

BEDEVILMENT OF AN ANGELIC HEART

Luciano DeSanctis



EXPECTATIONS ARE FROZEN RESENTMENTS WAITING TO THAW . . .

**BEDEVILMENT
of an
ANGELIC HEART**



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Chapter 1

Coming to Terms with Love

Slivering rays of autumn sun flickered a warm orange glow through the blinds of the window of the Provincetown, Massachusetts Public Library, even at the late hour of half past five in the afternoon. It shone onto the bookshelf and on Angel Francis Davin, where she was busily rearranging a stack of books in their proper order. In the library youth room, books were constantly being put back on the shelves in no particular order, but for Angel the tedious task actually was a pleasant part of her new job. It was much like playing Sudoku, which was her passion, and quite an addictive game.

As Angel glanced through a stack of books, she saw that it happened to be about horses. She gave a little self-conscious smile and bowed her head, knowing how she loved any type of horses, not to mention her girl — Sweet Pea. On that thought, an image of a silvery Standard bred stallion on a book cover caused her to momentarily turn her head slightly, bringing a sudden feeling of desolation. Her mind took her back to a day, not long ago, with her boyfriend, Terry Lee Whitney, horseback riding nearby the muddy lagoon. Her eyes then lightly

misted when memories flooded her head of him, on his stallion, Sigi, trotting through the grassy sand dunes. At such thought, she shook her head. It made her realize that she was being a bit irrational and she better stop having thoughts of being without him.

Good grief, just come to terms with it! Angel rebuked the lonesome thought. Her melancholy moods were again getting the best of her. Knowing that she had to keep her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ in getting through those times, and to self-exist until her boyfriend could come home. She has no doubt in the faith of her Lord, or for that matter in Terry. She merely wanted to end the awful gush of random discombobulated thoughts and feelings that surfaced from time to time ever since her flamboyant and assertive boyfriend left for college. *But, how can I? I am so tired of feeling this way and there no reason for me being this way —not really.*

These days Terry was very busy attending Boston College in the village of Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, as well as volunteering at the parish of St. Ignatius. Of all things, he wanted to follow the career of her mother, Francis Jamie Davin, who for many years has been a rector of the Church of the Holy Spirit, here in Provincetown. Her boyfriend has one more semester to go before graduating with a Bachelor of Theology. Being the

ever-busy body, he rarely came home. Through this time their long courtship took a big hit due to his ministry college career. The last time they saw each other was when he came home on Columbus Day weekend, which was a little more than a week ago. Angel worried about him because he was feeling overwhelmed with college workload. It was at that time he told her that he was going through some difficult times in his life and they needed to take a time apart from each other for a while, so that he could find himself and his life in Christ. This meant that during his studies he wanted no contact at all with her, or for that matter, anyone at home, until the end of the semester. Angel sighed, at the thought. Once her headstrong boyfriend decided, it was final.

At first, Angel felt a bit odd at the thought of going through a trial break-up. It bummed her out. After all, Terry was more than a boyfriend was. He was family to her, having practically grown up in her home. During their early adolescence years, he was the closest thing to a brother that she did not have. Being the same age, both attended the same schools in Provincetown, and even had some of the same classes together. His father and he attended her mother's church, and they had been neighbors for more than a decade.

As one would expect, Angel took the news calmly, like a good preacher's daughter. She humbly agreed to abide by his decision, even though she felt weird about it. She truly trusted Terry. He added to her life in which she was to be. Her belief was that they were meant to be together, that the Lord put them perfectly together for a reason. Her destiny was part of his; it was written for her in heaven, long before she was ever born. Her calling was to be a 'Mother', not just to her own children, but also to many. Encouraged by her mother, she was to share her ideal life, ministry, and status with others. People who knew her well saw her as the miracle baby who was not supposed to survive. From birth she has played an important role in her church as the rector's daughter. Her work for the ministry was her life — and the ministry, always came first.

Angel has always walked life's path not being the type to ruffle feathers. She simply loved everyone: friends, family, and strangers. She reached for them all, and, in return, practically everyone would reciprocate or at least acknowledge her. But if they ignored her, she did not take it personally.

At the heart of it, her boyfriend's detachment from her was temporary, only to last until the end of the semester.

Having a painfully shy demeanor, Angel went on telling her boyfriend that now that she had graduated from the library technology online program, and there were talks of marriage after his graduation, she could use the time apart as well. As it is, she had some changes to make on herself, such as being more assertive in her personal and professional life. Her shyness made her uncomfortable being the center of attention, and it was the reason why she had always avoided the limelight. It was something she had to get over. After all, she was destined to become a minister's wife and a mother, with responsibilities and duties that were unique in some respects. Suddenly half of her squirmed under that thought; wondering why she felt so indifferent. In the existing circumstances, being the daughter of a rector was never easy. All her life she felt the public was carefully watching her, as if being under a microscope. But as shy as she was, she was able to comfortably be under her mother's protective wings. Surely life was supposed to be an adventure, but her life was changing too quickly to keep up and somehow — it frightened her. What she really wanted was his attention. She wanted him back. She wanted things between them to be like they had been like in high school. Where they spent time with their friends, where they did

the same things, where they remained in constant contact with each other by text messages whenever they were apart. In these years of school, they were so close as if they had an umbilical cord attached to each other, and now, ironically, it seemed to her that they had broken that cord. And with that Angel rolled her eyes, brushed the thought aside, and concentrated on her work.

After seconds went by, the thought of him re-emerged. Again she rolled her eyes. *It is all good — It is only a week — He will get tired of it!* She sighed again. She flipped a book around, putting it back on the shelf where it belonged. *He is bound to get so lonely that he will grow out of this solitary phase that he is in.*

For the first two days of their break-up, they had no contact at all. After that, she gave in and contacted him once through text messaging. That was last Monday, to see how he was doing, and all she got from him was three calculated words that said — “busy, love you.” To make things worse, he also told her that he was not coming home next week to work on his small horse farm, because his Dad and he were still not talking. Also, he wanted to stay for the summer courses so he could lighten up the course loads in the future. That way he could get through college as soon as possible. Her boyfriend could take all the time in the world if he wanted to, since he is the last one to carry on his

mother's bloodline, and had inherited an estate worth 1.5 million dollars. The fact was that he was too ambitious, wanting to succeed in his Ministry, and would not stop for anything. He often professed to their fellow parishioners that he was in a hurry to graduate from college so he could answer the call of the Lord. Angel momentarily pursed her lips in disapproval, but raised an eyebrow, forcing an optimistic demeanor. She understood it was the right thing for him to do.

