

Ex-Husbands Regret Chapter 501 – 510

Ex-Husbands Regret Chapter 501-Emma.

I am nervous. I am very nervous. My heart is racing and I can barely breathe. I clutch the steering wheel in a tight grip as I try to calm down the panic that was surging inside me.

If I am honest, then I'll admit that I have been skeptical since talking to Ava. My words were a false bravado from a woman who, at the moment, had an unusual surge in confidence. After Ava left, that false bravado faded. The confidence I had dropped and I was left doubting the decision I had made.

I struggled with it, wondering if I was doing the right thing. I doubted the actions I wanted to take. I wasn't sure if it would bear fruits or if I would be making things worse by pushing myself onto them.

Finally, I decided to hold off on my plans. It surprised me, honestly, I wasn't like that before. I never doubted myself or my decisions. If I wanted something, I went after it, guns blazing.

Yesterday after I talked to Mia, it opened my eyes. She asked me if I was sure about making things right. I was sure. That is what I wanted. I couldn't help but ask myself one question as I went home. If being in Gunner's life was what I wanted, then why was I hesitating concerning the decision I had made?

I got home and the question kept ringing in my head like a broken record. The rest of the day, I thought about nothing else. Finally, before going to sleep, I decided to go through with the plan. This was the only way to get close to them. To get close to Gunner. He was what I wanted and I was planning to go after him, guns blazing.

Which brings me to now. When I got up in the morning, I called Ava and told her that I'd be coming in the afternoon. She was happy to hear. So glad that I hadn't backed out from my original plan. She'd given me her new address and I was on my way there now.

I push down the panic that threatens to eat me alive. Taking a deep breathe, I loosen the grip I had on the steering wheel. I was driving and I needed to relax. The last thing I need is to get into an accident.

"Turn left, on the fifth avenue." Siri's the tense atmosphere inside my car.

Following her direction, I turn the wheel and get on to the avenue, driving at a slow pace as I try to get my emotions under wraps.

I continue following directions until I get to an exclusive community for the upper rich. I grew up around wealth, but I still get shocked when I come across evidence of wealth that is beyond my imagination.

Going at the required speed limit of ten, I follow Siri's voice till it leads me to a black wrought iron gate.

"You have reached your destination." Her voice says before turning off.

Rolling my window down, I press a button with a bell engraved on it, on the screen next to the gates.

"Hello?" Ava's voice comes through the speaker.

"Hi, Ava, it's Emma. I'm at the gates."

"Oh, hi," Her voice turns cheerful "Let me just open them for you. Follow the driveway till the end." "Thanks."

Seconds later, the gates open soundlessly. I release the breaks and drive through the long driveway. Finally, I see their house and it's completely marvelous. It's straight out of a dream. It even had a fountain at the front.

I park my car and get out. Taking a deep breathe, I slowly walk towards the house, my nervousness now back. Gently knocking the door, I step back and wait.

Slowly, the door opens before Noah's head peaks out.

"Oh, it's you," he says in an emotionless and detached tone. "What are you doing here?"

Looking at him, I see so much of Rowan in him that, for a minute, I forget that this is his son. I never got to interact with Noah. For some reason, he hated me from the moment her first saw me.

"Hi, Noah," I say, unsure, with a slight tremble in my voice.

Does it say something about me that the two kids I know in my life hate me?

"I asked what you want." His voice was cold. I have never been intimidated by a kid before. There was just something about Noah that was domineering.

"I'm here to see your mom," I reply nervously, shifting from one foot to another as his grey eyes bore into me.

I felt like he was searing my soul. His stare left me feeling like he could see the ugly parts of me that I try to hide. My guilt, self-hatred, and insecurities. I felt like he could see them all.

"I hope you are not here to cause any trouble because I won't let you," he hisses, his voice taut. "Because let me warn you, lady, I won't let you upset my mother."

My heart breaks all over again watching just how ready he was to tear me down if I so much looked at Ava wrong. I could have had this with Gunner, yet I ruined it all because I was selfish.

Ex-Husbands Regret Chapter 502-I am jealous. Jealous that Ava has this with Noah. She also has a close relationship with Gunner. Why didn't I wake up from my foolishness before it was too late? My only prayer is that even if Gunner and I don't get to be as close as Ava and Noah are, at least we'll get to the point where he doesn't hate my guts.

"I'm not, I promise," I whisper even as my voice catches.

He gives me a searing look before he turns.

"Noah," I call to him before he leaves. His back stiffens but he looks at me over his shoulder. "I'm sorry. For treating your mom horribly and trying to get between your father and her. I'm truly sorry."

I didn't expect him to say anything back, and he doesn't. Instead, he turns back around and leaves me standing at the door.

Sighing, I wonder whether I should enter or just wait for Ava to come and welcome me. My mother's teaching was still ingrained in my head years later. I'd never enter someone's house without an invite.

Seconds later, Ava walks towards me. More like wobbles. Her baby bump was becoming more visible each time! saw her. She couldn't hide it now. It was obvious she is expecting, even with baggy clothes.

