

A Love Story

By

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EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - NIGHT

CHRISTMAS. The streets are alive, bathed in a warm glow coming from UNION SQUARE. Shoppers and tourists, loaded down with last minute gifts, dart amongst one another, going to and from local storefronts. It's a cold night, but a kind of music fills the air.

EXT. UNION SQUARE - NIGHT

A giant CHRISTMAS TREE stands at the center of the bustling SQUARE. Families surround the towering tree. They pose and snap photos of themselves under the warmth of a thousand tiny lights and delicate silver ornaments.

Among them is CARL, 28. He pulls a CAMERA PHONE from an interior pocket in his long coat and snaps a quick picture of the tree from behind a barricade set up around its base. He looks exhausted. A loosened tie hangs about his neck.

REAGAN, 24, trying to look like she isn't looking, notices him take the photo. She is a punk girl-- clad in a denim jacket with her hair dyed a brilliant red. She bites her lip, stealing quick glances in Carl's direction, standing just a few people away. Finally, she leans back from the barricade to speak around the people standing next to her.

REAGAN

It's beautiful, isn't it?

Carl doesn't realize he's being spoken to. He begins to leave, but it dawns on him soon enough. He leans into her, barely able to hear over the crowd.

CARL

Excuse me? Are you talking to-

A blush rushes across Reagan's pale face.

REAGAN

The tree.

She rolls her eyes, as if she knows just how crazy she sounds.

REAGAN

I mean... I saw you take a picture.
It's beautiful.

Carl smiles politely as he returns his phone to his coat pocket.

(CONTINUED)

CARL

Uh, yeah, it's great.

Reagan gathers her courage, slipping next to him. She extends a mitten-clad hand as she brushes a loose strand of red hair from her face.

REAGAN

My name's Reagan. You know, like the president.

He looks her over, finally to shake her hand.

CARL

Oh, Carl. Like... well, like I don't know what.

Reagan laughs. Her eyes closed and a kind smile on her face, she holds a hand up to the tree.

REAGAN

It's amazing. Can't you just feel the warmth coming from it?

Carl looks at the tree, then back at her. He grins nervously, a little charmed but a little freaked-out.

CARL

You sure like Christmas.

Reagan opens her eyes, turning her attention back to Carl as if being startled from a dream.

REAGAN

That's the thing, I hate Christmas.

She warms up as she looks back on the tree, speaking in almost a whisper-- as if to herself.

REAGAN

But I love Christmas Trees.

Carl simply stares at her, which makes her even more nervous. She can barely look at him.

REAGAN

Don't try to understand me, or your head might explode.

They both laugh.

(CONTINUED)

CARL

Same here.

(beat)

Well, not the "head exploding"
thing, but the Christmas part.

A sadness shows up on his face as he asks--

CARL

Why do you hate it?

Reagan's gaze wanders to an ornamental CRUCIFIX hung on the tree. It almost looks back at her. All of the joy leaves her face for a moment.

REAGAN

Religious reasons.

Carl smiles, trying to lighten the mood.

CARL

Hey, Sorry, I sometimes forget to
turn off the Ohio Side of my brain.
Us and our silly "Mono-theism."

Reagan perks up.

REAGAN:

Carl Sagan!

CARL:

What?

REAGAN:

From before, you could say your
name is Carl, like Carl Sagan. Or
Carl Weathers, that black dude from
Rocky.

CARL:

Yeah, I guess I could do that.

There is an awkward silence between them. And then--

CARL:

Would you like to get a cup of
coffee with me?

REAGAN:

Absolutely! As long as I don't have
to talk anymore, yes, please.

They walk away.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Carl comes out of the coffee shop with two CUPS and a MUFFIN. He sits next to Reagan on a small stone wall and hands her a cup, which she immediately takes a sip from, while he adds some sugar to his.

REAGAN:
You're from the Mid-West?

Carl tears off a bit of his muffin and stuffs it into his mouth.

