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Where We Belong: a novella

author

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Chapter 1

Prologue

I have a tendency to think about death.

Sometimes I wonder if other people think about death - frequently, or just in general. I wonder if they think about it casually, like they're thinking of the weather, or if they think of it lying awake at night, haunted by their own thoughts. I wonder... if they do think about it, do they ever think about their own death - the when, the how?

Or is that just me?

Am I weird because I think about death more often than I'd chose to admit? And not just lying awake in the middle of the night; I think about death sometimes constantly.

I think I need to clarify a few things. Number one, I'm not insanely paranoid. I don't think I'm cursed, or that I have a big black cloud hovering over my head. I don't avoid walking under ladders and stepping on cracks. I'm not superstitious or anything like that. I promise.

Secondly, when I think about death, I don't think of ways to kill people, or make up a list of certain people that I want to kill. I'm not making plans to go out and buy a black cloak and a mask and rename myself Ghostface, getting ready to slice throats and stab chests. I may watch too many Wes Craven movies, but I promise, I don't think of death like that. I'm not psychotic. Well technically; my best friend would have to disagree with that statement on regular occasions.

Thirdly... third of all... however it's properly said; my third point I'd like to clarify is that I also don't think of death in the form of ways to kill myself... technically. I say technically because I kind of am thinking of a way to kill myself, but it's nothing like... how do I put this?

I'm not suicidal but I have been thinking about my death. And as of lately, I've been thinking about it a hell of a lot. Will it be painful, will it go by quickly? Who will be there, who won't be there? And most importantly, when will it happen? These thoughts have become more frequent than usual, but I guess that's because I'm dying. And not on that large scale "one day we all die" crap, and again, I'm not suicidal; I really am dying.

I have cancer, and at this point, it's basically terminal. And it's terminal because of me.

I can't remember how old I was when I first had initially gotten sick, because it feels like I've been sick for a long as I could remember. Shout out to my grandparents for passing on the trait of lung cancer to me. No really, thanks guys, it means a hell of a lot that you want me to visit you all before I turn 21.

Anyway, I figured since this is the first time I've used this journal since I've gotten it, I decided to explain all of the basics. I have what is called non-small cell lung cancer or as abbreviated by most

doctors and lazy people as NSCLC. There's three types of NSCLC (hey, I never said I wasn't lazy too), and the type I have is the second kind; squamous cell carcinomas. "Squamous cell carcinomas" is just a big doctor-y way to say that my type of cancer is usually found in the center of the lung next to an air tube.

Go me.

I can't blame my ancestors or my cancerous genes entirely for all of this going on right now; it's mostly my fault that I'm dying now.

Long story short, at another one of my doctor's appointments - this one was an "important" one because my doctor wanted to see me and both of my parents in his office - my doctor told me that the chemo wasn't working the way it's supposed to anymore, and there's some other options for me, but I opted out of them.

When my doctor told me what was happening with my body and my treatments, I started thinking really about it, about everything. I thought about how all of my life, I've been doing treatments after treatments and it got to the point - or so I thought it had - that I was getting somewhat better. I finally didn't have to wear that cannula anymore and carry around a freaking oxygen tank anymore. I finally thought I was at least closer to remission than I had been in years. But nope; the chemo stopped working and even though I know he didn't say it directly, I knew I was running out of options. When my doctor went on to explain my other options - surgery to remove the tumor, targeted therapy - he actually recommended this for me first because it's for patients who are no longer responding to chemotherapy... but I opted out of all of it.

I don't know what influenced my decision, but I want to let nature run its course. My parents argued me, saying I'm only seventeen and I shouldn't make such a crucial decision like this without any logic behind it.

I scoffed at them.

If my parents truly knew me, they would know that I don't base anything I do on logic, it's just not me.

My doctor was the only one who seemed a little a little bit behind my decision, but I think he was trying to sway me back to treatments when he told me I would only have an estimated six months left.

Six months... it's really such a wide range of time.

At least, I think so. In six months, anything could happen, I could make anything happen. In six months, I could live more than I've lived hooked up to machines in the hospital, which is how I've spent a good majority of my life. And that's what I wanted to do; I didn't want to keep living if it meant I couldn't live. So no matter what anyone told me, this is what I wanted to do.

I was ready to die.

What I wasn't ready to do, was tell my best friend Delilah about my decision.

Delilah and I have been friends for years, and she's been by my side nonstop since I've gotten sick. She's been there to help me with my homework when I got behind in school, she's been there for my overnight hospital visits - to sum it up she's always been there. Always, and I love her for that but I think that's the reason why I can't tell her, not yet. At least that's what I'm telling myself, that I love

her so much, I don't want to hurt her. It's one thing to kill myself, but I can't kill her.

Speaking of Delilah, she's on her way here now. We're going to do something today - I don't really know what because it's something different everyday but we're more than likely going to spend the whole day together.

And I have to pretend like the weight of the world isn't on my shoulders, like there isn't a voice in my subconscious telling me to tell her the truth. But I can do it, I'm sure of it.

Living in California, everyone learns to adapt their actor or actress within.

...excerpt....

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