

## Reflection

Lexi needed to take a break from her busy life; everything that has happened during the past few days made her homesick. She submitted the creative writing paper that Namjoon helped with just in time before spring break; and then headed to the company afterwards to request an extended leave, allowing her to go home for the holidays. Once everything was settled, she packed her things and took the first flight to her hometown.

So many questions went through her mind but she left without saying goodbye, unable to get her answers. David's long disappearance affected her the most; while she was thankful to him for taking care of her in the past few days, Lexi couldn't help but wonder what drove him away in the first place.

On the other hand, her latest incident with Namjoon haunted her thoughts. She couldn't put her head around what happened that night; it was innocent, it was probably coincidental, but it woke something inside her. Confused, she cleared her mind and chased her twisted doubts away.

After reuniting with her family, Lexi went on a promenade in the neighborhood. The area had gained a certain flavor with time; she didn't know if it was simply due to her long absence, but it somehow became enchanting. She walked around, admiring her hometown. Passing by the park, she decided to give a little commemorative of hers a visit. It's been exactly two years since she sat on that bench, and her last recall of it was not pleasant. Nevertheless, she couldn't help but to grin while going down memory lane because, on that day, she had gained way more than she had lost.

"What's so funny?" a familiar voice cut her time travel short.

"Jackson!" she hugged him "What are you doing here?"

"I'm here on business" he returned her embrace "I've been promoted. A new branch is planned to be built in town, and I will be in charge of the staff".

"That's wonderful! I'm so happy for you!" she congratulated her old flame.

He turned back to her, curious about her current situation "What about you? What have you been up to?"

The old friends caught up with what's been going on in their lives. Lexi opened up about her own experience abroad: how she was nailing her English course, catching her professor's attention and writing reviews and essays for various books. She also told him about her training program and that she was hoping to become one of the future lyricists of the company. They reminisced about their school years, their relationship and eventually their unfortunate rupture. Ending their conversation on good terms, they concluded their unexpected encounter.

"You will always be my best friend, Alexandra" he said before parting ways.

After her extended walk, Lexi headed home. As soon as she stepped inside the house, a cocktail of exquisite aromas pulled her into the kitchen. By the stove, a busy Mrs. Martinez was preparing her daughter's favorite meals, pastries and desserts. Pleased, Lexi picked an apron that was hung behind the kitchen's door and joined hands with her mother.

"I should come more often, I haven't been pampered in a while" Lexi stated, feeling her mother's love through the cuisine.

"You're always welcome darling, I missed cooking for you. Your father barely eats nowadays with the tons of diets and health issues" her mother reproached.

"Is he still mad at me?" Lexi moped, almost guessing the answer.

"Your father is ... difficult" Mrs. Martinez explained "It will take him some time before he accepts it, so be patient".

"Ara ... I understand, mom" she then switched to a more delightful subject "What's for dessert?"

Since her father was at work all day long, the two ladies ate lunch by themselves. After washing dishes, they sat on the front porch's swing for some mother-daughter quality time while enjoying their dessert like old times. Only this time, Mrs. Martinez noticed that Lexi was rather playing with her food.

"Lexi dear, does the yogurt taste different than usual? You barely had a spoonful" she worried.

Caught in the midst of her momentum, the young girl responded "Not at all mother, it tastes fine. Just like the old days".

“What’s on your mind sweetie? Talk to mommy, God knows I missed our girly chatters” her mother appealed.

“I ran into Jackson today” she engaged “I was in the park when he found me”.

“I was wondering what took you so long to get back home” her mother commented “Is everything all right?”

“Yes, we just talked about the past, present and future” she divulged “he sent you his love”.

Feeling that there was something else disrupting Lexi’s heart, Mrs. Martinez grabbed the yogurt bowl from her daughter’s hand and put both their dishes on the nearby table. She then held her hands closely to her chest and implored “Talk to me Alexandra”.

Lexi opened up to her mother about everything that has been happening in her life since day one. She told her about her special friendship with David, how he was there for her from the start, caring for her every need until he went out of sight without pleading with a reason whatsoever. She also told her about her mentor, how he helped her dust her writing skills with his training methods and how he always showed interest in her ideas and opinions. She kept the details of her sick leave to herself because she didn’t want to worry her mother further. She wrapped up her talk with a bright smile, convincing her mother that she was doing fine and that balancing between work and her studies has exhausted her and terminated her social life in the process.

“Your happiness matters the most to me, I cherish it as my own” Mrs. Martinez concluded, sensing that her daughter is hiding more than she was letting on.

