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# **BROTHER'S REGRET**



**J. P. SAN**

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Be Kind.

## About the author

**J**.P. San, also known as Jimmy, is an American novelist known for weaving suspense, drama, and a touch of the surreal. From a young age, he was deeply attuned to the spiritual world, receiving a profound vision through his grandparents' intercession. This sparked his lifelong journey as a dreamer, seeking hope and guidance through divine signs. Drawing inspiration from everyday moments and human complexities, Jimmy creates emotionally resonant narratives. Outside of writing, he enjoys hiking, coffee, and exploring new places. He currently lives with his family in Rockville, Maryland, USA.



*Jimmy San*

# Introduction

**M**any of you know me from Professor San's stories. I am Telel.

My wings have carried me over countless gatherings, but few feel as heavy as this one. Here, in the trembling breath of Lam Portillo, you will find a man caught between doubt and duty, shame and love. His words for his brother are not polished—they are raw, fractured, and searching.

Read them not as eulogy alone, but as a mirror: of grief, of family, of the unseen angels who still linger at the edge of human sight.

Come closer now. Listen. The story begins.

# A Brother's Regret

I scanned the sea of faces, some familiar, most not.

We were all standing there, just waiting, holding ourselves open to anything that might give this moment some kind of meaning.

I didn't feel like the right person to speak.

I didn't feel equipped to pull a truth from my brother's death that would help anyone, least of all me, make sense of things.

"Now, I would like to invite Lam Portillo, brother of the deceased, to share a few words."

I froze, paralyzed by the cacophony of the crowd, thunderclaps splitting through my mind. Murmurs rose and fell like waves, tugging at me as the trembling ground beneath my feet felt ready to collapse. The damp air clung to my skin, heavy with the lingering scent of wet-cut grass. Family and friends huddled together in front of me, their grief-stricken faces searching desperately for comfort. They waited for my words, but my throat remained solid, unyielding as stone.

"Lam?"

I heard an unfamiliar voice. A tightness gripped my chest as I looked over the crowd again, each breath a struggle. It wasn't sorrow or regret, just the sheer weight of the moment, the crushing finality of it all. I hadn't cried, not one tear. For a split second, I had the absurd urge to burst out laughing, to feel some release, some break from the heaviness pressing down on me.

I suppose I had leaned mostly on the kindness of friends. I felt ashamed that I never considered reaching out to god for comfort. I had closed off spiritual connections as a child. I had made god too small in my eyes. For that I acknowledge that I need forgiveness.

My sister's small, weary smile offered a flicker of comfort, a fragile moment of peace to hold onto. There was something in Leslie's presence, a quiet strength that stirred something deep within me, like a subtle shift in the air, almost imperceptible but undeniable. Surrounded by familiar faces, I felt a strange sense of change hovering around us, just out of reach, waiting to take shape.

Then, out of the corner of my eye, I noticed someone standing just behind her, shaking his head in disapproval. The figure was barely there, a hazy outline in the dimming light, yet unmistakably angelic: a presence both gentle and stern, like a warning wrapped in grace. I blinked, half-expecting the vision to disappear, but this angel opened its glorious wings and lingered, watching us with an expression I couldn't quite decipher.

I heard a few people urging me to begin, embellishing my doubt that I was the right person to deliver this eulogy and provide closure. Like I said, I hadn't cried; I felt like an imposter. What could I contribute to this moment?

"Lam, are you ok?" The priest laid his hand on my shoulder.

"Yes, Father."

"You don't need to speak if you don't want to."

I did not feel relief, but I wondered momentarily why I had been asked to speak. Leslie checked all the boxes. She was shattered after our brother's passing. She couldn't get out of bed some days, and her temper flared like never before. I was careful of my words, such as mentioning "*brother*" or the smell of gasoline. Anything that remotely reminded her of Joey would bring her to tears.

"I'm OK, Father."



I took a deep breath to steady my voice. "We're here to remember my brother, Joseph Portillo III, who served his country and protected others in his unit." I didn't mention that he also saved Senator Goldman's and his family's life; they knew.

"We got many people here who didn't know him, but Joey is famous. He is a hero." That word always sat uncomfortably on my tongue. '*Hero*.' It was grandiose, too large, too absolute. The funny thing is that I had always imagined this title for myself in some grand narrative, not for my brother, who had quietly worn it long before anyone thought to crown him with it. But now, in death, it belonged to him, and I was left grasping for its meaning, wondering if I'd ever measure up to that word myself.

"A hero isn't just someone who fights battles; a hero is someone admired, of noble character, who acts with integrity, no matter

the circumstances. Joey was that kind of hero twenty-four-seven: noble, courageous, and thoughtful."

Don't get me wrong. Joey could be a shit; everyone has their moments. But I couldn't think of them now. He stole my favorite clothes before prom, my 7th-grade girlfriend, and my hashpipe. But I certainly hadn't appreciated him as much as I should have when he was alive. I would cause trouble or embarrass him in front of his friends for no reason. I would often steal money from his room.

Yet, no matter how I behaved, Joey always protected, cared for, and loved me and Leslie. Though he was the youngest, we all looked up to him. He wasn't just a brother; he was my best friend. But I wasn't going to share all that. Some things were meant to stay between us.

My mind went back to that angel I think I just saw. Joey believed in angels. I told him he was crazy and that angels did not exist. At our parents' funeral, Joey stood beside me, eyes fixed on the sky. That day, the air was thick with the weight of loss. I thought I saw blood on top of the casket. I tried to show Joey, but his expression was filled with wonder, like he had just discovered fire.

"Do you see it?" he whispered, tugging at my sleeve.

"See what?" I asked, glancing up at the gray clouds above us. I wanted Joey to say that he saw blood.

He smiled, small but sure. "The angel. Right there, by the clouds."

I shook my head, not sure if he was serious. Then I peered hard at the box of wood, I no longer saw blood on the coffin. I did not fault him; Joey was just a kid. But I remembered that he slowly looked up, like he was *really* seeing something. I didn't

see anything. It made me pause. He was either nuts or the best fucking actor I had ever known. There was something about Joey, a quiet certainty that made me wonder if he knew more than the rest of us ever would.

Another day, Joey told me that right before us, a celestial angel named *Ikart*, along with our parents' guardian angels, were ascending into the heavens where legions of angels would welcome their souls into a new dimension we call Heaven. All I saw that day was a clear, blue sky; nothing more. But the name stuck with me, maybe because it was so strange. How did Joey even know the fucking angel's name? Do angels have name tags?

Another time, he claimed a woman on the moon named Lakita was watching over us. What was it with my brother and these weird names and strange things that he would talk about? I remember thinking my little brother had lost his mind. But then he looked me in the eye, with a seriousness that belied his age, and said, "Lam, you'll remember this day when you're much older, at another funeral." Now, here I am, remembering.

I remember asking him about these visions and super-whatever beings. He looked at me seriously and said, "Lam, you have a special guardian watching over you now. She told me to tell you to not forget to love your family." It didn't make sense then. Joey was so convincing, so wise beyond his years, that I believed him. At the same time, my intuition told me that he was full of shit. Today, I believe he saw things we could not see. More importantly, I think he was telling me things I needed to hear today.

"Lam, are you ok?"

"I'm cool." I did feel cold, as if I were locked up in a refrigerator.