

The Last Will of Haruki

Written in my own hand, beneath the cherry blossoms, if not with a steady one.

To my nephew, Kenji,

By the time this letter finds you, the cicadas will have gone quiet and I will have finally built my last set. Do not grieve too long. I lived a full life, and much of that fullness came in small plastic pieces that hurt like a demon to step on in the dark of the workshop. You were the only one. While the rest of the family drank tea in the good room and spoke of money, you sat with me on the tatami among the bins, and you never once asked me what a piece was worth. You understood, the way I understood, that worth is not the same as value.

Here is what I leave behind, and to whom.

*To your father, my brother, I leave my fishing rods. He will know why. He will also never use them. To the neighbors, my apologies for the noises after midnight. It was never the wind. And to **you, Kenji**, I leave the whole of it. Every bin, every drawer, every half-finished thing on the shelf above the workbench. The collection. All of it. It is yours now. But I leave it to you **on one condition**, and I ask you to read this part twice.*

Give these bricks the love they deserve.

I do not mean keep them safe behind glass like a shrine no one prays at. I mean build. Take my models apart and make them into something I would never have dreamed of. Lose a piece beneath the floorboards and mourn it properly. When the right brick meets the right spot and you hear that small, perfect click, feel the thing I felt ten thousand times at that bench.

And whatever you do, never sort them by color.

Color is how people who do not build arrange things. It looks neat in a photograph and it is useless the moment you need a single small piece and can find only red ones. Sort by shape. Sort by what a piece may become. Sort by love, if you can learn how. But never, Kenji, never by color. Meet this one condition, and the collection is truly yours, not only the plastic, but the whole reason behind it.

Now go and build something. I will be watching from beneath the cherry blossoms, no doubt muttering about your parts organization.

With all my love,

Uncle Haruki