Title: Soulmates

Story Synopsis: Robert and Lucas keep missing each other. In fact, they’ve never met. That is until a disembodied spirit assigns himself Robert’s case. Can this spirit create the perfect opportunity for these two potential Soulmates to finally meet? And if they do meet, how will it go?

About The Author:
Antony Simpson is an avid Writer, Reader and BookReviewer from the UK. He has been writing on his personal blog for sometime.

He currently writes for online magazine The Gay UK and likes to write short stories in his spare time.

Copyright:
Copyright © Antony Simpson 2015-2016. All rights reserved. No part of this publication maybe reproduced without prior permission of the author.

This short story is entirely a work of fiction from the author’s imagination. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events or localities is entirely coincidental.

About This Story:
This story is a free download from http://www.antony simpson.com. If you have been charged money for this work, please contact the seller, demand a refund and contact the appropriate authorities.
**Soulmates**

I’m people watching, on the hunt for a new case, when I spot him. I can hear what people think, so I listen to his thoughts. His name is Robert. I watch him at a self-serve checkout in his local supermarket. He is tall and broad by human standards. He has deep hazel coloured eyes, which reflect the edges of his soul. He has mid-length slick black hair. He lives in a detached house off Sideshaw Street, the one with the red door. In the centre of his front garden is an apple tree. He has blonde pug dog named Ben. He likes working out, countryside walks and take away pizza on a Friday night. He dislikes people being late and the rain. He appears to be stirring blankly at the screen. But really he’s drifting off into his own fantasy world. He smiles to himself. He’s imagining what it would be like to be with the right man. He’s thinking that it would mean no more meals for one. I like his imagination, openness to love and his smile.

I want him to be my new case. But I can only intervene at certain opportunities, defined by the Cosmic Order. Imagine Robert’s soul as a piece of string. This thread is made of energy that is lit up different colours. The colours pulsate and occasionally change. Every colour of the rainbow is visible on the thread, including colours that can’t be seen by the human eye. Along thread, among the colours, are sporadic sections of white and grey.

Now imagine that everyone and everything that is alive in the Cosmos today, along with everyone and everything has ever existed has one of these threads. Each has it’s own combination of colours. Imagine that they are interwoven into a ginormous ball of string. Imagine that this ball is constantly moving, as the threads weave themselves into ever changing patterns. Some threads are long and others are short. Some are brightly lit whereas others emanate a duller glow. Some are connecting with others. Some are disconnecting. They cross and uncross, going under and over one another. Some weave tighter together and some unravel apart. Some join together and become one for a short time, before separating back into their individual strands. Some intertwine into pairs and fray, creating new threads, which are added to the ball. The ball of string is the Cosmos. The coloured sections on the threads, along with the patterns they weave is the Cosmic Order.

I can intervene when a soul’s thread lit up in the Rink coloured sections. Rink is a colour, that is a combination of red and pink. I can also intervene when the white sections are brightly lit to, because anything can happen in a white section of a soul’s thread. Robert’s thread is lit up in a strong Rink colour, so I assigned myself his case.

Before we continue, I should tell you a bit about myself. I am a nameless, disembodied spirit. One of many. We don’t have or use names, don’t ask me why - we
just don’t. I’m three hundred and eighty-three years old, which is young for a spirit. Most of us live into our early thousands, but some live even longer than that. My kind and I swirl around creating opportunities for souls to find one another. We figure that with over seven billion human souls on the planet, you need our help. Plus human beings are so unobservant. You literally miss what is right in front of your face. I mean you pass by my kind all day, everyday, but don’t even know that we exist. We’d be insulted, if it wasn’t for the fact that - as far as any of us can remember - it’s always been this way. Many of my kind feel it’s better that we go unnoticed, so that we can get on with our work in peace. Why do we do what we do? Simply because we feel that there should be more love around. We help the souls of many other species of animal to. Royal Penguins with their short stature, orange beaks and long yellow eyebrows are one of a few animal species that don’t need our help. They choose a Soulmate perfectly. Every time.

I stumble across Lucas as he’s walking, on his way to visit his elderly grandmother in her bungalow. Lucas’ white teethed smile can light up a room. He’s slim, has short blonde hair and blue eyes that look like the colour of ice. His glasses frame his eyes and show off his defined cheekbones. I listen to his thoughts, which reveal his shyness. He lives in an apartment overlooking a canal with his housemate Jen. He likes romantic comedy films, dancing and animals. He is always fashionably late. He dislikes loud people and being at the centre of attention.

