

Bless Our Lucky Stars Episode 13: Tragedy & Transcendence

[Video Description: Lukayo, a nonbinary person of colour, has long curly black hair with a shaved undercut, and glittery pale blue lipstick, with the symbol of Pisces painted in dark blue lipliner on their bottom lip. The frames for their glasses are patterned like silver-gold glitter, and the lenses are tinted violet. They are wearing a black t-shirt with white astrological designs on it, and a black baseball cap with the Kind Space logo in white (an asterisk in front of the word “kind”). Behind them are woven rattan dividers partially covered in two malongs, a specific kind of Filipino cloth, and a sculpture-painting depicting the sun and moon. The first malong is mostly purple (but also yellow, red, blue, pink, and orange), and the second has a rainbow-like colour scheme with intricate geometric designs. Throughout the video, Lukayo plays a bamboo mouth harp and tells a story, while gesturing with their hands and making movements with their head.]

[Intro of live music from a bamboo mouth harp]

[Invocation]

To the land that cradles this body, this voice
To the city that covers it, by force or by choice
To the earth, with its quaking, its growth and its joys
I thank you

To the ancestors' blood that runs in my veins
Be they baker or banker or criminals chained
Bikol poets unknown or Kadugnung's great fame
I thank you

To the Anishinaabe, The First of this Land
The original sovereignty for whom I stand
To each Two Spirit person, each woman, each man
I thank you

To the founders of hip hop and modern spoken word
To Black culture's impact on the poetry world
To Black liberation that helped me be heard
I thank you

To Diwata, Bathala, Creator, Divine
To the spirits the guard me, the 6 that are mine
To Gugurang, St. Brigid, and angels so kind
I thank you

To Kind Space and my co-workers for making the call

To our sacred tools and technology for bridging our walls
To frontliners, caregivers, those protecting us all,
I thank you

To the audience members who lend me their ears
To my family that support me year after year
To all those whose influence I hold so dear
I thank you

To the Land, to the Art, to the Spirit, to the Flesh
To the Word, to the Voice, to the Stage, to the Quest

All I have is my thanks and this promise to give
That as long as I breathe, as long as I live
When you support or honour or influence my craft
I will pay it forward. I will always give back.

There's no end to my thanks but our time is still young, so
Welcome to my mind, to my heart, to the show.

[Introduction]

Mabuhay. I'm Lukayo, of the Bikol people. My pronouns are they/them/their. And this is Bless Our Lucky Stars, an astrology and storytelling series live-streamed over Facebook by Kind Space, a 2SLGBTQ+ community organization located on unceded and unsundered Algonquin territory, in the National Capital Region of Canada.

I just played for you my ku'bing, a bamboo mouth harp, and recited an invocation, both in honour of my ancestry and of storytelling. Also as part of my storytelling protocol, if you're going to share with others these original tales I created, please remember to ask my permission first and to credit me when you share them.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, email me at Lukayo@Kindspace.ca.

This is the final story of the season, and I'm excited to share it with you all. So, onto the story.

[The Story: Tragedy and Transcendence]

Tragedy and Transcendence

A long time ago, in the Sky World, when Earth was a woman who was getting on in years, she was invited to go on a festival boat with many people, including her elderly parents and some loved ones. Her younger siblings, Sun, Moon, and Star, were all away on personal business

themselves and didn't go on the ship, which, in hindsight, was a mercy. No one could have predicted what would happen-- there was no storm, nor giant wave, nor any sign that something was amiss.

One day there was just the ocean, in all its glittering glory under a bright blue sky, and then, at some point, hours later, the boat began to rock, and list. Shouts of consternation came from the captain and the crew, and Earth ran to the railing and stared in shock at a whirlpool in the distance, fierce and deep, pulling the ship towards its depths.

The next moments were a daze-- she couldn't remember if it took only seconds for the ship to be pulled under, or if there was screaming panic for over 20 minutes as folks desperately tried to jump ship while the crew desperately tried to turn the boat around. All Earth could really remember is staring down as the ship's deck cracked underneath her and she fell feet first into a vast body of water.

