

“You Were Supposed to Be”; A Short Story
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“Where was I,” the boy awoke in thought.

A thread of nostalgia drifted through his veins as he was greeted with the warmth of a million memories. The memories immersed his everyday mind set; a mindset which could have been saved from a sense of decay.

“Where am I?”, he whispered for a second time but in this exact moment, he felt his body enter a state of being afloat.

Though the boy was yet to see as his eyes were closed, he could feel soft gusts of wind curl around his body and caress his skin.

“Who is there,” the child questioned but was yet again, not met with a desired response.

The wind acted once more as it twirled around his fingertips, whisking away the fallen pollen from the nearby blossom tree. A single branch just above his head had sprinkled dust onto him while the air sang melodies. A dust so glamorous it sparkled without the help of the sun.

He sighed with comfort as he felt the grass brush beneath his legs like when he was younger. And yet the air was ever so playful, that it intended to make the trees dance and make their branches sway to the pumping of his blood.

As he lay awake in the present moment, he pondered if he was dreaming or zoning out. It didn't seem to be a dream, but in fact, a lively state. The life he once had came to an end and a new beginning was about to arrive.

The boy, whose name was Kenji, was quietly waiting to wake up since it felt like many hours had passed. But interestingly, the longer he waited, the calmness he experienced faded and instead a sliver of sound echoed from beyond the depths of his perspective realm. It sounded as if there were a whole audience scattering in backgrounds; watching him. Who were to have such manners; to watch and discuss about his rest? Well in fact, the wind had dared to do so. In fact, the wind was alive. And along with the wind, the rest of the universe.

They spoke of him as if he was in despair; like something terrible has happened. He was the talk of his surroundings.

Kenji, was in the spotlight of the afterlife.

A sudden tremble in the ground caused silence to appear above all. Not a single hush was made to quiet the air, the trees, animals, and neither the stars. Everyone would know that only a person of high power of authority was to cause this,

“Manners all of you! Have we to discuss this for another hundredth time,” a voice rang out with a fast pace of footsteps.

“Sit! All of you sit down immediately! What kind of nonsense is this? You have been living here for the past million years and haven't learned nothing whatsoever,” a voice responded; out of breath

On the other hand, Kenji could hear everything being said and he, for that reason, was terrified.

“My, who in their right mind shut the poor boy up! Wake him at once. Come on, skidaddle! I don't have all day!”

Kenji heard the snap of fingers and instinctively, his eyes blasted wide open. He was met with an intense flash of light that blinded his sight.

The child was still clearly not thinking straight. His head was slightly spinning and when he tried to move a limb, it would instantly fall back down.

He groaned with confusion as he could not believe what was going on and attempted to rise again.

Though, he failed and just as his head was about to collide with the stone floor he was pulled up by underneath his arms and onto a soft plush sofa.

“Dear goodness child! What have they done to you,”

Kenji’s eyes adjusted to be met with an up close face of a young man. The man had dark hair and blue eyes that glowed like bioluminescent algae. He was greatly smiling which greatly creeped the boy out; especially that he was too close to him to be comfortable.

“Greetings child! My name is Cosmos, please make yourself comfortable,”

The man grabbed Kenji's hand and began to shake it furiously. The child’s heartbeat quickened by the sight of everything. He had never seen a person so beautiful and strange. His skin glowed golden, his eyes reflected the waters of fantasy like ponds, and his smile was brighter than the teeth in toothpaste advertisements he saw on TV. He contemplated who this man named Cosmos was; if this man was an actual human that originated from Earth.

Kenji directed his eyes to the background of where he lay since he could not process what in the world was happening. But, as he did, he became more shocked than before. He wasn’t now in a field, but rather a room; a room filled with gold and rich in architecture. In the expanse, pillars were engraved with jewels and a large dome was situated above. A dome so elegant that it showed the sweat of millions of builders.

While the child was observing and zoning out into his own world, Cosmos stepped away from his face and began to fumble in the background. Turns out, he was making tea for the sweet boy. What tea was he making? Nobody knew; not even Cosmos. Cosmos was not good with human sustenance.

