

Some secrets  
are worth  
keeping...



**One of the Same  
Kind**

by: Miguel Esquillo

Darkness covers the entire room. In the corner of its thick walls and low ceiling sits a wooden table filled with crumpled papers. Only a sheet of paper is found among the crumpled ones: the one in his hands. Moments later, he crumples and tosses it on the desk before he slides his hands down his face. He grabs a crumpled paper and unfolds it, then reads a few lines and crumples and tosses it back on his desk. This goes on and on for a while. It's way past his bedtime. No one witnesses the struggle he goes through. The door is locked. \*\*\* "Reading that book again, Megan?" her mother asks, bringing in a cup of hot coffee. In the living room of a house in a quaint village, a warm and bright light radiates from a lamp on the side table as the rain poured heavily from outside. "It never gets too old." Megan replies, smiling. "Read that line again, huh?" her mother asks as she sits on Megan's bed. "How'd you know?" Megan asks. "Honey, you do that face every time you read that very same line." "You really are mother." Megan's mom holds Megan's shoulder. "Honey you just got that book last week from the mail, and you still have no idea who it's from." her mom explains, worried. Megan stops reading and stares at her. She knew she had a point. \*\*\* The next morning, Megan catches sight of her seat mate Anthony getting his books from the locker. "Hey!!" Megan calls out, smiling. "Hey, Meg!!" Anthony greets back with a big smile. Megan takes out her favorite novel *A Winter's Promise* and shows it to Anthony. "Have you read this book? It's a great read." she says happily. Anthony views the pages of the books. He begins to smile. "Interesting. I'll check on this one out at the store later." "Great!! I won't spoil it though to give you the thrill." Megan laughs. "Good, good!!" Anthony laughs, too. Megan heads to class with Anthony following behind, smiling. At lunch time, Megan was at the cafeteria when Chelsea, Megan's best friend, spots her in the crowd. Megan remains quiet and Chelsea immediately notices. Megan walks away from the line with her tray filled with pesto pasta, with Chelsea following behind, holding a tray filled with carbonara. Megan keeps looking at Anthony just across the cafeteria hall, alone. He writes down a few notes on his notebook. "So, what you up to?" Chelsea asks. "Oh, nothing much." Megan answers with her mouth full of pasta. "Really now." "Would I lie to you?" Chelsea stops for a while and looks at Megan with a face quite stern. "Perhaps, especially if it's something you're really into." Megan sighed. She had to tell her what was really going on. One way or another, Chelsea would eventually find out. "Okay, last week I received a book from the mail and it didn't say who it was from. All it said was, 'The original copy, for my original amore.'" It was the book I showed Anthony a while ago, *A Winter's Promise*. I've been trying to find who wrote the book since what I received was the original copy of it." she explained. "Oh, please. That's just Anthony trying to impress you. We were classmates last year and all he could think of was how to impress you. He likes you, Meg." Chelsea replied. "He's been failing in his essays since first semester. What makes you think he's the writer?" Megan asks. "That's just the disguise he's wearing." Chelsea retorts. "To make you believe that he's a poor writer." she adds. "I know Anthony and he won't lie to me." Megan answers confidently. "Whatever you say." Chelsea answers as she continues with her food. A little while later after class, Anthony catches up with Megan, who was just down the school hall. "Hey, you wanna come with me to the book store? I'm gonna check on that book you recommended me." Anthony says excited. "Wish I could, I have cheer dance practice in 20 minutes 'cause we're going to a basketball game tomorrow to cheer for the school team." Megan replies, frowning. "Oh, don't worry about it. Besides, it is what you love." Anthony replies smiling. "Thanks, Tony." she says, smiling. Anthony drives toward the book store to check on the book that Megan had shown him. He was very excited to see the book. As a book lover, his heart raced quickly as he got nearer to the store. Upon reaching the book store, his smile turns into a frown as he sees a sign that's read: *A Winter's Promise*: ALL SOLD OUT. Please come back next week for the next batch. "Whoa." he exclaims. "Megan was right. That book was a great read it got sold out in just one whole week." he adds. When he got home, he ran up to his room. He puts down his bag and falls on to his bed, dead tired. But the