I check his thread, which is lit up white. His warm and caring nature beams out of his thread. Robert’s thread is so close to Lucas’ that they are practically side-by-side. I look closer at the threads, I see that they have had the misfortune of missing opportunities to meet one another.

One such occasion was a few months ago. Simon and James, mutual friends to both Robert and Lucas had a housewarming party in their newly purchased Apartment. Apartment number 64, in Lucas’ apartment block. Lucas and Jen had been invited and gone along as their new neighbours. Robert, who had been a friend of Simon’s for a number of years, was invited and went to join the celebrations. Lucas was sat on the brown distressed leather sofa in the living room with Jen talking above the background music.

Robert entered the living room with Simon and James. They were stood talking and laughing about past times. Evenings spent in gay nightclub Passion. Robert was just about to glance over in Lucas’ direction, when a loud-mouthed woman stormed into the room shouting, ‘Nathan, how could you do this to me?’ A drunken Nathan followed her. She had caught Nathan in the en suite bathroom with another woman. An argument ensued, with Robert and Lucas both being distracted by the drama. The
party atmosphere changed as Cindy, the woman in question, started to violently lash out at Nathan. The Police had to be called and the party came to an abrupt and premature end.

Robert and Lucas have the potential for an amazing future together. They just haven’t met, yet. Enter the fabulous disembodied spirit, yours truly, to change that.

* 

It’s late on a Saturday evening. Above leather studded double doors, the red neon sign reads Passion. On either side of the doors, a big man stands dressed in black. Each has an identification card strapped to their right arm. The doors burst open, releasing the sound of I Gotta Feeling by The Black Eyed Peas and revealing a group of drunken women cheerfully moving on to the next club. Robert, Simon and James are at the front of the red roped entrance queue. I am there with them, invisible. The bouncer closest nods his head and holds open the door. Robert, Simon and James step through and descend the stairs. On the dance floor Lucas dances with Jen. He wiggles his hips and raising his arms up into the air. His megawatt smile shows his pleasure at being able to dance and signalling his enjoyment of the song. Strobe lighting is in full effect. Lucas sees flashes of Jen is opposite him. She’s mirroring his smile and moving her head from side to side. In one hand is her gold clutch bag and in the other is her nearly empty glass. The DJ is superb tonight, a slightly tipsy Lucas thinks. Robert, Simon and James, head straight for the bar. A slender barman glances in Robert’s direction. Robert leans across the bar and shouts his drinks order to the barman. Lucas’ mouth feels as dry as a desert. He gestures to Jen they head towards the bar.

As Lucas reaches the bar the music changes. The beginning of Calvin Harris’ Under Control is being mixed into the end of I Gotta Feeling. I spot my opportunity. I can physically push people or objects to create opportunities. I push Lucas. Lucas collides into Robert’s bigger frame. I can slow or freeze a moment in time. I slow time. Robert turns to catch him, stopping Lucas from falling headfirst onto the floor. Lucas sees shiny black shoes and dark denim boot-cut jeans. As Lucas regains his balance, he notices that he is being supported by someone’s arm. His eyes move up noticing Robert’s black fitted short-sleeved shirt, that is tight in all the right places. Lucas raises his chin to look up, above his own height. He sees Robert’s smile, complete with dimple on his left cheek. As they gaze into one another’s eyes, they are in their own little time bubble. I have slowed everything to a stop, so that just for a moment, they can fully notice one another. Robert sees the mischievous glint in Lucas’ eyes. He feels the hairs on the back of his neck stand to attention. He notices that Lucas is
wearing a baby blue coloured shirt, navy waistcoat and black skinny jeans. To Robert, Lucas looks divine.

‘Hi.’ Robert says, finally speaking.

‘Lucas, what are you doing here?’ James shouts, popping the time bubble encapsulating them. The noise of music, people and the clinking of glasses come suddenly rushing in like a tsunami of sound. Lucas breaks eye contact with Robert, to look at James.

‘Hey. Huh?’ Lucas says looking confused.

‘WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?’

The barman returns, leans across the bar and taps Robert on the shoulder. Robert, who hasn’t taken his eyes of Lucas, turns to the barman and then back to Lucas.

‘Can I get you a drink?’

Jen appears at Lucas’ side. ‘Sure. Mines a vodka and coke.’

