

## A Life Beyond Limits

### Chapter 8

The guys cheered loudly in agreement, with Jack joining in just for fun. But when his name was drawn, the room filled with shrieks from the girls and envious glances from the guys.

"Wow, Jack! You really got lucky!" Wesley exclaimed.

Genuinely surprised, Jack turned to look at Phoebe. Her cheeks were flushed, and she stared at him in disbelief. After a moment of hesitation, she stood up. Amid the playful shouts and laughter of their classmates, Phoebe and Jack took the microphones.

As a gentle melody filled the room, they exchanged a quick glance and were instantly drawn into the mood of the love song. Singing with Phoebe for the first time, Jack felt a wave of emotion wash over him. His voice softened as he began to sing.

To everyone's surprise, Phoebe, who rarely sang, had a voice just as impressive as Feena's. Her tone was clear and pure, perfectly matched to Jack's resonant voice. Their duet was so in sync and captivating that it felt like a performance on a grand stage.

When they finished, the room filled in thunderous applause.

The whole room stared at them in disbelief. Some classmates even teased, "No way, Jack! Have you and Phoebe been practicing every day? There's no way you could sing that well without practice!"

Jack smiled and thanked them. Phoebe gave a faint smile. She gently set down the microphone, then casually glanced at Jack before looking away.

In such a fun atmosphere, time always seemed to fly by. Before they knew it, it was time for the barbecue. As evening fell, the classmates grabbed their grilling tools and food and headed toward the riverbank. The summer breeze left everyone feeling refreshed.

Based on the afternoon's plan, the barbecue groups stayed the same as their singing room teams. However, more classmates joined Jack's group, eager for one last chance to hang out with Phoebe and Feena.

As a few of the guys started goofing around, the atmosphere gradually grew livelier. The mix of bittersweet farewell and playful chaos created a unique atmosphere at the graduation celebration.

Then, someone suggested playing a game of Truth-or-Dare around the bonfire. To make it more exciting, they grabbed a nearby pinecone to decide turns. They passed it around quickly, and whoever was holding it when the music stopped had to choose truth or dare.

The game quickly elicited excited screams from the group. To everyone's surprise, many people boldly shared long-kept secrets.

As another round began, Wesley held onto the pinecone, refusing to let go, which made Jack, the next in line, visibly anxious. Just as the music was about to stop, Wesley suddenly tossed the pinecone high into the air. It spun around before landing right in Jack's lap. It was clear Wesley had done it on purpose.

Jack shot Wesley a glare, clearly annoyed. But before he could say anything, Wesley shouted, "Jack, you've got it! Now, tell us—who's your secret crush? No cheating!"

The classmates immediately chimed in, their voice growing louder.

"Jack, don't even think about lying!" someone shouted.

"We're all curious to know!" another added.

"Make your graduation unforgettable! Even if you were rejected, just say it!" someone else encouraged.

In the past, Jack might not have been brave enough to face this. But now, he was brimming with confidence. Besides, this farewell could mean he'd have fewer and fewer chances to see his crush once they were in college. After all, once they started working in different cities, they might never see each other again.

Jack took a deep breath and said calmly, "It's Feena."

A wave of surprise went through the crowd. Although everyone had guessed that Jack's secret crush was either Feena or Phoebe, no one expected Jack to actually say it out loud.

Wesley grinned and added, "Actually, Jack and Feena are childhood friends."

Wesley had always known about Jack's feelings for Feena and had purposely created this opportunity for him. Otherwise, once they all went their separate ways for college, there might not be another chance for Jack to confess.

After Jack spoke, he felt a weight lift off his chest. He glanced at Feena, eager to see her reaction.

Under the bright light, Feena's face reflected a mix of shock, confusion, and unease. Jack's confession completely surprised her and left her puzzled.

High school romances were usually subtle and unspoken—nothing like Jack's bold, straightforward declaration. Eventually, Feena turned away, avoiding his gaze. She said nothing, but her expression said it all.

A wave of disappointment washed over Jack, but at the same time, he felt a sense of relief. He had expected this outcome.

After all, the distance between them was undeniable. Jack was an expelled student, while Feena was a top achiever from a privileged background with a bright future.

Sensing the tension, the classmates quickly shifted the conversation to other topics, breaking the silence.

Feena felt a pang of guilt toward Jack, but she couldn't accept his confession. At her age, love was still an idealized dream.

She'd always imagined a perfect, talented guy riding in on a white horse to sweep her off her feet. Tall and handsome, he would sing better than her and would also outperform her in school. He would love playing sports, especially basketball and would come from a wealthy family.

Unfortunately, Jack didn't meet those criteria.

Seeing his best friend get rejected, Wesley felt a surge of guilt. He'd only wanted to help Jack, but now, he realized that he'd probably made things worse.

When Jack sat back down, Wesley patted him on the back and muttered awkwardly, "I was trying to help, but I messed up. Damn it..."

Jack grinned, giving Wesley a light punch on the shoulder. "I knew you were up to something, but I don't blame you."

Seeing Jack's easygoing smile, Wesley felt his burden lighten a bit.

The awkwardness from Jack's confession lingered for a moment, but it soon dissolved into laughter and chatter. The guys gathered around Jack, patting his shoulder and offering him words of encouragement.

Deep down, everyone knew that Feena, with her affluent background, brilliant academic record, and bright future, was far beyond their reach at this age.

The rest of the Truth-or-Dare game fizzled out without much excitement. As the celebration drew to a close, the group felt a bittersweet sense of farewell.

Many of them wrote their hopes and dreams in the damp sand. As the water gently lapped at the edge of the river, slowly erasing their words, they realized everything was about to change.

"Who knows the song 'Time?'" someone suddenly asked.

The group buzzed with excitement. "Time" had become incredibly popular lately, especially among the graduating students, and it was being sung everywhere. The song captured their bright hopes for the future, as well as the bittersweet emotions of first love and the sadness of farewells.

The songwriter of "Time" was considered a musical genius. Since the debut of the song, they had taken the world by storm.

On the Top Hits Chart, "Time" had shot straight to number one on the New Artist chart. It had also broken into the top five on the overall charts, rapidly climbing toward the number one spot.