It is all good! She told herself with a shrug. *I do not know why I am so cranky?* She then stopped momentarily sorting books, and with eyes raised to the ceiling, she quickly added a prayer — *Oh my dear Lord, please give me more patience. Lead me away from temptation, so I can complete your will and plans for me, whatever it may be. Amen.* And she dismissed the gloom from her mind in the time she crouched down to the floor to take a disorderly pile of books out on the bottom bookshelf. *I'll text later and tell him all about my new job*, she thought. *He will be so proud of me.* Angel paused and thought it over. Then a silly smirk came to her lips. *Well, at least he will acknowledge that I have a job. No longer will he tease me about being a little spoiled homebody that gets everything from her gracious mother.* She smiled widely, *because I now have a job — and my own money to go shopping with!*

Angel simply loved Terry, for who he was, and for who he wasn't, and she honestly felt that he loved her too. Even though she missed him, she truly believed with all her heart that he believed living a solitary life for now was good for them both.

While she crouched down on the floor, putting the books in order, a loud bunch of obnoxious screams jolted Angel back to reality. Angel immediately stood up, turned, and then moved forward to see more clearly where the commotion was coming from. Across the room among some teens and elementary students, she caught sight of two unpleasant girls, sitting across the reading table from each other bickering loudly among themselves. One was a very fair-skinned blond, and the other girl was olive-skinned with dark hair in a ponytail. Angel's deep blue eyes opened wide when she heard the cursing and shrieking; their arms were flailing about in the air, like tentacles ready to strike prey. Angel swallowed over the lump in her throat before she had the nerve to go speak to the girls. She walked over with her chin up and a steady look at them. They both turned very slowly to her direction and then pointed their eyes at her approach. Angel could not help but see the look of jealousy written all over the pale-green-eyed blond girl, with a tattoo on her neck of what appeared to be two skulls

making a heart shape. The other girl smiled, but with an oddly mischievous look in her eyes.

“Excuse me, but are you both doing okay here?” Angel asked courteously.

Both girls were dressed in dark clothing. Their faces were pierced with jewelry, and they wore vibrant makeup and nail polish. They both seemed to be rather tall, sitting there on children’s chairs as they looked to be fully developed mature young women. They gave Angel a quick backward glance before starting bickering again. Angel’s bashful face turned one of soft surprise to pure disgust as they continued their battle over a boy they were unknowingly having a sexual relationship with.

“Would you please keep it down and not use words like that in this establishment!”

Angel said with a voice of authority.

The unexpected tomboy tone in Angel’s voice almost made both burst out laughing.

They turned their attention to Angel as if she were some kind of a lunatic throwing a tantrum.

“Who’re you?” the ponytail brunette girl grumbled at Angel with a good, hard look at her short body.

The blond girl moaned under her breath, rolled away her pale-blue eyes before snapping at her, “Look, kid, this is none of your fucking business —

why don't you get lost!" She kept the stare at Angel with a repulsive smile.

Angel's mouth opened like a fish and then turned to look at the foul-mouthed girl expressing her displeasure. I am no child. No need to be rude. There is no cursing here, please, or you have to leave." Even though she was twenty-one years old, Angel still had the petite features of a teenager, and she looked remarkably young and angelic, standing a tad over four-foot eleven inches, with large deep blue eyes and jet blue-black hair. Now, with her new short pixie haircut, she was easily mistaken for a thirteen or fourteen-year-old, and as far as she was concerned, her Nymph qualities, was a curse of looking too young, which did not help in the new job. The girls' hard stony faces quickly wiped away after being told that they were in the presence of a librarian. They sat there quietly; their demeanor changed as Angel made them fully aware of the consequences resulting from breaching the rules given in the Library. They looked at each other first, then her, and then burst out laughing.

"We're just kidding around!" explained the ponytail girl. Then they both made a lame apology.

Angel felt the warmth on her face and realized that it was flushed-red. She just looked at both of them oddly, she could not bring herself to answer

verbally; her lips closed tightly. She acknowledged the apology with a brief nod of her head.

The blonde-haired girl gave Angel a puckish grin. "I wouldn't have guessed in a million years that you're a librarian," she remarked in her heavy Bostonian accent. Angel ignored the girl thoughtless remark, an eyebrow rose after reading her black sweatshirt.

It read 'Warriors 2015'. Angel went on ignoring the girls' silly grin, and she was about to excuse her when a little boy interrupted "Excuse me. I'm looking for a book about Pilgrims that settled here in Provincetown. Can you help find it?"

"Well, yes, please follow me," Angel said with a sheepish grin to the boy. "I believe there is one that is not checked out." As the boy followed Angel, the girls watched her, coldly, for a long moment, until the ponytail girl broke the stare and then quickly covered her mouth with her hand trying to suppress a fit of giggles without a lot of success. The other mumbled the words "pea brained bitch," and when Angel turned to look, she saw the two had hidden their faces with their books, giggling.

Angel sighed. *For heaven's sake, what is the world coming to? They cannot be more than twelve years old, and they are fornicating?* Angel thought as she grabbed a book off the top shelf. She shrugged at the thought

of it. If truth was told, Angel was a virgin who had no interest in sex. She had no appetite for it at all; she never had any interest. Sex to her was something a wife had to get through to please her husband.

My Gosh, at their age, I was busy playing softball, fishing, and horseback riding.

