



### **The Future Is In Your Hands:**

*"Hold on to what matters."*

*A message to my daughter as she turns one*

Hey kid,

365 days. One full revolution around the sun. Your first lap on this strange little rock - and what a lap it's been.

The world looks different to me now. Brighter, somehow. Less suffocating. People don't grind me down the way they used to, and the darkness... it still lingers, but it doesn't drag me under like it once could.

And when I look ahead now, I feel something I thought I'd lost:

Hope.

Which is strange, considering the state of things. Because if I'm being honest with you - and I always will be - I worried about the world you were arriving into. I still do. In fact, as you hit this milestone, it feels like things are getting more unstable, not less.

But you didn't exactly arrive into calm waters, did you?

You came in the middle of a storm.

I watched as your mum began to slip away. Doctors moved fast. Voices sharpened. That quiet panic filled the room – the kind that tells you something isn't right before anyone says it out loud.

For a moment, everything teetered. And then... you both pulled through.

A woman whose body had already been through hell, and a premature little fighter with the odds stacked against her—you both said no.

Not today.

I think that's where it started for me. The shift. Because in that moment, I saw something I can't unsee now:

Even when things look like they're about to fall apart... sometimes they don't.

Sometimes those in the moment fight.

And sometimes they win.

So when the world starts looking like it's circling the drain—and it will – I come back to that moment. Not as a comfort blanket, but as evidence that those who may seem so frail, can still prevail.

Evidence that collapse isn't guaranteed.

Now, here's where it gets a bit heavy – but you'll come to expect that from your old man.

I've started to think of this planet as something alive. Not in some soft, poetic way – I mean properly alive. Breathing. Straining. Taking damage.

And right now, it's under pressure. The thing stressing it the most... is us:

Humanity.

A clever little species with a bad habit of outgrowing its own wisdom.

We build, we consume, we repeat. We cling to the past like it's sacred, even when it's clearly not working anymore. Nostalgia is a hell of a drug—it keeps people comfortable while the house quietly burns down around them.

We're adaptable, I'll give us that. We can normalise almost anything.

Even smoke in the lungs.

But normal doesn't mean *sustainable*.

And that's where you come in.

Not just you — everyone your age, everyone who's going to inherit whatever this planet becomes.

The future is in your hands. No pressure.

You don't need to save the world on your own. That's not how this works. But you do need to understand the game you're walking into.

So here's a few truths from your old man — take them, reshape them, ignore them, prove them wrong. That's your right.

Just don't sleepwalk through life whilst you have them.

People will never agree on everything. Religion, politics, climate, football — pick your battlefield. Don't waste your life trying to make everyone align. It won't happen.

If you want to move people, understand them. If you want change, learn how people think — not how you wish they thought. Most people don't respond to truth — they respond to identity. To feeling right. To feeling like they've figured something out.

It's messy. But that's the terrain. Keep that in mind.

Take care of the world around you.

Don't litter. Don't waste more than you need to. Respect the systems that keep things alive – even if most people ignore them – and find a way to integrate with them.

Right now, we're burning through resources like there's no tomorrow.

There *is* a tomorrow.

You're in it. So act accordingly.

Turn off lights you're not using. Pick up a book instead of a screen, and consider what other travel options are available to reduce impact.

Forgive people for not knowing.

Ignorance isn't always malicious. A lot of the time, it's just... comfortable. Easy. Don't waste energy hating people for being asleep.

If you can, wake them up.

If you can't, keep moving.

Also, never attribute malice to that which is most likely incompetence.

And don't ever think you're better than anyone else.

You're going to hear how special you are – and you are. You're a miracle, no question. But everyone is special to someone. Even the ones getting it wrong and misbehaving.

Remember that when you meet them. Unconditional positive regard.

Call these whatever you want. "Dad's savage tips for surviving a savage world," "notes from a tired optimist," or something less dramatic if you take after your mum (and I have a feeling you will).

But these pearls are yours now, and there are many more new age gonzo wisdoms to come. I make no apologies for this (no matter how much you may cringe).

You're starting to talk in small words. You're wobbling when you walk. Twelve steps and down you go - always to get right back up again.

And each time you do - I see it.

The potential. The power of you. The person you're becoming. You're going to do incredible things.

Not because the world is easy. But because it isn't.

I can already see in these early moments, that you're someone who will do the right thing on a difficult day.

And when you do - I'll be there.

Not as someone who has it all figured out - but as someone figuring it out alongside you.

Watching. Learning. Trying to keep up. Probably getting it wrong sometimes.

But always showing up.

**Happy birthday.**

Love you, kid.

Dad