

Under The Floorboards

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The Merry holds one last secret before its time finally comes.

Takes place between Chapters 429 and 430

OMEGA-SPOILERS

[Us/Ka]

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"B-But Merry..." Nami walked around the deck, then touched the mast. "How?"

Franky walked up to her, "Ships have souls, maybe it has unfinished business with one of you. One last secret it must tell before it can rest."

A dull cluck was heard from the men's quarters. The bandaged sniper quickly spoke afterwards. "I'll go check it out."

Usopp walked down to the place where he slept for the longest time, and noticed a familiar boy standing by a loose floorboard with a smile on his face.

"We've been holding a message for you, Usopp. We had to make sure you get it. It's very important."

"You're...the Klabautermann!"

"Soon, you will come in contact with the men with Galley-La again, and we will finally be able to have our eternal rest. But first," the Klabautermann lifted up a floorboard and pulled out a piece of paper, "We've held this from you, we're very sorry."

The Klabautermann handed the paper to Usopp, which he quickly started to read. Some parts showed signs of dried up tears, most likely from the person who wrote it.

Dear Usopp,

It's so sad to see you leave us, but it's best for you. I know that. There were so many things I want to say to you, but I couldn't bring up the courage, I didn't want things to change.

When you first entered my life, I wanted nothing to do with you, but then your stories cheered me up and let me laugh for the first time in a long time. I fell in love with the adventures, I fell in love with the story.

Most importantly, however...I...fell deeply in love...with the storyteller.

After Kurahadol attacked, you and your nakama saved me and woke me up to be stronger, to not worry about things in the past. Your nakama helped change my life for the better.

I pray everyday that this ship will keep you safe, that it will make you stronger, that it will allow you to meet more nakama and to protect as many people as you can.

And...maybe one day...maybe...you can come back home. You'll have more stories. I'll wait for you until the end of the world. I know one day, we'll be able to live together...forever.

Love, Kaya

New tears started to drip on the paper, this time caused by Usopp. The Klabautermann put its hand on Usopp's shoulder.

"We're sorry to keep this a secret for so long. We were afraid, when we fell into the sea during Aqua Laguna, that we would never get this message to you. We didn't want to interfere with your adventures by making you miss her."

"OI! I SEE A SHIP!" rang from Zoro's voice in the Crow's Nest, "It's Galley-La!"

"It's time for us to go, Usopp. Thank you for taking care of us. Farewell."