When Earth awakens next, she is in a medical centre, surrounded by her weeping siblings, being told by a healer that she is the only survivor. Emergency services found her washed up on shore and she had been brought back to her town once her siblings identified who she was.

Earth also is being told that there have been complications with the accident that is still being tested and analyzed, and that she may have developed a chronic illness from it that requires her to be in bed for long periods of time.

At first, Earth obeys the healer's orders, but she finds herself restless often, in the middle of the night, consumed with memories of her parents and of her loved ones, of her dreams of birthing children, of her present circumstances confined to this bed.

One night, unable to take it anymore, she pulls off the covers, and puts her feet on the ground, delighted to find that she can stand up. Her relief as she takes a step forward quickly turns to horror as she finds herself suddenly surrounded by water on all sides -- above her, below her, everywhere. In a panic, she flails her arms and legs, and she is back in her room in the medical centre, having only taken a step forward, but her bedclothes and body are soaking wet.

Confused, she takes another step, and she is back in oceanic depths and darkness, and moving her foot again brings her to her room.

The healer assigned to check on her finds her sobbing, curled up on the ground, shivering and wet, unable to get up and back to the bed, whispering: "They're all there, back in the ocean. The ocean is haunting me."

When her siblings visit her again, the healer tells them that they've done everything they possibly can for her but Earth's body acts as if she has one foot in the grave. She refuses to leave the bed, and when Sun coaxes her to try, the siblings watch in her horror as Earth

vanishes from sight every time she takes a step, and then reappears gasping for air, wild with grief and terror, only to disappear again with another step.

“The ocean is haunting me!” she wails.

Her siblings hug her tightly, then dry her off and carry her back to her bed.

As they continue to visit her, they get updates from the healing staff that she refuses to leave the bed, ever, and sleeps unusually long. In her rare waking moments, she spends all the time reading books, eating food, and participating in any kind of distraction to avoid interacting with people.

Earth is barely able to speak when her siblings come and visit, and sometimes can't focus on them but goes back to reading or listening to music.

As the months continue with Earth in this state, her siblings desperately bring different healers to her, or different herbs and medication, or conduct as many one-on-one or group circles to have her process her grief and pain. Earth tries it all, at first enthusiastically, but later with growing resignation.

This is because no matter what she does, as soon as she gets up to take a step, she still ends up there, in the ocean, in the water, in the darkness, alone.

Years pass, as this pattern continues. Her siblings do not give up on her, and continue to visit as much as possible, but Earth realizes, deep down to her toes, that nothing is going to work. The ocean is a part of her now, and she could either accept it or spend her whole life in bed.

Resolute, she swings her feet off of the bed and, shaking, slowly stands up and takes a step forward. As the ocean closes in on her, the panic seizing her body, she realizes that she can breathe in the water. Then another terrible thought occurs, about what kind of creatures could be hiding in the depths to take her. Eventually her body comes to terms with the water, and her possible death at being eaten by a marine animal, as she floats along in the watery semi-darkness.

Death does not come. She is all alone out here, in the vastness of this liquid, and another sorrow grips her, as the sheer loneliness begins to soak through. All the suffering she'd experienced, not just in the last few years, but her whole life, comes rushing through her being, and she is wracked with despair and agony. But there were no books or music she could run to and away from these feelings, so she leans into it, she lets it flood her. Earth let's go.

In the flooding and the floating, her experience of suffering changes-- it grows beyond her own, and includes all those she loves, and then all those she knows. It keeps growing, in a way that she thought her spirit couldn't bear, but it expands further, and further, until she is filled with

compassion for a whole universe of suffering and begins to understand pain and its message, and its other form-- pleasure or joy.

Earth awakens into the ocean of existence, of her own consciousness-- perhaps even touching the numinous Divine. As she embraces all there is, beyond the memories of the past or the anxieties of the future, she comes fully present to what is, all of it, everything, from joy to sorrow, pleasure to pain, what is happening inside her body, around it, and beyond. And existence or the Divine responds in kind, holding her like the ocean holds her body.