Her thoughts traveled on to the day when Terry forcefully kissed her in the mouth for the very first time, unexpectedly happening in the cellar of her mother's church. In spite of knowing it was wrong, she let him kiss her until he went on touching places where he should not have been touched. Angel moaned and strained against him, and forcefully pushed him away screaming bloody murder, until he stopped. Needless to say, that was in contrast to her, who had vowed chastity to her lord Jesus until the sanctity of marriage. They were fifteen then, they were very close, and if she had let him go on, it would have gone to sex. It was then that her life had changed with Terry, being that he became so like a man, who attempted to make out with her every chance he got. It was an unpleasant time for her, dodging his sexual advances. Shortly thereafter, Terry became unreasonable and they started drifted apart. In those days, he started drinking and smoking marijuana. He made friends with a group

of older guys outside school and their church, and preferred to spend his time with them at parties. She did not know what to do, but talk to her mother. His father was furious when her mother finally disclosed his son's sinfulness. Nevertheless, by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and much encouraging talk and prayer, her mother and she were able to save her boyfriend, bringing him back to Christianity.

Keeping her virginity did not mean she would not love: it was during their senior year of high school that Angel allowed herself to give to her boyfriend needs. When the occasion was just right, or when the situation arose, she would let him satisfy his needs, without sex, in a place discreetly and then go on with their celibate lifestyle.

These days, Angel was impressed on how matured her boyfriend had become, and how genuine he was in his intentions to the ministry. Terry had come a long way from the '*Dennis the Menace*' type kid he was.

Engrossed in that thought, she handed the boy the book. Once he was satisfied, the boy gave Angel a grand smile and thanked her politely, which satisfied her. The sweet, lovable boy reminded Angel of why she took up the librarian job in the Youth Room: because she naturally loved being around children, and being able to help them in their

education. She had always dreamed of being a mother one day, for her nothing was more amazing than to watch children learn how to manage their world, and know the true beauty of motherhood. Angel can remember a time her boyfriend was talking to a group of friends after church, and as she joined in, she surprisingly overheard him say that she was fantastic with children, and that one day she would make the perfect mother for his children. ‘Caregiver’ should be her middle name; he went on saying that she was a devoted babysitter and parents could not ask for a better maiden. Those words were the finest compliment she ever received by him.

After the boy walked away, Angel took a moment to look the room over to see if anyone needed her help. Apart from the two unpleasant girls, who apparently were waiting for her to be out of sight, every girl and boy seemed to be busy writing or immersed in his or her reading. *Good, no one needs me*, she thought. She made her way back to the other side of the room, to the bookshelves.

Once there, Angel immediately went where the cart full of returned books stood and pushed it in front of her, wheeling it down the narrow aisle. She then read each book (DDC) code, sorting them out. Occasionally, Angel gave a quick look around the

room making sure that everyone was doing okay, especially the unpleasant girls who were quietly talking among themselves and finally behaving. Angel then relaxed. She went on pushing the cart over to the series and sequels section of the bookshelf. While inspecting the shelves, Angel gave a sly little smirk upon spotting an open book laying on top of books, and then gasped when she recognized that it was one of her favorite books, *Blackjack: Dreaming of a Morgan Horse*.

Oh my gosh, it is still here in the library! She thought delightfully, as she reached, grabbed it, and looked over the well-worn book. She had read the book more than once, making her obsessed with horses. She immediately recalled her fifteenth birthday party, when her mother presented her with her own: a lovely black Morgan. Angel can remember how ecstatic she was. She took the book, closed it, read the code number, and put it back in its rightful place thinking about the nine years that her mother had been renting a stall from Terry's father, Charlie Casey Whitney, a good and decent man who worked hard on the small horse farm business that he had inherited from his wife.

Angel's attraction to horses began at the age of eight when she moved with her mother into the church rectory next door to Adam's beautiful five

acres' horse farm by the beach. She never has forgotten her first horseback-riding lesson from Mr. Whitney. Not to mention her first meeting with Terry, who was sitting on the white fence watching her, like an opposing team's fan, while his father helped her get on the horse. The day turned to be a donkey of the day, after the quiet, kind-hearted mare she was riding suddenly became skittish and fretful by the noise of a State Police helicopter circling the farm fields. As the aircraft flew overhead, the mare suddenly bolted across the arena at a gallop and Angel came off, slamming her head against the fence. Fortunately, she was wearing a helmet and was not injured, however, she was terrified. As she dusted off the dirt on herself and shakily stood up, the puny towheaded kid became cruel about it and guffawed at her reaction, making her shed tears from the embarrassment. She remembered Mr. Whitney called his son immediately, and after a slap to the face and a few harsh words, the disgruntled boy headed straight to his room.

The next day, while waiting for the school bus, Terry sauntered slowly by her, and then delivered a sincere apology. From that day onward, they became inseparable friends.

Terry was much like his father, in that he was slim and dainty with wavy russet hair, deep hazel eyes and of ruddy complexion. Like her, a single parent raised him. Terry's mother had passed on several months before her mother and she moved in to the rectory. Sadly, the woman, had been infected with cardiomyopathy, and unfortunately, she passed on while waiting for a heart transplant. As anyone might guess, it was hard for Terry growing up without his mother. She felt sorry for his loss. She counts her blessings with deep appreciation for her mother. For she has come to know how much her boyfriend loved his mother; how much he misses her; how a part of him died when she did.

Terry always dreaded living with his father, who was stern, impatient, and who refused to spoil him like his mother once did. Their competitive relationship made him cockier and more rebellious to his father and as well as to everyone. Granted, her boyfriend could be a bit arrogant and opinionated at times, but she was okay with that. She has learned to go with the flow of life and his quirks. Since she could remember, her boyfriend was always careful to dress well, his favorite clothing line was *Tommy Hilfiger*. He always looked glamorous, confident and ambitious. Being a social junky, Terry could brighten any room he walked

into. He was always the center of attention — nothing like her, who was quiet and more of a reserved nature.

At one time, Terry could have been a harness race driver, but his constant fall out with his father, who had trained him, ended the idea. She can vaguely recall a time long ago, when Terry told her about his father's disability: that he was once a well-known pro harness race driver at Yonkers Raceway, and he was badly injured after his sulky flipped over during his last race of the season, in which permanently injured his right arm, ending his career. It was because of that accident that lines of scarring are clearly visible on the left side of his father's face.

