

## Introduction

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This support pack contains the following materials:

- the story that you can listen to in the podcast;
- a comprehension activity based on the story.

## Read the story

### The End?

by Chia Lih Tan

'You know, I have been thinking about this for a long time. I want to start a new life, with a new you,' she said.

'New me' I asked.

'Yes, as my best friend,' she gave me a smile. I have always loved the way she smiles. Somehow though, this time it seemed different.

I was not sure how to react. Deep down in my heart, I thought, friends huh? Ha ha. After three years, friends huh?

'I was happy with you, honestly. However, I believe I will be happier with Lawrence. He gave me a sense of belonging. He made me laugh when I was sad. He accompanied me to the library whenever you were not around. He took me to see comedies and he laughed at the same time as me. He even peeled oranges faster than you'.

Wow, that was quite a lot of things I never knew before. Do I really need all this new general knowledge about myself? For a while, I thought this was just a dream. However, it was a bit too real. I had expected something like this to happen. I had known that Lawrence was always looking for chances. I had known that by taking on the post of Student Council Vice President, I was sure to be bound by all the activities. I mean, how could a VP escape from the activities of over 30 clubs and societies? He had to make sacrifices. He had to balance his time. He had to have an understanding girl friend. My last thought finally awakened me.

'Is there no turning back?' I asked, half expecting what she would say.

'We do not need to turn back. I just want to move forward with you but we will no longer be in the same vehicle. Our destination may even be different but I still want to move forward. Perhaps you may want a new passenger. I am not sure but I hope that when I need a driver, you will still be there for me, IF you still remember me. I just hope that when you see me in another vehicle, you will not ram me from behind but will honk and let me know you still remember me. Can you do that?'

I smiled painfully. She made it sound so realistic, so easy and philosophical! I had never rejected her demands before. We had had no arguments recently. Now was that not a good sign? Okay, I had to admit that we seldom saw each other those days. We had not even had lunch together that whole week!

'Okay, perhaps my car needs some maintenance,' I finally admitted.

'Your car needs no maintenance, you just need a new passenger, someone who is able to wait for you when your car breaks down, someone who will ride with you even though you have no air-conditioning in your car.'

'Is my car that bad?' I asked, feeling better as I expected her to say no.

'No, of course not. Just that I feel happier with my new driver and his new car.'

'Ha ha.... Emily, here's my best wishes to you and your new driver.' I offered my right hand and we shook hands. I felt lonely. For the first time in my life since I assumed the post of VP, I felt lonely. Perhaps it is time that I take a new turn? Perhaps it is time I start afresh. Perhaps our

relationship was not as durable as I had thought. Perhaps it is more of an ordinary battery instead of an alkaline one. Ha ha. Perhaps I had asked for it. I agreed totally with my last thought. I had asked for it. It seemed funny but somehow I could not laugh. I could not even see the floor clearly anymore. Everything was a blur. Perhaps it was time to change spectacles?

'Here, take this tissue. You know, whenever I cry, you try your best to soothe me? I am sorry, I do not know how to do the same. However, I DO have only one Hacks left. Do you want it?'

I looked at her. How could she say things like that at a moment such as that?

Both of us burst out laughing. One Hacks. I gave her a hug, said goodbye and took many thousands of heavy steps back to my house in SS14. The walk which would normally have taken 10 minutes seemed to last forever. People say, sometimes you are up and sometimes you are down, now that is life. I believed that then but I believed it unwillingly, now. I really do.

'Help!' I heard a frantic cry for help. A girl was pointing in the direction of a guy who was running away from her. He had taken her purse! The first thought that came into my mind was, run. I was not much of a runner and not much of a fighter. So, what would I do even if I caught up with him? Kick him? My thoughts ran even faster than my feet. The snatcher was fast, there was no way I was going to catch up with him. However, looking back at the girl who was now running behind me, I knew that I had the obligation to keep on running. I had to keep on chasing this guy until someone stopped him. The road was empty of people that day. He kept on running until he turned a corner. I was already soaked with my sweat and my stamina was giving up. Again I glanced back and there she was, slow but she was still running. Again, I pushed myself further. If I caught up with that guy, I will register for the Half Marathon held next month.

As soon as I turned the corner, I shouted for joy. There he was, pinned to the ground by a policeman. Apparently, he had raised too much suspicion.

'We have been waiting for him for many days. We

thought that he would not be so stupid as to try again but he did. These drug addicts never change' the policeman said while handcuffing him.

'Drug addict? I could not even catch up with a drug addict? Now, this is bad. I laughed but as I was also panting for breath at the same time, I choked and coughed. Here was I, dumped just 20 minutes ago and now I was told that the guy whom I had tried so hard to catch up with was a drug addict? The policeman held the man up. Finally the girl arrived. Her face was red and yes, she was sweating as well.

'Wo...w, y..ou caught up wi...th him huh?' she said amidst her gasps for air.

'Actually, the policeman here did,' I tried my best to keep the sound of my breathing down.

We followed the policeman to the nearby police station where a report was lodged against the man and then we were allowed to leave. 'You do run quite fast, were you a school runner previously?' she asked.

Her facial expression did not show that she was joking.

'Ha ha.... I would have given up in the next ten seconds if the policeman had not been here to apprehend him.'

'Actually, I was just joking. I knew that he was too far away from you and besides, these drug addicts can really run fast.' This time I believed she was telling the truth.

'Really? Was the sentence just now a compliment that I ran well or was that just a sentence to help me regain some sense of pride?' I said, noticing that she was not that tall, maybe around 155cm.

'Ha ha.... Well, what do you think then? Would you mind if I treat you to lunch tomorrow?' She gave me a nice smile. I had always loved it when Emily smiled at me. Her smile was definitely much sweeter than Emily's.

'How could I refuse? You sound so sincere. Aiks! I have a meeting tomorrow from 1 to 3 p.m. Would you like to have lunch earlier, say at

twelve or maybe we can have tea at three?' I hoped that she would opt for the latter as my class would finish at 12 and meeting at 1 p.m. meant that I would have to be in earlier. If we had tea together, I could then ask her for dinner!

'We will make it twelve then. I still have a bus to catch. See you tomorrow.'  
For a while, I stood there. Something was amiss. What? I remembered. There are three colleges together here in Subang Jaya. How was I

supposed to know which one she was studying at? She had a bus to catch. That may even mean that she was studying at a college outside SS15! It was too late. She was no longer in my view.

Perhaps I would meet her again? I hoped so as I walked slowly back to my house. I slept soundly that night. It was not due to my happiness at this chance meeting. I was tired. Nevertheless, I smiled.

## After reading

### Exercise 1

Decide if each of the 13 statements below about the story are True or False.

1. The author had been Emily's boy friend for three years.
2. Emily wanted to break up with Lawrence.
3. The author blames his role as Student Council Vice President for the break up.
4. Emily compares their future relationship to a ride in a car.
5. Emily thinks the author needs a new girlfriend.
6. The author needs to get some new glasses.
7. Emily and the author laughed because he said something silly.
8. The author was worried about what would happen if he caught the thief.
9. After the policeman caught the thief, the author was honest with the girl about what had happened.
10. At first the author could not tell if the girl was being serious.
11. The author thought that Emily's smile was nicer than the girl's smile.
12. The girl arranged to meet the author at his preferred time.
13. The author realized that he hadn't arranged where to meet the girl.

## Answers

**Exercise 1:** 1. True (T); 2. False (F); 3. T; 4. T; 5. T; 6. F; 7. F; 8. T; 9. T; 10. T; 11. F; 12. F; 13. T