smile from before hasn't faded yet. He looked at the photograph of him and Megan at their annual Science Fair, where he and Megan won first place. Sooner than he expected, he fell to sleep. \*\*\* The next day, Anthony receives a message that reads: "Hey!! We're off to the game. Wish us luck!!" - Megan 'You got this, mi amiga.' Anthony says to himself. Some time later, Anthony sees Chelsea who happens to sit alone in the corner of the classroom. "You miss your bestie, huh?" Anthony asks as he approached Chelsea. "Yeah, but it's only for a day anyway." Chelsea answers, wearing a forced smile. "By the looks of it, you don't seem comfortable with it." "I'm fine, okay? What could go wrong?" A little while later, Chelsea sits at the cafeteria, alone and sad. Anthony approaches Chelsea and decides to stay with her for lunch. "What could go wrong, huh?" Anthony retorts. "Okay, maybe I was slightly unsure of it." Chelsea replies, trying to laugh a little. "She'll be back tomorrow. It'll be alright." Anthony says as he comforts her. Chelsea decides to change the channel of their conversation. "Hey I don't know if you're aware, but Megan received a book from the mail last week and it was the book she showed you yesterday." Chelsea says. "No way?" Anthony says, surprised. "Yeah. And it's the original copy." Chelsea adds. "Who's it from?" "Didn't say who." "Dang, that's one heck of a gift." Anthony remarks. "And you did good not letting her know it was from you." Anthony nearly spat out his drink in surprise. "I'm sorry, say that again?" he replies. "I know it's you, don't deny it." she says, trying to force something out of him. "Who? The writer of the book? Absolutely not." he answers confidently. "Okay then, if you say so." Chelsea says, trying to be satisfied with his answer. Anthony had to leave early to get to class. Chelsea was left alone with only one thought in her mind: 'I know it's him. I feel it in my gut.' \*\*\* As Anthony drove home after class, the very thought of him being a writer was bothering him. 'This is nuts. I can't be a writer. I can't even write an essay well, what more of a big-ass story?' he said to

himself. When he reached home, he received a message from Megan. "Hey!! How was your day? Text me if you receive my message :)" While Anthony was looking at the message, he received another message; this time, it was from Chelsea. "Hey. I'm sorry about my irrational judgement a while ago. Megan also told me the same thing yesterday. But it's not too late to show her that you can excel in something more than what Brody is good at. Text me back if you can. - Chelsea" Anthony sighed. It was as if what he wanted to say faded like ash on the ground. Whatever he would say, Chelsea would always counter it with another factual statement, so he decided to say nothing at all. \*\*\* The next morning when Anthony arrived at school, he caught sight of Megan who was just down the hall. "Hey!! How was the game?" Anthony asked his friend. "We won the finals!!" Megan said, smiling. "And down to the championship we go." added a deep voice who seemed quite unfamiliar. Then out of the corner of the hall, a fair-toned and average-heighted boy emerged from the shadows. It was Brody, the team's MVP for two straight seasons. In his hand was a copy of the book *A Winter's Promise*. Could Megan have already found the guy she had been looking for? "Oh, Brody. What are you doing here?" Anthony asked, sheepishly. "Hey 'Tony. Just came to accompany my girl to her room. After all, I am who she's been looking for." Brody answered as he held her shoulder. "Megan, what's he talking about?" Anthony asked, looking very clueless. "Anthony.." she began. "I found him." "You found....who?" "The writer of the book. It's Brody." "How'd you know that?" "He told me and showed me all of his works, even the failed ones." Megan handed Anthony a whole yellow pad full of writings. "Wow, congratulations." Anthony said, trying to smile. "So, since you're not so good in writing, maybe you could join us for a little tutorial session for the project we have to turn in by the last week of the semester." Megan offered. "I'll see later, but I can't promise." "Well, suit yourself. This is your only chance to pull your grades up." Megan and Brody walked together with smiles on each other's faces. Anthony was left alone. He was still speechless of what had happened. Were he to feel happy that Megan had finally found the guy of her dreams? He couldn't think. Or speak. He walked away and no one noticed, except for Chelsea. \*\*\* As soon as classes had finished, he headed to his car with his head hanging down. Chelsea saw and knew why he was like that. She approached