

Guardian angel

It was a sunny morning. Birds were chirping happily on the branches just beside my window, the biology's teacher's voice was faint, boys were playing soccer on the courtyard, and when the ball shooed away the birds, my gaze unconsciously fixed on *him*. Henry Parker. He was wearing a white sweatshirt, denim jeans and a pair of Timberlands. Casual. It may be surreal, but he was shining, glowing. Probably because of the sunlight. Yeah, that must be it. His hair was a light brown, almost blonde. His jaw, sharp. Those lips, full. And his-

—Pst, pst, Jessica! —a voice brought me back from my daydream.

—Huh? What? —I looked over my shoulder to see my bestie, Vee, making strange motions and mouthing something I couldn't quite understand. Giving up trying to figure out what she was attempting to tell me, I slowly turned to the front, catching a glimpse of my crush's smile, I encountered Mr. Smith's pissed off face and his intense look towards me. I cleared my voice awkwardly, suddenly being aware of the silence and tension in the air.

—Care to answer my question Ms. Brown? —Mr. Smith asked with a kind of irritated voice.

—Well... Umm... What was the question..? —I asked cautiously. But before he could reply, I automatically repeated what my seatmate whispered to me—. Pigs are like you! I-I mean pigs are like us. No no, I mean —my voice was muffled by the laughter of my classmates. My face went all red from the embarrassment.

—Detention after class Ms. Brown —right then the bell rang— Class is dismissed, see you tomorrow —with that Mr. Smith exited the classroom without sparing me another glance and I buried my face between my arms. I'm doomed.

—That was good Brown —said my irritating seatmate while cracking his ass up—. Didn't actually

expect you to say it. Next time try not to stare your crush so much or else-

—Shut up, will you?! —I was on the verge of crying.

—It's okay Jess, we all do embarrassing things sometimes —said Vee coming towards me, trying to comfort me.

—That's right Jessi —said Jackson trying to imitate Vee's voice—, your life is a total joke!

—Leave us alone will you, jerk?

—Chill girl. Anyways, see ya later Brown —said my seatmate winking at me.

When I entered the detention class, my heart stopped for a moment. Henry was seated by the window, typing something on a computer. I was so immersed in his figure that I hadn't noticed someone was behind me.

—Staring is rude Brown —whispered my seatmate in my ear from behind. It tickled.

—Will you stop whispering in my ear?! It gives me goosebumps —. I turned to face him with an annoyed expression.

—Oh? You were blocking the doorway and it seemed like you blocked the world out too. Had to do something —he pushed past me and went to sit at the back of the classroom.

—Tch —I entered the detention room too, and went to sit two tables behind Henry. He was always so gentle with everybody, so kind and playful. I have admired him from the first time we met.

“It was the beginning of a new semester, girls were gossiping about a new transferred student, while boys were playing around with a paper ball. I was just sitting at the front of the classroom, working on the last chapter of my love story novel. I was thinking about how the boy should answer the confession of the girl when Jackson took my notebook and started reading it out loud.

—I love you Mike, I don’t know since when I developed these feelings for you, but I know th—
—he was using exaggerated and dramatic voice just to make fun of my characters

—Hey! Give it back! —I said standing up trying to snatch it out of his hands. But he raised his arm higher up, making me impossible to reach it. I wasn’t short, but he was just too tall. He continued making fun of my story, catching the attention of some boys, who were watching the scene laughing. That’s when *he* entered the room. Reaching from behind *he* took my notebook out of Jackson’s hands and approached me.

—Here —he said handing me my notebook.

—O-Oh, thanks —he was gorgeous, and his voice was so gentle. I was caught up in a trance when the bell rang and Mr. Smith came in.

—Sit down class —everyone slowly went back to their seat—, today there is a new student joining us. Please introduce yourself —Mr. Smith welcomed the mentioned student by putting a hand on his back.

—Hello everyone, my name is Henry, Henry Parker. Hope we get along well—his smile was absolutely stunning.”

That was 8 months ago. Although we are from the same class, I never had the chance to work with him, and I am too shy to go and talk to him.

—Jessica? —someone called me.

—Hum? —I looked up and saw Henry’s angelic face—. O-oh, hi.

—Could you perhaps return this computer to Mr. Smith when he comes back? I gotta go.

—Ye-yeah, of course!

—Thanks Jessi, see you tomorrow —with that said, he winked and exited the door. I blushed and

kept staring at the door from where the boy just went out.

—You look like an idiot Brown —whispered Jackson in my ear *again*.

—At least I'm not one like you Clark —I replied back—. Seriously Jackson, will you stop whispering in people's ears?

—I'm afraid that won't happen Jessi —he teased me with my nickname. Following action he sat down beside me.

—Tch, don't talk to me anymore jerk.

—Did you just call me a jerk? —he looked at me arching an eyebrow.

—No? I said Jacky —I acted innocent—. Don't you like the nickname, Jacky? —I asked playfully and smiled at him.

—Whatever —he tried to hide his smile. He liked seeing her smile, it always made his day.

Shit. I'm late. I was running down the stairs, with my backpack hanging on my right shoulder, I rubbed the sleep out of my eyes, and sprinted to my high-school. Luckily it wasn't too far away from home, so I reached there just before the second period started. When lunch time came, Vee and I were sitting in the cafeteria, where I had to catch up on what I had missed this morning.

—What?! —I was astounded— Did you just say I am pairing up with Henry for biology's project?

—Yup duh —she waved off the matter as if it was nothing—, your time has come Jessi —she winked at me with a playful smile.