CARL:
Yep.

Reagan gives him a playful bump with her shoulder.

REAGAN:
Me too!

She flashes a fake "gang sign" with her hands

REAGAN:
(gangsta)
Iowa representin'!

Carl offers her a bite of his muffin, which she waves away. He continues to tear at it, popping bits of bran into his mouth.

CARL:
I run into so many people from the Mid-West that move out here. It's like this is the furthest they can run away from home without leaving the country, you know?

Reagan slowly loses track of the conversation as she catches a glimpse of a FATHER playing with his DAUGHTER at one of the tables which surround the coffee shop. Something is deep and sad behind Reagan's eyes. Carl notices.

CARL:
So, what brings you out here?

Reagan snaps back to reality, instinctively trying to hide her distraction with a long sip of coffee.

REAGAN:
Oh, School. But then I met this guy and all that kinda changed. So, yeah... whatever, right?

(CONTINUED)

(under her breath)
The jerk.

Carl gives her a knowing nod, his muffin gone.

CARL:
I came out here for school too. But
it wasn't for me, lifestyle changes
and stuff. Anyway, I'm doing pretty
well as a day-trader, so that keeps
me busy. Do you mind if I smoke?

He pulls a pack of CIGARETTES from his coat.

REAGAN:
Mind if I bum one?

Carl hands her a cigarette and gives her a light. She
inhales it, making yummy noises as if it is the greatest
thing in the world.

REAGAN:
God, some things are just perfect,
you know?

Carl stares a little too long at her. She looks amazing.

CARL:
Some things.

He realizes he's staring and draws his attention to his
watch.

CARL:
Damn. It's getting late and I have
some work to do tomorrow.

Reagan looks upset, but tries to put on a cool face as she
flicks her cigarette butt away.

REAGAN:
Oh, hey, that's cool.
(nervous laughter)
You can't hang out here all night
and... yeah, well...

Carl drops his cigarette to the ground and crushes it. He
shakes her hand and begins to walk away, backwards, still
facing her.

CARL:
It was great meeting you, Reagan,
like the President.

She rubs her arms to keep warm, nodding at him with a smile on her face.

REAGAN:

You too, Carl. Thank you for the coffee.

Carl, hesitant, continues to walk backwards for a while. Reagan pretends to look away, but still she notices him. Finally, with a nod, Carl turns and begins to leave.

Reagan is alone.

She fidgets anxiously, eventually locking eyes with a little BOY who is staring at her. She looks away, glancing toward Carl, now almost out of view. She looks back, tears swelling in her eyes, as the little boy is pulled away by his mother. The sounds of Christmas are deafening.

REAGAN:

Shit.

Carl is a good distance away when Reagan begins to run after him, shouting.

REAGAN:

Carl! Carl, wait!

Carl turns to face her, she seems to be keeping her distance as if she's afraid she will scare him off. She catches her breath.

REAGAN:

Okay.

(takes a breath)

I know you probably think I'm some kind of psycho stalker-type person or something, but I *really* had a nice time talking to you. And... I just wanted to tell you, well, I mean, I wanted to *ask* you, actually--

Carl stares, confused, but waiting to hear what she has to say.

REAGAN:

Would you like to go to a party?

Carl's expression doesn't change. Reagan looks back at him, a worried look on her face.

Finally, he smiles.

INT. RAVE - DANCE FLOOR

CLOSE ON: a D.J.'s HAND as he works the turntable.

WIDEN TO: Carl, a drink in hand, looks out onto the crowd of RAVER KIDS in which he finds himself surrounded. He leans back against the bar-- very much out of place with his tie undone and dangling about his neck and his white shirt unbuttoned.

A PRETTY GIRL walks past, giving him a "look." He tries his best to return it, but eventually hides into his drink.

REAGAN:

Hey, you!

Reagan bounds into Carl, almost spilling his drink. He smiles as she wraps an arm around his back, taking his cup from his hand and drinking it down in a few gulps.

