On Repeat

*Beep! Beep! Beep!* The alarm clock sounded, making as much noise as it can to wake the sleeping girl who laid in the bed next to the stand where it sat. With a groan, the teen stirred and hit the snooze button, silencing the accursed sounds. After reading the time, she yawned and shuffled out of bed, her hair resembling a brown bush with how messy it was.

“I hate Mondays…” The girl, Angela, hissed as she prepared herself for school. Angela was a junior in High School, and today was the day her Biology class would be paired up to work on a science project. Angela didn’t really care, though. She never cared about school; it just felt like a waste of time. She knew the school was going to bend over backwards to see all the students pass, and that included her, so why bother?

Angela made her way to the kitchen when she saw a note on the fridge. She didn’t bother reading it because it was the same thing every time: Her mother was too busy that morning, and Angela would have to take herself to school. Angela’s mother was the only real parental figure she had; she didn’t have any grandparents, and her father left one day and never came back. Conveniently, the school was just a few blocks away, so Angela never had to walk far. She made herself breakfast, straightened her hair, changed into her school clothes-a t-shirt and jeans-and walked off to school.

“Good morning, class.,” her teacher, Mr. Burbanks, an older man with a broom-like mustache, greeted, “Today is the day we start on the class project. Now, I know last year I let you choose your own partner, but seeing as that was… A disaster, I will be choosing your partners for you.”

Most of the students in the class groaned, but Angela just shrugged to herself. She wasn’t exactly a people person, nor was she all that popular; on the contrary, none of her fellow students really cared much for Angela. As a result, she usually just paired herself with the only other person in the class who didn’t have a partner, so the teacher picking her partner for her actually worked out in her favor.

“David, you’re with Joseph. Mark, you’re with Melanie. Isaac, you’re with Sean.” The teacher began to list who was partnered with who. Angela eventually zoned out, as she often did in school, until her name and partner were announced.

“Angela, you’re with Robin.” Angela looked over at her partner, who sat two seats to the right of her. Robin was a mess, as she always was; her black hair was long and messy; her clothes were wrinkled and torn, and her eyes had black bands underneath them. Her skin was so pale, you’d be forgiven for thinking she was a vampire, which made the freckles on her face stand out. Like Angela, Robin wasn’t popular with the rest of her classmates, although for different reasons; people thought she looked creepy, and the fact that she rarely ever spoke to anyone wasn’t helping.

“Now, I want you to pair up and discuss what the topic of your project will be for the remainder of the class. And please, nothing inappropriate. This is Biology, not Sex Ed,” the teacher announced as the students got up to join their partners. Angela sighed as Robin sat down in the empty seat next to her, wondering why she had to be paired with the class loon.

“H-hi, Angela. My n-name is-,” Robin stuttered, before Angela cut her off.

“I already know who you are, Robin.” If looks could kill, Angela would’ve been arrested for mass murder.

“Oh, uh, right, I guess y-you would. We a-are in the same class after all,” Robin laughed nervously, caught off guard by Angela’s glare, “W-w-well, we r-really should work on the p-project.”

“Yeah, sure, whatever,” Angela rolled her eyes.

“You could at least act like you care,” Robin muttered under her breath, hoping Angela didn’t hear her. Unfortunately, Angela was sitting right next to her, so it was pretty easy for her to hear.

“Why should I care?” Angela hissed, “I don’t care about this project; I don’t care about this class, and I certainly don’t care about the freak I’m partnered with!”

Robin’s eyes widened in shock at Angela’s harsh words, before looking down at the table, unable to look at her. “You’re… You’re gonna be sorry one day…”

“Grow some thicker skin,” Angela scoffed, having no sympathy for the girl next to her. People have said crueler things about her before, so why was this any different.

The rest of the day was uneventful. Neither Angela nor Robin spoke to each other after Angela’s harsh words, and the rest of the school day breezed past Angela. After school, Angela took the route she always took home when she heard someone call out.

“Excuse me, miss! May I speak with you?” Angela turned around to see who was talking, and she saw an older woman walking towards her. Her skin was lightly tanned, which made her long, vibrant red hair stand out. She was fairly tall; taller than Angela and her mom at least. On her shoulder was a parrot; its feathers the same fiery red as its owner’s hair. The woman, now standing in front of Angela, smiled warmly as she spoke.

“Hello there. My name is Gila Augusta. It’s a pleasure to meet you.” As the woman, apparently named Gila, introduced herself; Angela noticed that she had a slight accent, but what accent it was wasn’t clear.

“And this is Phoebe. Say hello, Phoebe,” Gila gestured toward the bird on her shoulder. The bird didn’t speak, but Angela swore it was glaring at her.

“Right. Well, I’m not interested in what you’re selling, so I’ll just be on my way now,” Angela said, not bothering to make the irritation in her voice known.

“Oh, I’m not trying to sell anything,” Gila responded. “I just want to ask you a question. A simple, easy question.”

Angela paused, raising an eyebrow in intrigue, “Alright, but make it quick. I got better things to do, y’know.”

“If you could repeat a day, any day of your life, what would it be?”

“What kind of question is that?!” Angela yelled. “What, you think people can just turn back time for a do-over?! Quit wasting my time.”

“Just humor me,” Gila, despite being yelled at, kept eerily calm and continued smiling, “Answer the question and I’ll be off.”

