

## You Once Called Me Wife |

### Chapter 14

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The next night, we drove to the Westons' house, where James and Rachel were throwing a big party to celebrate their wedding anniversary. I wasn't sure whether I should go or not—I didn't want to cause a scene with Chris and Opal being there—but the Westons had invited Zane too. So, here we were.

It still amazed me that my former in-laws were so understanding. Most times, parents sided with their children no matter what, but James and Rachel made it clear to Chris and everyone else in town that they didn't approve of his actions. Still, I would not overshadow their night by announcing my engagement.

I smiled when we walked into the backyard, which had elegant tents and a dance floor set up. James never did anything halfway for Rachel. That man adored his wife with everything in his being.

But then I was distracted by everyone turning to look at us. Some people looked happy, but others were shocked, even angry. I tried not to let it bother me; I had just as much right as any of them to be there. Even if they were no longer my in-laws, I still cared for them deeply.

"We're going to go over and speak to Matilda and Raymond," Mom whispered in my ear, startling me.

So, it wasn't just my family here, but Zane's as well. Chris was going to have a fit.

I met Zane's eyes, and he gave me a wink. "Let's plow through this and make it known that we're not affected by their looks."

I felt a surge of love once again for my man. He'd been my rock, and he made everything seem so doable. I didn't know how I deserved him, but I was going to make damn sure I didn't lose him.

As my parents, Zane, and I approached Chris's parents, James smiled widely and said, "Kenzie, it's so good to see you. I'm glad that you came." Then he shook my fiancé's hand.

Rachel pulled me into a hug. “I hoped you would come, darling,” she whispered in my ear.

“Thanks,” I whispered back. “I just hope I don’t cause any problems between you and him.”

“Oh, I’m not worried about that. He’s the one who caused all this, so I don’t care what he thinks. Now, tell me how you’ve been.”

We spent about thirty minutes catching up with them, and then I excused myself to go to the restroom. But as I headed into the house, a door opened, and someone dragged me into a room. There, I saw Opal.

I had to give it to her—she looked stunning in her dark blue dress. The cut hugged her figure, making her look like a fashion model. But while her outside beauty was never a question for me, I had yet to find any inner beauty in her.

“If you wanted to get me alone,” I said, looking around and raising my eyebrow, “there are kinder ways than dragging me into a restroom. All you had to do was ask.”

“Cut the shit, McKenzie,” she replied. “You and I both know you would never talk to me just because I asked. I’m the woman who stole your precious husband away. I made you a second choice, and there’s no way you would forget that.”

I rolled my eyes. “So, to what do I owe this pleasure? Need tips on what to look for when he cheats—or wait, do I need to tell him what to look for?”

I had never been all that dramatic, but that day I was feeling extra saucy. I knew it would turn hers and Chris’s worlds upside down when they learned I was engaged.

“That’s what I wanted to talk to you about,” Opal said. “I know you think I’ve done wrong by you, but I don’t want you to go after me because of it. Douglas is my cousin, and I was helping him pick out an engagement ring for his girlfriend. I don’t want you and your pack of rats to turn this into something it’s not.”

“Relax. Whether or not you’re cheating has nothing to do with me. I love James and Rachel, and I’m not here to ruin their day. My friends aren’t about

to start up drama either. We're bigger than that. Besides, if I wanted to start something, don't you think I would have told him by now?"

Opal glared at me for a moment, but she must see something that convinced her because she didn't argue.

"Now, could you leave so I can go to the restroom?"

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The first thing I heard when I returned to the party was Zane's and Chris's voices. They seemed to be arguing.

"So, you started to give a shit now?" Chris yelled. "You knew I was cheating on her back in high school, but you never said anything. You just kept your mouth shut and let it go on. What makes you think she won't leave you as soon as she learns that you knew all along and didn't tell her?"

I rounded the corner then, making enough noise that both men turned. Chris gave me a smirk, indicating that he planned for me to hear this. He wanted to ruin my relationship with Zane, and he had all the ammunition he needed.

After Chris showed up at my parents' house, I wondered if Zane was right that he still had feelings for me. It didn't make sense to me at first because he cheated, but my mom said some men thought it was okay to screw other women and love their wives.

I remembered then how Chris had tried to calm me down when I confronted him about the affair. How he'd said he was going to tell me, even though he'd given no signs that anything was wrong. How he'd shown up at my parents' house, begging to talk to me.

*Maybe he never wanted to divorce me.*

Zane looked at me with shame, guilt, and agony in his eyes, and the air was knocked out of me. I felt like I'd been hit in the chest with a sledgehammer, and now it was caving in.

"Hey, what's going on here?" Annabeth's voice demanded somewhere to my left. "Are we gonna finally beat the shit out of Chris?"

On instinct, I turned to her. At that moment, she must've seen that something was wrong because she instantly took me in her arms and held me tight.

I didn't know what happened after that because I went blank. I could see vague shapes and hear loud noises all around me, but none of them made sense. It felt like a dream that I might never wake up from.

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