"Oh my God, Emma," she exclaims in a sweet voice. "I'm so sorry for Noah's behavior. I didn't know that he'd leave you standing on our doorstep when I sent him to open the door. Come on in."

She hugs me before stepping aside for me to enter.

"It's okay. I know that I'm not his favorite person."

"Still, it was rude of him and he'll be hearing from me later on. Don't take it personally; once he gets to know you, he'll understand that you're really not a bad person."

“It’s okay, Ava. I understand. He’s just protective of you.”

“And Gunner. They’re best friends.”

She didn’t have to explain things to me. Like I said, Noah is an exact replica of Rowan. That includes his loyalty and protectiveness. I understand why he would view me as an enemy. Gunner doesn’t like me very much, and that translates to Noah hating me too.

Ava grabs my hand and we walk down the hallway. I can’t help but stare at the décor. The house is amazing, both inside and outside. It was every woman’s dream.

“You have a beautiful home,” I comment as my eyes continued to wander around the house.

It isn’t just a house; it is a home. It is filled with a kind of warmth that I’ve always desired to have in my own home.

“Thank you,” she replies. “The other house had so many bad memories. We bought this one because we wanted a clean and fresh start. A home with new and beautiful memories. Not one that was shadowed by the past and that reminded me of the heartbreak and pain.”

I nod my head, understanding their need to start fresh. I wanted the same. A clean and fresh start without my past encroaching on my present. For that to happen, though, I need to fix things. Just like Rowan and Ava fixed things before they could move forward.

“Have a seat,” Ava tells me, and I sit down on the comfy sofa. “Can I get you anything?”

“No, I am good.”

She nods her head and then takes a seat right next to me. “I was afraid you had changed your mind. I’ve been looking forward to hearing from you.”

“I admit that for a while I almost backed out, but it’s not because I don’t want to be in his life, but because I doubted that I was doing the right thing. I was afraid that I was going to make things worse if I went ahead with those plans.”

Ava’s brown eyes stare deep into mine with an intensity that makes me squirm before she finally speaks. “As a mother, you’ll come to learn that those moments of doubt are a lot. You’ll always doubt whether what you are doing is good for them. You will always doubt if you are a good mother. You’ll always doubt every decision that you make concerning them.”

Taking a deep breath, she continues. “Don’t let those doubts destroy what you are trying to do for them. Being a mom means fighting for them with all that you have. That’s what Gunner needs right now. He needs to see actions, not just pretty words. He needs

to see you put in the effort and fight for him. He needs to know that he matters to you. That he matters so much that you are willing to do anything for him, including living in someone else's house just to be near him."

Gosh. What she just said rings true in my head. For the longest time, I treated Gunner in a way that showed him he didn't matter. I showed him that he wasn't important. Now I need to prove otherwise. I need to show him that he is all that matters.

Ex-Husbands Regret Chapter 503-"When did you get so mature?" I tease, bumping my shoulders with hers. "I'm older, I should be wiser."

"Maturity comes with experience, you know." She shrugs her shoulders and smiles. "Love drives us to do what is best for our children. So as long as you are driven by love, you'll always want what's best for you kids, and you will make decisions based on that."

We are silent for a while, as I just d*****d what she told me. It makes me feel less like a failure knowing that even Ava has doubts when to me she's the epitome of a perfect mother.

"Where is Iris, by the way?" I ask looking around, noticing that I haven't seen the little one since I arrived.

"She's in her room with Rowan, playing tea party." Her answer is accompanied by a grin.

I couldn't help it when I burst out laughing. "Rowan? Playing tea party?"

It sounded so weird. So out of the norm, it felt like we were talking about a different person. A different Rowan.

I can already imagine him with badly put-on makeup, nail polish and a skirt. The thought alone makes me laugh harder and Ava joins in.

That aside, I admire his relationship with Iris. It takes a different kind of man to raise someone else's child and love her unconditionally. You wouldn't even know that Iris isn't his biological child. He loves her just as much as he loves Noah. That girl has a special place in Rowan's heart.

"Are sure you don't want something to drink?" Ava asks once again after our laugh dies down.

"I'm sure," I smile.

"Maybe you can stay for lunch," she insists

"I don't know, Ava," I reply. "I don't want to intrude."

“Come on, you won’t be intruding. Have lunch with us and then you can go.”

I look into her eyes and I can tell that she really wants to me to stay. I never thought I’d ever enjoy Ava’s company but I do. I actually do. So, I nod my head.

“Let me just let the cook know to prepare for one more person... I’ll be back,” she tells me, standing up.

When she leaves, I take out my phone and check if I have any messages or emails. Mom wasn’t around when I left and I’d forgotten to tell her that I’d be coming to Ava’s the previous night.

I am looking forward to moving into her former house. I am looking forward to building a relationship with Gunner and getting to know him.

“Emma?” The deep voice pulls me from my thoughts.

I look up to find Rowan looking at me in something similar to shock and maybe a bit of apprehension.

