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Dedication

To the version of me who kept going. To my girls who made me brave.

And to the parts I lost, may they bloom elsewhere.

###### About the Author

Kaia Wendell writes from the quiet corners of heartbreak and healing. Her words unravel the complexities of love, loss, motherhood, and resilience—offering raw reflections with gentle strength. With a voice both vulnerable and unflinching, Kaia captures what it means to break open, not break down.



## Chapter One

###### Good Days & Not So Good Days

A Little of All

Some days arrive like a gentle breeze— coffee tastes sweeter,

the kids laugh louder,

and I can breathe without feeling like I’m breaking. I catch myself humming in the kitchen,

forgetting for just a second that I’ve been tired for years.

Then there are days that knock the wind out of me— the kind where the dishes stack higher

than my patience,

and even the sound of a crayon snapping makes me want to scream into a pillow.

But mostly, it’s a little of all— light and dark,

beauty and burnout,

grace and grit wrapped in the same messy hour.

I laugh while cleaning up a spilled juice box and cry in the hallway because I miss

the version of me who used to dream.

This isn’t a story with clean chapters.

It’s scribbled in margin notes and sticky notes—

a patchwork of soft mornings and stormy afternoons. I’m learning to live in the in-between,

where nothing is certain but love is always here.

The Truth You Waited to Tell Me

You told me two days after the loss—

when my body was still hollowed by the storm, and my soul too fragile to hold more truth.

You waited, not to spare me, but because you were afraid

of what I’d do with the full story. And still, I listened.

Still, I stayed.

Seven Hours

I spent seven hours

watching myself from across the room— a blurry outline in yesterday’s clothes,

face frozen in something between apathy and ache. I heard my daughter ask for cereal.

I nodded.

I moved, I think.

But it wasn’t me, not really.

It was the version of me

that runs on instinct and exhaustion, going through the motions like a puppet

with invisible strings pulled by obligation and guilt.

I made a list and didn’t touch it. I stared at the laundry.

I opened the fridge six times

and didn’t eat a thing. I wasn’t sad exactly— just gone.

Disappeared into the stillness, watching life like a movie where I forgot my own lines.

Seven hours passed, and I didn’t cry,

but when night came,

I laid in bed wondering

how long I’d been missing from my own life— and who might notice

if I never came back.

Invisible Armor

I don’t wear my pain out loud.

I’ve learned how to tuck it into tight seams,

lace it under hoodies and behind dry shampoo, button it up with politeness

and zip it behind “I’m fine.”

My armor doesn’t clink like steel. It creaks like worn-out bones and smells like reheated coffee. It’s stitched with every moment

I bit my tongue when I wanted to scream, every “don’t cry” I whispered to myself

in a locked bathroom.

No one sees it. That’s the point.

They see the strength,

not the shaking knees behind it. They see the patience,

not the tears behind closed doors when bedtime stretches into battle.

But I know what I’m wearing. It weighs more every day— grief, guilt, survival, love.

It’s heavy, but it’s mine.

And even though it doesn’t make me invincible, it keeps me moving.

Maybe someday I’ll take it off.

Maybe someday

I won’t need it at all.

What You Took, What I Kept

You took honesty like it was optional.

You took comfort in my arms while offering yours to others.

But I kept the mornings I woke up whole.

I kept the version of me who gave love without question, and the strength of the one who now demands more

Almost

You were almost my person. I was almost yours.

We were almost something solid.

And then it slipped—

like sand through open hands— and left me grasping at a ghost of what we never were.

The Waiting Game

Waiting has a texture.

It feels like stiff air and walls that breathe.

It hums like a fluorescent light that flickers,

but never burns out.

I wait for answers. I wait for peace.

I wait for a break in the storm— a soft place to land

after parenting on a battlefield for what feels like a lifetime.

I check the time. Again.

And again.

But time doesn’t answer prayers, only stretches them thinner.

I wait for the next meltdown, the next call,

the next moment where I have to choose between what I feel

and what they need.

The waiting is its own kind of wound— not sharp, just persistent. And in it, I lose little pieces of myself. But I hold on, because I know the world turns, and morning always comes. Even if it’s late.

Today, I Choose Me

I stood in the mirror this morning and didn’t wince.

Didn’t suck in my stomach or tuck away my tired eyes.

I just looked— and said, quietly, “I see you.”

That’s how it starts. Not with a firework, but a whisper.

Today, I chose not to apologize for needing space,

for taking up space. I put on lipstick, not for a meeting,

but because it made me feel like a woman again.

I said no without guilt,

and yes without explanation. I let the laundry wait.

I let the mess breathe.

I danced for two minutes in the kitchen because I could.

I chose me.

And maybe tomorrow I’ll forget, but today—

even if it’s the only one for a while—

I remembered how it feels to belong to myself.



## Chapter Two

###### How To Keep Going

Dear Me,

I know you’re tired.

Not just in your bones—

but in the way your soul sighs when no one is around.

You’re holding it all together with duct tape and deep breaths, smiling so others don’t worry, saying “I’m fine”

when you’re anything but.

But I see you. All of you.

The version that stays up too late

because it’s the only time that feels quiet.

The one who feels guilty for needing more

when you’re already giving everything.

You don’t have to be perfect.

You don’t have to carry it all alone. Some days you’ll do your best, some days you’ll barely get through. Both are enough.

So here’s a soft reminder:

You are not a failure for feeling overwhelmed. You are not selfish for wanting rest.

You are worthy— always.

Even on the days you don’t believe it.

