

You Once Called Me Wife |

Chapter 13

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When I got home that afternoon, Zane's truck was in the driveway. Since he had his own key, I figured he'd probably already made himself at home.

I opened the door to hear music playing low all throughout the house. "Honey, I'm home," I called, smiling. I knew he was trying to surprise me with something.

A moment later, Zane walked out of my kitchen wearing nothing but a giant apron. My mouth and throat went dry. I watched those thick, muscled arms mix something with a whisk, then my eyes dropped lower and widened. I knew that I was seconds away from jumping my man.

When I finally brought my eyes back up, Zane was smirking. *This man knows exactly what he's doing.*

"What's going on?" I asked, licking my dry lips.

"I wanted to talk to you about something, and I thought the best way to get you to agree would be to give you some incentive," he replied before winking and turning back to the kitchen, giving me a full view of his bare butt.

Good Lord above! I suddenly felt like the room's temperature had risen ten degrees.

After dropping my stuff onto the floor, I followed Zane to my stove. On the way, I saw that he had set the table with candles and a bottle of wine. It was so romantic that I knew whatever he wanted to talk about must be important.

"Why don't you go get comfortable, and when you come back, we can eat," Zane said. He pointed to a now-filled baking dish. "I'm going to pop these in the oven."

Brownies. He's making me brownies.

Swooning, I headed to my bedroom and thought about what I should wear. He said I should get comfortable, which would normally mean pajama pants and

a T-shirt, but since he was walking around my house barely covered, I thought I should get payback. I decided to just strip out of my clothes.

I went into the bathroom naked, then fluffed up my hair a bit and checked my face. I still looked good from this morning, so I figured it was time to see what that man of mine was up to.

When I walked back into the kitchen, Zane took a deep breath. I gave him a coy smile and strutted over to the table to take a seat. He cleared his throat, and I laughed internally at his surprise. He thought he'd have the upper hand in all this.

"So, what's for dinner?" I asked, picking up my glass and taking a sip of wine.

"Salmon," he answered as he set a plate down in front of me.

I smiled, flattered he remembered that it was one of my favorites. "So, what did you want to talk about?" I asked before taking a bite.

"Well, we've been together a while now," he began.

"Yeah, it's been a few months," I said, then added just to toy with him, "You're not breaking up with me, are you?"

"What? Hell no!" He fidgeted with his food, making it clear just how nervous he was. "I mean, no, I am not."

Zane took a sip of wine as if gathering his courage. "I've been thinking a lot about us. I've loved you for as long as I can remember. There was a time, of course, that it felt wrong because of the age gap, but I still loved you. I thought I would never get the chance to be with you, so I tried to move on, but no other woman could hold a candle to you."

"I may have thought that I was happy before, but I know now that what I felt couldn't compare to how I feel with you, Zane," I told him, feeling like he needed to be reassured at that moment.

He nodded. "I know you weren't ready to talk about it when your mother brought it up, but McKenzie, I don't know if I can make it much longer without being able to officially call you all mine. You're the reason I wake up in the morning and the thing I dream about at night. I think about you all day."

He gave a self-deprecating laugh. "I was re-shoeing a horse the other day, and I had to do it a couple of times because I was so distracted thinking about you."

I could tell it was coming, but it was still a shock when Zane got out of his chair and down on one knee in front of me.

"I love you more than I could ever explain to you, Kenzie. I promise I'll love you forever and be faithful. I will cherish every second I get with you and prove to you that the world is a good place. And all this," he adds, motioning down his body, "can be yours for the price of one little, three-letter word."

When my mother had brought up getting married again, I was forced to consider my life and relationship. I hadn't known if I was ready to move on. How could a person know if they were ready to put themselves back out there and potentially get hurt again?

But with Zane on one knee, waiting for me to answer the question I had worked myself up over, I knew my answer. I knew I had always been where I was supposed to be, that I was supposed to live in this small town and get married, work a job that didn't take over everything, have kids. I was supposed to have a simple, happy life.

The only problem was that I chose the wrong man first. Now I had the chance to start over with the man I always should've been with. I would build the life that I always wanted but could never reach. My family would be able to live in peace, knowing that my husband would take care of me.

"Yes, I'll marry you," I said, crying.

With that, Zane pulled me into his arms and held me close for a minute. Then he kissed me with every ounce of love in his body.

At that moment, all my pieces fell into place, and all felt right in my world. Zane was the one who would be there with me through everything, and I would never have to question his feelings for me because he put them out there for me and everyone around us to see. I would always feel safe, knowing that he'd put me and any children we had above all else.

That was just the kind of man he was. And for the first time since my divorce, I truly felt at peace.

Next Chapter

[Continue to the next chapter of You Once Called Me Wife](#)