“Lipstick?” I ask in amusement, pointing to the wet wipe that was close to his lips and pink in color.

“Yeah,” he replies sheepishly. “Iris thought I’d look pretty in her mother’s pink lipstick. Plus, it would make me blend in with the girls. She didn’t want her dolls to know she’d sneaked me into their tea party.”

I couldn’t help it, honestly. I tried holding it back, but it was too funny, so I ended up laughing. I haven’t laughed like this in a long time. It felt strange yet exhilarating at the same time.

“You’ve been good?” Rowan asks after my laughter dies down.

“Yes, Rowan. I’ve been good, just hanging in there.”

Rowan nods his head. The atmosphere becomes awkward all of a sudden. I don’t like it. I don’t like being in such an awkward situation.

“Rowan.” He was about to turn when I called him.

“Yeah?”

“I just wanted to say that I am sorry. I am sorry for the lies I told about Ava. I am sorry for the things I said about Noah. I am sorry for trying to cause trouble between you and Ava. I was so obsessed with getting you back that I failed to see that the path I was taking was leading me down a rabbit hole.”

He takes a deep breath and releases it. He then takes a seat on the opposite side.

“I forgave you a long time, Emma. In fact, I am the one who should be apologizing. If I had realized my feelings earlier, I wouldn’t have led you on. I am sorry for giving you hope when my heart was already claimed.”

Ex-Husbands Regret Chapter 504-I don’t know, but for some reason, hearing him apologize released something inside me. something I couldn’t explain and didn’t even know I had been holding on to.

“It’s not your fault, and there is nothing to forgive. I should have also realized earlier that we weren’t meant to be. That our love was young, but it wasn’t the forever kind. Hell, I don’t really think we would have been together had our parents not pushed us into a relationship.”

Rowan chuckles before his lips turn into a grin. “So, you realized too that our parents were the reason we got together too? Their talk about how we would make a beautiful couple and all that shit. That got into our head and hearing it so often we started believing it.”

“True, I don’t think we would have gotten together had it not been for them. Everywhere we turned, there was always someone who thought we would be perfect together. Well, except Ava.” I smile, remembering that she’s the only one who didn’t like that Rowan and I were together.

“I think she saw something that none of us saw.” Rowan runs a hand down his face and says, “Maybe on a spiritual level, she just knew that you and I weren’t meant to be together.”

What he says rings true. Ava was probably the only one who could see that Rowan and I weren’t compatible. She’s the only one who saw right through the illusion we were forced to believe.

“You know,” I begin. “I’m glad things worked out the way they did. Turning you down when you asked me to marry you should have been a sign, but I was still blind. I am glad it led you to Ava that night. I see it now, we would have both ended up miserable had we gotten married. So, yes, I am glad things happened the way they did.”

Even without saying anything, the shine in his eyes tells me that he agrees with my words.

“I don’t want things to be awkward between us, given that your brother is one of my closest friends, Gunner is Noah’s best friend, and Ava has decided to take you into her fold. So, friends?” He gives me his hand.

I take a minute to think about it and finally shake his hand. “Friends.”

Just then, Ava walks in with two glasses of lemonade.

“Where is Iris?” she asks before handing me a glass, even though I’d told her I was good.

There is nothing in her gaze as she hands me the glass. No doubt. No jealousy. No suspicion. There is only kindness, trust and warmth. That is the look of her woman, who was secure in her marriage. A woman who trusted her husband even though he was with his ex. That is the gaze of a woman who knew she didn’t have to doubt because she was secure in his love for her.

Rowan stands up. He wraps his hand around her waist before pulling her to him. He then leans down and gives her a soft, quick kiss. “Once the tea party was over, she went in search of Noah. Apparently, they were going to slay dragons together.”

Ava chuckles, her chuckle filled with amusement, love and warmth. “That girl is a walking contradiction. She loves playing with dolls and having tea parties, but she also loves playing with cars and going to imaginary worlds where she is a knight and she gets to slay dragons, gargoyles and sea monsters.”

“You still love her either way, and besides, our girl doesn’t need to be a damsel in distress. She already knows that, just like her mom, she’s capable and can do anything she wants.”

“True”

I watch them. The love shining in their eyes. Their love surrounds them. Igniting between them. I don’t feel anything. No jealousy, envy or bitterness. I feel nothing but fondness for both of them. It’s then, watching them, that I realize that I found my closure. I’ve truly and utterly let go and I feel nothing but peace.

Ex-Husbands Regret Chapter 505-I pick up the last box and glance around my room. This room has been my sanctuary for the last two years.

It had been my room when I was still a small girl, but over the years I changed it as I grew to become a woman. The décor, the paint and the furniture. I changed everything to fit the woman I became.

This is the room I cried in when I first learned that Rowan had slept with Ava... Years later, in this same room, I licked my wounds after realizing all the pain and hurt I caused.

It became my source of comfort. The one place I could run and hide. The one place I could break down with no one to witness me unravel. If the walls could talk, they’d say just how much they witnessed. The secrets I hid. The terrifying thoughts of ending it all.