To the Woman I Am Becoming

I know you’ve been through hell— dragged your heart behind you

through heartbreak, motherhood, loneliness, and longing.

I know there were nights you sat in the dark, wondering if this is it—

if this version of life is all you’ll ever get.

But here’s what I know about you: You keep going.

Even when love disappointed you,

even when they left,

even when your reflection looked unfamiliar, you kept showing up—

for your kids,

for your dreams,

for yourself, eventually.

You are not the woman they hurt. You are the woman who survived it.

The one who loved too much and still dares to love again.

The one who breaks and rebuilds, softer, wiser, fiercer every time.

So, wherever you’re headed— I trust you to make it beautiful.

Forgive Me

Forgive me

for the nights I silenced your voice

because I thought others deserved the space more. For the mornings I told you to “suck it up”

when what you needed was softness.

I made you sit through pain with your back straight

and your mouth shut—

convinced that silence was strength.

Forgive me

for punishing you

for not being unbreakable.

You were never meant to carry the weight of two parents,

a partner’s absence,

and your own unspoken grief.

You were only ever meant to be human. So here—take this apology,

not just in words, but in action:

Today I’ll give you rest, gentleness, permission to feel it all without shame.

Keep Walking

There will be days when your hands shake

and your voice trembles,

and even brushing your teeth feels like a mountain.

Walk anyway.

There will be people

who misunderstand your strength, mistake your boundaries for coldness, your softness for weakness.

Walk anyway.

There will be moments when everything inside you screams to give up—

when the tears fall

before you’ve even opened your eyes.

But you’ve made it this far. And that means something.

It means you already know how to keep going

when everything tells you to stop.

So take the next step. Even if it’s slow.

Even if you cry while doing it.

Even if all you can manage is breathing in and out.

Keep walking. You’re not lost. You’re becoming.

A Letter from the Future

Dear Past Me,

You won’t believe how far you’ll come.

How many days you’ll survive

that you were sure would swallow you whole.

You’ll build a life

with pieces of things that once broke you.

You’ll find laughter again in unexpected places— like over burnt toast

or messy goodnight hugs.

You’ll learn that healing isn’t linear.

You’ll stop waiting for closure and start writing your own.

The people who left?

They taught you how to stay with yourself. The silence?

It taught you how to listen.

I know you’re tired. But don’t quit now.

You’re closer than you think

to peace that doesn’t need performance, to love that doesn’t require shrinking.

Keep going.

There’s magic waiting.

And you’re the one who creates i Love, The Woman You’re Becoming

When You Feel Alone

There will be moments

where the silence screams louder than any voice ever did.

When your phone stays quiet

and you wonder if anyone sees you— really sees you.

You’ll sit at the edge of the bed, your face in your hands, wondering how much longer

you can be strong for everyone else.

But even then— especially then— you are not alone.

Every heartbeat is proof that something inside you refuses to give up.

There are people

who may not know the storm in your chest, but would hold an umbrella beside you

if you let them.

You are loved. You are held.

You are never truly alone.

Not even in the darkest rooms.

You Are Enough

You’ve been measuring yourself against impossible expectations— the Pinterest mom,

the unbothered woman, the one who gets it all done

without crying in the laundry room.

But here’s the truth:

You were never meant to be a machine. You’re soft,

complicated, human.

And still, somehow, enough.

You are enough

on the days you snap.

You are enough

when the dishes pile and your patience breaks.

You are enough

when you’re doubting everything and still show up anyway.

You don’t need to earn your worth. You were born with it.

The Quiet Warrior

No one sees the battles you fight— the small ones,

like brushing your hair

when you’d rather stay in bed,

or answering emails through a fog of self-doubt.

You carry guilt, love, resentment, tenderness,

all in one body—

and somehow still keep going.

You are the warrior who smiles while bleeding.

The one who reads bedtime stories with tears in her eyes

and a knot in her throat.

You don’t wear armor. You wear responsibility. You wear love.

And every day you rise without applause

is another day you prove you were never weak— only quiet in your power.

Let Yourself Rest

Rest is not laziness. It is not weakness. It is not failure.

You’ve been carrying

a weight that would crush most people. It’s okay to set it down.

Let the world spin without you

for a minute.

The kids will be fine with cereal for dinner.

The to-do list

can wait ‘til tomorrow.

Your body is not a machine. Your heart is not a tool.

Rest, not just your limbs, but your soul.

The part of you that’s been

on high alert for too long.

Let yourself fall apart a little— that’s how we rebuild.

I Believe in You

Even when you feel small, invisible,

like everyone else has it figured out—

I still believe in you.

I believe in your softness, your strength,

the way you keep loving

even after being hurt.

You don’t have to prove anything. You don’t need to be louder, faster,

shinier.

Just keep being real. Keep showing up.

Keep trying,

even if all you did today was survive.

That was enough. And so are you.

Chapter Three

###### Heartbreak & Healing

You Never Said Goodbye

You didn’t slam the door. There was no final text, no dramatic ending

I could fold neatly into memory. You just… faded.

One day you were there— laughing through the phone,

calling me beautiful like it meant something.

And then nothing.

The silence was louder than any fight.

It echoed in the gaps between songs I used to love, in the time I kept checking my phone

long after I knew better.

I made excuses for your absence,

wrapped them in hope like they wouldn’t rot. I told myself you were busy,

overwhelmed, not ready—

but never “not coming back.”

Because the truth was too sharp, too hollow.

You never said goodbye. So I had to say it for you.

And that, somehow, hurt worse.

