

# Letting Go

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*Aaron, my character, is searching to rescue his partner and soon-to-be fiance, Ilona, from a horde of vermin headed by a wolf named Vaso. The story takes place after an ambush and Aaron learns that Ilona may be dead.*

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## Letting Go

Everybeast around the campfire was silent; the same thing was on every one of their minds, especially Aaron's. Everybeast had tried to cheer him up with distractions like compliments on how the food tasted, but nothing so far had seemed to work. On the contrary, it only made him look more depressed, so they had given up on trying any further. Duncan shifted uncomfortably, trying to think of some way to break the unbearable silence.

“Listen, mate,” he said finally, “I'm sure Miss Ilona is still out there, somewhere... I mean, why trust a lousy, lyin' vermin?”

Aaron, who continued to stare into the fire, softly places a paw on the hilt of Ilona's sword, but remained silent.

“So ya have her sword,” the hare said impatiently, “but what does that prove? There's no real evidence that she's... gone.”

“But there's no real evidence that she isn't either, is there?” Aaron responded quietly.

Duncan knew that Aaron spoke the truth and couldn't think of a response. After a long moment of uncomfortable silence, Aaron stood up and walked from the campfire and into the dark forest unannounced, leaving Duncan feeling a bit stupid for bringing the subject up.

After a couple of minutes, Phineas placed his bowl of hotroot soup on the ground. “I think maybe I should go talk with him,” he stated, and he followed where Aaron had gone.

Silence followed after Phineas disappeared into the woods. “Some terrible timin' I've got,” Duncan said regretably.

It didn't take long for Phineas to find Aaron some fifty yards from the campsite sitting with his back against a tree trunk, vaguely illuminated by the moon's light peeking through the leaves of the surrounding trees. He looked as if he were reflecting more on the horrible news.

Aaron's ears stood straight, alerting him that he had company.

“Please, Finny, just go away.”

“Sorry, matey, but I don't feel like doing that. I was wondering if we could talk.”

“No.”

“Come now, matey,” Phineas said, sitting against the tree so that the two were separated by an exposed tree root. “You know very well that the longer you hold in your feelings, the worse it will be when you eventually have to let them out.”

Aaron sighed softly, not looking at the otter but staring straight ahead, and remained quiet.

“Look, Aaron, as hard as it may be... *If* Ilona really is gone, then you must accept that fact and get on with your life. Blaming yourself won't bring her back.”

“But how do you go on living your life if its meaning is gone, Finny?”

“Nobeast said this would be an easy task to undertake, my young pupil. Loss is a part of life, whether you like it or not.”

“I guess you'd be right... I just... I just wish there was an easier way to cope.”

A long silence followed before Phineas said, “There is a way.”

Aaron looked to his teacher. “How?”

The middle-aged otter looked directly at him and said, simply, ``Let it go. Everything you're holding inside of your heart, everything that is troubling you, let it all out. All your worries, fears, concerns... everything."

The mouse looked back at him, rather hesitant.

``Trust me, Aaron; you'll feel a lot better when you do that. And it'll make you more prepared for the truth, whether Ilona is gone or still alive."

Aaron looked back at the ground distractedly.

``If you wish to be alone, matey``

``Please," Aaron said quietly.

Phineas stood up. ``Very well. You'll know where I'll be." He walked slowly back towards the camp. He knew what was coming. The last thing Aaron needed now was the daunting prospect of an otter watching him.

About halfway between the campsite and Aaron, Phineas stopped and gazed up through a large gap in the trees into the clear, moonlit sky. ``Even though I've never met you, Ilona," he said quietly, ``I do know one thing about you: You're very lucky to love a mouse like Aaron." He looked back in the direction of where Aaron was.

``Very lucky."

Aaron sat with his head bowed. The more he thought about it, the more Phineas' words sank in.

*Let it go... Let it all out...*

He felt his emotions start to churn inside of him. His thoughts and feelings for Ilona suddenly seemed to double. He breathed a ragged breath as his feelings and emotions quickly overwhelmed him. He placed his face in his paws and he wept.

He wept for his love for Ilona.

He wept for the kind and gentle mouse she was.

He wept for ever letting her go out into the battle which ultimately ended up in her capture.

He wept at the first time he met her.

He wept at the sudden loss of her parents, killed by the owl named Morice.

He wept at Ilona's becoming of a warrior mousemaid.

He wept at the memory of her striking down Morice with her father's blade, tipped with poison.

He wept for himself.

He wept for his unknown past.

He wept for the parents he never knew.

He wept at his discovery that Ilona may have held the key to his remembering of his past.

He wept at all of the injustice in the world.

He wept for his friends who always stood by his side.

He wept until everything that troubled him was let out of his heart and he could weep no more.

His breathing became steadier as he wiped away his tears on his sleeve. He stood up and took several slow, deep breaths to calm himself. *Finny was right*, he thought, *I am starting to feel better.*

His mind suddenly returned to the task at hand, and he knew he couldn't just stand there. He decided to make a commitment.

``Ilona," he said aloud, ``I will find you as quickly as I am able to, I swear my life upon it. Vaso, if anything has happened to Ilona, know that justice shall be swift, and you shall be punished for your crimes." He started back to the campsite, already feeling like a different mouse and ready for anything.

Even the possible fate of Ilona.