**EVERYONE LEAVES**

**STORY OUTLINE BY CHESKA MARFORI**

When Angel’s sister leaves for college in Manila, her inevitable fear breaks through, her fear of having no one turn to. With the unusual set-up of her parents and with the unending cycle of fights, she clings to her friends for comfort and companionship. They spend the whole summer going to nearby lakes in their town in Laguna. When they had swimming in one of the seven lakes, she meets Kerwin. Their friends are pairing them together. In overnight camping, the two get to know each other deeply. As the tension and excitement of having their first sexual encounter and first kiss, they make out. Angel realizes her mistake the next day and to avoid confusion she clarifies to Kerwin that she’s not really sure of how she feels right now.

In the wake of her friend's mother, she meets Eve, her friend's cousin. Eve is a known troublemaker in school due to her attitude and reputation. They had a small talk about cookies served during wakes. They exchange conversation through whispers while the Manangs sings the burial prayer on the background.

Summer's over and school starts. The students in St. Mary’s are neatly dressed in their school uniforms and properly aligned while proceeding to their respective classrooms. The hallways are now silent. Inside the classrooms, the students are attentively listening to their teacher’s discussion, but inside their bags and pockets, their Nokia phones are vibrating due to several notifications. The Boys are raving about their sex life during the holidays while girls are talking about the latest fashion and their rebonded hairs. A leaked photo of Angel and Kerwin making out circulates in school and soon enough, they become the talk of the campus. All the male 4th year are devirginized and now ready for their “graduation”.

Not soon enough, the students can’t keep up with their decent facade and the jungle starts. Eve makes a scene and pulls her classmate’s hair in the hallway because she was bullying her. Rumors spread that one of Angel’s friend have STD. During class, a classmate teases Angel about being devirginized. Out of frustration and anger, she accidentally slaps him in front of their teacher and classmates. As a penalty for her behavior, the school’s principal requires her and Eve to help the sisters with their holy mission; baking and selling cookies where proceeds go to the street children. She also requires them to do some extra cleaning during breaks and after class. In one of their cleaning sessions, she thought that Eve wouldn’t make an effort in helping clean the classrooms but she did, even though there are awkward silences throughout the afternoon.

In one of the school’s required mass, Eve and Angel sneak in one of the classrooms. They hum and make fun of the church songs. They act as if they are part of the school’s choir. They mock and recite the student handbook. They write lyrics of their favorite songs on the blackboard. Inside the four corners of the room, they are good friends but outside, through the hallways, and during class hours, they only exchange brief smiles.

When Angel arrives home one afternoon, her parents talk to her and tells her their mutual decision to temporarily separate due to irreconcilable differences. Her mother assures her that her father will come back home soon. Due to her parents' sudden separation, Angel is devastated and finds comfort through Eve. Eve assures her that everything in high school is temporary. They can all move on after graduation. It’s just high school, anyway. Due to the tension and comfort they have at that moment, they accidentally kissed. Angel, shocked and guilt-ridden, reluctantly admit it to her friends but they are utterly disgusted. Eve’s cousin discourages her and tells her to avoid Eve due to the bad influence she transmits.

Angel ignores Eve. She couldn’t even look at her in the hallways. She gets paranoid that everyone in school knows what happens between the two of them. During the eucharistic ceremony, she feels like the priest is addressing the homily to her. Even the choir is attacking her with their falsetto voices. She seldomly hangs out with her friends because they treat her differently now.

On their last day of punishment, Angel gives Eve a cold shoulder and said a quick and apathetic goodbye. Eve hesitantly admits that she likes her and she knows it is only temporary but she wants to say it anyway. Angel, motionless and emotionless, rejects Eve saying that the situation is not right. She contains her emotions as she walks home. Her walls shatter in the arms of her mother and defencelessly, she cries. She tells her mother what happened and she wholeheartedly accepts her.

Through her mother’s acceptance, she just focuses on more important things that she needs to deal with through college. She avoids her friends and focuses on sorting out who she really is and what she really wants.

Months pass, graduation comes. Angel’s parents haven’t reconciled and they arrive separately. Angel decides to tell Eve about what she really feels but was afraid then. But just because it’s graduation, she wants to be honest with her. Eve admits to her that after several weeks of pondering on what she truly feels, it’s hard for her to sort her feelings right now. And since they will enroll in different schools in college, she’s not really sure if it will work out. She suggests to just move on like what she did. Angel sadly smiles but still thanks her for everything that had happened.