Angel understood how hard Mr. Whitney worked, how he used to have high hopes that his son would be a horse jockey and take over where he left off. But Terry had ideas of his own, and those hopes of Mr. Whitney dwindled and died soon after his son went away to college.

To this day, Mr. Whitney is still quite disappointed in his son's rash and abrasive decision of his willing to become a minister. She thought it was silly and a bit ridiculous; even so, it was regrettable that the relationship never fully recovered from those days.

Some minutes went by when the new Library Director, Jaden Malak, walked in the room with a document. He went straight to the service desk area to scan the document to be emailed to another branch. Jaden was about to lay the document down onto the scanner when he heard whispers of offensive words, which made his almond colored skin crawl. Silence fell the moment he looked up and around him, and then spotted the annoying girls staring at him. The girls seemed perturbed by his presence. The girls quickly looked down their books, pretending to be studious.

Jaden glumly rolled his tongue over the inside his cheek, and mulled over their behavior a moment. Afterwards, he thought it through, he eyed them warningly, and then he shook his head and continued with his scanning.

Upon finishing sending the email, Jaden searched the room for his subordinate, wondering how she was doing with her work. He looked for a girl wearing a black long skirt and light blue shirt. His ebony-colored eyes pleasantly widened when he spotted her, taking in the sight of dips and edges of her beauty that peered through the open spaces of the bookshelf. Jaden then walked over and approached her calmly. Softly, he tapped her

delicate shoulder, which startled her immensely. Angel jumped around quickly, looking up at Jaden with concern. “Oh — sorry . . .” he chuckled politely, “. . . I did not mean to startle you.”

Angel smiled, signifying without words, that she was okay.

“I want to let everyone know, our fax machine is down and probably will not be fixed until next week.”

“Oh gosh, I heard that fax machine is on its last leg,” replied Angel, making an icky sticker face.

“Hmm, it does keep breaking down . . . hmm, yeah we might need a new one.” Jaden then pointed at the misbehaving girls. “Do you know those girls?”

Angel nodded no.

“Well, let us keep an eye out for those two, they are not being good together.”

Angel acknowledged him forwarding with a strong nod of her head, and then added, “I just put up quite an awful fuss with those two.” Her hand unconsciously wiped away a speck of irritation from the lower left side of her belly, as she went on informing the director about the disturbance.

Jaden listened and after drew back his neck and puckered his thick lips as if he had just tasted some lemon juice. He then scratched his curly brown head of hair looking at the girls with a petulant

frown on his face, figuring out how to go about handling them. This made him look funny to Angel. She suppressed her smile, as he came to a decision.

“Another disturbance and they are going to have to leave the premises.”

“Of course,” Angel agreed, poised for action, knowing that those girls had given the place an eerie, creepy atmosphere. She just wished that they would leave soon — like now.

Angel admired her new boss. Strangely, she found herself drawn to him, as if she had just run into a long-lost chum. Yet there was a kind of formality between them, perhaps caused by the fact that he was her boss. On their first meeting they knew right away that they were going to be friends.

He had a shy little smile. He was friendly in a distant way with everyone in the Library. In a strange way, she thought she understood him, sometimes. She believed him to be an amiable, unassuming fellow even if he appeared to be a man of substance, a scholarly individual who were very serious and quiet. She suspected him to be in his late twenties or possibly in his early thirties, however, she was not quite sure. His smooth skin complexion was soft, flawless and seemed to have a radiant youthful glow.

Jaded looked quite tall to her — she was such a *petite*. Angel could tell that he lived a simple life style from the clothing he wore: wool brown trousers and jacket, yellow shirt and tie, and shoes that were made well with lovely leather, but old and outdated. His eyes were benevolent with long eyelashes. His loosely curled hair was long to his shoulder and shined with chestnut highlights. Angel simply saw him as a humble man who could not step on a defenseless bug nor put a worm on a fishhook.

The squabbling and finger pointing escalated again. And without a word, Jaden walked straight to the girls. Angel exhaled a shaky breath, as she ran a hand through her wave hair, pushing her long forelock back out of her eyes and then followed the director.

Upon seeing the librarians approaching and that confrontation was unavoidable, both girls stood and sped to the exit door.

Jaden and Angel followed them outside, making sure they were gone for sure.

Some pedestrians looked confuse with watching the girls shouting and cursing amongst themselves.

The girls stopped shouting when they looked around and saw the librarians stared by the doors. It was then that the ponytail put up her fists to Jaden and Angel and gave the finger, and uttered a

malediction before she left the area. The other girl threw a big hissy fit, and then walked off in a huff.

“Good Lord!” uttered Angel, breathing easier.

With both hands on his waist, Jaden blew a sigh and shook his head.

“They are not to be on premises unless we get written permission from their parents,” he declared sternly.

Angel nodded her head in perfect agreement, understanding that she would have to contact the Police Department in the event of the girls’ presence in the building.

A solemn silence ensued, and the marks of a pink tinge became visible on Jaden’s face showing embarrassment.

After the awkward moment passed, Jaden turned to Angel and looked at her with a dismayed expression. “Do not be afraid, they are just sorry-sorry girls looking for love,” he said compassionately.

Angel acknowledged with a slow nod of her head. “Oh gosh, it breaks my heart,” she said shaking her head pathetically at the girls, as they disappeared through the street. She then added, “I pray that the Lord have mercy on their souls and guide the two back to the path of righteousness. Amen.”

With those words, Jaden lifted an eyebrow and glanced at her curiously, and then he blurted out, “So be it.” And then with a half-shy smile, Jaden then opened the door for Angel and led her inside.

Chapter 2

Get Comfy, We Got All Night to Play

Standing at the front door of room 1515, Terry raked back his russet hair with his fingers, mentally preparing for a rendezvous as planned. He knocked on the door, thinking something clever to say when his new friend opened it.

