

## They picked the wrong girl

### Chapter 10

Inside of a club.

“Say that again. I dare you.” Sherman yanked Jim up by the collar.

The man’s glasses were askew and one of the lenses cracked right down the middle.

His expression stayed composed, but his eyes—ice cold and dangerous. -  
were another story.

“I said.” Jim repeated, his tone sharp and deliberate, “she’s just a well- behaved girl we raised. She should be following our rules.”

Sherman did not hesitate to punch Jim in the face.

Jim’s head snapped to the side, and blood immediately trickled from the corner of his mouth.

He wiped it with the back of his hand, stared at the smear on his fingers, and smiled.

“Sherman,” he stood up slowly, voice calm, “since when did you start caring about her this much?”

“You used her for clout and spotlight and shoved her onto the stage while calling her your ‘bro’.

“She only ever told you she liked Eric, but you just had to go shouting it to the world.

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“From beginning to end, did any of us ever treat her like a real person?”

Sherman’s breath caught, fists clenching tighter.

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He muttered something, then threw another punch. “You knew who she liked! Why the hell would you...”

This time, Jim caught his wrist mid-swing.

He was not letting it land.

"I liked her." Jim said flatly. "What about you? Are you brave enough to say it out loud?"

Sherman's pupils shrank. In a flash, all those "casual" things Jim had said over the years came flooding back.

"Jen ditched the dinner again. Heard she was at the library with the student union guy."

"Last Thursday, she and three guys slipped into an empty classroom after school."

"The clinic nurse said she came for birth control pills yesterday."

"That rich kid from senior year's been hanging around her a lot lately."

And suddenly it clicked, and Sherman's eyes widened. "You've been the one feeding us all those rumors about her being easy."

Jim wiped his glasses slowly and methodically.

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The cracks in the lens mirrored the twisted mess inside him. "We were in the same school and the same grade, yet didn't you all just eat up everything I said?"

"Nonsense!" Sherman's hand shook where it gripped his collar.

"We treated you like a brother, and you played us like fools?"

Jim let out a shaky, almost manic laugh. "You think I'm the only one lying?"

He pulled out his phone and tapped Play.

Regina's sugary voice rang out, "Jimmy, I've got a meeting with the Sports Department folks tomorrow to 'accidentally run into' Jen. Don't forget to bring Eric and the others."

Sherman's blood turned to ice.

Each word sliced through memory like a knife.

Regina had "panicked" and dragged him and Eric to spy on me meeting some guy, and Jim had just "happened" to be walking by to back her story. Those two idiots bought the whole act.

I still remember Eric slamming the door in my face, over and over.

All those "caught cheating" setups? Turns out they were written, directed, and produced by that twisted pair.

“You...” Sherman choked on the rising bitterness. “You two wanted to cut her off from everyone?”

“She’d lose hope that way,” Jim murmured, his fingers scrolling through old messages from Regina. “Once everyone turns on her, I’d be

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the only one left beside her...”

Sherman’s next punch landed with years’ worth of regret.

“Because of your sick obsession, she spent three years being treated like trash by Eric!”

Memories hit me like a wave.

Cleaning up shattered glass, pulling all-nighters to help him prep for competitions, and smiling like it did not hurt when he humiliated me in front of others.

Jim let out a low, bitter laugh. “Weren’t you enjoying watching her trail

after us like a mutt too?”

Before he could finish, Sherman’s fist shattered his glasses.

“I’m gonna kill you!” Sherman lunged at him like a furious lion.

Seconds later, the two were full-on brawling.

Someone caught **it** on camera and it blew up online.

When Leon showed me the footage, all I could do was laugh.

Turns out, they would fight over me.

However, it was way too late.

And I did not expect it was the guy who used to quietly copy down my math notes when I was sick.

The same guy who told Mrs. Hemingway more than once that “Jen deserves the best.”

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But it was them who pieced together lies, bit by bit, using the filthiest

tricks.

And when Eric was grilling me in rage, he was the one who “filled in” details that never even happened.

I suddenly remembered that he jumped the wall just to get me medicine when I was sixteen, burning with a fever in the dorm.

He came back caked in mud and yet, he was still clutching a fever patch like it was treasure.

“Jen.” His forehead was bleeding, but his voice was soft. “As long as you need me, I’ll be here.”

What a joke.

He really was always there.

Lurking in the shadows, spinning webs, and adding fuel to every fire.

Always waiting for me to break so he could be the one to “save” me.

I doubled over, nausea rising out of nowhere.

Leon passed me warm water, and I realized I was trembling.

Not from sadness or rage, just that awful, hollow feeling when reality becomes too absurd to bear.

“Should we press charges?” Leon asked, gently wiping tears I had not noticed. “We’ve got all the evidence.”

“If not, I can just buy out his tiny company myself.”

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I shook my head and shut off the screen.

Some betrayals run deeper than the law can ever reach.