Lucas looks at her and then back to Robert to gage his reaction. Robert’s eyes widen for a second, but then he recovers his smile and gives Lucas a quick wink. Lucas feels his cheeks blushing, so he glances away.

‘He’ll have the same,’ Jen says gesturing to Lucas, ‘only diet coke.’

Robert orders the drinks.

Hours later the newly formed drunken group surface, leaving Passion. Simon and James appear first with Jen. Jen telling them a story about her drunken antics the weekend before last. Robert and Lucas are next to appear, hand in hand. Lucas stops, pulling Robert to one side. They face one another. Lucas moves his lips towards Robert’s. Robert leans forward. Their lips meet. I freeze this moment in time. Robert feels his whole body flooded with endorphins, which rush to his head. The feeling is intoxicating, more intoxicating than the alcohol that already flows through him. His thoughts are hazy. He can concentrate on nothing but the feeling of Lucas’ lips on his. Lucas feels his heart pound hard on his rib cage, as though it’s trying to escape from his chest. His whole body wants Robert. He’s not sure how long he can resist the urges within. The kiss is slow, intimate, short and enticing. Lucas feels overwhelmed, so breaks contact with Robert’s lips.

As Lucas slowly pulls away from Robert, his eyes are still closed and his mouth is smiling. Robert opens his eyes, looking for more, desperate for another addictive kiss. Robert goes in for another kiss, this time with more urgency. Their lips meet, open and Robert’s tongue glides inside of Lucas’ mouth. Lucas’ tongue meets Robert’s. Their tongues dance together. They caress one another, passion quickly building up within them both. Robert’s hands move to explore Lucas’ body and Lucas’ hands reciprocate.
Their lips separate. Robert feels Lucas breathe out onto his lips, as if he had held his breath. They open their eyes and smile at one another. Robert sticks his hand in his pocket and pulls out his phone. He unlocks it using his thumbprint and then turns it to face Lucas.

‘Your number? Because I am definitely seeing you again.’

Lucas takes the phone out of Robert’s hand. He taps in his name with a wink emoticon on the end and then taps in his number.

The group separates. Robert and Lucas go in their opposite directions. I follow Robert. He gets into a taxi home. As the cab drives, Robert leans his head back and puts his hands over his eyes. Suddenly the alcohol is taking a toll and he feels tired. He thinks about the night. He decides it was awesome. He had even surprised himself tonight. After several drinks for Dutch courage, he had let loose and danced with the gorgeous man. Lucas. Gorgeous Lucas. The cab pulls to a stop and he instinctively knows that he’s home. He pays the driver and gets out of the car, feeling happier than he has in a long time. I watch as he practically bounces to his front door. He opens it with a jiggle of his key, enters and then closes it behind him.

Robert and Lucas text each other frequently over the next few days. They use the texts to get to know each other, but each text has a flirty undertone. Robert really likes Lucas, but is holding back. Lucas looks great. He sounds great. But isn’t that the way it always starts? He thinks. Lucas is waiting to see if Robert really does want to see him again. I begin to think that they’re hopeless. I push a text out on Lucas’ phone, inviting Robert out on a date. The Taj Mahal restaurant is a place I’ve used to bring other couples together before and is local to them both. Lucas glances at his phone after work and see’s the text I’ve sent. I can pop ideas into people’s heads. I pop the idea into his head that he sent the text on his break. He’s been so busy and distracted at work that he accepts this idea easily.

*I join Robert at ten minutes to eight, when he arrives at the Taj Mahal. Outside there are dark and heavy clouds. Robert has smartened up. He is wearing pants with a centre fold, a floral patterned magenta shirt and shiny shoes. He enters the restaurant. Inside he is greeted by extravagant décor. Lavish gold embossed curtains hang either side of each of the large windows that are set into glazed brickwork. To his right-hand side is a bar. Behind the bar is a white detailed model of the Taj Mahal. Small spotlights draw attention to the model. Three large chandeliers, above three large circular tables in the centre of the room provide ample lighting.

‘Hello Sir, are you waiting for a guest?’ A smartly dressed Waiter asks.

Robert glances across the room, looking Lucas’ blonde hair and his distinctive face. He doesn’t spot Lucas and neither do I.