Quite tipsy, Mabel was sitting on the sofa, staring blankly at the loud television screen when she heard the knocks on her door. She had just finished applying her blood red lipstick. Mabel then swiftly tucked the lipstick in her pink make up bag and dropped the bag on the coffee table. She stood up, grabbed the remote from the coffee table, pointing it at the television, and turned down the sound. Then she dropped it back on the table, as she floated to the door. There, she looked through the peephole to see who was there; expecting it was Terry. She breathed a soothing sigh when she saw his face, being that her roommate was supposed to be going home for the weekend. Mabel pulled out the safety lock, unlocked the door, and then playfully opened the door showing herself wearing a naughty smile, and not much else. An ivory two-piece miniskirt and bra to be precise.

Terry was momentarily tongue-tied. He raised his eyebrows making a 'WOW!' statement, and gave her a heartwarming smile.

The tall long-legged woman with a curvaceous figure of a fashion model gave a few waves of her hand, "Salut!" She said in a French tone, and then edged up against him, tilted her long tawny-haired head, and whispered in his ear, "How do you like me now handsome?" She giggled after seeing the delightful mischievous twinkle in his hazel eyes.

Right at that moment, the sweet scent of jasmine on Mabel came blooming under his nose, triggering a surge of deep desire that almost overwhelmed him. "Well-well now, and 'salut' to you, there!" Terry said cheerful and lively as he stepped in the apartment pleasantly taking a closer look at the sheer stripe sexy apparel. He then quipped, "What can I say? I love you in it! I can't begin to tell you how much you mean to me." Terry said seriously as he reached and ran his fingers through Mabel's long wavy hair, thinking how damn seductive she looked standing there at that moment with her freshly made-up face; as if she was a porcelain doll. He went on playfully using words of love telling her what she wanted to hear.

Mabel smiled, and nudged his nose with hers. "I took a shower and slipped into these Jammie's just get comfy with you babe."

“Some jammies,” grinned Terry as he slowly slipped an arm around her soft curvy waist and kissed her deeply. Unexpectedly, Mabel felt something scratchy on her belly. She pushed

Terry softly away to see what it was. “What have you got there?” he said. He then lurched a bit forward, then back, and then he slightly widened his feet as if he was about to dance, and regained his balance. At Taboo lounge, he had downed a forgotten amount of *Beam Me Up Scotty* shooters, which consisted of a mixture of coffee liqueur; *crème de banane* and Irish cream shot drink, with his Boston Ale, and had quite a buzz.

“Oh . . . this . . . this here,” Terry stammered, forgetting what he was holding let alone the name of the wine, every muscle in his body quivered with lust. He pulled out the bottle, read the label, “It’s your *Bow-joule* wine,” and then gave it to her.

Mabel chuckled, as she shut the door, and locked it. “It’s a *Beaujolais Nouveau*,” she warmly corrected him with a heavy French accent. “How sweet of you to get my wine!” she went on to say, thanking him with a peck on his lips. “I could go for a glass right now, can’t you?” She took the bag and teasingly turned away, as he tried to give her another kiss.

Terry rubbed his neck, inhaled deeply in an attempt to be steady, and regain some composure. “Sure, I’ll try a glass of that,” he said, licking his

lips, tasting the sweet cherry flavor of her lips, as he watched her walk to the kitchenette.

“Come on babe, take off your coat and your shoes too — get comfy, we got all night to play.” She insisted.

Terry casted a lustful glance at her rear, as he unbuttoned his navy pea coat. Then he saw that the television was on by the corner and its sound system started playing a popular song. He walked over to the sofa, gently places his coat on one of its armrests, sat down and grabbed the remote and turned up the sound. He then took off his shoes and relaxed. Terry smiled smugly, as he watched on television Bruno Mars singing *‘Locked out of Heaven’*.

A moment passed as he stared on television: listening. At once, his smile faded, as the most unpleasant thought of getting caught surfaced, reminding him that he better be careful with the playboy lifestyle, and as well as with being a secret non-believer of God. For its consequences of discovery would be humiliation and discredit. The longer he was in college the more mind-boggling. In his third semester, he was feeling stuck, waiting for his graduation, for his life to get in order. Now, he detested college; detested the practice; the academic discipline of it; and the idea of it. The most significant thing he had learned in college is that there were clergies out there who do not believe in

God, and so they keep their secret to themselves. They keep their unbelief concealed to avoid a comfortable job and learn to live with unresolved spiritual issues. At one time, he truly believed that Adam and Eve were real people, that Jesus was born from a virgin, and that he literally was raised from the dead. Now, college has shown him that it was kind of a joke, knowing that the Bible has metaphors, and that science has proven that miracles are impossible. He had prayed his way to atheism with a small stopover in agnosticism, and he was miserable, alone: lost. These days, he viewed Bible as a kind of poetry written by human beings, as a way of dealing with the fact that we are mortal and we will not last forever. Yet to the contrary of his views, Terry still wanted to pursue the career in the ministry, knowing that it provides a flexible and prestige lifestyle and an opportunity to be able to positively influence people's lives. Ministry seemed like a natural fit for his strong personality traits and it was something more suitable than his father wanted of him. Even if he strongly resembles his dad in appearance and temperament, he wasn't going to be like him and let him win. He was going to be his own man, follow his own instincts, and his own values. Most of all, he wanted to be a powerful person, someone who could be looked up to, who had prominence in the world.

The performance was about over when Mabel approached him holding two glasses of wine with a big grin. She liked him — his looks, his smile — his bad boy charm. She admired at how, as a student ministry intern, spoke so authoritative, but, casual at the same time, as if he spoke of trivialities. Mabel suspected that he came from a well to do family. She wanted to please him. She wanted to give what he needed. She wanted to belong to him.

“Here you go babe,” she said as she hands him a glass of wine and sat by him sipping hers quietly when she saw his silence.

Mabel was not sure if Terry was in either deep thought or preoccupied watching the performance. She let him be and watched the performance not knowing what to do or say and after it was over, she broke the silence by blurting out the only thing that came to mind. “Just love that voice . . . love your voice Bruno! Don’t you?”

Terry gave second’s hesitation before responding to her question covering up his melancholy silence by taking a sip of wine. “You bet . . . he’s awesome.”