REAGAN:

Did you miss me?

CARL:

Every second.

Reagan looks over at the pretty girl, who is now ferociously making out with another girl, then looks back into Carl's face.

REAGAN:

liar.

(beat)

But I guess I can still give you your Christmas Present. Close your eyes and stick out your tongue.

Carl hesitates. Reagan looks very deep into his eyes, looking absolutely adorable and serious.

REAGAN:

I promise. It'll be OK.

Carl closes his eyes and opens his mouth. He sticks out his tongue, which Reagan places a small TABLET with a SANTA HEAD printed on it. The tablet begins to sizzle and pop as it dissolves. And then he swallows. Reagan places a tablet on her own tongue, swallowing it as well. She then gives him a quick peck on the lips and pulls herself next to his ear.

REAGAN:

(whispers)

Dance with me.

(CONTINUED)

Reagan leads him onto the dance floor and they are lost in a sea of writhing bodies. Soon, for them, they are the only people in the club, as the world spins around the two. Caught up in the moment, they hold each other-- moving into one another with the steady beat of the music.

Carl pulls her close from behind, his hands on her hips, the flashing colors of the house lights reflecting off her wet skin. She falls into him, her arms above her head clinging to his neck as she pulls his face close to hers.

REAGAN:
It's fucking hot.

Reagan pulls Carl from the crowd, leading him towards an exit labeled "ROOF ACCESS."

EXT. CLUB ROOFTOP - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: Carl, a cigarette hangs loosely from his mouth. His expression is one of awe and apprehension.

CARL:
Okay, we're on drugs and you are hanging off the ledge of a rooftop--

WIDEN TO: Reagan balances herself on the ledge of the building, her arms outstretched majestically as she feels the wind blow through her. Carl sits on the ledge next to her, his back turned away. The rooftop is littered with empty liquor bottles and cigarette butts. A content grin spreads across Reagan's face-- she is in her element.

CARL:
--this is how after school specials start.

Reagan never opens her eyes. The lights of the city cast a haunting glow about her face.

REAGAN:
Actually, I think this is how most of them end.

Carl flicks his cigarette off the edge, looking very concerned as he watches it fall all the way down.

CARL:
Just the same, falling to my death isn't big on my list of things to do today.

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Reagan laughs as she lifts one foot from the ledge allowing it to hover off the side.

REAGAN:
Is your life that great?

CARL:
Christ, that was dark.

His quip seems to stir something in her. She pulls her foot back to safety, much to Carl's relief. He offers her a hand, which she takes, and helps her from the ledge. She never lets go of his hand.

REAGAN:
I'm serious.
(beat)
Everyday I feel like I wake up in a box.

She sits next to him.

REAGAN:
And I know that I'm here, and I know that I'm *relatively* free to do what I want with myself, but I can feel this fucking box all around me. I feel like I can't breathe, you know?

Carl tries to comfort her, but she pulls away, pacing back and forth instead.

REAGAN:
And you know what scares the shit out of me? I can't tell if anyone can see it on my face. Do they know just how goddamn empty I am, how trapped I feel?

CARL:
I think I can understand that.

Laughing, she collapses next to him on the ledge, resting a hand on his inner thigh.

REAGAN:
Right, Smallville, and what dark secrets are you-

Carl kisses her.

Before things get out of hand, Reagan breaks their kiss, out of breath, but never pulling away from him completely. Their foreheads touch. Carl holds her face with his hands, she refuses to look at him.

REAGAN:

I don't do this type of thing.

CARL:

Well, we don't have to...

Reagan brings her eyes up to meet his, pulling away from him further.

REAGAN:

No. I mean... I'm just not the type of girl who, you know?

CARL:

I didn't think you were.

REAGAN:

I'm not!

Carl nods.

CARL:

We really don't have to.

