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❁ CHAPTER 1 GOING ABROAD

Shinichi Suzuki waved from the deck of the S.S. Hakone to a friend who had come to see him off from Nagoya. Beside him on the ship stood Marquis Tokugawa, the past lord of Owari, who had arranged for Shinichi to go on a cruise around the world. The Marquis's real purpose, however, was to take Shinichi to Germany to study violin.

A blast of the ship's horn pierced the air as the steamer slowly left the wharf of Kobe. Shinichi was exultant, knowing that he was actually standing on the deck of a ship bound for Germany. The date was October 27, 1921, and Shinichi had turned twenty-three just ten days before.

Four months prior to Shinichi's departure from Japan, a six-year-old boy had stood on the deck of the S.S. Taiyo as it left Yokohama for San Francisco. His name was Masaaki Honda. Both he and Shinichi Suzuki had coincidentally left Japan in 1921. However, the adult Shinichi had fully understood his purpose for going abroad, while Masaaki was not yet old enough to comprehend what awaited him in a foreign country. The difference in their ages would be of great consequence in their future lives.

❧ CHAPTER 11

MASAAKI'S LIFE IN SAN FRANCISCO

After living for about a year in San Francisco, the Honda family moved to 2039 Pine Street. This was up steep Buchanan Street, only one block from their former house on Bush Street. The house faced south and was warm, with plenty of sunshine coming in. From a terrace, they had a magnificent view of the commanding Twin Peaks in the distance. Compared to the Bush house, it was comfortable in a lot of ways, and Masaaki began to notice the importance of environment in people's happiness.

Masaaki now lived in the Emerson school district, and he transferred to the school at the beginning of the third grade. The school had recently been rebuilt, and everything was fresh and clean. His understanding of English was by now not a problem, so he was able to adapt himself to the new situation without any difficulty.

His teacher Mrs. Trowbridge seemed to have a special interest in poetry. Every noon, she would take her lunch in the classroom and read poems to the students. These poetry sessions began with simple nursery rhymes and gradually proceeded to poems of a higher level, such as those by Longfellow, Stevenson, Tennyson, Byron, and Wordsworth. Masaaki's favorite was Longfellow's "The Arrow and the Song." Every time he read this verse, he imagined that his song would somehow be heard by a friend somewhere. Wordsworth's "The Rainbow" also inspired his imagination, though he seldom actually saw a rainbow in San Francisco.

Masaaki's introduction to American history was from Longfellow's "Paul Revere's Ride." He was thrilled by the verses, beginning with "Listen, my children, and you shall hear / of the midnight ride of Paul Revere, / On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five; / hardly a man is now alive / Who remembers that famous day and year." His imagination flew with Paul Revere, riding through every Middlesex farm and village to spread the alarm. Indeed, it is very important for children to have good teachers who can lay a strong foundation for their