Anthony and decided to talk to him. He started his car and closed the door. She knocked at his window and Anthony rolled it down. The frown was still fresh on his face. Anthony was still left breathless. He couldn't seem to think or do something at the moment. It was as if he was taken into a room of darkness, full of misery and hopelessness. "You know if anyone should be sad, it's me." Chelsea retorted. "Why? What did you do?" Anthony asked curiously. "I've been believing that you were the writer from the very beginning, when in the end, it was Brody all along." Chelsea explained. "But you're still hanging on to that?" "Nah. I might get into even more trouble with Megan." Chelsea said, sadly. "Maybe you could still hang onto it, just for a little while longer." Anthony pleaded before he drove away. Chelsea felt helpless as she watched Anthony's car pull out from the lot and out on to the busy streets. \*\*\* When Anthony reached home, he went up to his room and sat on his desk. He sat there, staring at nothing as darkness came upon him, as if it were to swallow him whole. When he went to work on the project Megan mentioned to him, he noticed a whole yellow pad that he had gone missing. "No." Anthony said, worried. 'It can't be. Where is it?' he said to himself. He went through everything in his room. He checked his small table by his bed, his drawers, his closet. He was so desperate, he wanted to empty out the whole house just to find it. Then, a memory flashed. He remembered the yellow pad that Brody held in his hand. Could that yellow pad belong to Anthony and Brody just used it to impress Megan and make her believe that she has actually found her favorite writer? \*\*\* Back in the quaint village where Megan resided, she entered the house with a smile on her face. "Hi Mom, I'm home!!" she said, happily. "Wow!! You're happy today, what's up?" her mom asked while preparing dinner. "I found him at last." "Who? The sender?" "Yeah!! It was Brody all along." "Brody? Who's Brody?" her mom asked. "He's the school's MVP for two straight seasons. Megan replied. "Wow, an athlete and a writer, huh?" "Not to mention he's also great in class." "Even better than Anthony?" Megan stopped and looked at her mom. "What do you mean?" Megan asked. "I mean, does this mean Brody's better than Anthony in school?" her mom asked. "Technically yes, 'cause Anthony's always late in school and always turns in his paper works later than the specified deadline." Megan explained. "Hm. I see." "Yeah." Megan's mom looks at her with a sincere face. "You know, your father wasn't whom I expected him to be." she began. "Why?" she asked. "He wasn't, well, as handsome as I expected." Megan was teary-eyed. She never talked about this with her daughter. Megan's father went to work one day and ever since, became missing. A week after that, he was reported dead after being shot. "How does this connect to Anthony?" Megan asked. "Anthony is the one, and I know it for sure." her mom replied. "You sound just like Chelsea." Megan's mom saw Megan's bag open, with the yellow pad she received from Brody. "May I see that yellow pad?" her mom asked. "Sure, Mom." Upon taking a quick glance at the pad, Megan's mom had an idea. "Honey, do you still remember where you put all the letters Anthony had given to you last Valentine's Day?" her mom asked. "Yeah, they're in my drawer. Why?" Megan asked, looking curious. "Could you get them for me?" "Uhm, sure." Megan ran up to her room and got the longest letter Anthony had given to her last Valentine's Day. When she reached downstairs, they went to the dining table and turned on the lights. They compared the writings of the yellow pad and on the letter. Megan was so surprised her eyes could pop out. "They're—" "The same, right?" "Y-Yeah." Megan stuttered. She couldn't believe what she had seen. "H-How did you know about this?" Megan asked again. "Mothers always know best." she answered and gave Megan a wink. "And I have my sources." she added. Deep inside, Megan still had a hint of doubt. What if he just copied it from Brody? \*\*\* The