A long ten minutes had passed when the so-called “tea” was ready to be served. By the sofa which Kenji was laying on stood a small wooden table where Cosmos had placed a golden goblet.

“Have some tea kiddo,” stated Cosmos, indulging in a nervous expression.

Kenji hesitated to grab the goblet in his hand as he rose to peek inside it. The tea wasn’t particularly appetizing to look at since it was gurgling with bubbles and colored purple.

“No-no thank you” the boy stuttered and put his hand out.

Cosmos saw his resistance coming and nodded as he took back the cup in his hand. He was about to make the decision of washing it down the window but decided against it. He raised the tea up to his lips with the curiosity to taste it. It had been thousands of years since he made and tasted tea.

Kenji's eyes widened as he saw the man gulp down the substance. His heart froze in terror. He thought that he must've been dead by now, though that wasn’t the case. He only got a tad wee sick.

Cosmos slammed the engraved cup on the table as his face immediately turned bright green. Looking like he was going to be enormously sick, he suddenly began to run toward a window to stick his head out. Fortunately, he made it in time with only his slim legs to be seen dangling over the edge.

Kenji found this extremely funny as he started to giggle uncontrollably; falling onto the crooked hardwood floor. He glared up at the dome which was painted with a mural of a starry night sky. He felt as if he was floating in space, as the painting was enchanted to make it seem like it was real.

As the child lay there waiting for another problematic situation to happen, he realized that he wished to not leave such a paradise. Though he knew that Cosmos, who inhabited this place, was strange, it felt like home to him which he longed for. And, even though he had only been there for less than half the day, it felt as if he had been there for years.

The voice of Cosmos startled him once again; awaking him from his daydream.

“That was a spectacular experience.”

Cosmos laughed as he stared at Kenji who was still on the ground.

Though Kenji was having an interesting time, he still had many questions to ask and to interrogate the man for why he was here. He wanted Cosmos to get straight to the point for he was only a stranger to Kenji.

“Aside from all of this, who are you,” asked Kenji while picking himself off the floor and dusting off his jeans.

“What do you mean? I am Cosmos. I’ve already told you,”

Kenji sighed and sat back down; fidgeting with his fingers.

“I mean, where am I? Who are you to me? What is going on? I know all this has something to do with you,” he said, gazing into his eyes.

Cosmos hesitated for a moment before standing and walking over him; his dress shoes tapping against the floor. He knew that this wasn’t the place to talk with him. The universe had its own lethal ears and eyes.

As he loomed over him, he reached out his hand for him to grab.

“Come here.”

The child nodded and gladly took his hand in his; feeling the softness of his skin. As he did so, he was immediately swooped into his secure embrace.

Kenji gasped at what he did not expect him to do.

Cosmos cleared his throat as he placed his other hand onto his heart and closed his eyes. And when he did so, Kenji followed to experience the unbelievable.

He didn’t just experience the unbelievable but a phenomenon so drastic that even the universe couldn’t handle. The infinite stygian voids that were located an uncountable distance away trembled in fear and horror. And, the stars and planets which looked down upon them shattered. Some fled; becoming shooting stars.

Cosmos' actions brought chaos to which he swore to protect; everything.

Kenji felt an enormous burst of energy through his body. The feeling of being afloat appeared once again; just as he felt in the beginning of his “journey”. He tilted his head back as he embraced the bliss. But as he opened his eyes, still feeling the sensations, he was pulled into an unusual tunnel. A tunnel which zoomed up past his peripheral vision and was lit up in colors. The walls had been painted with the tears of the stars. And, the air coated with a pure fresh layer of mist. He gasped as the warmth of air glissaded in between his hair, whipping it up with the current. As he came back to reality, he not only realised that he was plummeting but that Cosmos was not to be seen.

Hundreds of thoughts came knocking on his head as he started to panic. He was alone for the first time.

“Cosmos,” Kenji questioned as he could feel the gravitational pull between him and whatever was slowly creeping up.

