

Letter to Silas — Age 5

A birthday letter to Silas about stones, whys, and learning how to open the world together.

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The Stones and All Your Whys

My dear son,

you came into the world at a strange time.

You were born while the world was still standing a little crooked. Adults wore masks. People kept their distance. Hands were cleaned again and again. Things were closed, opened, closed again, and the adults around you were still trying to understand what was happening.

Of course, you did not know it that way.

To you, it was simply the world.

I think about that often. That your first time in life began in a world where faces were sometimes half-hidden, where smiles could disappear behind fabric, and where adults said “be careful” a little more often than children should have to hear.

Now you are turning 5.

And I wish I had written a letter like this to you every year from the beginning. When you turned 1. When you turned 2. When you turned 3. When you turned 4.

I did not.

Not because you were not important enough. Never that. But because I am only now beginning to understand that some things need to be saved while they are happening. Not only as pictures. Not only as small memories on a phone. But as words. As traces. As something you may one day read and feel: this is how my father saw me then.

So I begin now.

Not perfectly. Not from the beginning. But honestly.

The past is the past. Now is now. And from now on, I will try to write to you every year.

Right now, you have your own worlds. Worlds full of colours, levels, characters, sounds, dangers, and small missions. You can step all the way into them, as if life is something you can jump around in, try again in, fall down in, laugh at, and start over.

I like that about you.

You are not only playing. You are investigating. You enter the world with your whole body. You want to know what happens if you do this. If you try again. If you go another way. If there might be a secret door somewhere.

And right now, you are collecting stones.

Yesterday and today, you walked around finding stones because I had told you that glass comes from something that was once stone and sand. And immediately, it became something in your world.

If glass can come from stone, then maybe stones can become windows.

And if one day we are going to build the house we talk about, then of course we will need windows.

That is how I love watching you think. You do not simply receive an explanation and put it away. You build on it. You turn it into a mission. A stone is not just a stone. It may be the beginning of a window. And a window may be the beginning of a house.

That reminds me why I never want to just give you a quick answer and move on.

Because when you ask why, sometimes a whole world opens.

And sometimes that world begins with a stone in your hand.

You ask all the time:

Why?

Why do we do this?

Why does that happen?

Why do people say that?

Why is the world like this?

Some adults get tired of why. I understand that. A why can arrive at the most impractical moment. When you are tired. When you have to get out the door. When food needs to be made. When the mind simply wants quiet.

But I love your whys.

Not because I always know the answer. I do not. And I hope you never believe that your father knows everything.

Because the most important thing I am trying to teach you is not the answer.

The most important thing is that we can try to find out together.

When you ask me why, I try not to close the question with a quick answer. I try to enter the question with you. We can look. We can think. We can investigate. We can ask someone. We can try to understand the world a little better, one small thing at a time.

So far, there has not been a question where we have not at least tried to find the answer together.

I am proud of that.

Not proud of myself. Proud of us.

Because you are teaching me too. You remind me that the world is not self-explanatory. It has to be opened. Again and again. Even for adults.

You are growing up in a time when machines can answer almost anything. You will live with artificial intelligence in a way I never did as a child. Maybe one day you will be able to ask a machine almost anything and receive an answer immediately.

But I hope you learn something more important than getting fast answers.

I hope you learn how to ask well.

How do we know?

Who says so?

Can we test it?

What if the answer is wrong?

What can we see for ourselves?

What do we still not understand?

Because that is how I think a person becomes free.

Not by having all the answers.

But by not being afraid of the questions.

You are my child, but you are not my project. You are not something I am supposed to finish shaping. You are a human being I get to walk beside for a while.

And I do not promise you that I will always do everything right.

That would be a lie.

But I promise you that I will try. I will try to listen. I will try to be curious with you. I will try not to make your questions small just because they come from a small person.

Because your questions are not small.

They are the beginning of your way of understanding the world.

So my first birthday letter to you is really about this:

Keep asking why.

But also learn to listen.

Learn to wait.

Learn to look for yourself.

Learn to say: “I do not know yet.”

That is a strong sentence.

Maybe one of the strongest.

Because when you say “I do not know yet,” you have not lost. You have opened the door.

Happy birthday, my son.

I am not trying to give you the world finished.

I am trying to teach you how we open it.

I love you.

Dad

RELATION MEMORY

TRANSLATION [Brev til Silas – 5 år](#) · Danish companion version of the same birthday letter.

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