Mabel twisted her head at him, looking concerned, “How are you doing babe?”

Terry gave Mabel a swift smile and then lifted his glass of wine to her and gave his reply with a voice filled with affection. “I’m relaxing; enjoying this sweet moment with you with this *Bowjoelay* here.”

Mabel giggled.

He let out a chuckle, "Okay, all right." He then puckered his lips, as if going for a kiss,

"*Beaujolais Nuevo!*" He repeated, trying to copy her pronunciation.

"Close enough," she laughed. She then clinked her glass to his and took a sip.

"Regardless, this wine is sweet and delicious just like you." Terry then put his glass on the coffee table and pulled out a dime bag of cocaine from his pocket.

"Got here just enough to keep us going . . ." He bends over to the table and made two large lines with it.

"Oh wicked, babe!" Mabel eyes popped out at the lines. "We're going to party hardy tonight!"

Terry rolled up a dollar bill and snorted his line, "Woo!" He hooted with a smile on his face, as the dripping came down his throat. He wiped his nose with his hand and passed her the dollar. Terry's buzzing head came to a crashing halt; he was in control again. He then grabbed his wine glass and drank the whole glass of wine, and afterwards he lay back on the couch and just savored the moment.

Mabel felt the rush instantly. At that, she licked her lips glancing up and down at him and then simpered a little as he reached for a kiss and a bit of a feel-up. She returned with a French kiss.

They put their glasses on the coffee table and the two continued titillating each other for a while, but as Terry was about to remove her bra, Mabel suddenly leaned back against the sofa poised as if ready for conversation. Mabel then looked sincerely to Terry, "It's crazy, but I've fallen for you preacher guy; I really have. I want to be more than just a friend for one night."

"Same here," He uttered with a smile.

"Looks like we're starting something good?"

"That's right, you're not a friend for one night; I love you baby doll!" He returned sincerely.

She then snuggled her face into his chest.

Terry ran his fingers through Mabel's long hair, and then leaned his head to her neck for a kiss inhaling her wonderful scent of perfume. "Oh Jesus, you're such a sweet doll!" He passionately whispered over and over as he kept kissing harder and harder and began to fondle her breasts again.

After a little moment, Mabel moaned his name; the sensations were too overwhelming for her. She took his hand gently and stopped him. She then stood up, gazed into his eyes and motioned with her index finger, "Come on babe let's finish what we started in bed."

Terry was boiling with lust and wanted his hands on her breasts again, which hung in front of him. "Yes, let's finish it." Then with a twinkle in those

hazel eyes, he slapped her fanny and followed her into the bedroom.

There he hastily looked over the crowded room, which was big enough to fit a twin-size bed, a side table and a dresser. Not to mention clutters of bags, some timeworn boxes and suitcases containing her life. However, the view from the corner window of Charles River late in the brisk cool night was simply spectacular. Not to mention the breathtaking view of colorful light that twinkled Boston skyline across the river.

Mabel gently turned him about with her hand and was about to sit him down on the bed, but Terry pulled her as close as possible and locked in a kiss. They cuddled and professed their love again for one another as they kissed and toyed with each other's body. What Terry most wanted was to throw her down onto the bed and plunge inside her, only that she had other ideas.

Mabel waved a hand and then sat him down on the bed. "You just sit put there, my sex therapy is coming your way," she said softly, sweet and sassy.

He raised an eyebrow as he watched her slither down. She unzipped his dark boot-cut jeans and seized his pulsing erection. She then glanced up at him with a mischief smile. "Oh — you're wicked wet," she said nonchalantly, and then plunged her mouth into it.

On the sofa, the *iPhone* sound of a telegraph
ringtone from Terry's coat quietly tapped and went
unheard.

Chapter 3

The Hangover

Ti tic ti — ti tic ti! A text ring tone from his *iPhone* jolted Terry. He managed to open an eye in the early morning and with it saw across the room red toes sticking out from the bed sheet, and realized that he was not in his dorm. There on the sofa, he closed his eye and drifted back to sleep.

When he had woken again, he saw that he was nearly naked in his underwear and he felt numb with cold right to the bone marrow. He wondered if he could stand up and then quickly did.

Right away, Terry felt his heart pounding; his head now throbbed so badly with pain that his eyes could not focus on anything. He rubbed his chilled chest with his arms as he groaned. He looked around, and then he curled his lip when he saw that his clothing was carelessly tossed on the sofa and on the floor. *Fuck!* He thought, and hastily reached for the fine clothing. As he got quickly dressed, he caught a whiff of alcohol mixed with jasmine radiating from his breath making his stomach churn. He felt dirty and wanted badly to take a shower, but of course, the woman was now out of bed and showering.

Oh, heck with it, I'll shower in my dorm! He went on buttoning his shirt thinking hard on last night's stealthy affair, pleasing himself on what he could reflect upon at some of the sexual adventurous moments with his new lover. That is, until Angel abruptly popped in between the two and cheapened it, tarnishing the memories. He suddenly felt like a criminal; the thought of being unfaithful flowed out of him much like other times. The guilt, of breaking his promise of celibacy to the vows of marriage, came as it always did. His promiscuity with other women had once more taken him. He pondered on it for a moment, until it dawned on to him that his former religious beliefs were messing him up again. *No . . . no fucking way!* He shook his head in response, and appeased his conscious with the fact that he was his own man and he did not owe God or anyone else a thing. It was a normal venture through life for men his age to have sex with girls his age. After all, he thought convincingly that, these days, Angel and he had taken some time apart from each other and he had no obligation to her.