“Cosmos,” Kenji repeatedly questioned, his lungs filling up with debris and clunk from his thoughts. He knew that if he continued to hyperventilate, he would pass out just as it had happened many times in his life.

“I’m here,” came a voice seconds later; slithering into his ear. A small flow of air drifted along his jawline.

Kenji relaxed a second after as he shut his eyes and instinctly curled into a ball; continuing to fall at an accelerating speed.

It had been an instinct of comfort all throughout his life; to hide from the pain and panic. To stay on the safe side of the doorway and cower. He had never opened it to see what was on the other side and he didn't plan to for the rest of his life.

"Open your eyes and look carefully, then you'll find me,"

Kenji was afraid to peer down though he forced his eyes to flutter open. He wanted to try. No, he needed to try.

He squinted his eyes and twisted his head side to side to see if he could spot anything.

Nothing.

Nothing caught his attention, though he supposed he should try again.

He did not want to be there any longer. The bright colors and the fact that he was somehow still falling made it even worse.

He closed his eyes and took a deep breath; calming his heart rate and emptying his mind of built-up terrors.

As he did so, he instantly felt the same trembles emitted in the energy field. The same trembles that were caused when Cosmos first appeared in the same space of time as he did.

And, it was only the beginning of infinity.

Waves upon waves of vitality radiated through and from his skin; hitting against the tunnel walls. With that, his body overheated with an immense sensation of power that he couldn't handle.

He screamed as he felt his heart tighten and his limbs shake with adrenaline.

"Kenji! You'll be okay, hold on a little longer," Cosmos' voice echoed; zooming through the mist.

He shook his head; gripping his sweatshirt. He wondered if he could survive handling the sensations for an unknown amount of time. Coughing and panting from exhaustion; he fell down to his knees. As he peered down he started to get a glimpse of a small exit. And after falling for nearly a minute, he seemed to think it was for more than an hour.

There was no existent time since everything was happening simultaneously. No future and no past but rather infinite.

"You're almost there," whispered Cosmos as he began to move closer and closer to the end of the long passage.

"I hate you," Kenji replied; pulling on his strands of hair.

Slowing down, his body entered its normal state. He could feel a cold sensation of air start to stir upward; cooling him down.

Kenji sighed in relief as he didn't think that he could take it for much longer.

Below him, the end was shaded in the purest dark. A living shape which held the energy of agony and the screams of torment. It was a place where lost souls roamed its depths. Souls that felt as if they did not complete their missions on Earth. Souls that refused to try again and achieve what they thought was impossible.

"Co- Comos? What is that," Kenji questioned; attempting to pull away from the black pit.

"It's the last part," Cosmos replied.

"Listen to me carefully and do as I say. Shut your eyes, do not open them until I say so."

Kenji listened to him and did as he was told.

"And whatever you hear, do not listen to the voices. They are the voices of your other self."

He did not understand what he meant by "your other self" but either way, he was petrified down to his core.

He nodded hesitantly; squeezing his eyes and covering his ears.

Cosmos knew exactly what was going to happen. Though Kenji was a strong willed boy, every soul who went through the pit of decay never came out with the same thoughts. But, Cosmos was only talking about the heart of the soul alone. He never mentioned how the mind of a live human would react.

Kenji was exactly still alive with a body of his own. A mind which had its own feelings and emotions.

Even then, Cosmos was nervous himself. Kenji was about to experience the souls and attempt to enter the eternal expanse.

“I’ll be waiting for you on the other side.”

Kenji flinched as his lower body immersed in what felt like thick liquid. He was tempted to hold his breath as his nose was nearly submerged.

At first, the liquid seemed to do no harm and neither did the voices that Cosmos had told about. It was silent all except for the beating of his heart.

The boy strangely still had the ability to breath but as he sunk further down his mind began to turn on him.

Was this what Cosmos had meant?

Kenji’s own thoughts were starting to evaporate; replacing them with memories of what he once had convinced himself of.

“You are unworthy.”

“You deserve to be in the state you are in right now.”

“You were destined to be cursed with misery.”