Reagan bites her bottom lip, looking Carl over one last time. She decides-- pulling her shirt over her head in one quick motion, revealing a lacy, blue bra underneath. A tribal sunburst tattoo encircles her delicate belly-button. She looks beautiful and sexy.

Reagan pounces on him, pressing her lips hard against his. Carl tears at his shirt, unable to get it off fast enough. He runs his hands along her lower back, guiding her closer into him. The two devour one other, neither able to breathe. Carl undoes Reagan's belt, unzipping her jeans slightly to reveal panties that match her bra.

She stops him, pulling away.

REAGAN:

Seriously, I don't.

CARL:

I know!

Carl pulls her back to him, kissing her along her neck. She seems lost for a moment, unable to remember what she was talking about. With a start, it hits her again.

REAGAN:
You think I'm like, a mega-slut,
don't you?

He continues kissing her body, now down to her shoulders.

CARL:
No.

Reagan doesn't seem to be listening, or even paying attention.

REAGAN:
That's totally what you were-

She stops talking, inhaling sharply as Carl slips a hand into her open jeans. He brings his face to meet hers again, kissing her lightly on the lips. A smile spreads on her face.

REAGAN:
Keep doing that.

CARL:
That was the plan.

Reagan wraps her arms around him, resting her chin on his shoulder, her lip quivering. She winces.

REAGAN:
Ow!

Carl pulls back.

CARL:
What, I thought it felt good?

REAGAN:
Well, now it hurts, so stop.

They both stop, staring at one another, until finally bursting into mutual laughter.

CARL:
Okay, how about this?

Carl kisses her again, giving it another shot Reagan melts, the smile returning to her face.

REAGAN:
Better.

They wrap themselves around one another, sinking to the rooftop. Reagan nibbles lightly on Carl's shoulder as he kisses her earlobe. Her eyes slowly close, her breath heavy. For a moment she quivers and begins to cry. Something CHANGES in her face. Her eyes fly open. They GLOW eerily with a luminescent GREEN LIGHT. Reagan grits her teeth as her skin bulges and cracks. Her bones twist and change beneath her flesh as her mouth begins to twist into a gapping MAW. Row after row of needle-like TEETH sprout from her mouth, dripping with thick saliva. She closes her eyes again, deep sadness washes over her as she pulls her face ever closer to Carl's exposed neck.

REAGAN:

I'm so sorry, Carl.

Carl pulls away from her slightly, unable to see the CREATURE Reagan has become. Carl's face has changed as well, it is exactly as Reagan's.

CARL:

I'm sorry too.

Carl and Reagan stare blankly at one another, both CREATURES, their green eyes glowing softly in the dark. Reagan begins to speak, but nothing is coming out. Simultaneously, both revert back to their human forms.

CARL:

But you're a...

REAGAN:

Omigod! you, you're like me!

CARL:

Holy crap!

Carl bursts into laughter. Reagan pulls herself off of him, rolling her eyes.

CARL:

We totally almost ate each other!

REAGAN:

This is so embarrassing.

The mood ruined, Reagan begins to zip up her pants and gather her clothes. Carl slips his shirt over his shoulders, a wide smile still spread on his lips.

CARL:

Goddamn that's funny.

REAGAN:
Glad you think so. Are you sitting
on my shirt?

Carl looks around for a moment, finally pulling a pink shirt
from under himself. He hands it to her.

CARL:
Are you alright?

Reagan turns away, slipping her shirt over her head, unable
to look at him.

REAGAN:
Yes. No. I don't know.

She looks at Carl, tears swelling in her eyes.

REAGAN:
It just sucks.

Carl stands as he buttons his shirt. Reagan tries to wipe
the tears from her face, doing her best to keep her
composure. Carl reaches out to touch her shoulder, but he
hesitates.

CARL:
I think I'm missing something here.
Did I do something wrong?

REAGAN:
It's not your fault... or maybe it
is, I don't know.

With a deep, mournful breath, she turns to face him.

REAGAN:
Did you come out with me just to
feed off of me?