I Almost Called You

I almost called you today.

Not because I want you back— I don’t.

But because I wanted to say

I saw something that made me laugh, and for a second

I forgot you’re not mine to tell anymore.

It was a quiet moment, a flicker of memory,

like muscle memory reaching for someone who’s no longer there.

I almost dialed,

just to hear how your voice would sound

now that I’ve stopped crying at the sound of it.

But I didn’t.

Because I knew

you wouldn’t answer, or worse—

you would,

and I’d hear that familiar warmth and fall back into a story

I’ve already outgrown.

So I whispered it to myself instead. And somehow,

that was enough.

Grief: The Silence After

It wasn’t just the loss. It was the silence after.

The way you texted the truth like it would land softer

if typed. It didn’t.

The Version You Loved

You loved the version of me who didn’t ask for too much, who said,

“It’s fine,”

even when it wasn’t.

You loved the easy laugh, the filtered photos,

the way I swallowed my needs so you wouldn’t feel burdened.

You didn’t love the messy me—

the tired, anxious, overwhelmed woman who cried on the kitchen floor

and wanted to talk too long

about things that weren’t light or sexy.

You didn’t love the version of me who started asking questions, drawing boundaries,

finding her worth. And that’s okay.

Because I finally love the version

you couldn’t handle.

And she’s not going anywhere.

Unsent Message: The Quiet One

I wish I could hate you.

It would be easier than caring this much.

I still reread our conversations like I’m trying to find clues to when it started to slip

and why I didn’t feel it.

What We Could Have Been

We were the almost. The what-if.

The maybe-if-life-were-different kind of love.

And for a while,

that made it more romantic— the fantasy of it all,

the longing,

the way we filled in the blanks with hope instead of truth.

But fantasies don’t hold your hand at night.

They don’t show up when the bills are due

or your heart is breaking.

They don’t stay. And neither did you.

I used to think we had potential. Now I see—

we had possibility,

but no roots.

You can’t build forever on maybe.

The Last Time I Cried for You

It was a Tuesday. Not a dramatic day— no rain,

no sad movie soundtrack.

Just a regular day

with the kind of ache that sneaks up while folding laundry.

I found your hoodie in the back of the closet. Still smelled faintly like comfort and grief.

And I sat down on the floor

and let it hit me—

how much I loved you, how much it hurt

that you didn’t stay.

I cried like I hadn’t let myself since you left.

Ugly, guttural, real.

And then I wiped my face, stood up,

and folded the hoodie into the donate pile.

That was the last time I cried for you.

And the first time

I felt free.

You Didn’t Break Me

You bruised me. Absolutely.

I limped through mornings and cried through dinners and lost count

of the times I almost called. But you didn’t break me.

You cracked me open, yes—

but that’s where the light got in.

You taught me what love isn’t.

What I won’t settle for again. What I deserve.

I bled,

but I healed.

And now I carry your memory like a lesson—

not a wound.

You didn’t break me. You built me back without even realizing it.

So thank you— not for loving me, but for leaving when you did.

Healing Isn’t Pretty

I thought healing would look like bubble baths and new journals—

like morning walks and gentle playlists.

But it looked like deleting your number and re-adding it

three times in one night.

It looked like crying

on a grocery store floor because a song came on that used to mean nothing until you ruined it.

Healing looked like

grief with a blowdryer in one hand

and a toddler screaming in the background.

Like breaking down mid-sentence and pretending I meant to laugh.

It wasn’t beautiful. It wasn’t clean.

But it was real.

And somehow,

I found pieces of myself in the mess. And put them back together stronger than before.

Closure Isn’t Coming

You’re not going to apologize. Not in the way I needed.

Not in the words

I rehearsed for you in the shower.

You’re not going to call one night and say,

“I finally get it. I’m sorry.”

And I’ve had to mourn that too.

Because closure isn’t a moment, it’s a choice.

A slow, steady realization

that I don’t need your remorse to be free.

So I wrote the apology myself, burned the letters I never sent,

and whispered goodbye in a mirror

with tears in my eyes

and strength in my bones.

You don’t owe me closure. I gave it to myself.

I Still Miss You Sometimes

And I hate that.

Hate how memory still feels warm even when the truth was cold.

I don’t want to miss you. I want to be angry—

burn-it-all-down kind of mad.

But instead,

I miss your laugh

and the way you always knew when I needed a nap

before I did.

I miss the way we talked about nothing

for hours.

But I don’t miss the way I felt when you ignored me.

I don’t miss waiting to matter.

I don’t miss shrinking myself to keep you comfortable.

So yes,

I still miss you sometimes— but not enough

to let you back in.

I’m Still Learning

I still flinch

at certain songs.

Still check the time

and wonder if you ever think about me at 2 a.m. on a Tuesday.

I still overthink

the last words we said— as if changing the ending

could rewrite the whole book.

I still reach for old habits,

even when I know they don’t fit.

But I’m learning. Learning to trust myself. To believe that love shouldn’t feel like waiting or explaining

or crying into my pillow while pretending I’m okay.

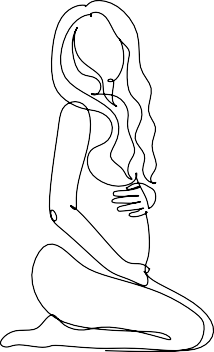
I’m learning

that healing takes time.

And I’m allowed to grieve someone I’m better off without.

This is not the end. This is the middle.

And I’m still becoming someone worth staying for.