“Fine! If it will get you out of my hair, then I’d want it to be this day!” Angela answered, just wanting this woman to leave her alone, “I’d want it to be this day to tell the school exactly what’s on my mind! I’d want it to be this day, so I can tell that creepy crybaby Robin to suck it up out loud and publicly! But most importantly of all, I’d want it to be this day so I can punch you in the face for wasting my time! That a good answer for you!?”

Gila pause, as if thinking over what Angela just said, “Certainly. Thank you for your time.”

Angela turned around to continue walking home, but Gila called out to her after she walked a few steps. “Oh, and I think you should learn to be kind, Angela.”

Sneering, Angela stormed off, finally making it home. She ate dinner, did most of her homework, and went to bed, dreading the day she’d have to go back to school to deal with Robin again.

Angela never realized that Gila knew her name despite her never telling her.

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“Same shit, just a different day,” Angela groaned, not realizing the irony in her words.

She shuffled downstairs, expecting to see her mom reading the newspaper and eating breakfast. Tuesday was one of her off days, after all. Instead, she found the kitchen completely empty. No breakfast, no newspaper, no Mom.

“Maybe she’s sleeping in or something,” Angela muttered before a certain note on the fridge caught her eye. She walked over to read it, realizing that it was the same note her Mom put on the fridge to tell her that she would have to get herself ready without her.

“Maybe she forgot to take the last one down. Yeah, that’s probably it,” Angela reasoned, trying to put her mind at ease. She made breakfast, brushed her teeth, got dressed, and headed to school.

“Good morning, class.” Mr. Burbanks greeted the class exactly as he did yesterday, “Today is the day we start on the class project. Now, I know last year I let you choose your own partner, but seeing as that was… A disaster, I will be choosing your partners for you.”

“Wait, what? Something’s not right,” Angela thought as she shot her hand up.

“Yes, Angela?” Mr. Burbanks pointed at Angela, as he always did when calling on a student.

“You already paired us up for our projects yesterday,” Angela said, wondering if Mr. Burbanks was going senile. Mr. Burbanks gave her a confused look in return.

“Angela, yesterday was Sunday. I know you’re not the best student in the class but do try to keep up with the schedule.”

Angela’s face contorted into an expression of pure confusion. “Uh… Okay, Mr. Burbanks, if you say so.”

“Did he have a stroke yesterday or something? Hang on a minute.” Angela thought as she pulled out her phone from her pocket to check the date. Sure enough, it too said that it was Monday, not Tuesday as it should have been. “What? The note, the project, and now my phone? Could… Could it be that-“

“Now then, with that out of the way, I will proceed in pairing you all up now,” Mr. Burbanks’ voice snapped Angela out of her thoughts. She realized that, if Mr. Burbanks assigns the same partners as he did yesterday, that means her worst fear was validated.

“Who was paired up yesterday?” Angela thought, “It was… David with Joseph, Mark with Melanie, Isaac with Sean...”

“David, you’re with Joseph. Mark, you’re with Melanie. Isaac, you’re with Sean.”

Angela’s eyes widened as Mr. Burbanks called out the same pairs as yesterday. The day was happening again, as if it was a song on repeat. “This… This isn’t possible! This has to be a dream! A nightmare! A-“

“E-excuse me, are you okay?” A familiar, stuttering voice interrupted Angela’s thoughts as she turned around to see Robin, sitting right beside her.

“Erm, uh… Yeah, I’m fine,” Angela lied, knowing better than to tell someone about what she thought was happening.

“Are you sure? You l-look pretty pale…,” Robin’s voice trailed off as she looked Angela’s face over in concern.

“I said I was fine,” Angela said, too stunned to be angry at Robin. “Don’t we have a project to work on?”

“O-Oh, right! Sorry, I just thought you were sick is a-all,” Robin replied, dropping the subject.

The rest of the day played out exactly like it had yesterday, only without Angela demeaning her partner. After school, she took the same route she did yesterday, in hopes of finding the mysterious woman who called herself Gila. Sure enough, in the same spot they met the first time was where she stood, as if she was waiting for Angela.

“Well, hello Angela,” the woman spoke, her bird glaring daggers at Angela, “I hope school was everything you dreamed of doing. Oh, and before I forget!” she leaned over towards Angela, her head turned slightly to the left, “Go ahead. Hit me in my good eye.”

“What are you talking about?!” Angela shouted, backing away from the crazy redhead, “What is happening!? Everything’s happening exactly like it did yesterday! I don’t understand!”

“Oh? Have you forgotten?” Gila asked, straightening herself with a smug smile on her face, “Last time we met, you said, and I quote: “If it will get you out of my hair, then I’d want it to be this day! I’d want it to be this day to tell the school exactly what’s on my mind! I’d want it to be this day, so I can tell that creepy crybaby Robin to suck it up out loud and publicly! But most importantly of all, I’d want it to be this day, so I can punch you in the face for wasting my time!” So tell me, Angela, was it everything you’d hope it would be?”

“How… I don’t…,” Angela was at a loss for words.

“Well, you have plenty of time to think about it. After all, there is always tomorrow!” Gila sang, walking off with that smug smile still plastered on her face.

“No, wait! I have more questions to ask!” Angela called out in desperation, but it was too late. The woman and her bird were gone…

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