

Don't Let the Chips Get You Down

By Heather Nawara

On the day I was born, I was told what I had to be.

“To be consumed,” said my Maker. “If you’re consumed, you’ll succeed. That’s all you need to worry about, my child.” He paused for a moment. “The first step is getting in the brown box, and destiny will take over from there.”

I thought it sounded scary, but I never wanted to disappoint Him. I had to serve my purpose if I wanted to be successful. I had to be like the rest of my brothers and sisters. It wasn’t long before my salty, crunchy insides were put inside my yellow foil suit. I was factory sealed. I was placed in a box with the rest of my brothers and sisters. We all looked the same. Our foil suits proudly displayed the words Lay’s Classic in vibrant letters on the top center of the foil suit. Below Lay’s Classic, we each had a picture of a brown sphere on us being sliced and made into our crunchy insides, and the lower right hand corner of the foil suit had text that read Potato Chips. The box we rested in was sealed, and we were taken somewhere.

None of us knew where we were going. There no longer were any shiny bright orbs to see like at the Birthplace. There was only darkness. At first, we moved at a slow pace. Then we were completely still. It felt like other brothers and sisters were being stacked on top of our box in their own respective boxes. We were all so snug against each other in the box. Then we all started to move in the dark. We were moving faster than ever before. Sometimes, there would be unexplainable stops, but the movement always began again. Finally, we reached a stop where our boxes were handled, and we were carried to a new destination.

The seals on our boxes were broken. Shiny orbs shined down upon us, though the light was different from that of the Birthplace. These shiny orbs appeared more flawed. I was taken by

meat claws and shoved to the back of a resting place for my brothers and sisters. I was more cramped than I was in the box. I was walled in by my brothers and sisters, but there was nothing I could do about it. This was my destiny. Even if we were all suffocating each other on some kind of strange display, we were doing what we had to do. This was all about being consumed.

We were faced with more change on the next day. Different meat claws of all shapes, colors, and sizes would grab us at random, and I would become closer to being more visible. I had to hold my breath. Eventually, fast and tiny meat claws knocked one of my brothers over to the hard, white ground below us.

“Awesome!” the creature cried before its mashers started to mercilessly stomp on my brother. I shuddered without moving. I could hear his crunchy insides being smashed into smaller pieces. When the creature was done, all that would be left was dust.

A taller creature came into view. “Billy, no!” the creature chided. The tall creature took the small creature firmly by his meat claw. “I can’t believe you just wasted that bag of chips like that! We’re paying for it, and it’s going to come out of your allowance this week!”

“Aw, Mom! Who caaaares?” Billy whined.

Mom shook her head in disapproval. “I do! Food’s supposed to be eaten! Not wasted!”

I had to ponder the meaning of Mom’s words. They seemed to be in line with the Maker’s. I was supposed to be consumed by these creatures, but I did not know why. Perhaps the answer would become clear when I finally met my destiny.

Days passed by. I was now at the front of the display. I was chosen by pale white, aging meat claws of a creature in the early hours of the morning. She set me in a metal box with holes

in it, but the holes were not big enough to fall through, and wheels were on the bottom to move the box. I was the only Lay's Classic in the metal box. The rest were other things that were supposed to be consumed. I suppose they are what Mom referred to as food. I rode next to Wonder Bread until we were taken to a place called Checkout. The other food and I were placed on a strange moving contraption that reminded me of the Birthplace. My yellow foil suit was scanned and placed in a transparent sheet of plastic with handles. I stayed with Wonder Bread and was taken on a new journey.

"Dan, I got your favorite chips!" the creature called out when we entered the new place.

"Helen, I can't..." Dan replied. "Doctor said I gotta go on a new diet 'cos of all the bad cholesterol."

Helen frowned. "That's a darn shame... I'll just stick 'em in the back of the pantry." Helen's meat claws took my body out of the transparent plastic and placed me into the pantry. Every other food went in front of me. "Maybe the grandkids will eat 'em."

But the grandkids never consumed me. They said they wanted Cheetos. Nobody ever bothered with me after that. I sat in the back of the pantry, watching everyone else go before me. I started to lose hope. How was I ever going to complete my destiny? I waited and waited and waited and waited. I was forgotten.

One day, Helen's old meat claws finally held me again. "Oh, yuck..." she muttered. "These expired a year ago. Guess it can't be helped..." I was finally moving again. But my trip was short-lived. I fell deep into suffocating black plastic with other food that was expired. "Dan, take out the trash for me. Tomorrow's Garbage Day."

“I remember, Helen,” Dan replied. His gnarled meat claws helped Helen seal the suffocating black plastic. We were all taken someplace and awaited Garbage Day. Had the Maker forsaken us? How would we ever be consumed now?

Garbage Day came. There were lots of strange, loud sounds unlike anything I ever heard. I had a sinking feeling in my hard, crunchy insides. We had all failed to meet our destiny, and we were headed towards something entirely different. We were moving fast. It reminded me of when I left the Birthplace. Finally, there was a stop, and I was falling in darkness. I fell and fell and fell and fell. The suffocating black plastic we were contained in landed with an unceremonious thud. I wondered if this was the end. Suddenly, pressure came down on us. My crunchy insides burst all at once into bits. And then there was nothing.

“You have my sincerest apologies, child,” said the Maker.

“B-But...But what is the meaning of life?!” I demanded. “I TRIED! I tried so hard to do everything you said!”

“You were intended to be consumed by the humans, to become energy,” the Maker explained. “You would have lived inside them for a period of time. Eventually, you would have left them and lived forever in all other forms of energy.”

“What can I do now?” I asked. I never felt so lost.

“You’ll try again, and you won’t remember any of this. You’ll keep trying until you fulfill your purpose. I wish you the best of luck.”

I was tired of trying. I had about all of the trying that I could take in a lifetime. I could no longer trust the Maker. What if I had to endure the same fate again for years before I got it right?

The chance to live forever as energy did not sound appealing. It wasn't worth it. Just as I was about to object, everything went white.

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