next morning, Megan ran up to Chelsea and showed her what her mom had shown her. Chelsea, too, was in total shock. "I told you so." Chelsea replied. "But, still. He could have copied it from Brody." Megan said, still doubtful. "But, here's my point: If that's Anthony's writing, why didn't Brody just give you his works in his writing?" Chelsea said, emphasizing the fact that Anthony could possibly be the real writer. Megan was left hanging. She could possibly be right and, at the same time, be wrong as well. She would have to give a thought or two about this point. So, she decided to confront Anthony herself. She found him heading towards their classroom. Megan grabbed him on the shoulder and pulled her in the center of the hallway. Chelsea and Brody couldn't help but watch. "Okay, Tony!! You've gone way too far!!" she shouted in anger. "Huh? What are you talking about?" he asked. She pulled out the yellow pad and shoved it in front of his face. "Copying Brody's stories? How crazy can you get?" she exclaimed. Megan called Brody and showed him the content of his paper and Brody's. They were exactly the same. "How could you? Plagiarize my favorite author's work just to get my heart? Well, news flash: you just lost that chance!!" she added, engulfed in anger. She stormed out of the hall, alone, and into the girls' locker room. "Bro, not cool." Brody said, walking past Anthony. "Megan!! Megan!!" Brody called out as he followed her. And just like before, Anthony was left alone, speechless. It was as if he could hear the very thoughts of the other students. "What a shameful boy...what a pity...shame on him...he should have known better than that..." Anthony walked outside, with his eyes filled with tears. Chelsea decided to follow close behind. \*\*\* Chelsea found Anthony sitting on the bench, staring at the sky that had seemed to turn dark whenever his eyes and the sky would make contact with one another. "Hey, you okay?" Chelsea asked as she approached Anthony. "I don't know." he replied as he wiped his face with his handkerchief. "You're the real one, aren't you?" she asked. Anthony nodded slightly. But as he nodded, he felt more tears dripping down his face. "So it is true." Chelsea said as she patted Anthony's shoulder. Anthony felt so guilty about what had happened that he decided to go home and sulk in his room. Chelsea couldn't say a word after what had happened to him and Megan. If only Chelsea could help in the problem that he was facing. \*\*\* When Anthony came home, he came to his room and cried in the corner. And just like before, darkness came over the entire room and seemed to engulf him in it. A little while later, he noticed a note left on his desk that read: "Hey 'Tony. Just wanna say thanks for giving fire to the devil. You really shouldn't leave your window unlocked just like that. Now that you're out of my way, me and Megan can live and be happy together in peace when I gain her heart once and for all. After all, I'd fall a thousand times just to make you smile a thousand times more." - B. The fire inside Anthony began to burn brighter and bigger. Brody was the thief who stole his yellow pad the night he was looking for them. 'And now, it's time for some payback.' Anthony said to himself. So all through out the night and over the weekend, Anthony worked out on a new novelette which he entitled *The Dawn of the Unknown*, which focused on a man who had two identities; himself and a famous poet. Once favored by the girl and then rejected after being framed for a crime he didn't commit, he sought vengeance and successfully struck back at the real culprit. In Anthony's mind, only one thing kept him fuelled in writing his weapon: Revenge. 'Revenge, oh, sweet revenge!! On this plan, it is you whom I shall trust and depend.' he said, sounding poetic. \*\*\* When that fateful week came, it was time to execute his plan. But he knew he couldn't do it alone, so he called Chelsea to help him with his plan. And just like manna from heaven, he found Chelsea just down the hallway. "Chelsea, Chelsea!!" he called out as he ran towards her. "Anthony? What's wrong?" she asked, concerned. "Check this out. He showed her the book and this made Chelsea interested. He told her all about his plan, which was a bit devious but he knew it would work. "You got it?" he asked before leaving her. "Yeah, let's do it." she said, determined. Being very observant, Chelsea subtly watched Brody unlock his locker and memorized the code to unlock it. When he and Megan left the locker hall and headed to the library, she unlocked the locker and placed the book in it. The plan was for Megan to think Brody had written another book for her and would be found clueless because he didn't write it. Anthony and Chelsea were hoping to see this plan succeed. They soon found out the outcome. When Brody opened his locker, he found the book sitting in between his school books and notebooks. Megan followed behind. He scanned the book and was so clueless of how it got in there. Megan noticed him and decided to check on him. "Oh, what's this?" Megan asked she took the book and decided to take a look at it. "Is this for me? It says Written by StarWriter18." she added. "Uhm...I-I didn't write that." Brody said, very clueless. Megan was surprised. Her eyes