Now though, I was leaving it behind. I know that I'll still be sleeping here on the occasions I spend the night at home, but for some reason it felt like I was saying goodbye to it. There was a kind of finality. As if finally, I was letting go of the memories from the last two years. It felt like I was ending a chapter.

"Are you ready?" Travis's voice breaks through my thoughts.

My eyes shift briefly to him before going back to my room. Maybe when I am more emotionally stable, I'll find time and come to change the décor again. This way I can get rid of the memories that were etched on the walls. You know, give the room a brand-new start because we both need it.

"Yes," I finally whisper.

Like I said, it feels weird. This is my home. This will always be my room no matter what... but it feels like I am saying goodbye to it.

I turn my back on it. Travis takes the box from me and walks out. I don't look behind me again, instead I follow him. We walk in silence until we get downstairs.

"My baby," Mom cries, tears playing on the edge of her eyes. It's as if they stubbornly refused to fall down. "Mom," I walk to her and pull her into a hug. "Why are you so emotional?"

"It feels like you are leaving home for college all over again. I remember when we first had to let you go. Your dad cried more than I did."

My heart aches at the thought of my father. It's been two years since he died. I still think of him. I still love him. That will never change.

"I miss him," I whisper, my voice thick with emotion.

Mom grabs my hand and squeezes it. "We all do, but I am sure he's watching over us."

I nod my head and squeeze her hand.

"Are you ready for this?" Travis comes to stand next to me, his eyes searching mine.

I laugh nervously as I twiddle my thumb. "Not by a long shot, but I have to do this. I have to make an effort for Gunner's sake."

"You are right."

Unlike me, Gunner accepted his grandmother and uncle wholeheartedly. I don't mind it though. A bit jealous, but I don't mind it. I understand. They didn't hurt him like I did." Okay kids," my mom beams with excitement. "It's time to go."

She walks towards the door with Travis and I following behind her. This is a huge step for me. I am nervous and excited at the same time.

We get inside Travis's Range with me in the passenger seat and mom in the back. Soon we are cruising in the streets heading to what will be my new home.

"It's really nice what Ava did for you," Travis begins mid-journey. "I wish she could give me a chance too." There is longing in his voice. I know how he feels. Our situations are different but similar at the same time. We've both done hurtful things to people we thought we didn't care about. By the time it hit us, it was already too late.

We haven't talked much about it because I've been lost in my own guilt and misery, but I know Travis longs to have a relationship with Ava. He once told me that it kills him to know that Ava forgave Rowan and the entire Wood family, but she hasn't forgiven him and won't let him be a part of her life. She only allows him access to Noah through Rowan, but that's it. Same with Mom.

"Don't worry about it," I try to console him, feeling his deep hurt and regret. "She came to visit us a couple of weeks ago. She even talked with mom. That's progress. Give her time. She'll come around when she's ready."

"But it's been two years. If she hasn't forgiven me yet, I doubt she'll ever will." His voice catches as if it's clogged with emotion.

His sadness pulls the strings of my heart. I want to ease his pain. I want to help him, but I know I can't. All I can do is make him understand.

"You know, I've talked a lot with Mia. One thing she told me was not to expect forgiveness instantly. Some take years before they are ready to forgive. She told me if I really cared for Gunner and Calvin, then I should be patient with them. Pushing and trying to have my way will only make things worse and slow down their healing process. Do you care for Ava?"

I already knew the answer, but I had to ask anyway.

His gives me a brief look before his eyes move back on the road. His brows were furrowed as if he couldn't believe I'd ask such an obvious question.

'Yes.' "Then you have to be patient with her. Don't try to push things when she's not ready. She'll probably end up resenting you more."

His hands tighten on the steering wheel, but he doesn't say anything else.

"Emma is right, Travis," mom adds. "We were the ones in the wrong with how we treated her. We can't expect her to play to our tune. We have to move at her pace. For

once, let's think about what she needs and not about what we want. We've been selfish for too long."

I turn in my seat and look at my mother, giving her a smile. She grins back.

I am so glad that she finally understood things. Just like Travis, she used to complain about Ava refusing to forgive them even though they apologized countless times. It is refreshing to see her in this new light.

Travis looks at mom in the rearview mirror. He takes a deep breath and lets it out before nodding. "Okay, I'll be patient."

Mom gives him a satisfied smile before answering an incoming call from her phone. My heart feels at peace.

Even as I look at them with a smile on my face, I can't help but think that maybe there is hope for this family after all.

Ex-Husbands Regret Chapter 506-I continue staring at my brother. It's suddenly hitting me that I've been so lost with what's happening in my life that I failed to notice anyone else around me.

That's the thing with depression. You fail to see the sufferings of others because you are too focused on yourself. I've let life pass me by these past few years. I haven't been involved with those around me. In fact, I've pulled everyone's focus on me because they were so worried about my mental health.

I didn't stop to think about what mom was going through with her own guilt. I didn't stop to think about Travis, who was carrying the weight of his own sins plus that of the company. I didn't stop to think about anyone but myself.

