my head as I try lock down what I am feeling.

"Good," I finally say, "I got in contact with my previous firm. They have a branch here in the city and they were happy to have me back."

That is something I wasn't expecting. It's been two years since I had a mental breakdown because of guilt and out of nowhere, I quit my job. I never expected that they'd take me back, given that I didn't give them a reason.

When I took the leap to call them and ask for my old job back, I expected them to turn me away and tell me to fuck off. I was surprised when my senior got excited at hearing me. She immediately accepted my request, even after I told her that I wasn't coming back to the city I'd called home for the last ten years.

"Is there a particular reason why you decided to get your life back?" Her question pulls me back to the present. "Gunner,"

I don't have to think about it. Gunner is the reason I am doing all this. He is the reason why I sought therapy to heal and change.

"What about him?"

"I can't try to be a good mother to him when my life is a mess now, can I?" I give her a sheepish smile. "I quit my job and moved with my mum while I was basically wasting away in my bedroom. That doesn't scream 'good, responsible mom'"

She nods her head and then writes something in her note book before turning back to me.

“I get what you are saying, but I am worried that you are using Gunner and Calvin as a bandaid. I am afraid that you are settling for them since you didn’t end up with Rowan, given he was always your first choice.”

Her words tear something inside me. I feel offended and hurt that she would think this way about me and about my intentions to mend things with Calvin and Gunner.

I am quiet as I just stare at her. No words come out of my mouth. It opens and closes, but nothing. I lack the words to express what I feel at the moment.

She raises her eyebrows, “I can see that I’ve offended you... That was my intention. Gunner may be too young to understand everything but if that’s what I am thinking, then that’s what Calvin will think too. Are you sure that you haven’t settled for them because the person you wanted chose someone else?”

Sighing, I let go of the anger that has started building inside me. Now that she put it that way, I understand. Hell, if the tables were turned, I would have thought the same thing. Calvin and Ava are friends so he knows that she and Rowan are together. He knows Rowan chose Ava. What’s to stop him from thinking that the reason I am now begging for forgiveness is because Rowan didn’t want me? I’ve was hang up on him for years, what’s to stop Calvin from thinking that my change of heart is because I was rejected by Rowan?

“I am sure, Mia. I am not doing this because I am settling but because I genuinely want forgiveness and a chance at redemption. I want to be in Gunner and Calvin’s life.” I answer after a while.

“And why should I believe you?”

She had reason not to believe me. I understand. Hell, I do understand how it seems from a stranger’s point of view.

“You don’t have to believe me, but I genuinely want to be in Gunner’s life. It took losing him for me to open my eyes. It took looking into his eyes and seeing indifference when he looked at me to know I messed. I thought I wanted Rowan. I thought he was my dream, but then somewhere along the way, I realized that he was just a mirage. By the time I turned around to what is real, Gunner and Calvin also had their realization. The realization that I wasn’t worth the heartache and pain. They weren’t there anymore.”

It’s a painful reminder of how stupid I have been. How I had the best but I lost them because I was chasing a dream. I was so focused on a dream that had died a thousand deaths. It made blind to what was important.

“If you do this, you have to give it your all. You played with their hearts once; this time they won’t let you in so easily. I had to make sure not only because of you but also because there is a child involved.” She says then pauses for a while before continuing.

“I’ve seen many clients run for the next best thing when things don’t work out as they wanted. The reason I asked your motives is because I needed you to be sure yourself. Like I said, this won’t be easy. Getting their forgiveness won’t be easy. They won’t be receptive at first. If your motives are right, your determination is what will keep you going. If your motives aren’t pure, then you’ll give up on them on the first sight of trouble, and that will cause even more damage. I want you to be sure that this is what you want.”

I don’t have to think about. I’ve had two years to dwell on this. Two years to stew on it. I know what I want.

\*I am sure. I want this. I want to be in Gunner’s life. I want to know my son. I want to make up for my wrong towards him and Calvin.”

A smile breaks from her lips. Her eyes light up. “That’s what I wanted to hear. I wanted you to be sure that you genuinely wanted to fight for him.”

I smile back at her as a sense of peace washes over me.