

Destinyborn

Lucy Waterman – Grade 10, Homeschool

*Fly, little Destinyborn. Fly.*

I never knew where that voice came from.

Was it given to me by a mother? A father? The Creator of this very life itself?

I never knew, just that it was all I had to live on.

I've never seen another of my kind. I don't know what Destinyborn look like. I don't know what *I* look like.

But my appearance is unimportant. What is important is that I've never seen another Destinyborn.

I may be the only one, for all I know.

But that doesn't stop me from staying where I am. Exploring the universe beyond is unfathomable for a microscopic being such as I.

Still, I wonder what the universe would appear like from another star's perspective. It could look nothing like how it appears from my star home.

Despite that, I much prefer my star home over all else's.

The ground beneath me begins to tremble. Something begins rattling my star to its very core.

Something is coming.

Something is wrong.

I stare up, out into the black void of the universe. Perhaps this is what it feels like when a Destinyborn evaporates, to become particles of starlight once again.

I crouch down and cover my head with my arms, bracing for something to come.

A large, loud sound echoes through the universe, seemingly bouncing off every star.

A comet.

Comets have passed me by before, but none have come so close to my home. Surely this one is going to crash into my star, collide with my very being, and I'll be nothing. Not even starlight particles.

But the impact never comes.

The comet becomes a deafening sound as it passes me by. I'm unsure whether I scream in agony, bracing for imminent death, or I remain silent.

Something does make contact with my star, however. I feel the balance become temporarily thrown off.

I'm hesitant, but I gradually stand up and face something I believed I would never see.

A fellow Destinyborn.

This other Destinyborn is glowing.

Born of starlight.

The other Destinyborn looks as though he was enveloped in pure, glimmering light. A look of adventure is on his face, as though he went venturing across the universe just to find me, a lone Destinyborn, preparing herself for a crushing death.

He sees me, makes eye contact, and smiles. "I wasn't told to expect a Destinyborn all the way out here," he says. "A Cassiopeia? Impressive. I haven't met one of your tribe since... ever, really. What's your name, starling?"

I'm breathless, still caught off-guard by this other Destinyborn, and the fact I'm not the only Destinyborn in this vast universe, but I manage to choke out, "S-Seren."

"Seren, eh?" he replies. "That's an interesting name. I'm Castor."

"How...?" I say. "How are you...?"

"Here?" he asks. "Well, Maristela, the High Star Elderwoman, sent me here, because I'm a tribe-gatherer, so..."

"No," I cut in. "How are there other Destinyborn? Where have you been?"

"Oh. Well, the Destinyborn, according to Maristela, were scattered after a series of star-burnings, and she sends tribe-gatherers, such as myself, to roam about the universe and round up all other tribes, so that the Destinyborn won't face extinction due to tribe separation. I'm here to escort you to a better life, starling."

"Where?" The idea of other Destinyborn fascinates me more than I can explain. I wonder if there will be others from my tribe.

"A lone star, ways off from here," Castor explains. "Are you up for a journey?"

It's time to fly at last. "More than anything."

The universe is so much more than what I've seen from my star.

It's dark and light. It's dim and bright. It cries tears of stars innumerable and can glitter with happiness.

It's the cosmic paradise I've kept myself from for all of this time.

"Do you not get out much?" Castor asks sometime during the journey.

"I've... never gotten out at all." I can't help but be captivated by the expanse of black, spotted with light far out ahead of us.

"I don't blame you, though," Castor says. "It really is extraordinary; to be something so small yet so important in the universe."

I look over at him, watch his radiant eyes scan the stars far above that may have served to be star homes to so many more Destinyborn in the past.

I sigh in contentment. Maybe I'm really not alone in this universe after all.

"We need to get you to Maristela," Castor says, standing up. He holds out a hand for me to take, and I stand up too. "She'll be waiting for us."

And together we resume our journey amongst the stars.

“Castor!” a shrill feminine voice calls out. “I’d begun to think you got taken out by a comet.”