He cried in resistance; demanding the voices to shut up. But, they did not. Their mission was to make him drown in the pit of darkness.

He twisted to swim up but it was no help. And unfortunately, he had blacked out for what might have been forever. The Universe was one who too could not predict the destiny of his story.

Cosmos had seen his body go limp and immediately began to feel the guilt and doubt sink in. His mind revived the memories he once made; making him go into shock. He knew that in the end, everything he mistakenly did to harm would come back around. Every action he regretted in his past sought out to get revenge as he once did when he was young.

The souls which failed to live their life as a human were kept in the darkness. Kenji was in that terror of black that Cosmos had created himself; and it worked as a test.

One who failed the test would drown; their soul taken and left to join the rest.

One who succeeded in making it through, would be granted to many specialties. The options in which they could choose from allowed them to continue to live with their soul.

Cosmos was the first child of the Universe. He was the Universe itself but he was the one who was once defined as the fallen soul. He was the one who brought the souls to forfeit.

Cosmos wanted revenge. He wanted to make everybody suffer as much as he did, millions of years ago. Though, in time, he had begun to change. The stars and the planets took him into their care to teach the values of life; one's moral beliefs.

Unfortunately, what Cosmos once forced upon the souls had still, never been cleared of. He did not know how to fix what he had done and the pressure of his actions built onto him. The man lived in guilt till the time of Kenji’s end.

He was never to be hopeless in the beginning since Kenji had passed the test.

Kenji had passed the test.

The Universe repeated again,

“Kenjia has passed the test”

Kenji had lived.

“Cosmos?”

“Cosmos?”

Kenji’s voice filled his ears to the brim. The sweet delicate sound he had envied. At that moment, he didn’t realize that Kenji survived. That he passed the test because he was the chosen one all along.

The universe chose him.

“Ken-Kenji?”

Cosmos had come back to his senses; opening his eyes which were brimming with tears.

“Cosmos?”

“Kenji,” he shouted hoarsely; delighted.

“Where are you,” questioned the boy; his words ringing around the expanse.

Cosmos was still left in the room where Kenji was before he got sent through the tunnel: known as the gateway to The End.

Immediately, he teleported into the White Expanse with his given powers.

“I’m here,” whispered Cosmos behind his back.

Kenji was surprisingly standing on his feet, given all that he went through.

He gasped to the sound of him as he turned around; tightly wrapping his arms around him.

“Where were you? Why did you leave me? I was so- so scared,” Kenji mumbled on the verge of crying.

“I- I don’t know how to explain it. All I know is that the Universe chose you.”

Kenji looked up into his intimidating eyes.

“What do you mean the Universe chose me? For what?”

“To be the savior of life,” Cosmos responded; tucking a strand of his hair behind his ear.

The boy furrowed his eyebrows in confusion and shook his head in disbelief. Even so, that wasn’t the only thing he should have been concerned about.

He was forgetting about the White Expanse which he stood in.

The expanse was an eternal space of white light. It was the origin of the Universe and where the purest entities were born; hand crafted by Cosmos himself. And, In the middle of it lay a vast pool of translucent water. It wasn’t any normal water but the clarified tears of the moon.

The moon had the ability to store the memories of every soul; being able to show and play back every action and thought.

That was what Cosmos had come to retrieve; to give Kenji a change of perspective.

“I’ll show you.”

Cosmos grabbed his hand and pulled him toward a body of water.

“Kneel and look in,” he said; taking off his leather black gloves.

Kenji did so and looked in.

Straight away, the tears had reached up and flowed to his fingertips. The fluid was coated with a shine and sparkle that left residue on his skin.

“Wow,” the boy exclaimed with amusement.

Cosmos hummed in agreement as he too, waved his hand across the liquid to revive and attempt to unlock his life memories.

Right as he did so, the body of it began to glow a majestic blue, the same shade as his eyes.

Kenji moved closer to him since he felt a sudden breeze hit the back of his neck; making him cold. A second later, he leaned his head on his lap triggering a slight smile from Cosmos.

“I’ve finished it,” the man responded, putting his gloves back on.

