

# You Once Called Me Wife |

## Chapter 24

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A few days after my interview, I was standing by Dr. Hampton's front desk when the door opened, and in walked Douglas. My breath caught in my throat at the sight of him. I still hadn't decided if I thought Douglas was Gavin Sampson or not.

"May I help you, sir?" I asked, trying to stay calm.

"Yeah, I— Oh, hey, didn't we meet at the mall a while back?" he asked, smiling.

I tried to match his smile. I was never all that good at acting, so I needed to make this the best performance of my life. "You know, I think you're right. We did. You're Opal's cousin, right?"

"Oh, yeah... You see, Opal isn't my cousin." I felt my heart stop beating for a second, but then he smiled wider. "She's my fiancée. She told me that there was a lot of gossip in this town, and she didn't want any rumors to start until we were sure we were going to get married."

Looking at this man, I still found it hard to believe that he could be the violent and manipulative Gavin Sampson. His eyes screamed sweet-boy-from-next-door. I didn't think he was the one we should be worried about.

Relaxing a bit, I let out a short laugh and said, "Well, I can certainly understand that. When I was going through my divorce, I was the talk of the town."

Douglas smiled again, no hint of disbelief in his eyes. "I was wondering if you could tell me where I can find Opal," he said. "She told me she was working at the chiropractic's office here in town as the office manager."

*My, oh my has Opal been spinning so many lies.*

I was debating how to respond when the office phone rang. "Do you mind if I get this?" I asked sweetly. "I was expecting a call from one of our patients."

“Sure, no problem. I’ll just have a seat over in the waiting area.”

As Douglas sat down and pulled out his phone, I answered the call. “Dr. Hampton’s office.”

“McKenzie, this is Agent Matthews. My agent just informed me that a man who fits the description of someone Ava’s been in contact with has just entered your office. Do you feel in danger?”

“Probably. Dr. Hampton is with a patient at the moment, but I could see if I can get you in,” I answered, hoping the agent caught on.

“I’ll send the agent in right away,” he said. “He’ll get the man in your office, and the other agent will bring in Ava.” Then he hung up.

When I put the phone down, Douglas walked back over to me. He smiled sweetly, and a part of me felt bad for what was about to happen.

Before he could open his mouth to speak, the front door opened, and an FBI agent rushed in and handcuffed him.

Douglas looked around, clearly confused. “Why are you doing this?” he asked.

“Gavin Sampson, you are under arrest for multiple counts of fraud, theft, and assault,” the agent answered.

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Later that day, after I’d called Zane and he came to the office to comfort me, we entered the police station. Opal was yelling for all she was worth that they had the wrong woman, and everyone in the waiting room looked annoyed. Probably because she’d been at it for a while.

I walked up to the front desk and said, “I’m McKenzie Templeton, and I need to speak with Agent Matthews. Tell him it’s about Opal and Douglas.”

As the officer headed to the agent’s office, I stood there looking around the station, wondering if I missed something. I couldn’t think of a single thing pointing to Douglas being Gavin Sampson other than the fact that Becky had identified him as the one who wanted her to set up Zane.

I wanted so badly for this to be over, but I knew it wouldn’t be until we got all the right people.

Agent Matthews appeared in the doorway of the waiting room. “McKenzie, you needed to speak with me about Ava and Gavin?” he asked, looking between me and Zane.

“Yes, but I think this is something you’ll want to talk about in private.”

Nodding, he led us back to the office. “So, what do you need to tell me?” he asked once we were all seated.

“I don’t think Douglas is Gavin,” I said. “Now, before you start, just listen. When we spoke today, he mentioned he was Opal’s fiancé. He thought she worked in the chiropractor’s office with me. And when I met him at the mall a few months ago and she introduced him as her cousin, he looked shocked. He could be acting, but I don’t think so. Something isn’t right.”

Both men looked at me oddly.

“He was the one Becky said gave her the money to set me up,” Zane said, irritation in his voice.

“Yeah, I haven’t been able to figure that out,” I replied. “But the thing is, Opal is playing him. I can see it plain as day. He’s in love with her and doesn’t have a clue who she really is. I also think all this ties in with Chris, but I don’t know how. Maybe if you talked to her about it in the interrogation, she’d give you some answers.”

Agent Matthews didn’t look convinced. “Everything we have on Sampson’s appearance matches this Douglas.”

“And when did you get that information?” I asked, trying to show how serious I was.

I couldn’t bear the thought of Douglas rotting in jail while the actual thief was free to rob people and possibly hurt them. I couldn’t live with that on my conscience. But if Agent Matthews wouldn’t listen, there was nothing I could do.

“The descriptions come from witnesses who may have had contact with Gavin in the past few months,” he answered. “Where are you going with this, Mrs. Templeton?”

“If you gathered these descriptions within the time Opal and Douglas met,” I said, “then of course they’ll match him. All I’m asking is that you look deeper into this. Something is not adding up here.”

“It wouldn’t hurt to check into everything,” the agent conceded. “I usually have a good read on people, and I agree Douglas doesn’t fit what we know about Sampson’s demeanor.”

He stood up, and so did we. “If I find something that I think you need to know, I will be in touch,” he promised. “In the meantime, be on guard. If you’re correct, then Sampson is still out there.”

Next Chapter

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