When she takes her next step, her feet land on the floor, and she is completely dry. She takes another step, in meditative grace, and remains in the world, while a part of her is also still in the ocean.

Earth checks herself out of the medical centre, and her siblings find her at her home-- painting, composing music, and writing poetry.

"I'm so glad you're feeling better," Moon says sincerely.

"I'm still the same as I was," Earth responds contemplatively. "I am still chronically ill and fall into the ocean. I just... am responding to it differently."

"What are you making?" Star asks curiously.

"My dreams," Earth says gently. "The dream. The dream of life itself. I want to help others become aware of that dream, and so I create so that they can awaken."

Sun smiles proudly at Earth and says to their other siblings: "Through all that she has experienced and suffered, our kind and gentle Earth has stopped trying to escape from her own consciousness. Instead, she's grasped the eternity of consciousness, the wisdom of awareness, and the transcendence we can achieve with our minds, our souls. Instead of keeping it to herself, in her empathy and compassion, she's sharing her teachings with the rest of the world through art."

The siblings listened to the music, gazed at the paintings, and read the poetry. And they understood and awakened too, into the unbreakable internal flow of their spirit, into the dream of life.

[*Story Analysis*]

In this story, we learned one of the 12 Elementals of the Earth and the 12th Lesson of the Sun, and the body part it's attached to. Let's break it all down!

The Element of the Earth we were introduced to was the Ocean. Its Latin name in Hellenistic Astrology is Pisces. Those gifted with the Ocean in their chart have blessings around meditation, creativity, empathy, gentleness, imagination, mystery, and consciousness itself.

However, like in the story, when Earth stayed in her bed and threw herself into compulsive behaviour like reading or listening to music to avoid her pain, those influenced by the Ocean can be harmed or stunned by life's experiences and seek to escape reality at every turn. It's important for those influenced by the Ocean to channel the internal explosions and revelations into creativity and/or meditation, as a way for their mystical sensitivity to process all of reality's joys and suffering.

The 12th Lesson of the Sun is Transcendence. In Hellenistic Astrology, this is known as the 12th House, traditionally known as the House of Troubles. This Lesson teaches us about how we navigate trouble and tragedy in life, and what we can do to transcend it.

In the story, tragedy strikes Earth yet again in the death of her parents and loved ones and many people on a festival boat, leaving her the sole survivor. The grief and survivor's guilt consumes her, on top of her new and unpredictable power to be able to teleport to the ocean with the steps she takes. At first, she tries to escape through sleeping, reading, and music, refusing to engage with people or life in general outside of her bed. However, at some point, she let's go, and gets in touch with the mystical, or divine, or consciousness itself.

As Sun explained, the Lesson here is that, when faced with impossible situations, we reach inside ourselves, and discover what is eternal.

Every single one of us has this Elemental and this Lesson in our chart, even if it doesn't influence us as deeply as others. But it also is part of our bodies, since we are the Children of the Earth.

And the Ocean and the 12th Lesson are connected to our feet. This is the part that has some of the most sensitive skin in your body, with almost thirty bones, over twenty joints, and eleven sets of muscles. It can be the connection between you and the earth, between all of reality.

When your feet bring you where you don't want to go, like Earth's did, you can ask yourself: "Can I reconcile myself with reality when I've started off with the wrong foot? Am I satisfied with who I am, with what I've done, if I have one foot in the grave? Am I dragging my feet on facing my feelings, my truths? Am I ready to have the world at my feet?"

[Closing]

Thank you for watching. Gugurang Mabalos. I am your storyteller, Lukayo. I hope you enjoyed season one of this astrology and storytelling series. I'm going to be taking a long break before I start this series up again, but don't worry, you can still message or email me if you want to chat

about astrology! It's been a pleasure spending this time with you all. And remember: bless our lucky stars! Bye!