

*THE BRICKLAYER*

by Arthur M. Jolly

Dramatic

Man (50's-60's)

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*A bricklayer talks to his adult son as they work together.*

BRICKLAYER

Josef! What are you doing, you're getting that everywhere! You slap the mortar on like a cow dropping manure. Smooth - use the edge of the trowel, spread it smoothly, like stroking a woman. And then a little twist - like so - to wipe the edge as you go. That way the brick stays clean, see? There, and twist... eh? Another thirty years, and you'll do so well.

(Beat)

I don't care if it is government work, that's not the point... It's... Josef, my little Joe... let me tell you something my father told me. A long time ago, they were building the cathedral at Arles - a gothic cathedral, it took two hundred years to build. The man that designed it knew he would be long gone before it was half finished. The story goes, a traveler comes by, and sees many people working. The traveller asks a mason what he was doing - and the mason says "I'm cutting a stone", and he asks a carpenter, and the carpenter says "I'm building a frame" ... and then he asks an old man, a man whose only job was to sweep the dust away at the end of the day, to clean up for the skilled workers... and the old man says: "I am building a cathedral for the glory of God."

(Beat)

It is such a small thing - a brick. I have laid a hundred thousand in my time, and your grandfather - maybe twice that many. Each one, a wipe of the trowel, place and tap - so - and move on. But think of the larger picture, always.

(Beat)

This is not a brick, it is a piece of a wall. Or a house, or a big industrial chimney that will reach higher than any cathedral. It will be standing here long after we are dust, my boy. Every little piece we do contributes. Each brick you add is part of something -- look at the larger picture, that is what my father taught me. So do it right. Here - smooth, twist, place, tap... Maybe no one but prisoners will see this now, but you will always know that you did your part. I want you to be able to say to your children - to your grandchildren - see that chimney? The chimneys at Auschwitz? I built those. I was part of that.

END OF MONOLOGUE.

*First produced by the Atlantis Playmakers in the 2006 Short Attention Span PlayFEST on July 20th, 2006, directed by Bill Spera and performed by Jim Sullivan.*