‘Yes.’
‘Why don’t you wait at the bar?’ The Waiter suggests. Robert walks to the bar, sits on a barstool and orders a drink. Each of the two-seater tablets that are placed next to a window are occupied, except for one, which Robert assumes is for Lucas and himself. The seated couples are talking, laughing and eating. Robert’s stomach makes a low growl. Now he is anxious for Gorgeous Lucas to get here. Robert takes a sip of his red wine. He drums his fingers on the white marbled bar. He checks the time on his phone, ten minutes past eight. He sighs. Where is he? Robert thinks. I think the same. The bartender catches Robert’s eye and appears to give him a pitiful look. Robert pulls out his phone and clicks on Lucas’ name. His call goes straight to voicemail. He doesn’t leave a message. Robert watches a couple enter. He watches a Waiter having a conversation with them. They gesture to the free table and the Waiter shakes his head. They obviously don’t have a reservation. Robert checks the time again on his phone. Quarter past eight. Robert’s leg is bouncing as he taps his foot on the floor. He’s done waiting. He stands up. He walks over to the couple and Waiter. ‘They can have the table.’ He grunts, exiting the restaurant. Outside it’s raining heavily. I listen to Robert’s thoughts. He hates being let down. I hate the rain. He walks home getting drenched. He is angry with Lucas and frustrated at himself. I listen harder, ah there’s the problem: Robert is insecure. Deep down he doesn’t feel good enough to be loved and has been let down many times, by many men in the past. I sigh. I wish I could control what Robert thinks about himself and Lucas, but I can’t.

I set off to search for Lucas. I eventually find him. Dapperly dressed, he sat in a black plastic chair that has metal legs. He is in the hospital, in a cubicle surrounded by pale green curtains. On the bed is Lucas’ ninety-two year old grandmother who has had a fall. I can’t change set life events, such as Doris, Lucas’ grandmother, slipping on the wet floor in her kitchen. Lucas keeps glancing at his phone, aware that it’s getting later and later. He doesn’t have signal in the hospital. I listen to his thoughts. The ambulance crew had called him. He had rushed straight there. He hadn’t had the time to style his wet hair, which has become a frizzy mess. It looks like a large pile of hay has been dumped on his head. He had managed to call his mother on the short journey to the hospital. But she is yet to turn up and relieve him. When she does it’s past nine o’clock. Lucas kisses his grandmother on the cheek, wishes her well and exits the hospital.

As soon as Lucas has signal he calls Robert. Robert clears the call on his phone. Lucas leaves a gargled voicemail message, apologising and explaining what had happened. Robert’s phone chimes indicating a voicemail message. He listens to Lucas’ message. But this only makes him more furious. He debates bashing out a text, but thinks better of it. He decides to ignore Lucas. His voicemail and a text he’s
just received off Lucas apologising again. Oh my dear Robert. Sadness fills me as I watch their soul strands split off and change direction, beginning to move away from one another. I am reminded of the limitations of my role: I can’t influence how two people feel about one another. I merely create opportunities for them to meet, get to know each other and explore how they feel. My success rate is pretty good, most of the couples I bring together, stay together, at least for a time. But there are always those rare cases where the opportunities you create, only serve to drive the couple further apart. I decide I am not ready to give up on Robert and Lucas, just yet. One more try.

*  

A few weeks pass by. Robert is at the zoo with his sister Susan and his five-year-old niece Molly. As always when I have a case, I am with Robert, just invisible. The sky is clear blue, with the sun radiating light, but not much warmth. Robert is dressed casually in a grey hoodie, jeans and trainers. Susan is in a green cardigan, white t-shirt, jeans and flat shoes. Molly is in a dress and stockings. They have already seen the pink flamingos, tall giraffes and the fast running ostriches. As Robert, Susan and Molly walk around the zoo, Robert has told Susan all about Lucas. Robert is trying to decide what he should do. Susan has told him that Lucas sounds nice and that he should give him another chance. Robert, Susan and Molly are heading to The Reptile House. Molly is fearless, liking the snakes, lizards, and even the crocodiles. Robert smiles. Molly reminds him of what he was like of a child. All the things he should have been scared of he wasn’t.

Unknown to Robert is that I have spotted Lucas and Jen, who are also in the zoo today. Jen often drags Lucas to the zoo, especially since he bought her two annual passes on her last birthday. Lucas and Jen have seen roaring lions, pacing tigers and curious meerkats. On the walk around the zoo, Lucas has told Jen what happened on the night he was supposed to meet Robert. He recalls Robert’s smile and his quirky dance moves. Lucas imagines a mongoose dancing at a party, it is similar to Robert’s dance moves. Still they made him laugh and he couldn’t fault the guy for trying.

