

Alphabet Challenge: H is for Hero

By Kouta Slatefang.

Kouta looked at the television in disbelief. Who died? The bear had to rewind the television again, and again, and again. It had to be a hoax, surely? His favourite actor had died. He sighed heavily and looked out of the window at the scattered snowflakes. To know his daughter will spend Christmas fatherless...it didn't bear thinking about. Kouta switched off the TV and slipped his shoes on. He needed a break from sitting around all day. He took in the sombre sights. What would have been a lovely winter scene only made him sigh more heavily than before, his cold breath coming before him in an eerie mist.

The streets of his town were bitter and quiet, the wind rolling over empty streets and the cold steel of the cars parked on them. Kouta decided on a whim to visit the one place where he could always feel safe and warm, even more so than his own bed; Sykes' Café, a local establishment. He walked in, greeted the barista, and settled at a table by the window, watching the world coast by, without him. After what seemed like eternity staring out into space, Kouta rose from his seat, and ordered a drink from the counter. A hot chocolate to be precise; two sugars. Being a bear, he always did have a fondness for the sweeter things in life. It was just a shame he had to swallow such bitter news. He took the drink, thanked the barista and made his way back to the seat, where he nursed the hot drink, sipping at it occasionally and sighing, somewhat contented to be lost in the warm brown swirls of fine Swiss chocolate.

He was just about to leave when someone who seemed familiar walked in. Who was it? She was a cabbit, only too distinctive, with her cobalt blue fur and her sweet smile. She wandered in, smiling at everyone, noticing the solemn bear in the corner. She waved exuberantly and practically bounded over to him, settling herself into the seat without so much as an 'excuse me', such was the nature of their warm friendship.

"Hi Kouta!"

"Hi Bwoo." He looked away.

"Why the long face?"

"My favourite actor died today...in an accident...I didn't think I'd be so upset...but...bloody hell...he was an inspiration."

"Oh? How so?"

"Well...he got me wanting to try street racing. He was the guy that inspired me to really...get into cars, you know? Before I watched my favourite movies with him in it, I didn't even see the point of a manifold, or what it even was. Now, anything I don't know about cars, probably isn't worth knowing. I do owe it to him for basically giving me my first hobby." Bwoo nodded silently. She was all too familiar with that feeling. Kouta even felt bad for talking about his loss like this. "I-I'm sorry," he corrected. "I know it's not my place to talk about how much you can miss someone, especially since I never met him-" Bwoo held up a hand sweetly.

"It's fine, Kou. I know how it feels. It helps to talk about stuff, you know? I mean, I remember when...No, wait, no I don't..." She tried to keep a stern face, but it soon gave way to giggles, even causing a smile to curl the corners of Kouta's muzzle.

"Thanks, Bwoo. I do like talking to you, it feels like we've been friends forever."

"Hehe, really? Awwww!" Bwoo smiled again, giggling sweetly once more.

"Yes, really." He petted her hair gently, chuckling slightly. "It's getting stuffy in here. Should I walk you back to your place?"

"Well, I came here to get a drink....but okay!"

Kouta nodded, and walked out, with Bwoo following closely. In the chilly winter air, Kouta rubbed his hands together, but looked concerned for Bwoo, who had only opted for a shirt and jeans, compared to Kouta's snug, warm parka. He was about to pull up his hood when he noticed this. He bit his lip, a pang of guilt pricking his chest, and unzipped his parka. "What's wrong, Kou?" He wordlessly removed his parka, revealing a grey polo-neck shirt, and passed the coat to Bwoo.

"Please. Take this, you look freezing, angel." He warmly smiled as she put it on, zipping it up. It looked far too big for the cabbit, and she pulled the hood up, now completely concealing her face, almost like it protected her from the bitterly cold world. Kouta nodded approvingly. His fur meant he could go naked and not be too cold, but he'd rather not be arrested. Not if he wanted to be a lawyer, which he did. He held her hand gently, and walked the cabbit to her house, talking about things like dancing along the way. Needless to say, that conversation went down like a lead balloon, given that the bear had two left footpaws.

They soon arrived at her house. Bwoo took the coat off and tried to give it to Kouta, who politely refused. "Don't worry, I'll be fine. Just make sure to give it back next time we meet, okay?" He smiled again. It felt like smiling was becoming a rarer and rarer event to the bear. Bwoo nodded, excited, and pulled the parka on again, wrapping her arms around herself as if she was trying to give herself a hug. It truly was an endearing sight to the bear, who easily saw her as his sweet little sister, and likewise, she looked up to him as a cuddly big brother/portable heater. They waved as she entered her nice warm house and shut the door, leaving the bear alone with his thoughts again.

So what if someone dies? It doesn't really mean they're gone. As long as they've influenced someone, somewhere, they will always remain in our thoughts and hearts. They will never be forgotten.

Never.

The End