

# You Once Called Me Wife |

## Chapter 8

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When I woke the next morning, it was with a smile and a blush. For the first time in years, I knew I was the object of someone's desire.

I got up and started getting ready for church, though I hadn't gone very often since I got married. My mother kept asking me to come, but Chris never wanted to. Now, since I was starting my life over, I thought I should return; it was always something I enjoyed before.

As I turned to lock my front door, I saw a note stuck to it.

*You need to stay away from Chris!*

*Good Lord, what in the world is this?* I thought. *Opal must really be feeling inadequate since the festival.*

I knew by the scowl on her face that she was going to cause me problems, but this seemed a little childish. I guessed I couldn't expect much from the woman who went after a married man.

On my drive, I wondered if Zane would be there. When he dropped me off the previous night, we hadn't made plans, but we grew up in the same church.

I met my parents in the parking lot, still smiling, and hugged them tightly. After I let go, Dad looked like he was trying to figure out what was going on with me, but immediately Mom asked, "You went on a date, didn't you?"

I smiled wider. "I did, and I'm pretty sure we made it official."

Dad raised an eyebrow. "Zane?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Good," Dad said. "I always wanted you with him, anyway."

That confused me. "But you were always so nice to Chris, and you never said anything."

“Well, as your father, I wanted to support your choices. If I’d said no to Chris without a good reason, then you would have dated him out of spite.”

Growing up, Dad taught me the things I needed to know so that I could make my own choices. He didn’t stick his nose in my business unless I was going to do something dangerous, but if my choices turned out badly, he was always there to comfort me and help me understand where I went wrong.

I wondered then what he saw in Chris that I didn’t.

Together, we walked into the church, where we saw Chris’s parents in their usual pew. James looked up and gave us a wave, and we went over to make small talk with them. It was just like it had always been, and I was thankful that they were still open to me and my family.

After a few minutes, I heard the church door open and turned to see Zane walking in with his parents. There were times in my life, before Annabeth decided she hated hanging out at the ranch, that Matilda and Raymond had been like another set of parents to me. I was glad to see them.

“Hey Kenzie,” Zane said before pulling me into a hug and kissing my temple.

I glanced at everyone in the church watching the odd scene. After all, I was standing with my parents and talking to both my ex-in-laws and my current boyfriend’s parents.

I was sure everyone thought a fight would break out, but all these people had been friends since childhood. I didn’t think they would ever let something like this ruin that.

Still, with everything that had been happening in the surrounding areas, I understood why people were suspicious about everything. Zane and I were only adding fuel to the fire.

I wondered how many of them thought that I would want revenge on Chris and Opal. I wondered if that was what happened to that couple in the other town. And I wondered what the town would think if they knew their new favorite investment worker, Opal, was leaving threatening notes on people’s doors.

The service started, and Zane sat with me and my parents. He draped his arm behind me on the back of the pew, and his warmth made me feel at home.

The sermon was uplifting, and it felt like it was meant for me. Before I knew it, the service was over, and Matilda was inviting me and my parents over for lunch. I was excited; I wanted to spend every moment I could with Zane.

“You wanna ride with me?” he asked, taking my hand. “I can bring you back later to get your car.”

“Won’t you be busy?” I responded, remembering what he said about work at the ranch never stopping.

The smile on Zane’s face was contagious. “Now that I have a staff, I take the weekends off.”

I stepped up on my tiptoes and gave him a quick kiss. “Okay, sounds good to me.”

His groan let me know the kiss was worth the effort. *He’s just as affected by me as I am by him.*

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Matilda cooked the best fried chicken in the world, and that was just the beginning. She made enough food to feed an army.

Zane sat beside me and filled my plate with more food than I’d eaten in years. My eyes widened. “You know there’s no way I’ll be able to eat all this, right?” I asked, looking at him like he’d lost his mind.

“You eat like a bird,” is all he said as he continued to fill the plate.

“Zane, you watched me eat a burger, fries, milkshake, and dessert last night,” I said, exasperated.

“I know,” he replied, finally stopping. “I just want to make sure you have all that you want.”

“Honey,” Matilda intervened, trying to hide a smirk, “he’s just like his father. He takes the role of provider very seriously.”

I laughed, and Zane’s face scrunched up like he was fighting a laugh of his own. He gave in quickly, and then everyone else joined us.

We had a great lunch, and all too soon, Zane was driving me back to my car. Once he parked, he sat for a moment before turning off his truck and looking

over at me like I was the most beautiful girl in the world. I could see everything he was feeling in his eyes.

It was like we had a connection that went beyond words. I felt like he knew my heart without even trying, like he saw me in a way no one ever had. Maybe all those years I was married, he held onto the knowledge of who I was without me even knowing.

“You want to come to my house for a while?” I asked, my voice squeakier than I would’ve liked. “We could hang out and watch a movie. I’d like to spend some time with you if you’re not busy.”

Zane smirked. “Are you trying to lure me into your web and seduce me, Kenzie?” His voice was deep and husky, and I instantly soaked.

*Damn him.*

“Um, I just thought...” I lost my train of thought as he cupped the side of my face and stroked my cheek with his thumb.

“You just thought what? Are you forgetting what you wanted to say, baby?” he whispered before leaning forward to kiss me.

The kiss was so passionate that I was left gasping for air. I’d been so deprived of male attention that his words and his kiss got me fired up to the point of combustion.

“I thought it would be nice to be with you for a while,” I said, my voice now husky too.

Zane looked concerned. “You know I would never pressure you into anything, right?”

“I do. But I think I might pressure myself into something.”

And that was the truth of it. I wanted nothing more than to spend the rest of the day making love to this man. Everything about him turned me on, and I didn’t think it would be such a bad thing to give myself to him.

*Nothing in my life is holding me back from taking what I want. Why should I wait then?*

“If you want it, then it wouldn’t be pressure, would it?” Zane looked me in the eye before adding, “We’re both adults, and as adults, we can do whatever we want. If you want me, McKenzie, then you can have me. I don’t think any less of you because of it.”

“But we’ve only just started this,” I said, trying to rationalize not jumping him.

“And we’ve known each other since we were children. I’ve wanted you for years, and I think deep down, you’ve wanted me too. Why fight it? I’m here for the duration, so why put off what you want for some stupid idea about when it’s the right time to be together?”

I knew he was right. And I was tired of fighting this.

“Then follow me,” I responded.

Next Chapter

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