Terry suddenly felt nauseous, and almost vomited. He could not think straight. He needed to be in his dorm, and have a day to recover from all the drinking. He eyed the bathroom door, grumbling a sullen pout on his lips, eager to get it over with the disentanglement and the awkward

parting with his new friend. Terry wanted it over quickly. He sat on the sofa contemplating, *I'll just say, see you later' and be done with it.*

After Terry tied his shoes, he pulled out the *iPhone* from his coat pocket, and opened the screen. When the time appeared, 9:50 AM, Terry blew out a puff of air in frustration, knowing that he had missed Saturday's St. Ignatius 9:00 a.m., Mass. He was supposed to be there on Saturday's volunteering. Thereupon, he frowned as he read the number '2' on the text message icon, realizing that he had missed two messages. He touched the text icon and saw that the messages were from Angel. "Fuck!" He yelled, after reading one of the dates and time of delivery, 'Oct 26, 2015, 11:04 p.m.'. Terry quickly put on his coat as he read the message: "Hey there hermit, just checking on u. LOL. How r u doing? I haven't heard from u in a while. I do miss our video chats. I did something really-really silly this weekend. You'll know when u see me, LOL."

Terry snickered in wonders. *What the fuck did she do this time?"* He shook his head at the submissive and self-deprecating girl that worshiped him. *It wouldn't surprise me the least if she banged up her mother's car again! That girl can do some foolish things sometimes.*

In some strange way he had an obsession for Angel. She reminded him of his mother when she was still around — so soft-hearted, inept and gullible at that — at times, she completely overwhelmed him. There was a mystery to Angel's innocence; something that he was attracted to; something that was so normal, so human. He envied her great closeness to her mother. Something he once had with his mother, for what he could remember of her, especially during the last years. In a way, the relationship he has with Angel duplicated the intense love he had with his mother. Perhaps it was the warmth and pampering he got from the girl that he could never describe.

Then, without a moment's hesitation he brushed off the remorse that was its aftermath, and turned his eyes back to the *iPhone*.

The text went on to say: "I just got done talking to your Dad, he told me that Sigi has a limp in his left hind leg & the veterinarian put him on some pain medication. He had to break off the training. Call me & I'll tell u more about it." Terry's jaws tightened as he clenched his teeth.

The drunken louse, he's running my horse to the verge of collapse; he knows better than that! He shook his head holding on to bitterness towards his father, blaming

him for everything that he thought was wrong. He resented the way his father disciplined his horse, for he would never smack it. He went on reading: "Also, you'll be happy 2 know that I did get the librarian job (yay!)

I like my job + the people I work with. I know you're very busy with your studies & volunteering but r u coming home this year to our All Hallows Eve celebration? Do let me know? Well, I hope to see u then. Do b in touch, ALL My Love, in Christ Jesus. OXOX."

Terry quickly touched on the morning message: "Good morning. Gosh I can't believe I fell asleep last night waiting for your message, I guess it didn't go through. Well, I'll call u soon after mass, that is, if I don't hear from u. Anyway, hope u get this one; so here it goes again." Then last night's message repeated. Terry gazed moodily at his *iPhone*. He rose from the sofa and wondered around the room aimlessly. He shut the screen of the phone, and then slipped it in his pocket thinking that it was not the words he wanted to hear, knowing that Angel was a very punctual person and would call right at 10:05 a.m. — right after his volunteering at the parish of St. Ignatius. At that thought, Terry hastily walked to the bathroom, and opened the unlocked door.

The shower was still running. He saw Mabel's distorted body through the clear shower curtain, and called her name, telling her that he was leaving.

Mabel parted the shower curtain and stuck her head out looking bewildered. "I thought we were going for breakfast. Aren't we?"

Terry apologized, confessed that he was too sick to eat, and needed to be alone.

"I shouldn't have mixed beer and wine!"

Mabel saw the look of hangover on his face.

"Wow, you don't look good!" She sadly said showing a look of concern. At that, a wry smirk appeared on her face, "I guess you over did it last night, on the mixed booze, babe."

Terry nodded agreeably, "I'm done with wine or anything, just beer from now on."

"Sorry babe! Aspirin is a cure-all —there's some in the top vanity." She pointed and then shut the shower-head off.

"Thanks, but I'm allergic to aspirin. I have some meds at my dorm." He said looking dismal. *Cocaine would do, but I'm all out.*

Mabel then gave him a little suggestive smile, showing her firm breasts. "I wish you would feel better." Then she grabbed a towel off the rack by the shower and wrapped it around her.

Terry looked down, knowing that he was much too sick to be excited about the prospect of sex with her.

“Oh well, honey, it’s okay. Call me later, we’ll get together another time.” Mabel looked lovingly to his eyes and waved goodbye, “I love you.”

It was clear that Mabel was being sincere about her feelings for him, and he was speechless. She was quite a pleasant, attractive girl to be around, and he liked her, but she was game. Right then and there, he knew that his illicit sexual relationship with her was not over. Terry just cracked a smile, and prepared to lie when suddenly, a song ‘*The Proof of Your Love*’ filled the air from his coat pocket. The designated ring tone told him that Angel was the caller. *Fuck!* He gasped. He was not about to answer his phone right there; he would call her later, when he felt better, making some excuse that his *iPhone* was not charging or something.

Mabel was bewildered when she saw Terry’s lips purse slightly, uncomfortably. “Are you, all right?”

“Oh . . . yes . . .” he forced an unconvincing fake smile on his face, “. . . I’m okay sweetie, but we’ll catch breakfast another time.” Terry bid his farewell and rushed out of there, leaving Mabel open-mouthed.

When Terry awoke hours later, he slowly got up and sat up on his bed. He glanced through the blinds just in time to catch sight of the red, dimming sun. He then jumped off his bed and stretched his back, quite surprised that it was very late afternoon and the night was coming on. Now, feeling better, he went to the bathroom mirror to investigate how he looked physically. He washed his face and combed his hair, taking a few moments to ready himself before making the video call to Angel. When satisfied that he looks presentable, he walked back to his bed, grabbed the *iPhone* on the side table, and made the call.

Terry plopped himself down on the bed, as the image on the screen settled down enough to show Angel's face looking startled on her bed. At once, Terry's eyebrows hit the ceiling, his eyes widened upon seeing her with such short hair. Now with all that thick overly long hair cut off, her face had filled in, especially around her lovely blue eyes, making her look much healthier — beautiful.

“Gosh, what happened — did you get my messages?” she asked, showing facial expression of torment due to lack of responses.