# Chapter Four

##### Motherhood Through Silent Pains

I Don’t Remember Who I Was

Sometimes I look in the mirror and wonder where she went— the version of me

before the bedtime tantrums, the therapy appointments, the guilt,

the beautiful chaos.

I see photos from years ago and think,

“She had no idea.”

No idea how much she would give. How much she’d lose.

How much she’d love.

Becoming a mother isn’t a line you cross— it’s a slow unraveling,

a quiet disappearing act

that no one really warns you about.

But even though I miss her, I wouldn’t trade this version.

Because this one—

the one with tired eyes

and a heart that breaks open every single day—

is real.

And stronger than she ever imagined.

They Don’t See

They don’t see

the invisible labor—

the calendar in your head holding every appointment, snack time,

meltdown warning.

They don’t see

how many times you swallow the scream in your throat,

or how you pick up the broken pieces

no one even knows were dropped.

They don’t see

the way your love stretches— thin as paper

but somehow still enough.

They see the birthday cupcakes. The cute outfits.

The filtered smiles.

But they don’t see you.

And that’s the part that aches the most.

On the Days I Yell

I hate those days. When I hear my voice— too loud, too sharp—

and wish I could scoop the words back into my mouth.

I see their faces fall and the guilt rushes in

before the silence even settles.

I didn’t want to be this mom. The one who loses it.

The one who forgets to breathe until it’s too late.

But I’m human. I’m trying.

And afterward, I kneel down,

pull them into my arms, and say the thing

I needed to hear growing up:

“I’m sorry.

Even when I mess up,

I love you more than anything.”

And somehow— they believe me.

Sleep Doesn’t Come Easily Anymore

Not because the kids wake me (even though they do).

But because my brain

won’t stop spinning once the house is quiet.

I replay the day—

every sigh, every snapped word,

every moment I wasn’t patient enough.

And then the future starts knocking— Will they remember the good parts? Will they be okay?

Will I?

Sleep used to be rest.

Now it’s a battleground

between my mind and my motherhood.

But sometimes,

when one of them crawls into bed, wraps their tiny arms around me, and whispers, “I love you, Mommy,” I finally sleep—

Not because I stopped worrying, but because love

is louder than fear for just long enough.

I Miss Me

Not in a dramatic,

life-was-better-before way. Just in a quiet,

“I used to laugh more” way.

I miss the girl who had time to think without interruption, who wore perfume

just because.

Now, I rush past mirrors and forget if I’ve eaten. My playlists are cartoons. My hobbies are surviving.

But I’m still in there— beneath the schedules and snack crumbs

and invisible lists.

And slowly,

I’m learning

to meet myself again— to make space

not just for the mom I’ve become

but the woman who never stopped deserving care.

Some Days I Want to Run Away

Not forever— just long enough to breathe

without someone needing me.

To drink coffee while it’s still hot.

To cry without hiding in the shower.

To sit in silence

and remember who I am without the noise.

But I don’t run. Instead, I stay.

Because their needs are louder than mine right now.

And one day, they’ll be grown—

and I’ll miss the chaos.

But today,

I just miss myself.

And I think that’s okay to admit.

This Is Love, Too

It’s not the Instagram-worthy moments.

It’s wiping noses

and finding the lost shoe for the third time

before 8 a.m.

It’s sitting on the floor next to a screaming child and whispering,

“I’m here. I love you.”

Even when you want to scream back.

It’s fighting for services. Advocating when you’re exhausted. Laughing when you want to cry.

Crying when you finally get a break.

This isn’t soft-focus love. This is real love—

feral, raw, messy as hell.

This is what love looks like when it’s stretched thin and still shows up

every damn day.

I Can’t Do It All

And maybe I never should have tried.

I thought being strong meant saying yes

to everything.

Showing up

even when I was running on fumes.

I thought if I did more, loved harder,

tried longer—

no one would feel the absence of the things I couldn’t fix.

But here I am— burnt out, resentful,

lonely in a room full of love.

So I’m learning to let go.

To ask for help without shame. To say no without apology. To stop chasing perfection and start choosing peace.

Because I can’t do it all.

But I can do what matters. And that’s enough.

You Are Not a Bad Mom

Not because you did everything right— but because you kept showing up even when you didn’t.

You fed them

when you were empty.

You held them

when you needed to be held.

You loved them

through your own unraveling.

And some days,

you lost your temper. Some days,

you forgot how to be soft.

But you never stopped loving. And that—

in all its flawed, human,

fierce glory—

makes you a good mom.

Motherhood is a Thousand Goodbyes

Goodbye to sleep. Goodbye to your old name. Goodbye to privacy,

plans,

and the version of life

you thought you were building.

It’s a slow series of letting go—

the first time they walk without you, go to school,

pull away when you reach to help.

You lose parts of them bit by bit,

even as they grow

into everything you hoped for.

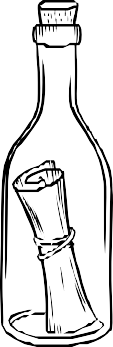
But in all that goodbye, you find new hellos— to resilience,

to deeper love,

to a version of yourself you never saw coming.

Motherhood breaks you open in all the best and worst ways.

And somehow, you love harder because of it.



#### Chapter Five

What I Never Sent

I Would’ve Given You Everything

I still catch myself grieving the version of you I made up in my mind.

The man I wanted you to be was so beautiful.

He saw me. He stayed.

He held space for every storm

without needing me to shrink.

But that wasn’t you.

And I don’t blame you for that— not anymore.

Still,

I would’ve given you everything.

