

Short story – the mailbox



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

[Outside, the light morning breeze eased its way through the barely shut window, leaves rustled under its wake piercing the clear air with a silent howl. A minute refraction of light showered the sealed curtains creating an array of shadows frolicking wildly around the room. The serenity was put to an abrupt stop by the shifting movements from the occupied bed. She slowly rotated her face to face the ceiling, two hands behind her head, deep in reminiscence. ' Hey...' the voice cut through the air, obviously directed at the figure beside her, ' do you still remember what happened 10 years ago?']

It was the 23rd July, year 2002. Hastily, a singularity in a crowd of hundred looked defiantly at his watch seeming in a hurry. His hair was messy, crooked yet he cared not. His clothes shaggy, unfashionable yet he cared not. He only had his eyes on one thing as he slowly inched his way through the traffic, gazing at the train station looming ahead. His name is Tetsuya Kaito, a 15 year old minor sent to school in the hustle and bustle of Tokyo, miles away from his hometown.

[' Haha' croaked the voice beside her, ' I remember alright, I remember everything now, I've told you already!'. ' If you really want to start from the beginning take it back 15 years ago' offered the voice smugly.]

Spring! At last the cherry blossoms in Okashaya began its beautiful blooming ritual, slowly unveiling its petals one by one. A sweet melody swept across the entirety of the village giving birth to the new month. Two figures emerged from the breathtaking scenery smiling eagerly at each other. They couldn't have been older than 10, yet they already displayed true figments of love. The two beings came to a halt in front of a rusty, crooked mailbox

just barely standing on its post. Of the two, a male extended his arm to drop off a roughly wrapped letter stained with droplets of tears. A shiny metallic chain was then produced to lock away the secret for eternity, only the keys held by those two could unlock it.

Both knew they had to part ways but promised to regularly send each other letters.

[‘ Of course, that never happened’ stated the feminine depressingly, ‘ After you left it was a fight to retain my sanity just waiting for a letter to come around’. There was nothing the man could say as he wrapped his arms warmly around the female both deep in thought experiencing, sympathizing and reflecting on the same memory.]

The watch was ticking, 8am thought Tetsuya to himself. Many things raced through his mind at once, after catching this train he would be back in the hometown he hadn’t visited in 5 years. He doubt he could even remember what happened there since 4 years ago Kaito was involved in a critical accident which fortunately did not kill him, but induced amnesia rendering his past memories difficult to recall including those of his childhood in Okashaya Village.

The chugging noise of the blaring train snapped him back to reality, he hurried off to rush on the train; the next one wouldn’t be until tomorrow and he could not wait. Ever since his accident he’s had dreams of a distinct mailbox which may have a connection to the village. He was after answers!

A sudden jolt sent Kaito waking up, he checked his watch; 11: 30pm. He would arrive at Okashaya soon where then he'd take a cab to his parent's close friend's house. It would seem that Tetsuya and Asharagi Mizu (close friend's daughter) were inseparable childhood friends. Of course Tetsuya wouldn't remember.

[' Do you remember what you said to me when I opened that door and welcomed you with open hands?' demanded the female irritated. ' Who are you?' replied the male hesitantly, " I'm sorry, i-it's just that I couldn't recall your face, you turned much prettier' he confessed jokingly, though his words were lost to the fuming person beside him. ' Alright here, I'll make it up to you, how would you like breakfast in bed?' he questioned readily prepared to do it. ' Wait!' she beckoned ' Stay a little longer...'.]

The crunching sound of his footsteps disturbed the peace of the night as he carefully made his way up to a very traditional and oriental Japanese abode complete with an intricately designed front garden. The pebbles were lined up in perfection, water dripped steadily from the tiny stream and the grass wavered against the wind. Before he could reach the door knob, it was swung open and a female figure pounced on him with arms wide open smiling in delight, ' Ouch' squealed the twigs and pebbles as they tumbled onto the front lawn. Eyes met for what seemed like ages before he finally managed to gasp out some words. The girl's expression changed suddenly into a confused, puzzled state. An elderly woman trudged her way from the front door and greeted Tetsuya politely beckoning him inside to take a much needed rest.

He wasn't sleepy, as he lay down on the soft futon he could not help but be troubled by the girl. He was deep in ponder when a sudden, yet quiet knock was brought upon the door. 'Are you asleep?' the voice whispered. A grunt was the reply but it was all she needed as she charged into the room and lay down next to Kaito.

['That's when I broke down into tears after hearing you lost your memory' she sniffled, pulling the blanket over her face. 'It also meant you forgot the promise we had' she added.]

Kaito was utterly confused when the girl known as Asharagi Mizu began to recount her past memories with him that night. They stayed up till sunrise making conversation and catching up though it was hopeless for Kaito to regain his memories of the past.

['Yea, I had forgotten' the male reiterated, 'All I could remember was the mailbox and...']

The sun's beam slowly seeped into the room raising the droopy eyelids of two sprawled figures on the floor. His head hurt trying to recall past memories, like trying to break through an impenetrable wall. However, the only two prominent images that came to his mind was a dusty, run-down mailbox and a lone tree by a beach,

He was almost certain these had a link with Asharagi, so he consulted with her hoping to find answers. She starts to recount the legend of the mailbox...

"Long ago, there was an abandoned mailbox which remained in its soil for a few decades. It was by chance that a boy and a girl by the name of Tetsuya

and Asharagi would stumble upon such a find after adventuring in the nearby hills. They decided to make this mailbox their secret where only the two of them would be able to view the content of the letters inside it. Each day letters were sent via the use of the mailbox whenever they wanted to talk alone, it had more meaning to it.”

She giggled after realizing how foolish it sounded but agreed to take him to the mailbox hoping it would help him recover his memories. She knew nothing about a tree.

It was already late morning when they set off. Kaito having forgotten the taste and smell of the country leapt at every chance to take in the scenery. After a rough walk they arrived at a solitude mailbox with overgrown grass gnawing at its feet. A rusty metallic chain was wrapped tightly around its abdomen with a key-lock. A sharp twang suddenly hit Tetsuya’s brain, nothing what he had to do he told Ashiragi he would be back in a moment.

[“ I still wonder where you wandered off to after seeing it locked” pondered the female aloud, “ Would you care to fill me in?”. “ Alright” yawned the male “ Go get the popcorn” he joked.]

The sea’s tide was setting as he arrived. There were many trees in sight yet there was only one tree that was stuck right in the centre of the beach. He hurried over to it and started feeling from its trunk up. In moments his finger caught on to a small gap in the trunk where a keychain was just barely protruding out from. Kaito was satisfied as he made his way back.

[“ It was quite a long wait” she complained, “ you know you shouldn’t keep a lady waiting” she said returning a witty remark.]

The jangling of keys bounced off the metallic sheen of the lock. Tetsuya prepared himself for what was going to happen as he turned the lock. The chain came loose and dropped dead on the ground, the creaking of the mailbox’s door was followed by a rustling flood of letters. Tetsuya was amazed, all the letters accumulated from his childhood and from the time he left had been in here.

One letter in a rough wrapping stood out from the rest. He carefully picked it up trembling with excitement and also relief. It read:

“ 23rd July 1997, Bye Mizu! I’ll miss you. I promise when I come back lets get married okay?”

[“ It was quite sudden for me” he exclaimed, “ I never expected myself to write something that serious”. “ But fortunately my memories gradually returned after reading those letters and told me once again how precious you are, beautiful” Tetsuya exclaimed. “ Well, let me go and make that breakfast for you, just wait right here sweetie”. The door closed behind him. Mizu slowly outstretched her arm to the bedside cabinet and dusted off a letter which read...