went wide. She gave a slight chuckle. "What do you mean you didn't write it? You are StarWriter18, right?" she asked. Brody had to come clean. It didn't look like he had much of a choice. "Meg, me being StarWriter18—" "It was all for show, wasn't it?" she asked, looking very grim. He couldn't say anything. He was breathless. He only scratched his head. In a blink of an eye, he gave Brody a hard slap on the face and stormed out again out of the hall. The students who witnessed this were speechless. Even Anthony and Chelsea didn't know what to say. "This went far better than how I expected it to go." Anthony whispered to Chelsea. "I know, right?" Chelsea replied, laughing softly. As soon as Megan disappeared, Brody raged to his classroom. As he passed by Anthony and Chelsea, they acted as if they felt sorry for Brody. \*\*\* Anthony found Megan outside, crying on the swing in their botanical garden. Anthony felt hesitant to comfort her. Chelsea followed him from behind. "Chelsea, I don't know if I can do this." Anthony said, sounding scared. "Yes you can. Just walk up to her." Chelsea smiled. Chelsea gave him a pack of tissue. Anthony looked puzzled. "Really? I have one pack of tissue in my bag, too." Anthony chuckled. As he inched closer to Megan, his heart was racing faster and faster. He could only think of what she would say when she saw Anthony's face. He soon found

out how she would react. "Oh, you. What are you doing here?" she asked, her voice cracking out from crying. "Just wanted to check if you were doing alright." Anthony said, smiling. Megan sniffled and sighed as Anthony handed over his tissue pack. "You're probably still mad at me for making such an irrational judgement with asking you first, right?" she asked, sobbing. "Megan, you know me; I don't hold grudges....even to those who hurt me the most sometimes." Anthony replied, smiling. Megan sniffled and smiled at him. "Thanks, Tony." she said. "Now, come on!! Stop that crying and you're turning 18 tomorrow!!" Chelsea remarked joyfully. "My birthday? Oh my God!! My debut's this Friday at Acacia Hotel!!" Megan exclaimed. "Oh yeah that's right!!" Anthony and Chelsea said, surprised. "I gotta go and get my outfit prepped. It's already Wednesday and my event's this Friday!!" "Not to worry you, but April 9's a holiday, which is this Friday." Anthony remarked. "Which means more people." Chelsea added. "Not to mention the traffic, too." Anthony added as well. Megan hurriedly went to her car. But before she drove away, she looked back at Anthony. "Hey, Tony?" she asked, sounding a bit scared. "Yeah, what's up?" he answered. "I know we fought a while ago and all those stuff I said about you but, would you want to be one of my 18 roses on my debut?" she asked, trying to smile. "Want? I'd be honored to!!" he exclaimed happily. "Great!! The title of my debut is "A Crystallised Masquerade Celebration: Megan at 18" which is a sparkle-and-shine-themed party and the party goers are expected to go in masks. So as much as possible, wear shining or bright colors like white, silver and others." she explained while handing out the invitations. "Reminiscing the 1800's, eh? Sounds classy." Chelsea said, impressed. "I bet you're gonna 'shimmer and sparkle' the night away." Anthony said, smiling. "Oh, Anthony stop it." Megan giggled. Megan couldn't help but blush. As soon as she left, Chelsea looked at Anthony who had a smile that was bigger than before. "Looks like you got yourself a one-way confession ticket, Tony." Chelsea smiled. "Well, it's now or never." Anthony said as he clutched his backpack towards him. "What are you planning to give her?" "I don't know. Maybe another book?" "You can't write a book in one and a half days." Anthony stopped for a moment. He knew Chelsea had a point. This might be his last chance to make things right after Megan had proven him wrong. He texted his parents to rent him a coat and tie for the debut and they immediately did. They texted him that it was in his closet and he took note of that. The three friends parted ways as they all headed home to prepare for Megan's debut. \*\*\* As Anthony's car pulled over into the garage, he went up to his room to find the coat and tie left by his parents. He found the coat bag in his closet with a note that read: "Green is the color of will, as said in the Green Lantern film. You must be courageous and have a lot of willpower to admit to her that you are the one. And I know you posses both of those qualities. Go get her, son!! Make me and your mom proud!! We'll be back in a week. We love you!!" - Dad When he took out the suit, it was an emerald-colored coat and tie. Anthony was speechless. 