

Short Narrative

## The Quiet Forever

**APRIL M. BAGON-FAELDAN, Ph.D.**

Associate Professor III  
Mindoro State University



I gave him a goodbye hug.

Not the kind that lingers too long.  
Not the kind that means anything dangerous.

Just a simple hug.

A hug of friendship.  
A hug of thanks.  
A hug for a half day spent wandering museums and laughing like old friends.

No malice. Just gratitude.

But when my arms wrapped around him, something inside me softened.

Like I had found a quiet place to rest.



When I reached the LRT station, my smartphone buzzed.

It was him.

“Did you arrive safely?”

Such a small question. But no one had asked me that in a long time.

After I confirmed, he replied,  
“I’m glad you’re okay. Looking forward to our next gala!”

I smiled at my screen like an idiot. I teased him back:

“Oo sige ha... lagot ka sa akin kapag hindi ka namansin! Marami pa tayong museums na papasyalan. Maraming salamat sa masayang bonding, kapatid!”

He didn’t reply. And just like that... silence.

I told myself, *That’s it*. Just another person I met in a seminar.

Just another temporary connection. Because that’s how it usually goes, right?

You meet people.  
You laugh.  
You bond.

Then the training ends. And so does everything else.

People disappear like footnotes in your life.



A week later, my smartphone lit up.

His message.

“We will do Intramuros area next time...”

I laughed out loud. Half confused. Half amused.

So... we weren’t over?

Then he started sending funny Facebook reels.

Random memes. Silly clips.

All I could reply was “haha.”

But secretly, each message made my day a little brighter.

Like sunshine sneaking through curtains.



Then one morning, he sent: “Good morning.”

Two simple words. But they felt warm.

Personal. Intentional.

Not everyone greets you in the morning.

Only someone who thought of you first.



One day, my supervisor asked me to look for related studies about indigenous education.

And for some reason...I remembered him.

I remembered how he casually mentioned his brother worked at the UP library.

So I messaged:

“Kapatid... can you help me find literature?”

He replied the next day, asking for my email.

I gave it. And then—my inbox filled.

Dozens of research papers.

Published. Legit. Organized.

He didn't just send links.

He researched. He downloaded.

He compiled everything for me.

For me. I stared at the files, overwhelmed.

No one had ever exerted that much effort for something I needed.

“Where did you get all of these?” I asked.

“I did the research,” he said simply.

No drama. No bragging.

Just quiet effort. My chest tightened.

I promised him ramen. The most expensive one I could afford.

But honestly... it still didn't feel enough.



Later that night, hesitant, I asked:

“Kapatid... can I call?”

Before I could even overthink—my phone rang.

8:00 PM.

His voice.

Calm. Familiar. Warm.

Like coming home.

We talked the way we did when we first met at Century Park.

Easy. Natural. No awkward pauses. No pretending.

Just two people who understood each other.

At 9:30, he said he had to go.

He needed to catch the last LRT.

I blinked. “You're still at the office?”

“Yeah. Usual routine,” he said lightly.



Single. Alone.

Working late.

Something about that made my heart ache.

When he reached his condo, we continued talking.

And the night felt peaceful. Soft. Gentle.

Like the world had quieted down just for us.

We shared stories. Confessions. Even silly, naughty jokes. We laughed like teenagers.

And I realized—

I didn't want the call to end.



I started to feel something strange.

Something soft.

Something unfamiliar.

Something I couldn't name.

It wasn't loud.

It wasn't sudden.

It was quiet... creeping slowly into my chest like warm sunlight through a window.

And somehow, everything felt lighter.

I caught myself thinking about him at the most random hours.

While walking.

While eating.

While staring blankly at nothing.

His name would just... appear in my mind.

Effortlessly. Naturally.

Like he belonged there.

Then a question whispered inside me—

*Does he have a crush on me?*

My heart skipped.

*Or... do I have a crush on him?*

I tried to shake the thought away, but my lips betrayed me.

I had this silly smile.

The kind you don't notice at first.

The kind that slowly curves on your face while you're alone.

The kind that makes people ask,  
"Why are you smiling?"

And you don't even know what to answer. There was doubt.

A little suspicion.

Tiny sparks of hope I was afraid to touch.

Every time my phone lit up with his name—

my heart raced like it was running toward something.

Or someone.

I kept asking myself—

*Am I falling in love?*

*Does he like me too?*

*Or am I just imagining everything?*

But why did his voice calm me?

Why did his presence feel like home?

Why did the world feel softer when he was beside me?

It felt like butterflies.

Not the chaotic kind.

But gentle ones.

Floating. Dancing. Alive inside my stomach.

The kind that make you nervous and happy at the same time.

The kind that make ordinary days feel magical.

The kind that make you secretly hope—

*Please... don't let this feeling end.*

And for the first time in a long while...

I didn't feel scared of love.

I welcomed it.

Because loving him didn't feel heavy.

It felt warm.

It felt safe.

It felt like coming home to something I didn't know I had been missing.

And maybe...

just maybe...

I was already falling. Without even realizing it.



Two years later...

He is no longer just the man I met at a seminar.

He is my boyfriend.  
My best friend.  
My confidant.  
My safest place.

Sometimes I still pause and wonder how something so small —  
a shared seat,  
a random conversation,  
a museum walk —  
could grow into something this big.

This deep. This life-changing.

I never thought a simple encounter would turn him into one of the most important people in my life.

I never thought I would fall in love again.

After everything I had been through, I honestly believed my heart had already retired — that it had loved enough, hurt enough, given enough.

I thought my story was over.

But then he came.

Quietly. Gently. Without force.

And suddenly... love didn't feel terrifying anymore.

It felt safe.

He gave me a new way of seeing the world.

A softer perspective. A calmer life.

His hugs feel different. Not the kind you give out of habit.

But the kind that linger. The kind where your body relaxes without you noticing.

The kind that says, *You're home now. You're safe here.*

Every time his arms wrap around me, the noise inside my head disappears.

My worries dissolve. My heart slows down.

And for a moment, the world makes sense.

His kisses are warm and unhurried.

Soft. Familiar.

Breathing the same air as him feels strangely intimate — like even something as simple as his breath carries comfort.

Like loving him means loving every small, ordinary thing about him.

Even the quiet spaces between us.

And when we are close — when our foreheads touch, when our hands intertwine, when our hearts beat against each other — I feel something I never knew I deserved.

Not just desire. But connection.

Not just passion. But belonging.

A deep, steady kind of closeness that whispers:

*You are wanted.*

*You are chosen.*

*You are enough.*

With him, I don't feel insecure.

I don't feel lacking.

I feel admired.

Valued.

Cherished.

Like a woman seen fully — not just looked at, but understood.

I never thought I would experience this kind of compatibility.

The kind where silence isn't awkward.

Where laughter comes easily.

Where even doing nothing together feels complete.

Being with him doesn't feel like fireworks. It feels like sunrise.

Gentle. Warm. Certain.

He is my peace after long days.

My comfort after tears.

My quiet happiness. My happy pill.

And sometimes, when I look at him beside me — smiling, breathing, simply existing — I whisper a small thank you to the universe.

Because love didn't end for me.

It just arrived late.

And it arrived as him.



