A HE CALLED IT LOVE GUIDE

YOU DON'T OWE THEM ACCESS

A workbook for people who love people who hurt them.

"You're allowed to leave the family group chat.
You're allowed to leave the family."

— from He Called It Love

BEFORE YOU START

This isn't a guide about cutting people off.
It's a guide about telling the truth.

The truth about what happened.
The truth about what it cost you.
The truth about what you're allowed to want now.

You don't have to hate them to protect yourself from them.
You just have to stop explaining your boundaries
to people who benefit from you having none.

WHAT MAKES A FAMILY TOXIC

It's not one bad day. It's the pattern.

The apology that never comes.
The love that has conditions attached.
The way you're the problem the moment you have a need.

If you're always the one adjusting...
that's not harmony. That's survival.

WHY LEAVING FEELS WRONG

They taught you loyalty before they taught you safety.

So now walking away feels like betrayal, even when staying was the real one.

Guilt isn't proof you're doing something wrong.

Sometimes it's just proof you were raised to never do this.

WERE YOU THE PARENT?

I managed my parent's emotions before I could manage my own.
I was the reason the peace held.
I felt guilty resting while everyone else needed something.
I don't know how to ask for help without apologizing first.

If you recognized more than one...
you already know.

WHAT IT COST YOU

Trusting your own memory.
Believing your needs were reasonable.
Feeling safe asking for help.
Knowing what normal actually looks like.

None of that was your fault.
All of it is fixable.

BUILD YOUR BOUNDARY

Fill in the blanks. Say it exactly like this,
or make it yours.

"I love you, and I won't _____anymore."

"I'm not available for_____.”

"I hear you. My answer is still _____.”

You don't need a longer sentence.

You need a steadier one.

SCRIPTS FOR THE HOLIDAY TABLE

"I'm not discussing that today."

"That's not true, and I'm not arguing about it."

"I love you. I'm still leaving at 6."

"We're not doing this here."

Practice these until they feel boring.

Boring means safe.

STAY. PAUSE. OR GO.

Ask yourself, not them.

Does this relationship change when I bring something up,
or just when I bring myself up?

Do I feel like myself after we talk, or smaller?

If I stayed exactly this size forever,
would that be okay?

Your answers are the filter. Trust them.

IS THIS RELATIONSHIP SAFE RIGHT NOW

I can disagree without punishment.

My "no" is treated as real.

I'm not the family's emotional shock absorber.

I don't have to shrink to keep the peace.

Safety isn't the absence of conflict.
It's the presence of respect.

@HECALLEDITLOVE

WRITE IT DOWN

What did I learn to tolerate
that I should have never had to?

What would I tell a friend
in my exact situation?

WRITE IT DOWN

What am I still hoping

they'll finally say?

What do I get to choose now

that I didn't get to choose then?

@HECALLEDITLOVE

LAST THING

You don't have to burn it down
to walk away from it.

You don't have to prove the damage
to be allowed to leave it.

Blood explains why you started there.
It doesn't require you to stay.

You get to choose your family now.
Choose the ones who choose you back.

CARRY THESE

I am allowed to protect my peace.

Love without safety isn't love,

it's loyalty in disguise.

CARRY THESE

I don't owe anyone access to me.

Distance is not betrayal.

— from He Called It Love