

## They picked the wrong girl

### Chapter 11

Mrs. Hemingway did not make it through that spring

At the funeral, I saw my childhood friends again after two long months.

Eric looked rough. Heavy dark circles under his eyes, and his right hand wrapped in fresh bandages.

Word had it he had been slipping up in matches, and fans now called him a “mad dog”.

“Jen...” His voice was raw, “I found out about your parents...”

What do my parents have to do with you?”

He suddenly grabbed my wrist, the bandage on his hand starting to stain red. “Didn’t you say... it’d be forever...”

“Forever what?” I asked quietly. “Forever your emotional punching bag? Forever the one who cleans up your mess?”

His grip dropped like he had touched fire.

I did not argue. Just turned and walked away.

Behind me, Eric’s silhouette got smaller and smaller in the rain.

I remember the first time he won a championship. He shouted to me in the golden confetti, “Jen! I won!”

His eyes shone brighter than the trophy itself. “If I win again, can you...”

We both flushed.

However, he never said what I was hoping to hear.

After that, he kept winning. More titles, more fans, more fame.

And he lost only one thing, the girl who used to be there in the crowd, always cheering for him.

I have watched his game replays in the middle of the night more times than I care to admit.

And every time, when he lifts another trophy and glances around...

I know who he's searching for. He's looking for Jen, the girl who stayed up all night painting his name on a poster, the one who messaged him first after a tough loss, and the one who cried even harder than him when he won.

Unfortunately, she was gone.

I would not clap for his victories anymore, would not stay up worrying when he falls short, and I would not wait around for a boy with a temper to finally learn how to be gentle.

Leon gently took my hand, pulling me back from the memories.

His palm was warm and steady. No outbursts, no tension—just quiet. reassurance and calm.

"What are you thinking about?" Leon asked gently.

I shook my head.

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We walked in silence until Sherman suddenly caught up with us.

"Jen, you're here. Why didn't you let me know? I could've..."

He paused when he saw Leon beside me, choking back the words he wanted to say.

"You two are still together?"

He forced a smile that looked more like he was in pain.

"Since we were kids, you always spoiled me. Later, I heard people say you treated every guy like that and I hated it so much..."

"All those endless pranks and teasing was because I felt unloved, and I wanted to make sure you wouldn't leave.

"Jen, I'm sorry." He suddenly grabbed my wrist, his voice trembling. "Can we go back? Just treat me like your little brother again."

I gently pulled my hand away, meeting his reddened eyes.

“Oh—  
right!” He added quickly like he was clinging to one last chance. “I reported Jim’s company for financial fraud. He’s about to go bankrupt. I did it for you...”

“Sherman.” I looked him in the eye and said slowly, “I can’t take your jokes anymore.”

The smile on his lips finally faded away.

“From now on, don’t drag me into your trending topics, your scandals, or your little ‘scripts’.”

With that, I turned and walked off.

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Behind me, I heard his voice, low and broken, “Jen...”

However, I did not turn back.

Maybe in a few days, he would do what he always does, post something casual like nothing ever happened, saying, “Don’t overthink it. Jen and I are just siblings, just messing around.”

Yet, this time, I am done giving him chances.

The man behind me seemed to have dropped to his knees.

I could hear his muffled sobs like a stray dog left out in the cold.

Yet, not a single part of me was moved.

Some mistakes are not fixable with just a sorry.

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