

You Once Called Me Wife |

Chapter 12

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One day, a couple months after the weird night at my parents' house, I was out shopping with Annabeth and Erika when I saw her. Opal. She was walking around the mall with a man who wasn't Chris. They weren't holding hands or anything, but they were smiling and laughing a lot.

"Do you think he's her sidepiece?" Erika asked.

I laughed. "What? Why in the world would you jump to that conclusion?"

"Well, why not? It's not like we're in our town, where everyone would be watching. She could be getting busy with guys all over for all we know." She sounded too happy about the idea.

"I know you want your revenge on Chris," Annabeth said, "but this isn't the way to get it. Just let karma handle it."

"Oh, come on," Erika said. "You both would love nothing more than to rub it in his face that the woman he left Kenzie for was getting action from someone else. It would be the best cosmic justice!"

Just then, Opal and the man headed into a jewelry store, and before I could stop her, Erika stalked over to see what they were doing. I glanced at Annabeth and shook my head. As much as I wanted Chris to get his, I was not about to follow that woman around.

"I'm going into the home store downstairs," I told her. "Meet me there when you're done."

I walked away, knowing that Annabeth wouldn't be able to resist seeing what happened. She and Erika could be a mess when they had an idea that they wanted to follow through on. I, on the other hand, just wanted a day of peace.

I was looking at a nice set of bathroom rugs when Erika and Annabeth found me. The grins on their faces made me wonder what craziness they were up to, so I took the bull by the horns and said, "Spill. What did you learn?"

"She was trying on rings!" Erika exclaimed, her voice pitched high. "They looked like engagement rings, and he bought one!"

"We couldn't get close enough to hear anything," Annabeth added, "but we could see the purchase. This one seems to think she's going to leave Chris high and dry for him. And to be honest, he's hotter."

I laughed but said, "I think you should just sit on what you saw. You have no proof of who the ring was for. Don't get yourself involved in something if you don't have to. Keep it in your back pocket for future use."

Erika loved a good secret, and Annabeth wasn't the type to start something, so I figured we were safe for a while.

We were sitting in a restaurant, chatting about Annabeth's latest crush, when Opal and the man from the mall came in. I sighed. I had just relaxed, but now I couldn't help but notice that her arm was linked with his.

As Opal smiled up at the man, I prayed that she wouldn't notice me. But fate had been against me lately. Her eyes met mine, then widened.

She tried to mask her emotions, but I could tell she was nervous. Though I didn't actually care to know about her relationship with the man, she was probably wondering if I would run and tell Chris. The evil side of me loved seeing dread eat her alive.

The woman tried to walk quickly past our table, but Erika got an evil glint in her eye and said, "Well, hi there, Opal. Care to introduce us to your friend?"

Opal looked conflicted, and the man next to her looked confused. Erika gave a smile that only her close friends could tell was devious, and I found myself secretly enjoying every second of this.

"Oh, come on, Opal," Erika goaded. "I've never heard of you being speechless before. Who is this fine young man?"

"This is my cousin, Douglas," Opal said through gritted teeth.

"Oh, your cousin?" Annabeth joined in. "I would've bet my life that you'd say brother."

Opal gave us a heated glare, and Douglas glanced at her, obviously still lost. I sort of felt bad for the guy. He clearly didn't understand anything that was going on, and Opal didn't seem in any hurry to explain.

I wondered what Opal would've done if he weren't here. Would she have yelled, screamed, slapped us? Though I'd hate to admit it, I would've loved to see Erika get in a few good hits on her.

"Sorry, but we can't stay and talk," Opal said. "We're on a tight schedule to get everything ready for Douglas's big day." With that, she took his hand and walked back out of the restaurant.

Annabeth and Erika immediately began dissecting the conversation, but I was so lost in thought that I didn't tune in until Annabeth said, "There's been talk around town that Chris looks miserable lately. I heard he stopped taking her out all the time and that they've even been arguing in public."

"That's not surprising," Erika said. "Relationships that start out with cheating rarely last. I mean, who in their right mind would trust someone who's already cheated? If you help that person cheat, then you know there's a possibility they'll do it again."

I certainly couldn't trust someone who had cheated. After Chris had shown up at my parents' house begging me to talk to him, I hadn't even wanted to be in the same town as him.

Still, now that I was finally over all of it, I didn't want to cause any trouble. The reality was that unless one of us moved away, then there were always going to be times that I'd have to see him. I wanted those times to be as painless as possible.

If that meant saving Chris and Opal from some well-deserved karma, then so be it. Being happy with Zane, even with my ex around, was worth way more to me than petty revenge.

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