“I just did — that's why I called,” Terry went on, changing the subject. “Whoa! I can't believe you cut your hair!” He chuckled with a bright smile, liking what he was seeing. The more he looked at her, the

more he became fascinated by the change of her appearance, and the more he became stimulated to say the least.

Angel looked mildly abashed as she rolled her eyes at him.

Terry then remarked on her courage. “Well, I see you’ve babbled long enough about cutting it, and finally you did it.”

“Oh gosh, I know — just do not look at me that way — I did not ask for this cut,” she complained, as her eyes traveled apologetically over his stunned face.

With a few more chuckles and smiles, Terry twirled a hand in the air, like a lasso,

“Would you get up, turn around and let me see the rest of you.”

Angel gave him a quirky smirk, and then rose from the bed; “She cut my hair too darn short making me look like some little girl.” She leaned her *iPhone* against a pillow and moved just away enough for him to see most of her, and in play, she spun around in her charcoal sleepwear as if flying.

Hot damn! The habitual reflex thought popped in his head-on cue. Angel was more attractive than he ever had seen her before. The bit of weight she had gained was in the right places, as it was obvious that through the spinning, her nipples were protruding and her breasts had filled out a bit.

Terry shifted on his bed, of all the freaking time for his sex drive to come back full force. "You're really gorgeous!" He said while covertly ogling her breasts and her petite hourglass figure. "Now, I can't call you '*Cousin It*' anymore."

Angel beamed a smile at him; it was good to see him again. "It feels weird . . . being so short," she said, as she passed her fingers through her hair. "You'll be pleased to know that I donated my hair to *Locks of Love*."

"Well, praise the Lord, hallelujah, that was so good of you!" He said with a clergy's practiced flourish. "Jesus will bless you for your kindness." Then, he playfully grinned, quirked an eyebrow at her. "You know you're looking pretty sexy these days; I'm not kidding."

"Okay now . . . now you behave," Angel responded with a chuckle, then grabbed her phone and sat on the bed wishing that she could jump in that screen and cuddle with him.

"And I see you put on some weight!"

Angel looked at him with a funny smirk on her face. "About ten pounds. It is so weird; lately I have been eating like a rabbit." Angel said, as she suddenly had a numb, vague pain on her left side below her belly button. She then massaged it as if it might fade away. She went on with it because the pain had happened before, and it had always faded

away. “I got to stop being a rabbit or I will explode.” Angel then paused for a thought and then looked at him glumly,

“Anyway, so, what is going on with you?” She asked with a dreary voice, “I even emailed you through *Facebook!*”

Terry merely looked at Angel showing his hound-dog eyes and shrugged, “I’m really sorry honey, and I didn’t know that you had texted yesterday. It was this morning that I found out that my phone had died on me. Apparently, the phone must have gotten wet, probably caused by the rain the night before. I tried to recharge it —oh well — it was later after Mass that I ended up getting it fixed.” Terry felt the coming of a tingling sensation on top of his nose, and scratched it as he went on telling her about what a busy bee he had been lately with all the studies and volunteering.

Angel blushed a little, sensing that her boyfriend was being different and distant, not knowing exactly why. Angel had known him long enough to be able to read him, and he was for sure not being himself. She let it go. She gave him a half smile and acknowledged him with her eyes, as her mind was somewhere else.

Then . . .

“Do you still love me?” She asked frankly. The question just came out of her mouth, like a hiccup or a cough.

He looked at her with a questionable funny face, “What’s on that nutty mind of yours?” He blinked a couple of times, “Of course I do, for heaven’s sake, and you know that you’re the girl I’m going to marry.” He said as if that explained and fixed everything.

Angel then giggled in her cute bubbly manner, tucking a short strand of hair behind her ear, “I love you too,” she said, looking at him straight at his hazel eyes, “It just that I have not heard you say it for a long time, and I like to hear it. Am I being silly, aren’t I?”

Terry made a quirky smiled and acknowledged her with a weak nod. “I love you Honey!” he declared.

They went on talking, until an hour had passed. Mostly about: her new job, her mother’s bad legs due to diabetes, his volunteering in youth ministry, and the events that took place. Also his dreaded Hebrew exam that was coming up and of course, the latest local news and gossips that had been going around about in their corner of the world. As their conversation was about to end, Angel broached the matter with his father that he had been avoiding all evening. She explained the situation with Sigi: on

how the horse had taken off again with the jockey. However, this time Sigi slipped down a muddy bank. Angel went on telling him how drained and tired his father looked lately from the strain of training Sigi, and that the Jockey had quit and he was on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

Terry shook his head, and then let go a sardonic smirk. "Why am I not surprised?" He asked, but not expecting an answer. "As usual, he's too darn hard on himself, on the jockeys as well as that poor horse of mine! He's relentless; and he will go on hiring another jockey to run my horse to its death!"

Angel's eyes assured him that what he was saying was not true. She interrupted him, as her face displayed an expression of affection for his father. "Do not make your Dad cruel because he is not. You should thank the Lord Jesus Christ for continuing to help your Dad through sobriety." She paused briefly looking away disappointed, and expecting some words, but Terry was silent.

After a moment, Angel then went on, talking more to herself than to him, "Your Dad is hurting because you stayed with us the last time you came home. You shouldn't have avoided him."

Terry looked gloomily away from the screen, and let her ramble on without hindrance.

“Mother and I have been praying that you make up with him. Let the past be, Terry — for heaven’s sake.”

How could he let it be, his drunken rage, the humiliations and beatings he got from the bastard! Terry was lost in thought, as the hideous images replayed in his brain.

Angel tapped on the screen, waking Terry from deep thought. “Are you coming home for our All Hallows Eve Celebration?”

Terry took a deep breath, and closed his eyes for a moment, then opened them again with a decision. “Yes, I’ll definitely be coming home. I promise!”

“Fabulous!” Angel gave a gleeful chuckle. She then flashed her deep blue eyes at him, urgently, “Could you try to see your Dad?” she asked, imploring him to do what was right. “Please do it for me, for us.”

Terry then emitted a profound sigh and nodded his head, “Sure!

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