The strength to let go

I watched Jack finish writing as he delicately folded the letter and lay it on top of the kitchen table, patting it for extra measure. Without looking back, he walked out of the house to where his parents were, together, in the front garden. He was the same as he had always been, with short ebony hair that stuck up at all sorts of angles and pale skin which was splattered with freckles at this time of year. I certainly recognised one factor had shifted since Jack was an adolescent, his self-confidence had strengthened. He didn’t need me, his best friend, Mackie, anymore. Jack was equipped to take the world on, and all the opportunities before him, independently.

I felt as proud as a gold medallist as I read over his letter, quietly mouthing the words as if in Jack’s own voice,

*“Dear Mum, Dad and Mackie,*

*Is it truly time for me to depart for University? Flee the nest, choose my own path in this wonderous world. I couldn’t have done it without you Mum, without your unconditional love and encouragement and of course your marvellous cooking. Dad, I thank you for your reliable fun and entertainment, and for selflessly supporting me to always achieve my best. Finally, I couldn’t bear to go off without voicing how utterly fortunate I was to have you in my life, Mackie. You changed it all for me, I have become the finest version of myself largely because of you. I will always be in your debt; I owe you everything. Aforesaid, I shall never forget you… “*

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Dazed and drowsy, I pondered my purpose, and this remained unclear, until I met Jack that is. I first met him whilst nameless and benumbed. He awoke me, he gifted me with a sense of belonging and from that point on I vowed to help him too. As we became closer, the most amazing moment arrived when he bestowed me with a name! *“I’ll call you Mackie!”* he exclaimed. I felt so accepted as if I was part of something big. He had some rough times, throughout his years, people called him names in school, they would howl “ghost face” or “chopstick legs”. Sometimes I wanted to tell Jack to retaliate as I could never understand the cruelness imposed on him. Yet, I never did once utter words of spite back, I showed Jack that we were superior. That he was better.

Jack and I were best friends, I went everywhere with him. We would explore the great outdoors. Hunch down low to admire the mice dancing around with each other in the fields and investigate insects crawling unsuspectedly. These were the best times, basking in each other’s company.

Sadly, It wasn’t always this way. Shortly after moving school further north of England, where the air was cooler, the rain habitual and the aroma of food clung in the air from the various markets scattered throughout the town, times did change. Jack’s family departed their home town to escape the confines created by the school bullies. Unfortunately, what followed was his parent’s frequent disagreements.

I kept Jack as far away from this as possible, we would play his favourite games such as: hide and seek and spot the difference to distract him from the continuous roar coming from the kitchen. Keeping Jack away was a full time job, it was always worth it, to keep him contented and jovial. Jack’s parents did break up and this was rough. They would never meet each other therefore Jack only ever got to see his parents separately after the fateful day their marriage terminated. I noticed this put a strain onto Jack, he was not the same for a spell; he stayed quiet and began to withdraw from exploring with me.

It took a while before his personality started to unfold once again, it was as if the world was testing his will power to see how much he could go through before he would break. I would never let that happen, the world did not know that I had his back.

Before I knew it, he was leaving for university. His parents, in a paradoxical way, joined each other to wave goodbye to their son.

We never talk now, but I am always there watching out for Jack. I know now that he definitely remembers me and the most incredible times we spent together, his letter proves that. Our friendship felt fantastic, we were strong and happy together. Jack steadily grew into the best version of himself, and it became my time to be strong and let him go. Jack was my gift from the world and I was his. My given name is Mackie and I am more than just an imaginary friend, I am part of Jack forevermore.