I feel terrible when I think of all those things. All the things I have put them through. The worry, the anguish, the pain. I know I wouldn't want to see any of them in the state I was in. It would be painful knowing that I can't really help them because they refuse to be helped. I understand that, so I understand what it must be like dealing with myself.

"I'm sorry," I whisper, running my hand through my hair.

I really need to book an appointment at the salon. I don't remember the last time I had my hair trimmed or even taken care of. It was a bit dry and the split ends were crazy.

"About what?" Travis asks, briefly looking at me before focusing on the road again.

"For what I've put both you and mom through these past two years. I've been so selfish, thinking only about myself and my pain. I was so blinded by my guilt that I failed to see what I was putting you two through."

I had twisted my body in my seat so that I could be able to address both of them. Mom leans forward and pulls my hand into hers. It's warm and comforting. Her warmth eases something inside me.

"You don't have to apologize, Emma. We will always be there for you no matter what," she says, her eyes conveying her love for me.

Her words break and mend my heart at the same time. There is just something about being surrounded by your family. By their love. I know it's too late, but I wish that Ava had this when she was married to Rowan. That she had this kind of support when he broke her heart over and over again. Maybe it would have helped heal some of her wounds. It's too late now, and what's done is done. I don't like what she went through, but everything that happened, happened the way it was supposed to happen. What matters is that we are there for her moving forward. We lost the meaning of family when it came to her. It's time for them to fix that.

"Mom is right. You are family, Emma. We will always be there for you, no matter what. You don't have to apologize for what you've been going through. We all have our burdens, and we deal with our shit in different ways. What matters is that you are getting better. You are starting to live again."

I blink my eyes rapidly, trying to blink back the tears that threatened to fall. I give him a watery smile as I close my eyes to try and get my emotions under control.

When I feel more in control, I open them. "How is Scarlet?"

Travis looks surprised at my question. He can't hide the fact that I've shocked him by asking about his long-term girlfriend. I wasn't welcoming to her because, one, she was always provoking me, and two, she was best friends with Ava, and at that time, I hated Ava.

It took me a while to realize that her provocations were spot on. She wasn't really provoking me, just telling me the truth I didn't want to hear.

"She's well," he says after the shock fades.

"I know we have had our ups and downs, especially after I came back, because of Ava, but I'd like to fix that. I'd like to get to know my future sister-in-law."

I can see how his eyes widen, even though he's focused on the road ahead of us. This time I chuckle, unable to push it down any longer.

"S-Sure. I know she'd be happy with that," he stammers the word.

"Are you sure she'd be happy?" I ask skeptically, doubt marring my voice.

He laughs a bit, his voice echoing in the car. "You'll grow on her. She isn't that bad and she doesn't hold grudges"

My lips press in a thin line. I'm doubtful but I am willing to try. I'll have to take his word for it.

Mom's head pops between us. "This is what I want. To see my family united. It's such a great feeling.*"

Her voice is beaming with happiness and excitement. It's so contagious that Travis and I end up smiling. Grinning from ear to ear.

"And hopefully Ava can join the folds once again," I add, my smile still in place.

"Amen to that," mom says.

"Are you ready?" Travis asks after we are quiet for a while, everyone just basking in the peace that surrounded us. "Why do you ask?"

"Because we are here."

I swivel my head, almost snapping my neck in the process. I look through the windows only to realize that we were at Ava's previous house.

Yeah, I thought I was over my nervousness, but now it's back ten folds and the peace I felt only moments ago flies out the window.

Ex-Husbands Regret Chapter 507-I look at Ava's house, and it's just as I remember it. Nothing has changed, and it's still the same. I know this is a different house, but looking at it takes me back to years ago, when things changed after dad died.

I remember coming to her house to spew nonsense because I felt like I was losing Rowan all over again, and it was her fault. God, I am ashamed of the bullshit I said and did to her. The way I instigated her and when she stood her ground and fought back, I went back to Rowan and lied.

I had been jealous of her. Jealous that even though Rowan hadn't treated her well, he had spent almost a decade married to her. It also grated me that he had been faithful to her despite the fact that he didn't love her. We never slept together when we were dating, but I know men. There is no way he would have been celibate for nine years.

Back then, it felt like daggers in my heart when I thought of them sleeping together. I knew it happened even without Ava rubbing it in my face. In my head I thought it would have been better if he had cheated on her and had mistresses. It would have hurt less.

I wanted to cause trouble because I was hurt. There we were with a second chance, yet it seemed like Rowan's thoughts were consumed by Ava. He tried hiding it, but I knew him, and I knew he thought of her most of the time. It grated on me the way he would run to her every time there was trouble. She tried pushing him out of her life except when it concerned Noah, but he stood still.

The day he almost crushed my hand after we had dinner, and he saw Ava and Ethan had been the worst. It's on that day that I started realizing that maybe I'd already lost him. It pained me to see him so jealous of Ethan. Jealous in a way I've never seen Rowan before. Sure, he'd get jealous when boys flirted with me back when we dated, but not on that level. Rowan looked livid and ready to tear Ethan's head for merely touching his ex-wife.