Kenji sat up abruptly, leaning over to see if he could see anything in what he so thought was water.

“Before- before you see anything, I need to explain to you why you are here.”

The boy knew he was being serious at this point and decided to listen.

“Okay! I’ve been waiting for this,” he said back; excited.

“No, Kenji. It’s not good news for most people. So it won’t be good news for you.”

This time, he stayed silent, completely silent.

Cosmos took a deep breath before speaking again and took a hold of his hand; gripping it softly.

“I know, I know that the last thing you remember was that you were walking to school in the morning today. Kenji, you’re not asleep in class right now and neither are you daydreaming. Right now, you are in what we call the passing stage,” he paused for a second time letting the boy catch up his thoughts.

After several seconds of silence, Kenji’s eyes began to coat with a layer of tears and his cheeks became heated. He shook his head slowly; gaping back into Cosmos’ eyes.

“I’m- I’m dead?”

I’m dead, aren’t I,” Kenji’s voice cracked while he resisted to cry.

Cosmos nodded and cupped his face; wiping his tears off.

“Yes, you are.”

He sniffled, choking on his tears which flooded his throat.

“What now? What do I do now,” asked Kenji in disbelief, tilting his head back and trying to stay calm.

The man grasped him into a tight hug to comfort him as best as possible.

“First, let’s discuss what happened. It’s mandatory for me to do so.”

“No. No I don’t want to. I didn’t deserve this. I told myself I would become happy before I die. To change. I was waiting for my life to become worth living, not to die!”

Kenji was refusing to listen to him, twisting out of his grip.

“Stop. Calm down. You still have the option to live.”

“What?”

“Just let me explain,” Cosmos stated.

“You have been granted three options. The first option is to become a soul like you were planned to become. You would turn into an entity like a ghost. For example, in the beginning, when you were near the blossom tree, what you heard were the souls. You would end up being a voice in the air like them if you choose so. The second option is to reincarnate into a new life. A new beginning but you are not going to remember anything from your past. You’ll end up in a different family, different body, and have a different mind. The last option is to continue living your life. You would be put back to the place where you died, but on one condition; you have to make your life the life you want to live. To do everything you have ever wished and to change like you wanted to. But, you cannot fail listening or else you will end up falling into The End. Do you understand? I don’t want you to become one of them. Please, I care for you.”

Kenji looked as if he were to faint right in the instance.

Did he want to become just a meek voice? Of course not. His dream was to live his life to the fullest like everyone had told him to. In his life, he struggled to live. He struggled to be happy and to find his passion in his world. He just wanted to be important.

He was important. He was just blinded from his past.

But, he did not want to start over and throw away everything again like he did in his life. To throw away his friends, family, and happiness. All his hard work in trying to live would then just go to waste.

“Can’t I just stay here, with you? Like right now? I don’t want to go back to Earth and you know it. I want to be happy here. I can be happy here. I won’t even have to try,” exclaimed Kenji.

Cosmos sighed in disappointment; putting his hand on his forehead.

“No Kenji. Your soul was meant to reach your destiny. You can not cheat your way out of your problems. You have to learn, just like I did,” he stated.

Kenji was hesitant to respond as he did not want to go through what ruined him for another time. He was scared he would fail again.

Cosmos knew what he was thinking about. He too had the exact feelings when the Universe told him the same words.

“What if I fail?”

“You won’t. I will guide you.”

Cosmos referred back to the puddle of the moon tears as he took Kenji's hand and placed it on the surface.

A photo appeared. No, a faint memory of when he was in ninth grade. The first time he had ever been heartbroken.

Kenji gasped from the sight of it; puzzled.

“It’s me.”

A second memory replaced it. This time, a moving one. A visual of when he got his first A on a test. It showed as his parents embraced him, praising him while he smiled and jumped around. The memory was painted warm as he could still feel it happening some time distance away.

“Do not tell me you could never be happy again. Look at you. You have the ability to be happy.”

Kenji stayed quiet.

