

'The Letter'
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Tairo, is your average school kid who likes to do things that boys like to do. He has a special talent for gymnastics, and is Number One in his school. It is break-time and like any other break from lesson, Tairo is practising in the gymnasium while his best friend, watches. Raimundo is good at football and plays for his local team, so he often teaches Tairo how to play football during lunchtimes.

Suddenly the door swings open and in walk Christopher, Nathan, and James, all big, fat and strong. They are known as the 'Three Fat Bullies,' of Gladethorpe Primary School. Christopher, the biggest and also the leader of the gang, walks over to Tairo.

"What are you doing?"

"Err, nothing," replied Tairo, softly.

Meanwhile Raimundo faces the ground in the hope not to catch eyes with any of the bullies, as he would get pushed around for sure.

"We all know that only girls do gymnastics! So what are you Tairo?"

By now, Christopher is standing right in front of Tairo, breathing heavily all over his face with his eyeballs popping out of his head, while Nathan and James are pushing Raimundo around the gymnasium.

"It's not only for..." but before Tairo could finish his sentence, Christopher pushed him really hard, and Tairo fell to the ground. He then kicked Tairo in the leg, and the three of them roared in laughter.

"Bye for now girls," Christopher said, as the 'Three Fat Bullies,' left.

Gymnastics wasn't only for girls Tairo thought to himself, but he could never argue back, as he is a very skinny boy, and of average height. He sort of blamed Christopher's dad, Rouley, because it was he who was crazy. Whenever Rouley came to 'Parent's Meeting,' he would always have a cigarette in his hand and be drunk. He smelled of beer and often shouted at the teachers and students for no reason. So it was clear why Christopher had anger problems, as the teachers put it nicely. As for Nathan and James, they just follow Christopher around everywhere and copy what he does, like puppets on a string.

Tairo and Raimundo always walk home together as they are neighbours. Tairo would run along the garden walls and practice some cartwheels and other gymnastic moves. On the way home Tairo was about to jump up onto a wall, but something colourful caught his eye, and so he jumped into the wall instead. Raimundo cried out loud in laughter. However, Tairo had found a letter written in what appeared to be blood.

"What you got there?" asked Raimundo anxiously. Tairo didn't answer, he just smiled and looked at Raimundo, showing him the letter. A great sense of mystery and adventure fell over his head. He examined it further only to realise that it wasn't written in blood, but in red ink.

"It's a letter," Tairo said quietly.

"I can see that! Open it then." replied Raimundo. Tairo tore the bright yellow envelope and pulled out the letter. It was written in Japanese, but that was not a problem as Tairo *was* Japanese.

Honey, how are you?

Recently the sky has turned dark blue, and the air has become cold.

The trees are becoming naked, little by little their leaves are falling. The night comes early and I feel that in this season I can breathe easily once again.

I miss you Sakurako! I will wait for you under the tree in Cherry park where we first met, on friday 12th, at six o'clock.

Love,

Nagura.

The letter reminded Tairo of a story he was often told by his mother. During the Second World War when America were bombing Japan. His great grandparents had been separated. His great grandfather went off to fight in the army against America, and he often wrote letters home, but somehow the letters never reached his great grandmother. Eventually they thought that each other had died during the war, until they remarkably met ten years later, but both were married to somebody else. It was a tragic love story.

“Hello! Is anybody there?” asked Raimundo sarcastically. He then snatched the letter out of Tairo’s hand and looked at it. “Hmm. What is it about?”

“It’s in Japanese, and I want us to deliver this letter.” Tairo went on to explain the contents of the letter and the story of his great grandparents to Raimundo, who listened carefully. The only problem was that it was friday 12th today and it was already 3 o’clock.

“What time do you have to be home?” asked Tairo.

“Six-thirty. Same as usual.”

“If you get home slightly late tonight, do you think it will be ok?”

“Of course! I always tell my parents I am going to be home half an hour later then I plan to be, that way I always get home early,” Raimundo said with a cheerful smile, as he knew what was on Tairo’s mind.

* * *

The task was simple really; all Tairo and Raimundo had to do, was to take this letter to the address written on the envelope. They set off for their adventure cutting through the park on the way to the local high street. The cry of a flying swan above Tairo’s head catches his attention, and so with his eyes he follows it as glides over the lake and dives beyond the distant trees. Paper white, icy clouds drift from his mouth as he and Raimundo hurry along.

They ask an old lady who is of little help, for directions. Nobody could help them find this address, and they didn’t want to waste time within the same area. Then right before Tairo’s eyes stood a small colourful building with a flashing orange light. It was a mini cab station. He and Raimundo opened the door and stepped inside. Cigarette smoke filled the air and made both of them cough, but Tairo was determined to deliver this letter and wouldn’t let nothing get in his way.

They could feel all the pairs of eyes inside the station glaring at them as they walked over to the counter. It was a creepy mini cab station with dim lighting, cracks on the wall, and old torn posters all over the floor. Tairo looked directly at the man on the opposite side of the counter.

