

You Once Called Me Wife

Chapter 3

“He’s not going to go kill someone is he?” Erika asks. I couldn’t tell if she was being serious or not.

“No, he’s doing what he said he would. Kenzie, did you not suspect anything?” mom asks.

“I knew he was acting differently. He had stayed gone most of the time. He was saying it was busy at work and I had no reason to not believe him. He was distant. I thought maybe it was just us getting stale in our marriage. We’ve been married for five years and maybe he was getting too comfortable with everything. I know that’s a thing about marriage. There are times when you feel like roommates instead of a couple. But it just kind of started happening. I was going to cook us a romantic dinner tonight and try to rekindle that spark. I got off early and that is when I saw them.”

I feel their silence, and it weighs heavily on me. They are probably thinking all the same things I have. The whys and what happened to him. Everything I thought about led me to another question and it wasn’t always something I think I’d like the answer to. I don’t think it’s my fault, but does he? Does Chris think I was doing something that pushed him to this?

I get that people like to pass the blame and all, but at some point we all have to take responsibility for our actions. I searched and searched to see if there was anything I could have done or said that pushed him away. I can’t find anything. All I find are the attempts on my part to get him to open back up. I didn’t pressure him, but I tried. He was the one doing all the pulling away.

“Don’t think that this is your fault. He’s the one who made the choice to go and have an affair. Did he tell you why?” Annabeth asks.

“He just said he loved her too much to turn away from her. Did he not love me enough to not do that in the first place? I mean am I the only one blindsided by all this?”

I ask them because I really want to know. I know that love often makes people see things through rose-colored glasses, but this is almost too much. Couldn’t anyone notice the changes, or was it all some enormous secret that no one

saw coming? Chris has always had a good poker face, but this goes beyond that.

"I don't think anyone would have ever seen this coming. Chris always seemed to be just as in love with you as you were with him. This is going to be a shock to everyone. If anyone has seen or figured out what he's done, it's probably hard for them to believe," Annabeth says.

"What about his parents? Do you think they knew about this? I mean they are really sweet people and the community loves them." Mom says.

I'm not just losing Chris, but his family, too. I always got along well with his parents and his extended family. Are they going to be weird around me now or will I see pity in their eyes any time I see them? Damn him for this. Damn him for ruining all that we had. I want to pull my hair and scream at all of this. But the only thing that happens is a single tear rolling down my cheek.

"Oh Kenzie." My mother pulls me in her arms and it's like the dam finally broke. The emotional surge I feel is nothing short of paralyzing. I feel the shake of my body from the sobs, but other than that the only feeling I have is the pain radiating from my heart.

I had read and heard of what heartbreak felt like. I had once thought I had felt that when my grandparents passed away. I was lost without them and I mourned for what seemed like forever. But that doesn't feel anything like this. I'm gutted, a crumpled up mess of emotions and pain. How could I have ever known what this would feel like? It's like I'm dying a slow and agonizing death.

My mom and the girls sat with me and held me for hours. Dad came back and changed every lock on every door. He also installed deadbolts and other things for added protection. His thoughts were that Chris was not the person we thought he was, and I wasn't going to be the victim of anything else at his hands.

At some point, my dad left and brought back food and things for my mom. She had decided that she was staying with me for the foreseeable future. She didn't want me to be alone with all that was going on. I wasn't about to argue with her. I need someone by my side and my mom and best friends were just what I needed.

Mom helped me get changed and cleaned up. The emotional moment that lasted for what felt like an eternity took a toll on me. She helped me to bed

where Annabeth and Erika crawled in with me. They held me close as I cried again. I needed to get this all out now that I was finally feeling it all. I cried for my life that I thought I was living. I cried for the love I had for him and what I had thought he had for me. Heck, I even cried for the fact that everyone in town is going to be gossiping about what happened between us.

At some point, I must have fallen asleep. I woke up with Annabeth still laying beside me. Erika had gotten up and I could hear her and my mother cooking breakfast. My mind was pushing the idea right out the window, but my growling stomach had other ideas. I hadn't eaten since lunch yesterday and I couldn't make it through this if I didn't take care of myself. I would make it through this one step at a time.

I walked into the kitchen and saw that my mother had made a buffet of food. There were all my favorites, as well as what the girls liked. Food often brought comfort in my family. Anytime someone was upset or sick we always ate the things that made us happy. Food was one of my mother's love languages.

We sat and ate, talking about anything but the problem at hand. Mom was telling us about the church's festival that was coming up in a few months and how she was going to be hosting a pie-eating contest. She was over the moon at the thought of making all the pies for the contest. You could see the joy in her eyes.

Annabeth was telling us about going and helping on her cousin's ranch while a few of his staff were out with the flu. I couldn't remember the last time I had seen Zane. He was older than us and always had this aloofness about him. Maybe it was because we were so much younger, but I knew he and Chris had never got along. That made me laugh a little, knowing what I know now. Maybe Zane knew something the rest of us never did?

My phone had started ringing around lunchtime and I couldn't bring myself to answer. When I didn't answer the land line, my cell phone started ringing. It was Chris, and I had to scoff at the idea he was calling me after everything that went down last night. Text messages started coming through and Erika took the phone and turned it off.

"The last thing you need is the asshole trying to start something else with you." Erika had always had a temper and I would be afraid if I were Chris. There's no telling what she may do.

When the house phone rang again, my mother picked up when she saw who it was. The look on her face told me it would be someone that I didn't want to talk to.

"Hello. Yes, Rachel, she's here." Mom said, looking over at me. "She's not up to talking to anyone right now. I know, dear, but you have to understand what he did to her. That boy ripped her heart out and even if you don't support his choices you're still his parents. Just give her time. Once she's calmer, she may feel like talking to the two of you. I will. Goodbye."

My mom came over and sat beside me, taking my hand in hers. She was torn at the moment and I knew it was because she wanted to protect me from something. I gave her hand a squeeze, letting her know it was okay to tell me.

"James and Rachel found out this morning. Chris brought the woman to their house to meet them. I understand it didn't go well. Rachel wanted to make sure you were safe and to apologize to you. She says they had no clue that any of this was going on. James punched Chris in the nose and made him leave." Mom says, trying her best to hold back a smile.

I wasn't that strong, and I started laughing. The image of Chris getting punched by his father was one that was too funny to not laugh at. James was a man to behold if you threatened his family. I guess I was more family to him than I knew.