“Every single time you stayed in bed the whole day. Every time you doubted yourself and your abilities. The days where you questioned your existence. What did that do to you? Everytime time you wanted to do something but decided against it because your problems were weighing you down. What did that cause you Kenji? You said you were trying but you were only waiting. What were you waiting for? How long were you planning on waiting,” Cosmos explained as he listed through his memories in the “water”.

“Kenji, you can’t assume that everything you wish for will come someday. You need to make it come true. You need to come close to what you want every single day so that one day, you will truly meet it.”

Kenji whimpered about going back to his real life.

“You were supposed to be the boy who saw himself worthy of friends and love. You were supposed to be the one who never gave up on your hobbies and dreams. You were supposed to not fear your mistakes and pain. But you did, and that's why you deserve a second chance to learn. I love you for that. I love that you fought through the pain as best as you could. But you did not fight against it, only to relive it.”

As Cosmos finished speaking, he was out of breath. He wanted the best for Kenji. He, for some reason, felt the need to protect him like a loved one.

He hesitantly looked up into the boy's eyes.

Kenji's lip was quivering as he was deep in thought. This was too much for him to take. All that he had gone through was embedded into his brain like a mark of shame. Every person he came to for help had shut the door on him. Nobody wanted him as a friend, a family member, or even himself; for who he was.

Nobody but one, Cosmos.

Cosmos, the strange man who attempted to make him laugh for the first time in years. Cosmos, the person who didn't judge him at first glance. Cosmos, the one with the universe who was giving him another try at getting what he wanted. Cosmos, the one and only person who loved him.

Kenji could see in his eyes that he was desperate for him to choose what he wanted; to end up in the same life. But, he sensed an amount of grief from him as well.

It was not only Kenji who had a bad past. But Cosmos, as we know, did too.

They were two broken lost souls who were intertwined by destiny.

"I- okay. I'll do it. I'll take the third option for you," Kenji expressed as he pulled his knees up to his chest.

A minute passed as they both sat at the edge of the pond of tears until Cosmos had actually proceeded with what he had said.

"Kenji," Cosmos abruptly shouted with excitement; jumping onto him.

Kenji yelped as the force of his body hit him; groaning in pain.

"Oh goodness, my apologies."

Cosmos chuckled as he wrapped his arms around him for what seemed to be like the tenth time.

"But Kenji," he whispered.

"Don't do it for me. Do it for you. You deserve the Universe"

His breath tickled against the child's ear; making him laugh softly.

"I'll try."

Cosmos nodded his head in agreement as he picked him up and placed him onto his feet.

"Wait," Kenji stated.

"Yes?"

"I think I'll miss you."

Cosmos inhaled sharply; holding his breath. His eyes drooped down to the floor while fumbling with the buttons on his wool coat.

"I'll miss you too, more than you will ever know," Cosmos continued,

"But, I will always be with you. We are one with the universe."

Kenji nodded, getting emotional once again as the mood became gloomy.

"So, this is it," he questioned, stepping closer to the man and putting his hand on his face.

"No Kenji, this is only the beginning. But for right now, I guess it is."

The pure souls that had stayed silent all along began to chatter amidst everything; ruining the mood.

"All of you scoundrels! Will you please shut up," Cosmos shouted.

Both of them laughed as the ending minutes had been slowly shortening. And of course, they were stalling. Neither of them wanted this to end but it was a brutal reality.

Cosmos reached his hand out for him to grab so he could return him back to his life.

“Kenji, remember what I said. And, if you ever need to talk to me, the stars and planets will always be your home to go to. Are you ready?”

“Yes, I am.”

The same process happened again as Kenji passed out and awoke, standing in the middle of a crosswalk. A buildup of cars were honking just like a normal New York City early morning. The sun was nearly close to rising as he could still see the stars which now reminded him of Cosmos. With the immense impact that he experienced just moments ago, Kenji felt that he would be able to achieve what he thought was impossible. And even without him being there, he could still feel his presence in the dark sky and even right next to his side. And so, that was proven true as the whisperly breath of Cosmos flowed into his ear for the last time,

“My soul is always with you.”