The fact that I also kept going back to Calvin for sex behind Rowan's back should have been proof that maybe wasn't invested in our second chance as I thought I was. After all, if I truly wanted things to work out with Rowan, shouldn't I have given up Calvin? Yet I didn't. I didn't stop sleeping with Calvin until he ended things between us. Looking back, I think that the reason I held on to Rowan even when the signs were there that we didn't belong together is because I wanted him as a trophy. A trophy to prove to Ava that she hadn't taken him away from me. That Rowan still belonged to me. I know it's horrible, but deep down I know that it's the truth. Rowan was like a toy Ava stole from me. I wanted him back. After all, even as a child, I never liked sharing, nor did I like others getting what's mine.

I laugh internally at how absurd things were. I held on to Rowan for almost a decade only to realize at the end that I didn't actually love him and neither did he. It's sad that we lost a decade running after a dream when we could have been with the people we belonged to.

"Emma?" I am pulled out of my thoughts by Travis' voice. "You've been zoned out, just staring at the house. I asked if you were ready."

Taking a deep breath before releasing it, I pull my mind back to the present. "Just got lost down in memory lane for a bit."

His brows furrow as he looks at me in concern. I didn't want him to stress, thinking I was reverting to a depressed state.

"I am okay, I promise," I assure him by grabbing and squeezing his hand in assurance.

"Like Travis asked," mom pauses, her eyes searching mine. "Are you ready for this? Cause if you are not, we can just go back home right now."

I chuckle. "I know what you are trying to do, and it won't work. I am coming back to live with you, mom."

“But I’ve gotten used to having you around. It will be lonely,” she pouts, and that just makes me and Trevor laugh because it’s a first. She looks cute, though.

“I was always in my room and rarely left it. You were basically living alone.”

She waves her hand, dismissing what I said. “That doesn’t count. It’s your energy that does. I felt your energy and presence and that was enough.”

*I’m staying. Remember, why am I doing this?” I tell her, grinning.

Before she can come up with more absurd notions, I open the door on my side and get out. I approach the house before using the key Ava gave me to open the door and let myself in.

Ex-Husbands Regret Chapter 508-It’s sparkling clean inside. She told me that she usually has someone come and clean it at least once a week, so I didn’t have to worry about having to clean it. It was also fully furnished, given Ava hadn’t taken anything out of it except for Noah’s bed and Iris’ cot.

Despite it not having been used for the last two years, it still had a homey feel to it. It still held on to a certain warmth. Ava really does have a way of turning a house into a home. My penthouse never felt like this. It felt cold. A place to live in, but not a home.

I’m startled when Travis walks in carrying a box. He gives me a questioning look, but I turn around and ignore it. I leave and head to his car to take more of my things inside.

It doesn’t take us long to bring all my things into the house. Fifteen minutes or less. I didn’t have a lot, given that I lost my passion for shopping, so I haven’t bought anything new in the past years.

“Looks like we are done,” Travis murmurs, staring at the staircase, his hands on his waist.

“Yes,” I reply. “I would have cooked, but I have nothing in the fridge. Maybe I can order takeout, and then later on I’ll go out for grocery shopping.”

“No need for that,” Mom emerges from the kitchen with a smile on her face. “Seems like Ava stocked the fridge for you. You don’t have to do grocery shopping. What’s in there is enough to last you for about two weeks.”

I smile thinking of her kind gesture. I make a mental note to call her later on today after I am done unpacking.

“That’s sweet of her,” Travis expresses in a soft voice before turning to me. “I can’t stay though. I promised Letty I’d take her out for lunch after I am done here.”

*I understand”

“And I also have a lunch date with my teammates. We need to discuss the oncoming tournament,” Mom adds.

Mom is a member of our sports club’s tennis team. For as long as I can remember, she has always played tennis. She never stopped, even after she entered her fifties. She’s also excellent. Mom is the team leader, and they have only lost two games since she was elected.

“Maybe next time then,” I begin with a small smile. “I can have you over for dinner.”

They agree and after saying goodbye, I watch them leave. They wave at me from the car, before Travis speeds off and I am left alone. Closing the door, I turn to face my new home for the time being.

My stomach grumbles and I walk to the kitchen to make myself a sandwich. I struggled to find the ingredients, given I didn’t really know where Ava put them. I was just taking out a plate when the door opens.

*Ava?” his voice sounds, echoing through the house. “Did you come back to the house for something? I saw the door closing when I was pulling into my house.”

We both freeze when Calvin enters the kitchen, only to find me instead of Ava.

“What the hell are you doing here?” he all but growls, his eyes burning like liquid fire.

“I live here now,” I say calmly, even though my outside appearance didn’t reflect the turmoil that was wreaking havoc inside me.

My heart was racing and my palms sweaty. I knew I’d face Calvin, but not this soon. Not immediately after, I moved in.