The sun has set, and a fatigued Mr. Martinez pulled over on the driveway. He always came home after dark as paperwork was endless. He greeted his wife and daughter and went inside the house. For as long as Lexi could remember, her father had an unbreakable routine: once he came home, he washed up, changed into more comfortable clothes and sat in the living room. His wife would bring him his evening coffee, sugar-free and a veggie sandwich. His daughter never understood how he could mix two different aliments, but she never argued as long as he kept his diets healthy.

When Mr. Martinez finished his little break, he sat on one of the two armchairs set by the fireplace. While his wife usually sat by his side reading one of her magazines, he preferred going through the day’s newspaper.

Just like she used to do when she was young, Lexi sat on the huge cushion placed between her parents' seats. She used to write short stories on whatever caught her eye on her parents' journals in her little heart-shaped notebook. This time however, the grown up girl had a story to tell, a story where she was the main.

"Dad, I need to talk to you" she beseeched. To her disappointment, her plea was rewarded with utter silence. She stood up, fixated her eyes on her father's indifferent gaze and begged "Dad, I need you to hear me out". Upon watching the scene, Mrs. Martinez freed the seat for her daughter and left the two of them to sort it out privately.

Lexi took her time in explaining herself to her father. She told him about her many accomplishments in such short time, her plans for the future, and how Pr. Jenkins believed that she can do whatever she set her mind on. She didn't miss the chance to show him her determination about her new path and made sure that he understood the importance of her quest. No matter how stubborn he was, Mr. Martinez loved his daughter way too much to stay angry with her any longer.

As they sorted out their issues, a pleased Mrs. Martinez watched her precious family from a distance. She waited for them to break free from their father-daughter moment before she went back in the living room, with a letter in her hand.

"This came for you two months after you were gone" she handed her daughter the envelope.

Baffled at first, Lexi took the letter and examined the address; a certain **Danielle Trussoni** sent it.

"Oh my god, I cannot believe it!" she jumped on her cushion like she used to do as a child.

"Well, what is it? Do tell" her father demanded impatiently.

A week before she left for Seoul, Lexi wrote a letter to the author of her first-ever read novel. That book accompanied her throughout her college years. She was a slow reader and was more of a cinephile than she was a bookworm. Prior to opening the mail, she ran to her room and brought a copy of what appeared to be the letter she sent to the author. She then regained her seat between her parents, her hands shaking in excitement and read both sheets.

Dear Danielle,

I am writing you today to share with you my various feelings of happiness and excitement upon finishing your book **Angelology**. I used to read a lot in junior high, but I stopped years ago as I got consumed with watching movies and TV shows. Your book was truly a godsend when I came across it five years ago in the library, as I developed interest in angels, and the many movies, miniseries and articles that I explored did not satisfy my passion about them.

I am quite ashamed to admit that it took me five long years, on and off, to finish your book, not that I didn't enjoy it, but with every chapter that I have read, my mind wandered as your brilliant ideas shaped themselves inside my imagination, leaving me truly amazed and wishing that your book finds its place in cinema, as I will be more than thrilled to watch its outstanding storylines crown the big screen. As I approached the end of the book, I willingly put it aside and couldn't bear to finish the few pages left, as my heart and mind could not stand the end of such a vivid story. I carried my book everywhere, to school, to the mall, to the pool ... **Angelology** has become a part of me and I could not allow myself to let it go.

You could not - or you probably could - believe the amount of joy I felt when I found out that you wrote a sequel! Now I cannot wait to go purchase it. This news truly made my day; as I opened your website to thank you for such a marvelous adventure, and was rewarded in return with a second journey through **Angelopolis**.

Thank you for reviving my reading passion, I can go dust my **Harry Potter** books now and give them a try, and then give **Dan Brown** a go, but my book club won't be complete without **Angelopolis** joining its prequel on the shelf. I have always worshipped everything fantastic, supernatural, and biblical; to find all three in one, is quite astonishing. I hit the jackpot of literature and I am eternally grateful to you for such a wonderful gift.

Truly, Your biggest angelological fan, Lexi

Laughing at her overjoyed writing style, Lexi moved on to the response mail.

Dear Lexi,

I was so happy to receive your message. Thank you for taking the time to write, and for reading my books. It is so gratifying to have people like you out there!

I hope that you continue to find pleasure and happiness in reading. There are so many amazing adventures and characters out there! Hearing that **Angelology** inspired you to read has made all the work of writing worth it.

I will be sure to let you know when my next book comes out. Thanks again for getting in touch.

Sincerely, Danielle

After finishing her reading session, both parents joined Lexi on the cushion in a group hug. Mrs. Martinez was glad that everything went back to normal because the constant bickering around the house exhausted her. A warm atmosphere reigned over once more; all was well in the household.

As her short-term vacation came to an end, Lexi bid her parents farewell. She packed her stuff and headed to the airport. This change of air put her heart at ease and helped her gain perspective of her next move.