

Letter to Aymel

Aymel lives in Afghanistan. He received this letter from his Uncle Raz just before Nao Roz, the Persian New Year on 21st March.

Read the letter, then think about the questions that follow.

Dear Aymel,

I hope you are well. How's everyone in Dadal? I'm OK. The city is very busy. I miss the hills and orchards back home. I'm sorry I haven't seen you for a long time. The roads out of town are hard to pass. The ISAF soldiers and Taliban fighters have so many guns. People say they have enough to fight a hundred wars. That's why Mum wants me to stay in Kabul until I finish university.

I passed another exam. Your goofy uncle is going to be an engineer! My tutor says I am doing really well. I still have to finish some project work. I want to design a water system that works from gravity. It could bring clean water to everyone's house in our village. It's only a project but, one day, you never know, I might make it real.

I have to be serious for a minute. You were so young, only three, when it happened. So maybe you don't remember your dad dying. TV news said he fought for the Taliban. That was a lie. Your father was a farmer, not a soldier. He never even carried a gun. But the drone couldn't tell the difference. Five men died that night. The flying machine flew off and disappeared into the dark sky. Like your mum says, your father was killed by a robot. That makes it worse, somehow.

When I was your age, your grandad showed me how to make a kite. Everyone in Dadal would come out to see the kites in the sky. A flick of my wrist could make my kite dive down or soar higher. It felt like I could fly over the mountains to anywhere in the world.

Please turn over...

I will be sorry to miss you for New Year. I can't believe you're ten years old! You'll be as big as me, soon. I'd like to show you how to make your own kite. Do you know the old folk tale about kites? Make a wish and send it into the sky with your kite. One day, the wish will come true.

My wish is to see you and your mum. One day, it will come true, but not yet. Instead, for New Year, I've made you a new kite. It's the best one I've ever made. It's powerful and fast. By now, I'm sure, you will be strong enough to control it. Until I can get it to you, here is a photo. I hope you like the colour! Soon, I hope, the drones will be gone. Until then, if you still have your old kite, be careful where you use it. Clear skies are best, but they can be very dangerous. The people in the village say that if you see a green light and a red light next to each other in the sky, leave everything and run.

I hope you're getting to school. Is it open at the moment? If not, you can still read your books. And look after your mum. I miss you and my sister so much. I've written a letter to your mum, too. Please give it to her.

Salam, my nephew. Do write back soon.

RAZ



This is based on a true story from Afghanistan, provided by Raz and produced with his permission.

Suggested questions:

Where does Aymel live?

Why can't Raz see him?

What happened to Aymel's father?

What advice does Raz give Aymel?

How do you think Aymel will feel on Nao Roz?