I was ready to build a life

around the way you made me feel in those early, golden moments.

Turns out,

you just wanted the parts of me that were easy to love.

The rest?

You left behind without a word.

I’m Still Angry Sometimes

I hate that you made me question my own worth.

Hate how your silence

echoed louder than any goodbye.

You said I was too much. Too sensitive.

Too intense.

But I was just honest. I was just all-in.

You were the one who kept one foot out the door, calling it “boundaries”

while I was busy calling it love.

You hurt me— and I let you.

That’s the part

I’m still learning to forgive.

I Shouldn’t Still Miss You, But I Do

Not every day.

But some days sneak up.

A song. A scent.

The way someone laughs just like you did

before everything changed. I don’t want you back.

Let me be clear.

But I do miss who I was when I believed

you were different.

Back when I thought this would end

with arms wrapped around me—

not empty space

and unanswered questions.

You Didn’t Just Leave Me—You Left Our Future

You didn’t walk away from a situationship.

You walked away from a home we hadn’t built yet.

From birthdays you’ll never know.

From ordinary Tuesdays that could’ve held extraordinary peace.

You gave up

before the story started.

You chose comfort over connection.

And somehow,

I’m the one

still cleaning up the aftermath.

To the One Who Said He Loved Me, Then Disappeared

How dare you.

How dare you say forever

with hands that already knew how to let go.

You opened me like a book you never planned to finish.

Left my pages dog-eared, my heart mid-sentence.

And I still check my metaphors for you. Still wonder if I was too much,

or just too real.

I won’t rewrite you into a hero. You were the cliffhanger

I learned to climb down from on my own.

I Still Don’t Understand

And maybe I never will.

Why you pulled me close just to push me away.

Why you spoke to me like I mattered

only to treat me like I didn’t.

I overanalyzed every moment.

Convinced myself it was me.

But deep down, you weren’t ready.

You wanted the feeling

of being loved

without the responsibility of receiving it fully.

I just wish

you would’ve said that before I got attached to the lie.



#### Chapter Six

Letters to Myself and Past Loves

Dear You, the One Who Almost Stayed

You held me like I was breakable

but treated me like I was replaceable. And I let you.

You weren’t cruel.

You were kind in all the convenient ways— sweet words, soft hands,

half-gestures wrapped in half-promises.

I wanted to believe

we were something real.

That love could grow

even in the shadow of your silence.

But the truth is,

you never fully showed up.

So this is my goodbye

to the maybes, the what-ifs, the almosts.

You almost stayed.

But I’m not waiting anymore.

Dear Me, When You Almost Went Back I saw you.

Fingers hovering over the screen,

reading old messages like they were love letters instead of breadcrumbs.

I watched your hope rise like a wave

you knew would crash.

But you didn’t text him. You remembered.

The tears.

The questions. The shrinking.

You chose silence over suffering. Growth over guessing.

And I am so proud

of that quiet, powerful no.

To the One Who Thought I’d Never Leave

You thought I was always going to stay— because I forgave,

because I waited, because I cried behind closed doors but smiled in public.

You thought my softness meant surrender. But here’s the thing:

I loved you hard

until I loved me harder.

And once I did—

your power disappeared.

You thought I was weak.

But it takes strength to walk away

from what you once prayed for.

And I’m walking without looking back.

Dear First Love

I still carry your laugh like a key in my pocket— small, rusted,

but shaped like home.

You were my beginning. Not the best,

not the worst—

but the most unforgettable.

We didn’t end in fire, just in silence.

I thought we’d grow together, but we just grew apart.

And that’s okay.

You were my favorite before I knew

what love really meant.

Now I love deeper. Now I love wiser.

But I’ll always thank you for being my first chapter.

To the One I Should Have Let Go Sooner

You weren’t the storm. You were the fog.

You didn’t hurt me in big ways— you wore me down

in a hundred small ones.

Apologies that came too late. Effort that felt like obligation. Love that only showed up when I threatened to leave.

And I stayed

because I kept thinking

you’d remember how to be the version of you I met in the beginning.

But that version was a mask.

I forgive myself

for not seeing it sooner. I was loyal.

Not blind.

And now I see clearly— and I’m finally free.

Dear Me, On the Days You Feel Unlovable

You are not hard to love.

You are just used to being asked to be smaller,

softer, less.

You’ve twisted yourself into quiet, shrunk your needs into whispers.

But the right love

won’t flinch at your fullness.

It won’t ask you to mute your magic or silence your storms.

You are not too much. They were just not enough.

Say that again until you believe it.

To the One I Never Got to Hold

I’m sorry.

I wanted you.

More than anything.

And I carry the shape of you in every quiet moment—

when the room is still, when my arms are empty, when no one’s looking.

I talk to you in the car, in the shower,

in the silence between heartbeats.

You were here

even if the world never saw you.

And losing you broke a part of me

I didn’t know could break.

But I carry you. Always.

With love, and longing, and a promise

that you will never be forgotten.

To the Friend Who Became a Stranger

We were everything once. Inside jokes.

Shared playlists.

Late-night calls

when the world was too loud.

But something shifted.

You stopped calling. Stopped showing up.

And I stopped asking why.

Now, we’re polite likes on Instagram.

Memories wrapped in nostalgia and a little bitterness.

I miss you.

Not the version now—

but the one who used to get me without explanation.

Maybe it’s life. Maybe it’s me.

Maybe we were only meant to last a season.

But damn—

it was a beautiful one.

Dear Future Love

If you find me— know this:

I’ve already rescued myself.

