

Thursday 12th September 2019

The chapter delves into the narrator's recent discoveries about Seb, a man connected to Jen, revealing details from his background and personality. Seb works at the same company as Jen, having joined a year prior, and hails from a small English border town with Welsh ties. He has South African heritage through his mother and is 44 years old. The narrator uncovers Seb's past relationship with Kate and notes Seb's interests, such as Caribbean holidays and extreme sports for charity. Despite some sympathy for Seb's personal losses, the narrator remains skeptical of him, particularly regarding his relationship with Jen.

The narrator initiates what is termed the "Jen Inquiry," a personal investigation into the reasons behind Jen's breakup with them and the nature of her relationship with Seb. This inquiry is marked by the narrator's strategic approach to conversations with mutual acquaintances, carefully managing social "tokens" to avoid overstepping. The tension of navigating these interactions is palpable, especially during a visit to friends Jane and Avi, where the narrator must balance curiosity with social tact amid the chaos of family life.

A poignant moment arises when Jane's child, Jackson, expresses feelings of being replaced, mirroring the narrator's own sense of loss and displacement. This interaction underscores the emotional undercurrents running through the chapter, highlighting themes of attachment, favoritism, and the complexities of familial and romantic relationships. The narrator's empathy toward Jackson's plight provides a humanizing contrast to the otherwise investigative tone of the chapter.

The chapter concludes with a lighter, more humorous scene as the narrator recounts an unexpected encounter with Daisy, an ex-partner, and the awkward aftermath of a drunken voicemail apology. This anecdote serves to break the tension and offers insight into the narrator's vulnerable and self-deprecating nature. It also subtly sets

the stage for further exploration of the narrator's personal life and emotional struggles, maintaining the chapter's blend of introspection and narrative momentum.