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The Final Verdict

a One-Shot chapter

He became everything he thought would be enough—for her, for love, for the life he dreamed.
But as steel met silence on a rainy road, he realized too late that time waits for no one. Or does it?

JinAm

2025

Some hearts only learn to speak when it's already too late.

Lone Chapter

Objection of Fate

My Final Case, The One I Never Won

JinAm

2025

The night air was thick with rain, each drop tapping rhythmically against the windshield like a metronome counting down the seconds I didn't have. The city lights outside smeared into streaks, blurring through the droplets—just as my thoughts blurred between moments past and a future I would never see.

The weight of the day pressed down on me—hours spent poring over legal briefs, fighting battles in court, carrying the hopes and fears of others on my shoulders. The fight to rise from the awkward, insecure boy I was in junior high to the man I'd become was not just a story of self-growth. It was a tale written by her—the girl I never truly dared to hold, but who shaped everything I was and everything I wished to be.

Tonight was supposed to be different.

I'd just come from a late meeting, finalizing a case that could have meant a promotion—one step closer to the life I'd dreamed of while studying in college, balancing student council duties and long nights of research. But the familiar ache settled in my chest—the ache of a love never spoken aloud, a love that haunted every success, every lonely moment.

The road stretched ahead, slick and unforgiving under the rain. My fingers clenched the steering wheel tighter, a futile attempt to steady the turmoil inside me. I could still hear her voice from years ago, the way it softened when she laughed, the warmth in her eyes when we met again during that government OJT in our fourth year of college—the moment our paths crossed once more.

But this time, I had the courage. This time, I thought, it could be different.

Then, everything shattered.

A sudden glare of headlights cut through the darkness—a car swerving recklessly, coming head-on without warning. My body reacted before my mind could process, jerking the wheel sharply. The world exploded into chaos.

Metal collided with metal in a savage, unforgiving scream. The deafening crunch of the crash filled my ears as glass burst, raining like cold fire around me. My head slammed against the side window, pain erupting like a star gone supernova.

But worse than the physical torment was the crushing realization that this might be the end—the end of a story I wasn't ready to finish.

I tried to speak, but my throat was thick, words caught like desperate gasps. I thought of her—the shy girl who unknowingly sparked a revolution in my soul. The girl I pursued silently from eighth grade, whose existence rewrote my destiny.

My vision blurred, pain radiating through every nerve ending. I wanted to tell her—no, I needed to tell her—that I loved her, that everything I'd done was because of her.

I remembered the proud moments: my senior high school graduation, the night I received high honors and the Best in Research award, the thunderous applause for a boy who once doubted his worth. The years in college, filled with laughter and struggles, where I served as a student council officer, learning leadership and responsibility—and always holding her in my heart.

But all those moments, all those triumphs, suddenly felt so fragile—like a delicate glass sculpture shattered in a single instant.

The world tilted, the rain on the broken windshield blending with tears I couldn't shed. Sirens wailed in the distance, but their cries felt like they were coming from another life.

I wanted more time—to rewrite the past, to fix the mistakes, to tell her that I wasn't just the boy who admired her from afar, but a man willing to fight for what mattered.

A part of me screamed against the dark closing in, but the pain grew heavier, dragging me down like an anchor to a deep, cold sea.

As my breathing slowed, a whisper escaped my cracked lips—an apology to the life I was leaving behind and the love I'd never fully claimed.

And in that final moment, with the city lights fading to black, I understood the cruelest truth: some stories don't get their happy endings. Not here. Not now.

But maybe, somewhere beyond this fragile existence, there was another chance—a different path where I could rise again, stronger, braver, ready to hold her hand and never let go.

The cold darkness swallowed me whole.

Then—suddenly—I gasped, lungs burning, eyes snapping open.

I wasn't in that shattered car anymore.

I was back.

Back in a classroom bathed in soft afternoon light, the scent of old textbooks and dust filling my senses. The familiar chatter of eighth graders buzzed around me, and there she was—unaware, unknowingly the catalyst of a future yet unwritten.

My heart hammered—not with fear, but with fierce resolve.

This time, I wouldn't be the boy who only watched from afar.

This time, I would rewrite everything.

Because death was not the end.

It was only the beginning.

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