I’m not waiting for a savior or a fairy tale.

I’ve stitched my wounds,

tended my roots,

learned to bloom on my own.

But if you’re gentle— if you’re kind

and real and ready—

I’ll make room.

Just promise me you’ll meet me where I am— whole, healing, and finally home in my own heart.

Dear Me, Back Then

You had no idea, did you?

You thought love meant fixing. You thought if you gave enough, they’d stay.

You blamed yourself when they didn’t.

You were soft,

and the world called it weakness.

But that softness? That was your strength in disguise.

You kept going,

even when no one clapped. You kept loving,

even when it hurt.

And I just want to say— I see you.

I love you.

And you didn’t deserve what broke you.

Dear Me, Right Now

I know you’re tired.

Not just “I need a nap” tired— but soul tired.

Hope tired.

You’ve been carrying more than anyone sees.

Smiling

when you feel like unraveling. But listen:

You don’t have to earn rest. You don’t have to fix everything to deserve peace.

You’re allowed to be a mess and still be worthy of love.

This chapter feels like a storm, but I promise—

the sun hasn’t forgotten you.

You are not behind. You are not broken.

You’re just becoming something stronger.

Dear Me, On the Days You Feel Behind Look at you.

Always measuring your worth in timelines and checklists, as if healing has a deadline, as if growth is linear.

Let that go.

Some days, showing up is the victory.

Some years, survival

is the success story.

You’re not late. You’re not lazy. You’re human.

And your pace is sacred.

Dear Me, When You Want to Give Up

I know you want to quit.

To walk away from the hope that keeps letting you down.

To stop trying so hard

for things that keep breaking. But don’t.

Rest.

Cry.

Scream into the pillow.

But don’t stop.

Because underneath the rubble is something still glowing.

A dream that refuses to die.

A version of you

who still believes in magic.

She’s waiting. Don’t let her down.

Dear Me, The Day You Almost Settled Remember that day?

You almost said yes to the bare minimum.

Almost made a life out of crumbs and called it love.

You almost convinced yourself that “at least he tries sometimes” was enough.

But something in you rose up. Something wild.

Something brave.

And you said, “No.”

That “no” saved your life.

Dear Me, After Our Angel Was Gone

You blamed yourself.

You carried guilt

like a shadow stitched to your skin.

You thought maybe

if you had done one thing differently, you’d still be carrying life.

But love—

it wasn’t your fault.

Loss doesn’t follow logic.

Grief doesn’t mean you’re broken. It means you loved deeply.

And love—real love—

never ends with loss.

Dear Me, The First Time You Called Yourself “Mom”

You didn’t know

how much that name would weigh.

You didn’t know you’d hold the world

on three hours of sleep,

whisper bedtime songs through tears, fight for services,

set boundaries, lose yourself

and slowly find your way back.

You didn’t know

how much would be asked of you. And you said yes anyway.

Not because you were ready.

But because love made you brave.

I’m proud of you. So proud.

Dear Me, When You Doubt Your Worth

I wish you could see what I see. Not the tired eyes,

or the stretch marks, or the mess.

But the fire.

The part of you that keeps rising. Keeps trying.

Keeps loving

even when your own heart is cracked open.

You are not defined by what hurt you.

You are not the worst thing someone said about you.

You are light.

Even when you feel heavy.

You are enough.

Even when the world says otherwise.

Dear Me, Before the Healing Began

You didn’t know that the pain you felt

was actually the beginning

of becoming.

You were still blaming yourself, still chasing closure from people who didn’t deserve your questions.

But healing doesn’t start with an apology from them.

It starts with you choosing yourself,

one hard decision at a time.

And look at you now— still healing,

still learning, still here.

That’s everything.

Dear Me, In the Mirror

You’ve aged. You’ve softened.

You’ve hardened, too.

You’ve let go of some dreams and clung tighter to others.

You don’t laugh as easily, but when you do—

it’s real. It’s earned.

You’ve learned the difference between peace and silence. Between love and performance. Between growth and hustle.

You’ve come home to yourself in pieces.

In poems.

In quiet, unshakable truth.

And you’re finally starting

to like the woman staring back.

# Chapter Seven

##### Closure

The Last Time I Cried Over You

I didn’t even know it was the last time. The tears came quietly—

not like waves anymore, but like a gentle tide leaving the shore for good.

I wasn’t angry. Wasn’t desperate. Just done.

You had become a dull ache

instead of a sharp one.

And when I dried my face, I realized—

you no longer lived

in the center of me.

You had become a story.

Not a storm.

The Apology I Gave Myself

I’m sorry

for not leaving sooner. For waiting on someone who kept me waiting.

I’m sorry

for all the nights I rewrote myself just to be easier to love.

For all the quiets I swallowed just to keep the peace.

I forgive you,

for not knowing better.

And I promise—

from this moment forward— you don’t have to beg

to be chosen.

Closure Isn’t Always a Conversation

Sometimes,

it’s not a phone call. Not a long, healing talk.

Not a “you were right, I was wrong.”

Sometimes, it’s you

putting down the phone

for good.

It’s blocking the number but not the memory.

It’s walking away without needing to win.

Because peace

isn’t found in their words— it’s in your release.

The Day I Unfollowed You

It didn’t feel like power. It felt like grief.

Like deleting the last thread

of a dream I once adored.

But love shouldn’t linger like a bruise.

And I realized— watching your life wasn’t healing me.

It was haunting me. So I clicked.

I cried.

I let it go.

