

# Nieze

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*A short story that popped into my head while on the monorail at Disney World. I can't really think of a good pretext right now, so feel free to form your own.*

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<http://www.fanart-central.net/stories/user/AarontheWanderer/30331/Nieze>

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# 1 - Untitled

Nieze was perched on a tree branch, looking out at the sea, looking more depressed than ever. So it was true after all. No one appreciated him, he was only an unwanted burden. And all that time he thought Ilona actually cared about him. What a fool he was, thinking that his life actually mattered to someone.

Another wave crashed upon the shore. The sea seemed so tempting, so welcoming... All he had to do was fly over the water, tuck his wings in, dive, and drown. Then it would end.

He raised his head and swallowed, trying to get rid of the lump in his throat. How could the death of a single crow affect the world? He was worthless and unimportant, it wouldn't matter at all. His existence was a mistake. Killing himself would probably be doing the world a favor...

"Nieze!"

The crow turned his head. Oh, not her, he thought. Not now...

"Nieze! Wait!" shouted Ilona, as she ran to the tree he was perched on. "Please, you have to understand! I didn't mean to say that--!"

"Shut up!" Nieze shouted back at the mousemaid. "Enough with your lies! What you said was right: I'm just a hopeless case! Here I was thinking that I found someone who would except me for who I am... But there I go, thinking again!"

"Nieze, think about it," came a second voice, as Aaron ran up beside Ilona. "Don't throw your life away like this. Deep inside your heart, you know there is another way to deal with this! Deep inside, you know that you're worth something--"

"Worth?" Nieze said. "It's clear that the only thing I'm worthy of being is the scapegoat and laughing stock for everybody! My life is a mistake! I have no purpose to live!"

"Nieze, stop it!" Ilona shouted desperately. "Don't say that!"

Nieze closed his eyes, his face screwed up in frustration. "Kyaa! You stop it!" he shouted back at her, his voice starting to break. "Stop trying to change my mind! Stop pretending my life is worth something! Just stop it!" With that, he leaned forward, spreading his wings, and with a strong thrust from his legs, pushed away from the tree branch and took flight, headed to the sea.

Ilona gasped as the crow flapped his wings hard, trying to gain altitude. She ran after him, dashing across the white sand and into the water. The water had barely reached her waist when Aaron caught up with her, grabbing her arm to prevent her from doing anything irrational. She tried to pry his paw off of her, but his grip was too tight. He had lost her once, it wasn't going to happen again.

"Nieze, I care!" she screamed to the retreating crow. "Don't do it, please!"

Nieze kept his eyes shut, trying to focus on the sound of the wind blowing past his face as he continued to climb higher, trying to block out Ilona. There was no turning back now. His mind was made up. When he felt like he reached the appropriate altitude, he stopped flapping his wings and began to glide, taking in the last time he could feel the thrill of the flight. He breathed deep, gathering the courage to follow through on what he had decided.

He forced his wings back to his sides and let gravity take over.

Ilona stood, horrorstruck at what she was witnessing. She couldn't do anything now except look on as the crow went into a nosedive toward the sea.

Nieze felt the weightlessness take over his body. His mind was filled with everything he had regretted. Hate, sorrow, worthlessness, fear, despair, rejection, exile... All of those thoughts clouded his mind as he sped toward his demise.

It seemed as if this were truly the end...

Then, at that moment, a thousand thoughts rushed into his mind. Memories of what Ilona and her friends had said...

"Deep inside your heart, you know you're worth something..."

"Your modesty is admirable, an excellent quality in anybeast..."

"I'm just so glad you were here. I honestly would have lost it, had you not saved me and been there to comfort me..."

"You don't care too much, Nieze. You have compassion, there's nothing wrong with that..."

But there was one thing that stood out from all of the others.

".... I care!"

Nieze was hit with sudden realization. Ilona! Why did she follow him all the way here if she didn't care? What was he showing in return for her compassion to him? What would that do to her? She had suffered enough distress by the mental torture Vaso and Kaze had given her, forcing her to watch the utter destruction of an otter holt followed by a gruesome description of her lover's supposed death, why was he adding onto it? Why was he throwing his life away? What was he doing?

He forced his eyes open and discovered he was dangerously close to the surface of the sea...

Ilona turned her head away, clutching to Aaron, not daring to watch Nieze's fate...

"Ilona," Aaron said the next moment. "Ilona, look!"

She hesitated, expecting to see only the sea claiming its victim, but she saw Aaron's expression: it was

one of great relief. She quickly turned and saw Nieze flying high above the water.

At the last moment, he had pulled out of the dive, so close that his talons scraped the water's surface. Just a moment's delay would have done him in.

The crow turned back to the shoreline, gliding back to the two mice, for he was so shaken by how close he was to his death that he felt he hardly had the strength to flap his wings. He reached the shoreline and landed, stumbling slightly, as the mice ran back to him. Nieze stood where he was, trying to settle his racing heart.

Ilona stepped up to him, cautiously. "Nieze..?"

Nieze took a deep breath and looked at her, his eyes brimming with tears.

"I swear... I am just a big softie."

A thin smile appeared on his face.