“What?” he yells, his face red. He was completely livid. If he were a cartoon character, smoke would come out of his ears.

“Yes, I live here now,” I repeat, trying to calm down my nerves.

“That’s impossible.” He speaks. “Ava would have told me.”

I just shrug, trying to look unbothered and unaffected by what’s happening. “I needed a place to stay and she offered.*

“Bullshit!” his eyes narrow dangerously. “It’s not like you don’t have money. You could have gotten an apartment or a house anywhere you liked. Hell, you could have continued staying with your mom. Why here?”

He's right. I wasn't lacking and if I was, I could always just ask mom for some until I got back on my feet. I don't answer him though.

He is rigid as he glares at him. His fist clenched at his side. "I don't know what your plan is, but I won't let you make a mess out of mine and Gunner's lives. I am warning you, Emma. Stay the fuck away from us."

I don't get to say anything before he turns and stomps off. Minutes later, the door bangs. I heave a sigh and slump against the kitchen counter. Our first encounter went better than expected. I am not naïve though. I know there is still a long way to go.

Ex-Husbands Regret Chapter 509-Harper.

"I honestly don't know why you wanted us to come here," I grumble as I rub my hands together to generate some warmth.

"Is it wrong that I want to take a walk with my wife through the park?" Gabriel asks, amusement coloring his features. My grumpiness doesn't do anything to diminish the shine in his eyes. In fact, it looks like he finds it cute.

*During work hours?" I ask skeptically, my eyes surveying the park we were in. Given the cold weather, we were among the few who were here.

*I am the boss, Harper, and you are my wife. We can do whatever the fuck we want," he says, grabbing my hand and holding it tightly in his. "If anyone has a problem with it, then they can go fuck themselves."

Despite the chill in the air and the fact that I don't want to be here, I smile. Using my hair to hide it.

Gabriel has surprised me over and over again with his care, love, and attentiveness. If I am being honest, I never thought that I'd ever be this happy with him. He has surprised me at every turn.

*It's still not a good habit," I tell him, looking up at his six-foot-two frame.

His smiling face greets me. Gone is the Gabriel I knew. He was no longer cold and detached. His smiles and laughs now come easily, and they warm my heart. Sure, at work he still maintains his aloof persona, but when Lilly and I are around, it quickly disappears.

"I've been working for Wood's Corporation since I was sixteen. It got worse after Ashley broke my heart. I lived and breathed the company. Our family's legacy." He pauses, his thumb drawing traces on my palm. "Now, I have you and Lilly, and you take precedence over everything, including the company. If I want to take you out for a stroll, then that's

what I'll do. I deserve to enjoy quality time with my wife after all the years of hard work I've put into the company."

What am I supposed to say to that? How am I even supposed to respond to that heartwarming little speech?

Instead, I squeeze his hand to let him know that I do understand. That I get what he is saying. After hearing his words, all my inhibitions fall away, and I put work aside. Focusing on the current moment. Using my free hand, I pull my coat together before stepping closer to him.

Even though Gabriel had handed over Unity Ventures, I still continued to work with him. I felt that there is more could learn from him before I am confident enough to venture on my own.

Besides, I was still in my planning stages. I couldn't just jump head first. I needed to plan. I needed to organize my ideas, my goals, and steps for how to achieve all the goals I had for the company.

Aside from that, before I can even launch the ideas I had, I needed to do interviews and hire new staff. Like I said before, Unity Ventures was solely focused on buying and selling properties. With the introduction of architectural, construction, and interior designing services, it will need not only new staff but also new departments.

It'll be a while before I can officially launch it with a brand-new face, so before that happens, I am totally okay learning and working under Gabriel for the time being.

A few hours ago, I'd been busy going through some files Gabriel gave me when he walked into my office with a boyish grin and excitement on his face. He had then proceeded to tell me that he wanted us to go for a walk in the park.

I didn't like the idea that much. I mean, the weather wasn't that good. I hated the cold. In fact, I prefer scorching heat to cold weather. I don't understand how some people prefer winter, honestly.

Despite my reservation about going out in the terrible weather, he somehow managed to convince me... so here we were. Walking hand in hand in this chilly weather, yet he didn't seem to mind at all.

"We should bring Lilly here one of these days," he tells me, breaking through my thoughts.

I have to admit that it's peaceful here. The quietness, the atmosphere, and most especially the tall green trees were relaxing. I feel myself melt into his arms as I relax. There is just something about being in nature. It leaves you rejuvenated.

“It’s on the other side of the penthouse,” I point out while smiling at a cute Chihuahua dressed in a pink skirt. We had not yet moved to our new home. For reasons unknown to me (or maybe I did know I just didn’t want to admit it), I kept postponing the movement. I know it frustrated both Gabriel and Lilly.

“It doesn’t matter; I had already planned to bring her to the office when she’s on school break. She’s been begging me to let her tag along one day,” he says with such a bright smile on his face that it shows his happiness. His pride in our daughter radiates off him in waves.

