

You Once Called Me Wife |

Chapter 23

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I always thought someone's downfall would only take seconds, but a week after the meeting at my house, Opal was still in the town's good graces. I waited every day with bated breath for news about her and that Douglas person. But there was nothing.

The money issue at the bank was a bigger deal than any of us had thought, though. The money was being sent overseas, and the local police thought it was related to the criminal activity that had been plaguing nearby towns, so they called in the FBI to help with the investigation.

One morning, I was called to the police station to have an interview with an agent. As I sat in the waiting room, I tried to think about what in the world I could tell them. Chris and I never talked much about his job—I hated listening to him boast about how great he was at finance—so I understood nothing he did.

"McKenzie Prescott?" a tall, blond man asked from the doorway.

"Um, yes, but it's Templeton now. I was married a short time ago."

"Oh, I apologize," he said. "Mr. Weston didn't mention you had remarried during his interview. I'm Agent Matthews. Please follow me."

The man led me into an office and gestured for me to take a seat, then said, "So, as I was saying, Chris didn't mention that you had remarried. Was the relationship you have with your current husband what ended your first marriage?"

"I don't want to be unhelpful," I said, sounding defensive even to my own ears, "but why does that matter in this case, Agent Matthews?"

"No disrespect to you—I just need to determine your ex-husband's state of mind during all this. He has given me his side, and now I need your help to fill in some blanks."

The thought that I would be forever tied to Chris was disheartening. I wanted my past to fade away like the mistake it was. But fate kept throwing it in my path.

“My relationship with Zane, my husband, did not start until after Chris and I were divorced,” I said. “We separated after I found out Chris was having an affair with Opal Holloway, who had recently opened a business in town. I have kept all my accounts at Weston’s, but that’s all the involvement I’ve had with the bank.”

“Did you and Chris have any financial trouble during or after your marriage?”

The question made me pause. *Just what did Chris tell him?*

“Not serious money problems,” I said. “We always had plenty, but we argued over his spending habits. When we divorced, we split our savings, and I kept the house, which was an inheritance from my grandparents. Afterward, he asked me to sign over his life insurance so that he could change his beneficiary.”

The agent’s eyes widened. “He signed his life insurance policy over to Opal Holloway after your divorce? How much was the policy for?”

“I think it was for about half a million, but we got that policy when we were first married, so it could have changed without me knowing. I assume he signed it over to her, since that’s what he told me, but I was over dealing with them. I signed just to get him out of my hair.”

I sighed. “Agent Matthews, when you go through a divorce because of cheating, you tend to not want to know anything about the relationship of the two cheaters. Well, at least, I didn’t.”

The agent watched me closely, probably trying to determine if I was lying. “Mrs. Templeton, do you by chance know the name Gavin Sampson?”

I laughed. “Honestly, I’ve never met a Gavin, and the only one I know anything about was a singer from some old rock band. There aren’t a lot of Gavins running around here.”

Agent Matthews smiled at me, and I could tell he believed me. But I get he had to be sure—I very well could have been covering for Chris. For some reason, some people were protective of their exes.

“Gavin Sampson is a very dangerous man. We’ve been following his trail for a while now, and we believe he is involved in stealing from Weston’s Bank. He has an accomplice known as Ava, and we believe she might be this Opal Holloway.”

What? I thought, incredulous. This went way beyond anything I imagined.

Agent Matthews’s face was so serious that it almost scared me. “We haven’t interviewed her yet,” he said, “nor have we asked Chris about her, but the story of this robbery and what happened between them matches many of the other scams Sampson and Ava have pulled.”

After thinking over this for a minute, I asked, “Wouldn’t you normally keep that kind of information to yourself?”

“We have someone tracking Chris’s movements, but we want the people who could be potential targets to know what’s going on. Sampson is known for using violence to get what he wants. We don’t believe that he is in the area right now, but we can offer protection if needed.”

Before I could respond to that frightening prospect, Agent Matthews continued, “I have asked the Westons to allow the login that was stolen to remain operational. We are working to recover their funds, as well as tracking any new thefts. This is just a precaution until we can get enough evidence to pull in Ava and locate Sampson.”

He looked closely at me. “We also believe that because of the situation that you and Mr. Weston were in with the cheating and the divorce, there could be a potential danger to you and those connected to you.”

“Why would you think that?” I asked. “I have nothing to do with Chris or the bank.”

“Because, from what we’ve gathered, your ex-husband isn’t letting you go like you may think. And what could stand in the way of this theft? The loss of the relationship between Mr. Weston and Ava. So, you being out of the picture would help keep the theft going.”

As I processed his words, I thought about Douglas. Could he really be this Gavin Sampson? He didn’t look violent when we met at the mall; in fact, he seemed surprised to be introduced as Opal’s cousin. But maybe he was just acting like Opal had been?

“I think I have some information that may help,” I told the agent.

“Zane, I’m home!” I called as I opened my front door that afternoon.

“Hey, I’m just getting out of the shower,” he called back.

I walked into our bedroom just as he came in with a towel wrapped around his waist. I looked at his bulging muscles and the water droplets running down them and instinctively licked my lips, thinking about all the things I wanted to do with him in that towel.

Zane chuckled. “How about you tell me about your interview, and then I’ll let you lick me like a popsicle if you want.”

With that, I fell out of my fantasy. I looked up into his mischievous eyes. “Party pooper,” I muttered before telling him everything the agent and I talked about.

When I finished, Zane looked pissed, and I completely understood why. Our lives had been turned upside down by all this.

Why would Opal and Douglas get Becky to take that picture if they only wanted to steal money? None of it made sense to me.

“I don’t want you going anywhere by yourself for now,” Zane said. “I think this is about to get a lot worse before it ends. We don’t know who this guy is or what he’s capable of, and then there’s Opal or Ava or whatever the hell her name is. I don’t trust any of them.”

I nodded in agreement. “Let’s just hope that Opal makes a mistake and they can finally catch her... Now, can I have my popsicle?”

Next Chapter

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