

Chapter 59 Too Much Time Alone

Since most of the work was done, and Mateo wasn't responding to my calls or texts, I suddenly had time on my hands. Too much time. With no projects to distract me, I was left alone with myself—and that was not a good place to be.

For the first time, I had to face the truth of my situation. I was sixty-nine, broke, and alone in a town where I knew no one.

What have you done? How did you end up here?

I thought I might go mad. Journaling saved me.

I began pouring out my heart. I emptied myself onto the page—my pain, my anger, my disillusionment. It was cathartic. Slowly, I began reclaiming forgotten parts of my life, which mattered because everything inside me felt scattered. My life felt disjointed, my mind was in pieces, and my memory had holes in it.

My inner critic was relentless. It was like a radio playing in the background, the same song over and over. Or, as Anne Lamott would say, a “pinball machine of blame and hopelessness.”

The voice sounded something like this: *You are old. Nobody wants you. You're over the hill. You're going to die alone. You fucked up. It's all your fault. How could you have spent so many years in a cult? What's wrong with you?*

I had no one to talk to, and the echo chamber inside my head was pitiless.

If I could just get out of this godforsaken place, I moaned silently to myself.

I imagined that if I lived in a more urban environment, I could go to the theater, wander through Barnes & Noble, or spend an afternoon in a museum or art gallery. A city like Austin offered so many wonderful distractions.

But here in Prairie Falls, there was just me, myself, and I. And I wasn't good company.