

You Once Called Me Wife |

Chapter 3

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When I walked from my workplace to my favorite diner for lunch on Monday, the owner was standing behind the register, scowling. I followed her eyes and saw Chris and Opal sitting in a corner booth.

It was like a slap to the face. Chris would never come to the diner with me because he said the food was so greasy that it gave him heartburn. Yet there he sat, smiling at Opal like an idiot schoolboy with his first crush.

"I can kick him out, love," the owner said.

"It's all right, Mace," I replied. "I called something in. I don't want to cause a scene."

Still scowling, Macy walked over to grab my order. When she returned, I paid for the food and made light conversation, but then I smelled Chris's cologne. I straightened up and turned around to face him.

The diner got unusually quiet.

"Kenzie!" Chris said, his ears turning pink. Opal stood behind him. "I...I didn't know you'd be here."

"I've only been eating here for the last five years," I replied coolly. Damn did I want to punch him and scratch her eyes out. "But it's all right, you wouldn't remember, anyway."

I nodded to the woman who took my place. "Opal." Then I walked out the door, my head held high.

Chelsea, Dr. Hampton's wife, took one look at my face and asked, "What happened?"

I'd just returned to the chiropractor's office where I worked. Dr. Hampton had a full schedule today, and since I was the only one who worked there, I hadn't wanted to call in sick. Chelsea came in sometimes to help.

"*They* were in there having lunch," I told her just as the door opened and Chris walked in.

Before we could say anything, he put his hands up. "I didn't mean to make a scene," he said, walking slowly toward us.

"I think you should turn around and leave, boy," Chelsea said in a deadly voice.

"Kenzie, Opal really wanted to try the food, and I didn't know you would be there, I swear."

I rolled my eyes. "I find it funny that you always made an excuse not to go to the diner with me, but she comes along, and not only do you go with her but you forget that it's my favorite place to eat. Everyone in town knows I eat lunch there every day."

Chris looked guilty, but I wasn't finished. "Just what in the hell were you doing the entire time we were married?" I yelled. "Cause it sure as hell wasn't paying attention to your wife."

The door opened again, and there stood Opal. The other woman. The temptress.

"Chris, honey, we're going to be late," she said in a sweet voice. "We should get going."

"Yes, wouldn't want to be late, honey," I seethed. "Don't come back here."

Chris glanced between us, looking at me like he wanted to plead for my understanding or forgiveness. I didn't give him either. I glared at him with all the anger that I felt at that moment.

If he wants me to see the guilt in his eyes, then I want him to see the pain in mine.

Once he finally left, I dropped into a chair. Chelsea locked the door, walked over to me, and took my hand. I looked up into her kind eyes.

“He’s going to regret what he’s done,” she said. “It may not be today or even this year, but trust me when I say that it’s coming. She’s the new thing he wants to play with, but in the end, he’ll wish he didn’t throw you away because women like her are a dime a dozen.”

It was like a premonition when she finished, “There’s nothing there to last.”

I spent the rest of my day trying to draw strength from Chelsea’s words. *I can do this*, I told myself. It won’t be easy, but I can and will do it. I won’t let my life go down the drain because of someone else’s mistakes. I’m worth more than that.~

At work, the girls and my parents all messaged, asking if I wanted someone to come and stay with me, but I told them no. I needed some time alone. And that was the truth.

I picked up a pizza on my way home and, while eating, looked up how to get a divorce in our state. Apparently, we had to be separated for six months before the divorce would be granted.

Three days down. Eighty-eight to go.

I pulled out some poster boards and made myself a countdown calendar. If I was going to go through this, then I was going to look forward to being free. I knew I was going to go through every stage of grief, but I would use this time to build myself up.

I wanted to work on myself. To make myself happy. There were things I gave up on because I was married, and now I would get all those things. If someone came along, they would have to work around what I wanted and needed.

A new McKenzie was coming, and I couldn’t wait to meet her. She was going to help me build a new life and, if the time came, a new love. Someday, Chris would understand what he had done, but by then, it would be too late. I would’ve already moved on with my life.

Then he would know what pain really was.

Next Chapter

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