

The One that Got Away

“Caaaaar!! Are you bringing this bag with you?” My mom yelled with her hands acting like a megaphone.

I tensed and said “Put it in the table, please! I will tell you after I finished what I’m doing.”

I couldn’t take off this goofy grin on my face as I organized my baggage. I was finally granted a working Visa from the United States after applying for two years here in Indonesia. I was inspired when I saw this commercial of U.S. soldiers a while back. My heart beats faster, and my hands are sweating like crazy since I am about to leave this country a few days from now.

I went to the living room to check out what my mom told me, and I saw my black Jansport bookbag from my senior year. I jiggled it and dropped my cheat sheets from my math class, some rocks. Ahh, the pranks my friends did... And a brown bracelet that I can’t fathom. Yet, I held the bracelet dearly and looked at it with great importance for some reason. Then I suddenly remembered a former classmate of mine. It made me anxious when I visualized her.

Her name was Angel. She was petite, brunette, extrovert, and a cool person. Her smile and sparkling eyes will make someone feel like everything will be alright as long as you’re with her. Me, on the other hand well, I am an intelligent person. In fact, I am one of the top five of our senior class at Saint Peter School. When someone needs help with their homework, you can count on me. Yeah! I am that guy. You could also say that I am a cool person since many people ask for my help.

Angel and I first met on a group project. It was a typical project where we had to present something in front of the class. I did all the work in most cases, and I let my groupmates present

it to everybody. After the presentation, my group usually get an A grade, and my classmates tell the whole class that

“Freakin’ Carl did all of that. What did other people helped with?” with disgust look to my groupmates.

Group projects were a thing in our senior year, and I noticed that Angel kept on being in the same group as I was. We became close friends and talked about schoolwork most of the time.

“Hey, I don’t really get this, can you help me solve the problem?”

“Sure thing!”

There was one time we had to film ourselves for a project in the second semester of our senior year, and just like you guessed, Angel was in my group again. This group project was different because we had to meet on our off days to complete the film. I had exchanged my phone numbers with my groupmates. Eventually, we would finish the film, and I noticed Angel is now more assertive texting me.

“Hey, can you send me photo of your cheat sheet so I can use it for mine?”

“Carl, what formula should I use on this question?”

Her willingness to learn lit a fire inside me, and I gave her most of my time to help her out. It then came to a point where we would go on a tangent and talk about ourselves.

“So what are you trying to do after you graduate?”

I replied, “I’ll probably apply for a visa to go to United States! I saw this commercial, and it made me want to go there! How about you?”

“I don’t know HAHAHA, Is there something interesting about you?”

“I can move my ears?” We both start giggling.

“Hmmm. Did you ever dated someone, or have you been in a relationship before, Carl?”

I hesitantly told her “I’ve been single for a while. How about you?”

“No” she answered and for some reason, it made me smile.

We both did our best to break the ice so our conversation wouldn’t end. Our conversation went on for a while, and the next thing I knew, the first thing I wanted to see was my phone with her name on top of my notification list. If I don’t see it, it feels like a lifetime.

Here is the crazy part. My heart feels like it’s about to explode every time I see her. We both couldn’t look at each other’s eyes for the longest, and it was very awkward because we stuttered as we tried to have a normal conversation. Our classmates noticed it and started teasing us.

“Everybody, Carl and Angel are in love!” shouted one of my classmates and that made it more cringeworthy.

Time passed by, and the Christmas holidays were approaching. Our advisor was looking for ideas on what the class will do for Christmas Party. One of my classmates suggested that we should do Secret Santa. We all started writing our names down on a piece of paper and put it on the pool pot. The advisor would call one student at a time and grab one paper from the pool pot. When my advisor called my name, I nonchalantly grabbed a paper. "Please be her, please be her." But it was not. Shortly after, the whole class knew who they had to give gifts to.

When our Christmas party came in, we sang Selamat hari Natal dan Tahun Baru and Malam Kudus. Our voices were out of tune, yet it had great enthusiasm. The Pork Rolls, Chicken Budu, Bagea, and a Lapet cake will make someone’s mouth water. Truly, it was a great day. After the festivities, Secret Santa came in. We directly gave the gifts to the person we picked from the pool pot before and greeted them with “happy holidays!” Guess who Angel picked from the pool pot. ME!

“Here you go” as she looks at the ground.

I smiled and told her, “Thank you.” Then we both realized that the class were looking at us.

“Aawwwwww” everyone from my class squealed and it left an indescribable feeling.

We only had three months left until graduation as the Christmas holidays passed. My friends were telling me that they would miss copying my homework. I told them that I would miss the laughter and pranks that we did. Shortly after, I plan on what I have to do to get to the United States. I told Angel about my plans, and she seemed pissed hearing it. She never left a text, she never talked or called me after that. My heart felt heavy, but I acted oblivious.

February month came in. The warm sun is touching my skin, and the flowers are blooming once again. Our school had a promenade coming, and it was a voluntary event. Angel approached me and asked, “can you be my partner?”

“Yeah, I can be your partner” as I look to the side. Though, I saw a glimpse of her beautiful smile when she said “Great!”

As the Prom came in, I wore this gray turtleneck and black satin trousers. I saw Angel with her two-piece dress adorned with sparkling beads and a gold panel. She was magnificent. I gave her a single piece of rose and told her, “You look beautiful.” She grabbed my hands, and we danced the whole evening.

As the night dusk, winds were blowing, and our prom is nearing its end. Angel asked me this question, “Carl, do you like me?”

Chills ran down my spine, and I swallowed my own saliva. I couldn’t look at her eyes and told her, “I mean... We could still be friends”

I saw a tear slid down on her cheek and she immediately rans off.

I told her, “Wait!” as I chased her. I lost her in the crowds. I later knew she had already left the venue. I sat down, flabbergasted, and reflected on the events until the prom ended. It felt like the whole world crashed down upon me. I hurt the person I really liked.

A few weeks later, graduation came in. The whole class was wearing their green graduation robe. Everyone was taking their selfies and hugging each other. I saw Angel, but now she acts like I am a stranger. I couldn’t say a single word after I approached her.

I got three medals from the school as our graduation ended. A photographer suggested we do one last class photo. After that, we said our goodbyes to our closest friends/classmates. Some of them cried.

One last time, Angel approached and said, “Hey, good luck on your future endeavors,” and hugged me really tight. After that, she grabbed her phone to take a selfie and gave me a beaded brown bracelet.

“Don’t you dare lose this when you leave!”

I replied, “Okay.” It happened too fast, and all I could remember was the grief that was crushing down her soul. It felt like my whole world was going to collapse seeing her like that. I wanted to apologize, but it felt like there was no point.

“So, are you bringing that bag? Helloooooo?” My mom said after seeing me in the living room.

“Yes!” I abruptly told her.

As my mom left the room, I tried looking up Angel’s Facebook. I saw her photos and it looked like she was in high spirits. And then I saw another man beside her with the caption, “I love you!”

This time, it felt like hell. I let her get away.