And I made space for something better.

I Don’t Hate You

I don’t wish you pain. I hope you grow.

I hope you change.

I hope you become the person you pretended to be with me.

But I won’t be around to see it.

And that’s the closure— knowing I don’t need revenge or regret

to be free.

I just need distance. And I’ve finally given it to myself.

When Healing Starts Quietly

No fireworks.

No big epiphany.

Just one day,

you don’t check your phone as much.

The ache softens.

The silence feels safe.

You catch yourself laughing and don’t feel guilty for it.

You stop building altars for someone

who never stayed.

And you begin to understand— healing isn’t loud.

But it is real.

I Never Got a Goodbye—So I Wrote One Myself

Goodbye

to the girl who thought

love meant proving her worth.

Goodbye

to the nights I stayed up wondering why I wasn’t enough.

Goodbye

to the dream I held onto long after it let go of me.

Goodbye

to the version of me who thought heartbreak was the end.

She didn’t know

it was a beginning.

The Last Lie I Told Myself

“That wasn’t a big deal.” “I’m fine.”

“He didn’t mean it like that.”

“It was probably my fault.” No more.

I see it now.

All of it.

The ways I shrank. The things I ignored. The truths I swallowed just to stay loved.

But love doesn’t live in denial.

And I’m done lying to protect someone

who didn’t protect me.

I Thought Healing Meant Getting Over You But it didn’t.

It meant coming back to me.

It meant remembering what I liked

before I asked you to like me.

It meant forgiving myself for needing you

so badly.

Healing wasn’t forgetting. It was reclaiming.

And now,

when I think of you— it doesn’t hurt.

It just doesn’t hold me anymore.

This Is the End of the Chapter

Not the story. Not my hope. Not my softness.

Just the chapter where I gave too much to someone

who gave too little.

The part

where I confused pain for passion.

Where I tried to build a future on “maybe” and “someday.”

This chapter is over. I’ve turned the page.

I’m writing something better now.

With more light. More truth.

More me.



Chapter Eight

###### The Healing

Healing Doesn’t Feel Like Winning

It feels like waking up

and not crying before coffee.

Like going a whole afternoon

without checking if they watched your story.

It feels like awkward laughter with friends who stayed,

soft music on a clean floor,

putting your phone down

and not hoping for a name to pop up.

It’s small. It’s slow. It’s sacred.

And you’re doing it.

I Am Becoming

Not who I was

before the heartbreak, but someone softer and more solid.

Someone who says yes to what feels like peace and no

without apologizing.

Someone who knows how to let go

without it meaning

she didn’t love deeply.

I am becoming the version of me

who trusts her own voice

more than anyone else’s.

On Days I Still Miss You

I don’t shame myself for it.

Missing doesn’t mean I want you back.

It means I remember.

I remember what it felt like to hope.

To believe in something.

And now,

I remember that I survived losing it.

That’s healing. Not forgetting—

but remembering without unraveling.

Peace Looks Like This

Unsent messages. Unwatched stories.

No more keeping score.

Just mornings that begin without dread, afternoons filled with my own laughter, nights where my mind rests

instead of racing.

No drama. No aching.

No begging to be understood.

Just peace.

That’s the plot twist.

I Stopped Performing

For love.

For validation.

For people who only clapped when I was quiet,

polished, pleasing.

I stopped shrinking into someone I thought they’d like more.

And in that silence, I met myself again—

loud, kind, full of contradictions. And I liked her.

The First Time I Danced Again

It wasn’t graceful. It wasn’t cute.

I spilled coffee, stepped on a toy, tripped over laundry.

But the music was on.

And I didn’t care

that no one was watching— or that no one was.

Healing looked like dancing alone

in a messy house with a heart

still learning how to stay open.

And for once,

I didn’t feel alone.

I Am No Longer Afraid of My Own Heart

She used to be reckless. Too open.

Too hopeful.

But now, she’s wise.

Still soft. Still warm.

But careful where she spills.

She’s not guarded. She’s just selective.

And she’s not afraid of breaking again.

Because she knows how to rebuild.

I Didn’t Need Revenge—Just Relief

I used to fantasize about karma.

About them missing me. Regretting.

Hurting.

But now?

I don’t need them to ache.

I just need my joy. My peace.

My freedom from checking whether they care.

Let them forget.

I remember who I am.

That’s the only justice I need.

I Am Allowed to Want Softness

I don’t need chaos to prove it’s real.

I don’t need longing to feel loved.

I want slow mornings, honest answers,

someone who doesn’t flinch when I’m messy.

I want steady. I want kind.

I want love

that doesn’t feel like a battle.

And I finally believe that I deserve it.

This Is What It Feels Like To heal.

To stand in your own skin without flinching.

To smile

and not question if you’re faking it.

To walk into a room

without hoping they’re there.

To hold your own hand and realize—

you are home now.

Not perfect. Not untouched. But whole,

in your own way.





### Chapter Nine

###### Empowerment

I’m Not Bitter—Just Better

It’s not anger. It’s clarity.

I don’t wish you pain—

I just don’t wish for you anymore.

I stopped romanticizing the bare minimum. Stopped mistaking inconsistency for passion.

You were a lesson.

I was the homework. And I passed.

My Boundaries Are Not Up for Debate

I don’t need you to understand them.

I don’t need to explain why “no” is enough.

I’m done translating my peace into a language others prefer.

This is my line. Cross it,

and you lose access.

No guilt.

No overthinking.

No committee vote required.

I Am Not Who I Was When You Met Me

That girl?

