Thursday 26th April 2018

A Letter to Michiya

The Cherry Orchard

10 Oak Avenue

Bristol

BW1 4PZ

Monday 9th May 2016

Dear Michiya,

Firstly, thank you for your letter - it really brought a tear to my eye reading it. I am writing to tell you about Kensuke, your incredible father. Words cannot describe how amazing he was. He was a very talented and honourable man, who I was very lucky to have met. It was with pure luck that he happened to find me and I have much to owe him for everything he did for me. Stranded on the island, we spent one whole year together and finally we began to form a strong friendship - one I will remember forever.

To begin with, we didn’t get on so well. Initially, I thought he was a very angry man who was trying to ruin my efforts to return home to England. Often I watched him stamp out the burning fire I had built in my attempts to reach out for help from passing boats. He also drew a line on the sand stating that one half of the island was his and the other half was mine. However, this anger did not last for long and soon we grew to be the best of friends. Kensuke was a magnificent man who showed me the ways of the world. Over the many months that we spent together, he taught me to fish for food, fend for myself and ultimately fight for survival. After saving me from my death twice, giving me a home and protection, I soon realised that he was a man to be trusted.

You said you have no memories of your father? Well, let me tell you – he was a marvellous painter. I learnt from him the true art of painting so we would often spend our long days painting lots of different images and memories we both had. He truly was a remarkable man; every day he would amaze me with his incredible talents. Additionally, the caring nature of your father was highlighted every day when he cared for the island’s animals, particularly the orang-utans. Kensuke had a special connection with these furry creatures and he always tried to keep them from any harm or danger.

Why did your father never try to return to Japan? The answer to this is that he was scared - scared to his very core that you and your mother had been killed in the war. I feel it is important to tell you that Kensuke never ever forgot you, Michiya. He was wracked with guilt at the thought that he was still alive and you not. It was in his head that he shouldn’t be alive and so he stayed on the island - his island. He felt he had let you down because he longed to be there to protect you. You were always there in his mind, his thoughts and his prayers.

I hope that this letter has helped you to understand your father a little better. Furthermore, he really was an outstanding human being. I am sad that you never got to see him again but I am sure he is in peace now on his island, his kingdom. Hopefully, we can arrange an opportunity to meet up (as I am planning a trip to Japan) so that I can give you a true insight into the special times I shared with Kensuke. I hope you receive this letter and I hear from you very soon. Please remember that your father is forever in my heart; not a day goes by when I do not think of him.

Best wishes

Michael