Carl looks away, running his fingers through his hair.

CARL:
Reagan.

She sinks. The tears start again.

CARL:
You aren't going to like the
answer.

REAGAN:

Right, I...

Carl grabs her shaking hands, at the very least trying to comfort her.

CARL:

No. I *did* have a good time, if that matters.

Reagan pulls her hand away, turning from him, her arms crossed. Carl shakes his head, stepping back from her.

CARL:

We can't just pretend to have normal lives like humans.

He pulls in close to her again, whispering into her ear.

CARL:

It's beneath us, Reagan.

Reagan turns toward him again. He stares into her eyes. There is nothing behind them but pain. She puts a hand to his chest. Reagan smiles an empty, sad smile. Carl can do nothing but stare back at her.

CARL:

Reagan, I don't know what you want me to-

Reagan stops him with a kiss. There is no passion in it. Without a word, she pulls away and he lets her. Carl watches as she walks out of his life. He shakes his head.

CARL:

What was that for?

Reagan doesn't bother to turn around as she makes her way to the roof exit.

REAGAN:

It just felt normal.

Carl is alone.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Reagan makes her way down the sidewalk, pushing past a large group of PARTY-GOERS. She looks furious, almost on the verge of breaking into tears again. She barely makes it a block before she has to stop, clutching her stomach. A panic washes over her as her skin turns a sickly pale.

(CONTINUED)

The CHIRP of a door being remotely unlocked behind her gets her attention.

Still clutching her stomach, she makes her way towards a MAN loading his backseat with boxes of paperwork. He doesn't notice her. In seconds she is on him, grabbing the back of his head before he even realizes she is there. With a quick burst of strength, Reagan shoves his face into the driver-side window of his car, splintering the glass. Blood pours from his mouth and nose as he attempts to yell for help. Reagan thrusts his head into the window again, crushing his nose completely into his face. He stops struggling as she drags him into a nearby alley, leaving a trail of blood in her wake.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Reagan sits on the ground, her back against the alley wall and her legs folded into her chest. Her sobs echo off the walls, as she wipes tears from her eyes with her hands. She is covered in BLOOD. The man lies at her feet, his throat torn out and his lower body completely ripped open from rib cage to crotch. Reagan is surrounded by death, lost in it. She crawls into a ball on the ground, lying on her side amid the devastation.

She weeps.

EXT. UNION SQUARE - DAY

Months have passed since Christmas. The tree is gone, but UNION SQUARE is as busy as ever during the daytime. In the crowd is Reagan, her hair a little longer. She stands amongst the teeming mass of others, looking on the spot where the Christmas Tree once stood.

A strange wave seems to wash over her face. She looks around, trying to find the source. Through the crowd she sees him: CARL. As she begins to approach, she notices Carl talking to a young woman with short, black hair. The woman grabs Carl by the arm, pulling him close to kiss him on the neck.

Carl looks directly at Reagan, holds the look for a moment, then returns his attention towards the young woman, laughing at whatever she just said. Reagan watches as the pair walk away, Carl never looks back.

JAMES:

I didn't know if you wanted sugar or not, so I brought you a few packets.

(CONTINUED)

Reagan wakes with a start, losing Carl somewhere in the crowd. JAMES, 22, holds up two cups of coffee eagerly, offering her one. Reagan scans the crowd once more, but sees nothing. James looks as well, then returns his attention back to Reagan, waving the cup of coffee in her face to get her attention.

JAMES:

Sugar?

Reagan smiles, taking the cup from him.

REAGAN:

Black is good. So you're from the
Mid-west?

Together they make their way through the crowd.

REAGAN:

I run into so many people from the
Mid-West that move out here. It's
like this is the furthest they can
run away from home without leaving
the country, you know?

As they walk, Reagan rests her head on James' shoulder, much to his surprise and delight. The camera slowly zooms into her face. There is nothing behind her eyes, she is completely dead inside.

CUT TO: BLACK