I’m mesmerized, and I can’t help but stare at him in wonder. It’s like he has hypnotized me. All I can see at the moment is his face and smile.

The continuous clicking of a camera breaks the spell that had me hypnotized by Gabriel’s grey eyes. We both look at where the sound comes from to find a man taking pictures of us.

When he realized that we noticed him, his eyes widen a fraction before he dashes out of the bushes. He falls on his front, almost breaking his camera in his hurry. He quickly picks himself up and gives us one last look before running away.

I shake my head before muttering, “Paparazzi.”

I’m not used to them, but I think I am slowly getting there. To be honest, I am not sure that I’ll ever fully get used to them. Yes, we were well off, but not at the level where gossip magazines were interested in our lives. For as long as I can remember, Wood’s family has always been in the limelight, given they were the richest family in the city. For Gabriel, none of this was new.

“Don’t worry,” Gabriel bumps my shoulder playfully. “They are just curious about the woman that managed to catch my heart and put a ring on it.”

At this, I laugh. “Please, I did nothing of that sort. If I remember correctly, you are the one who insisted on putting a ring on my finger.”

His lips spread, and he was about to say something. A come back that would probably be naughty and witty given his wicked grin, but he get’s interrupted by someone calling his name.

*Gabe?”

Ex-Husbands Regret Chapter 510-Gabriel freezes, rooted where he’s standing. His hand tightens, holding mine in an almost painful grip. I look up at him only to find his eyes wide, shock coloring his features.

I look over his shoulders to find a red-headed woman, looking at him with unshed tears in her eyes. She seems emotional. I don't understand her behavior or that of Gabriel's.

Slowly, Gabriel unfreezes and turns, his movements a bit stiff. He seems almost like a robot.

*Ashley?"

This time, I'm the one that stands frozen on my spot. My heart races as her name hits my ears and registers in my brain. I take a step back and try to pull my hand from Gabriel's, but he doesn't let go. Instead, it tightens.

Her hair falls down her back in shiny ringlets that remind me of the setting sun. Her green eyes were wide and expressive, framed by long lashes that were a shade darker than her hair. Her high, well-defined cheek bones stand out, and her full lips finish off her striking features. She was taller than I was, probably standing at five foot eight or nine. She has a slender figure with a small waist.

I stare at the beauty in front of me, my eyes drinking her in. No wonder Gabriel went for her. The woman was gorgeous, her natural beauty shining even with little makeup on her face.

"At first I didn't know if it was you," she says, her voice soft. "You are rarely seen in such a public place."

Just then, a hot dog cart passes near us. I push down the urge to throw up. Its greasy smell turning my stomach. I have been feeling this way for the past one and a half weeks.

I have my suspicions, but I haven't taken the test yet. I know the symptoms, and I am a hundred percent sure of what is ailing me. Despite this, I haven't told Gabriel. I haven't told him that I suspect that I am already pregnant.

I can't explain it. It's the same case with moving to the new house. I have been waiting for something. I just don't know what, but I know that when I find it, I will know.

"What are you doing here? Are you following us?" Gabriel asks, in a hoarse voice.

The need to run away hits me hard. I don't want to be here. I don't want to be standing here where Gabriel is face- to-face with his first love. A girl that caused him the heartbreak that turned him into a cold man.

She raises her hand up, shaking them. "No. I swear it's just a coincidence. I decided to use this park as a shortcut on my way to work."

I shift from foot to foot, feeling uncomfortable. I wish Gabriel would let go of my hand, but I know it's impossible with how tight he's holding it.

There is an uncomfortable, awkward silence as they stare at each other. None of them uttering a single word. I can't help but wonder what's going on inside his mind. Is he remembering their shared memories? The good times? The love he once had for her? I am facing his back now, so I can't really read his facial expression.

Oh, my goodness, what if the love he had for her is resurfacing now that he is seeing her again after years? He never told me what happened after he caught her with someone else, and I never asked. I thought that once he's ready to tell me the rest of their story, he will. Maybe I should have pushed to know more. My heart can't bear it if I find out that underneath the hurt and heartache, he is still in love with her.

Her eyes momentarily shift to me before they go back to Gabriel. "Can we talk? I recently came back, and I was hoping we could talk."

"I am sure anything you have to say you can say it in front of my wife, Ashley. There are no secrets between us," Gabriel says, his voice calm and assured.

Again, she looks at me before pulling her eyes away. Before she did, though, I saw regret in them.

"I never got to apologize to you for what I did," she begins, while fiddling with her hands nervously. "It didn't take long for me to realize that I was wrong, but by then you had taken your revenge, and I had to flee abroad."

Gabriel doesn't say anything, so she continues.

"Paul put me up to it. We were dating, and when he realized that you and your brother were attending the same school, he wanted me to get close to you when he couldn't. His plan was to be your friend and take advantage of it. He couldn't get close to either of you, so he talked me into it. I am an orphan, and I was drowning in debts, so I agreed. We first learned all we could about you, what you like, what kind of girls you prefer, and your favorite places. After months of studying you, we set up the stage where we first met."