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A Weebs Existential Crisis—A feature on Paula Francis Caceres

The anime protagonist is a person that is uniquely displaced in a world that doesn't accept him or her. The journey only begins when the protagonist chooses to make the world theirs, quaking the universe as they dwell upon it, unsure of what is going to happen—boom anime intro! That is something anyone would love to have in their world, and Paula was not an exception. The moment one matures into a phase that's different from the previous one is the moment one would stop and think. From the childish shinanigans, where worlds and realities are made within the palms of your hands to the responsibility driven cycle of adulthood—life passes you just like that—leaving no one safe from time.

She was always a weeb to begin with; going through college with a joyous mood along with classmates, despite keeping several masks hidden for only her to know and keep—now doesn't that sound like college to you?

Paula rolled over to the corner of her bed, waking to the sound of messenger notifications at 11 in the freaking evening. She should be sound asleep at this very moment, but why the hell is she evening thinking about responding to those notifications? As the synthetic, wannabe sunshine rays forced her left eye open, she saw it was messages from her best friend requesting a small favor from her, half dead half wake body. It was a short conversation, stupidly short and useless but regardless of it she thought about what he asked her for—a summary of her college experience. As the phone light died off, she laid on her bed thinking about that question, her body fell asleep once again but her mind lingered off...

Paula's college experience wasn't bad, it just sucked. However, she didn't hate it but actually loved her college years for very simple reasons. She couldn't make up her mind about these things but she knew that these were the feelings she had during that time. Paula had three months to make up her mind, left with her own ideas and thoughts—a long period of reflection—because she was LOA for the term. The only thing between her and graduation is thesis; the final boss of any undergraduate! So let's roll back a year and a half before the sequences of very questionable events.

Paula had failed her comprehensive exam, and the exam is needed to gain the “go!” signal for her thesis, but no. One failed component is what happened to her, one component shouldn't be too bad right? She thought it wasn't bad, and that she could take it next term but she was wrong. The aftereffects were bad, her heart tightened by the sight of one failed component left her close to tears. It was a sad day for some of the people that were left with an X mark on their paper, a no go for thesis, and a further delay to their graduation. She sat with her best friend in silence. He too failed his comprehensive exam, but the one thing that irritated her was that he passed the component she failed in—fictional writing. As she dragged herself home seeking the comfort from her family members, she was only greeted from the opposite of what she expected; silence. The constant pressure from her family, offered no support since she was deemed a fucking failure, and it only got worse from there.

Everytime she would wake up, she had to face the batchmates who did pass the exam. They did not rub it in her face, instead showed some support as they gave notes and help for whatever she needed. It didn't help because she knew she was hitting rock bottom as everyone surpasses her.

The next term came and she was able to pass the single component she needed to start on her thesis, but she had no motivation. Skipping class whenever she can, because her luck is just out of this world. The day Paula decided to skip class was the day the class gets cancelled, and this instance has been repeating since her first year. She once only attended a week worth of class yet still attained a 4.0 grade for that class; pretty ballsy in all honesty. But it was honestly hard for her to keep going. Her professors talked about things and that discussion entered the left ear and exited the right one, since everyone was close to graduation they started to openly talk about their plans for their future. "Can they just keep those things to themselves" she thought, she knew that they were just doing that out of excitement and it was for good reason, but as she stayed longer in class the more she felt bad about herself. Paula started to lose her drive that brought her into De La Salle, lying to her family that she had no classes. As people graduated from her block she felt more and more alone, she even went to a state of depression when her best friend decided to shift to a different course. He would usually be her partner in crime whenever a project was needed in class, nights where they can just stay awake and discuss whatever was needed to be discussed.

There are lies you cannot escape, and the longer you run from it, the harder it is to face it. Paula's lies continued, with her lies stating that she was going to graduate soon. Would you rather see your family happy or dismayed? She chose the first option of course which is why the lie continued. From her initial announcement, she planned to jump off a bridge and just end it all, but she saw herself holding back the dates. She'd move it next week, then next month, and finally 5 months have passed when she decided to tell everyone about the massive lie that she has been living with. The thing that kept her company was an online video game called 'Overwatch' where she found a group of people that kept pushing her death dates back. Saying that life was worth it, and that she was going through something existential. Instead of finding an occupation that defines you as a being, bring meaning into whatever you are doing. The words wringged in her head as she realized that the lie had to be put to an end, the lie that kept her from going into the next phase of her life. She is slowly getting back up on her feet, she even decided to tell her real life friends the truth of what has been going on, the truth to her silence and absence.

Paula hopped on a bus for school, telling her family that she was going to school to take her graduation photos, but it was another lie to seek guidance from her friends on campus. It was a slow and humid day, everyone was in their own LEAP class as Paula sat down by gokongwei waiting for her friends to finish their class. She couldn't enter from the south gate because she didn't enroll for any classes for that term so she was denied access, that didn't apply for gokongwei gate though for some reason. The clock struck 12 and the class was finished. Her phoned pinged and she was told to meet in one of the second floor classrooms. The atmosphere was not fit for the news she about to tell them so she asked them if they wanted to eat. She then decided to tell them as soon as they got their food, but alas, the heat was unforgiving and unfit for the news; so they decided to go back. They caught to what

was happening in her lives, going further and further from what she wanted to say. She thought to herself that this is going to continue on and that she would not be able to say anything if she doesn't do it now. Paula stopped everyone, with eyes on her she started to break her silence for the past few months.

After that she started maturing once again. Instead regressing to the comforts of her lonesome bubble she started looking ahead to what she needed to do. The truthful news came in like thunder to her family, with things being broken here and there, but now things are healing and they are more supportive. Careful now with they say to her because they do leave an impact on Paula. She continues to chat with her friends, asking if they can do visit her because she is currently grounded; with reason. She wants to get her thesis over with so that she can do things more independently on a hunt to find purpose and live in the moment.

This weeb shall continue to quake the ground as she walks because the pain she has endured is considered as a concrete platform in whatever endeavors. This is the start of a weeb's journey to reality.

The existential crisis is not only limited to any person in the midlife. It exists in a dome of self reflection. Young people have this in common due to the ideals and plans adults create for us. They create it to open our eyes, but those plans are things that start to define the youth instead of the youth creating existence with their own actions. Its pressuring, it suffocates the youth leaving them with empty holes of disappointment when failure is reached. This is a feature that happened to someone close, and something that should be brought unto awareness, to bring in small change around anyone willing enough to read this.

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