She would’ve begged you to stay.

She would’ve waited by the phone,

rewritten her needs to keep you comfortable, called it love when it was just survival.

But she’s gone. And I’m here now—

whole. Unapologetic. Not waiting.

I Am Not for Everyone

And that used to scare me.

I used to shape-shift, soften my truth, keep my volume low.

But not anymore.

I wasn’t made to be liked by all— I was made to be real,

to be light, to be fire.

Some will love it. Some won’t.

I’m still worthy either way.

Because I’d rather be alone than almost loved.

The New Standard Is Me

Not how they treated me. Not what I settled for.

Not who ghosted, gaslit, or gave up.

The new standard is how I treat myself. How I listen when I’m tired.

How I protect my joy.

I am not waiting for someone else to show me my worth.

I live it.

I breathe it. Ib ecome it.

I Am No Longer Available for Half-Love

If it comes with conditions, I’m not interested.

If I have to prove, perform, or shrink, it’s a no.

I want the kind of love that doesn’t flinch when I speak my truth.

That honors my edges and my softness.

And until then,

I’ll give it to myself.

I Don’t Chase, I Choose

I no longer run after crumbs.

I don’t overextend just to be seen.

Love is not something I prove. It’s something I invite.

If you’re not choosing me fully, you’re not welcome halfway.

And I’m okay with that.

Because I’d rather be alone than almost loved.

You Don’t Get to Come Back Now

Now that I’ve rebuilt.

Now that I’m glowing without you.

You don’t get to return

because your comfort got lonely.

This door isn’t locked out of spite—

it’s locked because I healed the part of me that would’ve opened it.

I wish you well.

But I wish me more.

I Am Not a Phase

I am not your “learning experience.”

Not a stop on the way

to someone “more right.”

I am the real thing.

The full-hearted, soft-spoken, hard-earned woman

who knows what she brings to the table.

You didn’t see it? That’s on you.

But I will never again dim just to fit in.

I Choose Me—Loudly

Not when it’s convenient. Not just when it’s easy.

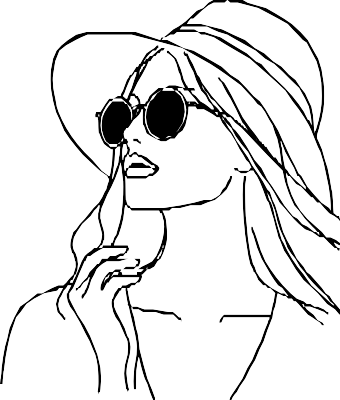
Always.

Even when my voice shakes. Even when choosing myself means losing what once felt safe.

Because I’ve tried abandoning myself for love.

And this time? I’m staying.

All in. All me.



### Chapter Ten

###### Becoming

I Am Not the Same Woman And thank God.

She was beautiful— but she bent too far, bled too long, believed too easily.

I love her for trying.

But I’m not her anymore.

I don’t chase. I don’t beg.

I don’t apologize for my boundaries.

I’ve outgrown the cage I once called comfort.

Becoming Her

The version of me

who no longer waits for closure, who no longer needs to be chosen to feel worthy.

She knows her worth is not a group project.

She walks away when love turns cruel. She rests without guilt.

She speaks without shrinking.

She’s the woman

I used to pray I’d become. And here I am.

I’m No Longer Explaining Myself

I used to write essays

for people who misunderstood me.

I used to twist my truth until it was palatable, digestible, comfortable.

Now?

I let silence speak.

If you don’t see me clearly—

you were never meant to hold me.

My Power Isn’t Loud—But It’s Unshakable

It doesn’t need to roar.

It doesn’t need applause.

It lives in the way I say no with softness.

In the way I rise

after being knocked down—again.

In the way I don’t beg for the bare minimum.

I am not loud.

But I am unmovable.

I Stopped Looking Back

There is no rescue in the rearview. No peace in past pain.

No answers in what-ifs.

I’ve memorized the lessons. I’ve buried the ghosts.

I’ve honored the girl who waited.

But now,

I’m walking forward with both hands open.

Because life is still here. And so am I.

I’m Proud of Her

The one who held it all together with shaking hands.

Who smiled through storms

and still tucked others into bed.

Who cried quietly

just to avoid questions

she didn’t have answers for.

She didn’t quit. She didn’t settle.

And now—

she’s standing taller than she ever imagined.

This Is the Life I’m Choosing

One where peace

is more important than proving a point. Where love isn’t begged for,

it’s mirrored.

Where softness isn’t weakness— it’s wisdom.

Where I don’t have to hurt to feel alive.

This life feels like breathing with both lungs.

Like joy without guilt.

This time, I’m choosing me. Fully.

I Didn’t Break—I Bloomed

They thought I was wilting.

That loss would be the end of me.

But grief was just the soil.

And heartbreak was the water.

And here I am— not what I was, but something entirely new.

I didn’t break. I bloomed.

I Forgive Her—The Old Me

For staying too long.

For not knowing her worth.

For giving too much

to someone who gave too little.

She only wanted love. She only knew survival.

I forgive her

for every time she forgot her own magic.

She never failed. She simply outgrew what no longer fit.

This Didn’t Break Me

I thought it would. There were nights

I didn’t know how to keep going.

Mornings where I faked okay until I believed it.

But this?

This didn’t break me.

It built me.

It burned away every version of me

that begged to be small.

And what’s left

is someone who rises on purpose.

Who walks with truth.

Who stays soft

even after the storm.

This didn’t break me.

It made me whole.