'This is it. The time has come for my big reveal.' Anthony said to himself. 'It'll take all my powers to stand up there and tell her the truth.' he added. Suddenly his MacBook popped up a notification from Skype. It was Chelsea, who wanted to have a video call. Anthony decided to answer the call. "Hey Tony!!" Chelsea greeted, smiling. "Chel, what's up?" Anthony asked. "Just checking up on you." Suddenly, another voice comes from the call. "Is that--" "Hi Anthony!!" Megan called out from the call. "Megan!!" he exclaimed. "Surprised? Me and Chelsea are at the gown rentals, checking on gowns for Friday." she asked. "Oh, I see." "Hey, which looks better? Blue or violet for my gown?" Megan asked. "I think blue looks great on you." Anthony answered confidently. "How come?" Chelsea asked, intrigued. "From a comic strip that I used to read, which is about DC's Various Lantern Corps, blue is the color of hope." he explained. "Wow, that sounds great!! All right, I'll take blue. What about you, Chel?" Megan asked her best friend. "Hm, I might go with....indigo. I love indigo so much." Chelsea answered, while clutching the dress. "I can tell, right Anthony?" Megan asked Anthony, who was chuckling a little. "Absolutely." he replied. Anthony checked his watch. It was way past his bedtime. He bid the two friends goodbye and ended the call. \*\*\* The next day, Anthony received an announcement from their class president that the teachers had a conference to attend to, which means there wouldn't be any classes for the day. 'Two-day rest day means time for preparations.' Anthony said to himself. He intended to give Megan the best gift he could ever give. Was it flowers? Chocolates? A new book? He couldn't decide. Luckily, he had some amount in his debit card to spend for her birthday. 'Time to put my spending to some good use today.' he told himself as he prepared to buy Megan the best present ever since being 18 only happens once in a girl's life. He started his car and headed to the nearby mall to check out some supplies he might need for making a great present. He went to the bookstore to check on something he had been willing to read for quite a while. He also bought some pens and papers for the gift. He headed to the checkout counter to pay for all the materials and the book. When he finished, he had lunch and unexpectedly bumped into Chelsea. "Chelsea!!" he exclaimed, with his eyes popped wide. "Shh!! Keep it down!!" she said, shushing him. "What? Are you robbing the store or something?" he joked. Chelsea looked at Anthony blankly. They took off to a corner nearby. Anthony took off Chelsea's hand that happened to cover his mouth. "What was that for?" he asked, annoyed. "Okay, first of all, I wasn't stealing anything and second, Megan is with me, checking out on new earrings for her debut tomorrow." Chelsea answered. "It's not like she'll suspect or something." he remarked. Just then, Megan caught sight of Anthony. He had run out of excuses to leave quickly, until all of a sudden. "Hey Megan!! Great to see you!! Listen, I gotta go, I really need to use the bathroom. Catch you later!!" he said quickly, as he dashed away like lightning. Megan looked at Chelsea. She couldn't comprehend what had just happened. "What was that about? Did he have to do the pee or poop?" Megan asked,

confused. Chelsea just shrugged her shoulders. \*\*\* Friday Night. The big debut of Megan. Anthony had just finished wrapping Megan's present. His smile was so bright, it turned his dark and gloomy room into a room full of happiness and joy. As he strapped on his necktie, he looked at his reflection confidently. 'No turning back now....it's showtime.' he said to himself. He checked his watch and saw that it was 30 minutes before the party. He was right on schedule. As soon as he reached the venue, he saw how elegant and well prepared the celebration was. At the lobby, he caught sight of Chelsea who was looking very splendid in her indigo dress along with her bright yellow-green mask. She couldn't recognize him at first, but it didn't take long for her to see that it was Anthony behind the silver-coated mask. "Well, if it isn't the Emerald Gentleman." Chelsea remarked, impressed. "Not bad yourself." he remarked back. Nearby, there was a photo shoot going on. It was a girl in a deep blue gown with a jet black mask. Anthony couldn't believe his eyes. He was left jaw-dropped. Chelsea noticed from behind. "Beautiful, isn't she?" Chelsea retorted. "And I'm the fifth boy to dance with her tonight." Anthony remarked, sounding a bit scared. "I don't think I'm ready yet. What if she won't believe me? What if I lose the chance? What if I—" "Relax." Chelsea said, patting his shoulder.