Robert and Lucas are walking around the zoo in opposite directions. They’re going have the misfortune of missing each other again. I decide it’s time to take drastic action. I can appear visually, in a form of my choosing. One of my kind once appeared as a child, with small white wings on his back and a bow and arrow. People overreacted, calling him Cupid and making him the God of Love. For this reason, it is discouraged among my kind to appear visually. But needs must.

Robert rounds a corner. He holds one of Molly’s hands and Susan holds the other. Molly is using them as a swing. ‘Wee!’ she screams in glee, as her feet are lifted from
the ground by the arms of Robert and Susan. I appear, creating the profile of Lucas from the back. I have Lucas’ short blonde hair, the thin black coat and camel coloured chinos that he’s wearing today. I am some distance away from Robert and appear to be looking at some exotic ducks in an enclosure. Robert glances up and notices me. I pop the idea into Robert’s head that I am Lucas. He speaks to Susan and then gestures to me. I start to walk away. I turn left at the end of the path. I want him to follow me. They turn and head in my direction, dragging little Molly along with them. They are heading away from their original destination, The Reptile House, but Molly doesn’t seem to mind. Her eyes are filled with wonder and her head darts from side to side. She is looking at the enclosures that they are passing, which have many different coloured squawking parrots in them. I pick up the pace. I let them get closer, but not too close. I go straight on and then make a right turn. Then I take another right turn. They turn the corner heading towards the elephant enclosure. I disappear. Lucas and Jen are already there. Lucas is reaching out his hand to touch an elephant’s trunk. Robert spots the side profile of Lucas. He lets go of Molly’s hand and increases the stride of his steps. Lucas places his hand on the elephant’s trunk and slowly moves it down. I pop the idea into Lucas’ head that he should turn his head. He does, just as Robert reaches him.

‘Hey, Lucas’ Robert starts. There’s an awkward silence. In their minds, both of them take themselves back to their first kiss, to the moment when their lips first met. They meet one another’s eyes. The awkward silence becomes comfortable. I freeze time for a moment.

They both go to speak at the same time. ‘Sorry, you go first.’ Robert says to Lucas. ‘Would you like to go for coffee?’ ‘Sure.’

* The future isn’t certain. It’s full of possibilities. I can see possible futures, by examining soul threads and watching the patterns they weave. I look at Robert and Lucas’ threads. They weave together a pattern that is one of closeness. I see them introducing one another to their respective friends. I see them introducing one another to their respective families. I see their friends and families accepting and loving them. Both as a couple and as individuals. I see Lucas meet Ben, Robert’s pug dog and think that he’s adorable, much like his owner. I see them creating many wonderful, loving memories together. I see Lucas moving in with Robert, shortly after Jen announces that she’ll be leaving to go on safari. I see Robert proposing to Lucas. I see Robert and Lucas dressed in matching tailored white suits on their wedding day and the big party that follows. I see glimpses of their honeymoon in the Caribbean. I see them visiting India and the actual Taj Mahal. I see Lucas with Robert, talking to a Social Worker about adoption. I see all of these possibilities in
their future together. I’ll visit Robert and Lucas from time to time, as I do with all of the couples I’ve helped to find one another.

I appear at a red door with gold-trimmings. I haven’t been here for a while. I open the door and experience the scent freshly cut flowers. I enter a room that is ceiling-less and lit by a rink coloured sun, bathing everything and everybody in it’s light. On comfortable seating dotted around the place, some of my kind sits, sharing one another’s company. As usual it’s warm. A harp plays somewhere in the background. It feels loving, comforting and just slightly erotic. After a successful pairing two Soulmates, all of my kind come to this place and undertake the same ritual. In the centre of the room, on a stone pedestal is the large golden coloured heart shaped gong. I feel it’s low hum and vibration within every fibre of my being. I push a mallet from a stand nearby, causing it to strike the gong. A loud bong ripples through the air and out into the Cosmos as the gong shakes. All of my kind present, turns toward sound. Robert and Lucas are my 1, 000th soulmate pairing. I smile. Satisfied. Then I sense another of my kind, one that I haven’t seen in over a hundred years. One I have missed without even realising it. We come together. We become one. We know each other for a time. Then when it is time, I leave this place, ready to set to work on my next case.