“Excuse me, can you tell me how to get to Ridley Street please?” he asked nervously. The scruffy middle aged man leaned forward holding a cigarette in his right hand.

“How much you paying?” said the man in a loud voice.

Tairo jumped slightly, and everybody inside the mini cab station laughed. He could feel his body tighten, he was scared and so was Raimundo. He was told never to talk to strangers and here he was inside an old mini cab station surrounded by strange men with a blanket of smoke hanging in the air.

“I don’t have any money,” he replied.

The man then leaned forward even more and stared right into Tairo’s eyes. He could feel his heart pounding like the sticks beating a Japanese Taiko drum. Then suddenly the man reached out and grabbed Tairo.

“Help!” Raimundo screamed. Tairo jumped up in the air, and pushed the man’s arm away releasing himself from his dirty hands. They ran towards the door, but then another man jumped in their way blocking the exit. Without stopping, Raimundo kicked him. The man held his leg in agony as they ran out of the shop and down the road. They came to a halt around two streets later, being sure they wasn’t followed.

“That was scary!”

“Way too scary,” replied Raimundo.

By now they had been walking around for a long time. They knew they were close by because they had received some helpful directions but kept on getting lost. Raimundo was just about to give up, when Tairo leaped up in the air and screamed out in joy.

“Look, there’s Ridley Street. Let’s go!” he shouted. Raimundo smiled in relief.

“Just a little bit further,” Tairo reassured Raimundo. “And then we can rest.”

They noticed some kids playing up ahead but thought nothing of it, but as they got closer Tairo realised it was the ‘Three Fat Bullies.’

“Oh No! what are we going to do now?” he asked.

“Let’s turn back and go around,” suggested Raimundo in a hurried voice.

“Good idea.”

However, just as they were about to head back, Nathan spotted them. He tapped Christopher and pointed towards Tairo and Raimundo. The three boys began heading towards them at full speed.

“Run,” shouted Raimundo, but Tairo just stood there.

“No! I am no longer running away from them. I will run through them instead.”

Raimundo then turned and faced the trio charging at them like an avalanche of snow, except he pictured fat meat instead.

“Are you sure?” asked Raimundo.

“Yes, I’m positive. We have to live round here also!”

Finally Christopher, Nathan and James arrived, all with blonde hair, blue eyes, bright pink piglet faces, and all seemingly out of breath. Other students often said that they should be called the ‘Three Fat Brothers,’ instead. Tairo was just about to speak when Christopher viciously grabbed the letter out of his hand. He obviously couldn’t understand it.

“What’s this rubbish then?” he asked.

“Yeah what is it?” said Nathan and James in unison.

“Give it back to him please,” Raimundo said politely.

“Stay out of this, it has nothing to do with you,” said Nathan. He then pushed Raimundo in the chest.

“Hey! I do the pushing around here,” said Christopher in a bullish voice. Tairo saw this as his opportunity to escape.

“Run!” he screamed.

Raimundo did just that as he dodged in and out of the three bullies in great football style. Then Tairo leaped in the air and rolled on the back of James, he cart-wheeled past Nathan and spun around Christopher while at the same time snatching the letter back from out his hands. He then pushed Christopher really hard. Christopher fell back onto Nathan and he then fell back onto James, and they all fell down on the ground.

“That hurt!” Nathan said out loud.

“I need to go toilet!” said James.

“Both of you shut up!” shouted Christopher angrily.

Christopher and the gang had hurt themselves and looked up in shock and amazement as they watched Tairo and Raimundo walk away. They couldn't follow as they were too out of breath.

"Wow, what was that move?"

"It's called, *The Spin of Life*," replied Tairo.

"That was great! I don't think we will have anymore trouble from them!"

A few seconds later they had reached a large green door with gold numbers.

"Ok, this is it," Tairo said.

Tairo glanced over the letter once more and then posted it into the letter box. He looked at his watch, it was now five-thirty. They decided to wait a while to see if anybody would come out. The sky had begun to grow dark and the chill was getting colder. The smell of bagels from the local bakery drifted warmly through the air. They waited in silence.

Then, ten minutes later somebody did come out. It was a young, tall and beautiful lady. Tairo and Raimundo carefully followed her as she walked quickly down the road. Had they succeeded? did they keep this burning love alive? these questions were running through Tairo's mind. They followed her to the gates of a park and watched her as she walked slowly towards a small tree next to a lake. Then a man appeared from behind the tree with his arms wide open. They ran towards each other and embraced.

Tairo smiled at Raimundo, they had succeeded and kept the couple's sweet love alive, and they still had enough time to get home before six-thirty.

"It was a nice day today wasn't it," Raimundo said.

"Yeah it was. A real mini adventure," replied Tairo in a satisfied voice.

"Yeah, but do you know the way home?"

They looked at each other and laughed, and headed back in the direction they had come from.

THE END