

Three Angels

by Ma. Elena L. Paulma

This is one of the true stories I like to tell and remember, especially when I want people to look at me in disbelief and say, “Oh really?” But it’s true. It happened. I’ve even given it a title: Three Angels.

I will not name the city, nor the circumstances that made me say at that time, “Your time here is up. It is time to move on.” I packed all of the things that had accumulated in the almost eight years I had lived in that city. I called a taxi and piled all of my things in every available space – on the front seat, trunk, floor, and backseat.

Those were the times when I would whip out decisions like they were instant noodles. I had no ticket yet and needed to buy one from the ticket office which, at that time, was still located next to the airport. The taxi driver was amused, and talked about his daughter, because I reminded him of her.

He asked, “Are you running away, *iha*? It looks like it,” he said, looking at me from the rear view mirror.

I smiled, weakly, for the flight was in an hour.

“No *manong*. In fact, I’m going home.”

By any heroic standards, it was but a little thing, what he did. He waited in the taxi with all my things while I went into the ticket office. He didn’t drive off. That was all. But I was grateful. At that time, I was losing faith in humanity in general.

He assisted me with my things into the airport terminal.

“*Ingat ka , iha.*” It was then I realized he had not believed me when I said I was going home.

As I ran towards the airport counter, I could see the personnel clearing the desks and placing a sign on top that said: “Closed.” He was my second angel of the day. Perhaps he understood the look on my face, because he took my ticket and gave me a boarding pass.

He weighed my things on the scale. Then he turned to me saying, “You have excess baggage.”

Sometimes, at times when I really shouldn't, I do very stupid things. This was one of those times. I was late for boarding, I had excess baggage, and I only had fifty pesos in my hands.

Then the third angel appeared. Looking back, I sometimes convince myself she really was a being from some outer world with wings tucked behind her shawl. Her face was beautiful, framed in a Muslim's black *kombong* that covered her hair. Her skin was clear and fair, and her eyes were a strange gray color.

"How much do you need?" she asked. When second angel told her the amount, she reached into her wallet, drew out the amount, and gave it to him.

I asked her for her name and address so that I could repay her, but she just shook her head and with a slight smile, walked away. My name was being called on the pager. I ran towards the plane, and flew home.

Ever heard of this phrase, "Life is right, in any case?" The three angels who quietly came and left a mark at a rather low period in my life proves it.