Castor shakes his head. “No way, Maristela,” he replies. “This is Seren.” He gestures to me. “I found her on my mission.”

“Where did you find her?” Maristela asks, looking over at me.

“Let’s just say she’s not what you’re expecting. I found her all the way out in Cassiopeia territory.”

“A Cassiopeia?!” Maristela shrieks. “I thought they all died out after that meteor shower. Are you sure, Castor?”

Castor nods. “I’m positive,” he confirms. “Unless she went star-hopping, she’s a Cassiopeia.”

Maristela still doesn’t look like she completely believes him, but she still says, “Nice to make your acquaintance, Seren.”

“Yours as well,” I reply respectfully. “Where are the other Destinyborn?”

“Follow me,” Maristela says, leading me off. “Castor,” she says, turning around. “Stay here, we’ll be right back.”

Castor nods grimly. For whatever reason, he doesn’t appear to still be the carefree, laid-back Destinyborn he was when he found me.

I have the sinking feeling that I’m not going to like what Maristela has to show me.

Maristela and I venture across a few stars before we reach one that appears significantly brighter than all the others around it.

I see why quickly; a number of Destinyborn, tall and short, old and young, brilliant and dim, are gathered together.

“These are all the Destinyborn the tribe-gatherers have found thus far,” Maristela says to me. “They’re all from different tribes, different constellation lands, different stars. No two of them are from the same star.”

I feel sympathetic toward all of these Destinyborn. No two from the same star? They’re all strangers to each other, in unfamiliar territory. Suddenly tears of light begin to stream down my face, and I collapse on my knees to the ground.

The heart-wrenching realization is that I’m not alone, but not by much.

This universe is being rid of those it doesn’t want anymore.

And that is my kind.

Maristela walks me back to where Castor is still waiting. I've managed to pull myself together, but the saddening feeling of the mass destruction of Destinyborn hasn't gone anywhere.

"You saw?" Castor asks me. When I nod, he says, "That's why I was sent out. To find any more Destinyborn out there."

"And not all hope is lost," Maristela interjects. I turn back to the elderly Elder Starwoman, the look on my face prodding her to explain. "We still have more universe to explore. And Seren, upon finding you, we have a new hope that there could be many more Destinyborn lying in wait in farther reaches of the universe than we ever thought before."

"Truly?" I ask. "There could be more out there?"

Castor nods. "Truly, Seren. There could be millions more Destinyborn. We just have to be willing to go find them."

*We just have to be willing to go find them.* His words echo in my head.

And, just like that, an idea comes to my mind.

"What can I do to help?" I ask unhesitatingly. "I want to help you in any way I can."

Castor's face brightens. "You can be a tribe-gatherer! With me, if you wouldn't mind."

Maristela nods her approval. "That would be quite beneficial to the cause," she agrees. "If you both are out there, exploring together, you could find many more Destinyborn more efficiently than one tribe-gatherer." She turns her attention to me. "What do you say, Seren? Would you like to become a tribe-gatherer alongside Castor?"

I nod. "Yes," I say. "Yes, I would."

"Good," Maristela says. "I wish you both the stars."

"Are you sure about this, starling?"

I hesitate. "Yes, Castor," I reply, trying to psych myself up to jump to the comet. "As ready as I'll ever be."

He shrugs. "Okay, then. Whatever it takes, right?"

A surge of confidence goes through me. "Whatever it takes."

I may never know a lot of things.

I may never know why only the Cassiopeia tribe – my tribe – was wiped out.

I may never know what lies in the far reaches of this universe.

I may never know where the voice in my head comes from.

But one thing I do know is that I'm willing to learn.

I'm willing to try.

I'm willing to go finding answers.

I'm willing to search the farthest reaches of the universe for others of my kind, riding a comet alongside Castor, the one to get me into this amazing mess in the first place.

I'm willing.

Fly, little Destinyborn.

Fly high and fly far.

Never look back, never look down.

Fly.