—Omg, I can't believe it! Hahahahaha —I started laughing from happiness. I finally have the chance to get to know Henry better. I looked over the table where *he* was seated and saw him on a table with some seniors. Seemed like they were having fun—. Should I go and talk to him? Or maybe I better wait until lunch finishes. What do I do Vee?? —I looked at her, but she was standing up taking the tray with her—. Where are you going?

—Seriously Jess, you don't listen when I talk to you! I have an appointment with the dentist, remember? —she answered quickly and was about to leave.

—Wait! What do I do? I-

—I dunno buddy, just go and talk to him. Break a leg girl! —shouted Vee. I just sighed.

Phew! The day passed by smoothly, and most importantly, I got to talk to Henry. We agreed to meet tomorrow at his house to start with the project. I was happy as Larry, and imagining different scenarios from tomorrow, I went to sleep, falling into a deep slumber.

I ringed at the door, and I was met with a breathtakingly handsome Henry in a white T-shirt.

—Hey, come in —he greeted me with a deep voice.

—Thanks —I said shyly.

Time passed by pretty quickly and within a few hours, we were almost done with the project, but we decided to take a break. Spending time with him was enjoyable and I don't know if this is the so-called "woman's sixth sense", but something seemed off to me. Little did I know what was about to happen when I accepted to stay a little longer to finish the project. We were sitting on his bed, when he unexpectedly hovered over me and trapped me between his arms. The kind and lovely boy from just moments before disappeared, and it was replaced by a rude and aggressive boy instead.

My mind was a mess, it couldn't process the sudden change of his demeanor, I was left speechless for a moment, when finally my voice came out trembling.

—What are you doing! Get off me! He-

—Shut up Jessica! I know you like me. I know you want this too. Just enjoy it —he buried his head on my neck and started sucking on it.

—No! Please get off me! —I tried pushing him away, kicking him, but he took both my wrists, pulled them above my head, and trapped my legs between his. I have read plenty of cliché books to know what these situations lead to. I just didn't expect it would actually happen in my life too. I started crying, I couldn't help it. I was afraid. Suddenly Taylor Swift's "I knew you were trouble" started playing, it was my ringtone. It stopped after a few seconds, and started shortly after ringing again. I thought to have heard the bell ringing downstairs too, but Henry continued nibbling on my neck. That is until his own phone started ringing and thankfully he got off me to take a look on the caller ID.

Taking his distracted state as an opportunity to escape, I quickly jumped off the bed and headed downstairs, hearing swearings from Henry. I was shuddering, but I managed to reach the front door and open it. I didn't care about the fact that I was barefoot, I just needed to get out of that hell hole the monster named Henry lived in.

To my surprise I spotted a familiar figure on the other side of the road, and without hesitation I called for him.

—Jackson! Jackson Clark! Here! Help! —I didn't care if I looked like a whole maniac, I was waving my hands violently, crying and running towards him. To my relief, Jackson recognised me and jogged towards me with a confused expression on his face.

—Jess? What happened? —he took my face between his hands, and dried my non-stopping tears. I couldn't utter a word, but I assume he understood the situation perfectly. He looked back and forth, from me to the door where I just came out from. Then he glared at the boy standing at the doorframe of his house, who turned back and slammed the front door shut.

I sniffled and hugged Jackson tightly. As tight as I could. Seeing my reluctance to let go of him, he embraced me back. We stayed like that for a moment. He was comforting me, stroking my hair soothingly and whispering reassuring words in my ear, which unlike other times, I didn't find it annoying.

I woke up with a grunt. My head hurt. I felt my eyes swollen. My whole body was aching. My heart, numb. I'm... in my room? How? That's when flashbacks from yesterday flooded my mind. I shook my head trying to get rid of those images. But there was just one person I couldn't get out of my mind. *Him*. Not Henry, but Jackson. Jackson. Thinking about yesterday's event, it brought me back childhood memories with him. Heartwarming memories.

"Little Jessica was crying and hiccuping in front of a tree on the playground. Three boys some years older than her snatched her favourite toy, played around with it and hung it on a tree. Kids were busy minding their own games, laughter and kid's playful yells were heard. Little Jessica felt helpless, when her mean classmate Jackson came up to her. He was always messing around with her, bothering and annoying her, he seemed relentless making fun of her. But this time, little Jessica noticed little Jackson was gentle, kind, talking to her soothingly, trying to calm her down. In the end, little Jackson climbed up the tree to get little Jessica's stuffed toy, earning a joyful kiss on his cheeks from his princess. But things didn't end there, little Jackson, along with little Jessica, went for revenge. When Jack and Jess heard the high-pitched screams coming from those "senior" boys, they let out a satisfactory grin.

—Don't worry Jessica, I will protect you no matter what —little Jackson promised little Jessica while she was still giggling looking at the crying boys."

Jackson has been annoying Jessica ever since they were little kids. But he didn't do it maliciously, it was a way to spend more time with her, and he liked the cute reactions from her. He was protecting her in his own way, somehow by showing people that she wasn't alone, to let them know not to mess with her, because only he could do it, nobody else.

Those memories made Jessica realise that her crush may not have been Henry after all, but somebody she found annoying, somebody who has been with her all along. With that thought, with that person on mind, she unconsciously smiled and whispered for herself: "I am such an idiot".

You can never tell who is being truthful. The always mean boy turned out to be her guardian angel.

Don't let expectations blind you. Don't let appearances fool you.

Expect the unexpected.

Yue Xin Fu