

Don't Let Go

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Conando and the Red Scarf Rebels - Part 1

(The following events take place sometime during Chapter 4 of Don't Let Go's main story.

While the Cheese Heads were fighting pirates and marines alike, Conando was having adventures of his own.)

Conando walks down the streets of a town at night. The silver Corporal insignia is no longer on his hat, and he no longer wears the pin of the government's symbol on his jacket.

Conando: (So this is it... Zamboria, right? The greatest swordsman in all of the Desert-Oasis Strip is supposedly here.)

Conando walks into a lively bar filled with rough-looking people. He sits at the counter.

Conando: Have any tea?

Bartender: Tea!? Hahaha! Don't think so, buddy!

Conando tosses some coins and a teabag onto the counter.

Conando: Can you make some for me?

Bartender: Uh... Sure...

The bartender makes him some tea.

Conando: Does anyone know where I can find Sergeant Major Blake?

Everyone becomes quiet and gives Conando a cold stare.

Man: What're you asking for him for!?

Woman: We don't talk about him around here!

Conando: Oh? Why's that?

Woman: He's got half the town locked away!

Conando: Sounds like a problem.

Man: You're damn right it is! If you have anything to do with him, we're going to beat the hell out of you!

A group of customers get out blades and clubs and charge towards Conando. He quickly pulls out his blade and flips it over to the dull end and dispatches the citizens with one blow. They fly up, and then fall to the floor. Conando's sword shatters.

Conando: (My fight with Ryven must have weakened my blade...)

Conando sheathes what's left of his sword as a teenage boy stares at Conando in horrified awe.

Bartender: Heh, looks like you need a new blade!

Conando: I'm afraid so.

Bartender: I think I've got a deal for you!

The bartender pulls out a sword on a stand from underneath the counter.

Bartender: How much you got?

Conando: I've got plenty. I'll take it for 2,000.

Bartender: Two thousand!? H-Hey, thanks!

Conando: Why are you surprised? That's a usual price for a single handed blade.

Bartender: It's nothing! I just-

An old man walks downstairs from behind the counter.

Old Man: There you go again trying to sell that sword! I've told you a million times, that sword's the devil.

Conando: The devil?

Old Man: This sword is known as the Devil's Blade! The hearts of those who wield it become black and twisted!

Conando: I find this story a bit hard to swallow. A sword listens to its master, not the other way around.

Old Man: What!? You're insane! I can't let you take that sword!

The old man hits the bartender on the head.

Old Man: Idiot son of mine! Look at the trouble you've caused!

Conando grabs the sword and lifts it from its pedestal. A black energy surges through it and into his body. Conando cringes as he wields the blade, and the old man and his son watch in horror.

Conando: A blade listens to its master! Heed my words, sword! You'll follow my every order!

Conando swings his sword through the air, sheathes it, and then holsters it to his belt.

Old Man: Impossible! We're still alive!

Conando: 2,000 it is then.

Conando counts coins as he puts them into a bag and hands it to the bartender.

Old Man: Just who are you!?

Conando: My name is Conando. Remember it, because one day it will be the name of someone who has defeated every bonafide swordsman in the world!

The old man and the bartender stare in terrified awe at Conando. He walks towards the door.

Conando: You say half of the town is locked up? Don't worry any longer. Sergeant Major Blake is about to meet his match.

A woman on the floor pants as she looks up at Conando.

Woman: What?

Conando: You really shouldn't be so hasty to draw a weapon. It can get you in trouble, and if you're not prepared for the consequences, well... things won't end well.

Conando leaves, and the teenage boy suddenly darts out the bar to follow him.

Bartender: Hey, you've still got floors to clean!

Man on the floor: We really messed up this time, didn't we, Less?

Less: Yeah, Bobuto... We did...

Conando walks down the street as the boy follows him.

Boy: Hey! You just took out everyone in one blow! And you picked up the Devil's Blade like it was nothing!

Conando: Yes, I did.

Boy: But, like, isn't that a really big deal!? Aren't you worried!? You're going to fight Sergeant Major Blake, right!?

Conando: Don't doubt my skills, boy, nor should you question my actions.

Boy: Huh!?

Conando: Tell me, what is your name, young child?

Boy: I-I'm- My name is Pomipe.

Conando: Well then, Pomipe, why did you leave the bar to follow me?

Pomipe: Well, I-I... It's nothing...

Conando: If you say so. I can't force you to speak.

The two walk until Conando stops.

Conando: Do you have any idea where the Sergeant is?

Pomipe: You mean you had no idea where you're going!?

A lady and a man can be heard in distraught as two soldiers attack them. Conando looks over to them and dashes down the street with incredible speed. He unleashes his blade, turns it to the backside, and slashes at the soldiers. The two being attacked are on the ground crying and whimpering.

Less: Thanks, you really saved us!

Bobuto: Yeah, we really appreciate it!

Conando: I know you two. You were at the bar and attacked me.

Pomipe runs up to Conando, panting and putting his hands on his knees when he finally gets there.

Pomipe: You're ridiculously fast!

Less: I thought you left! What're you doing back here at the bar!?

They all stare at Conando.

Conando: I don't know.

All: You mean you walked around in a circle!?

Conando: I guess so.

Bobuto: So do you really want to know where Blake is?

Conando: Yes, I would.

Less: Alright... We'll take you to him.

Less and Bobuto start to walk off. Conando and Pomipe follow.

Conando: You're coming with? You know it'll be dangerous. You're far too young for this.

Pomipe: I know! I can handle it!

Conando: If you insist, but know that I'm not responsible if anything happens to you, child.

They all arrive at a shipyard.

Less: This is the shipyard. It's where Blake's lives.

Conando: Okay.

Conando walks up to a three-story building and yells.

Conando: Sergeant Major Blake, greatest swordsman in all of the Desert-Oasis Strip! I wish to challenge you!

Pomipe: Are you crazy!?

Less: You're gonna get us all killed!

Bobuto: This guy's insane!

A light turns on in the third floor and Blake walks towards the window in pajamas.

Blake: Just get your ass up here. I'll be ready in a minute.

Conando walks towards the door.

Pomipe: What should we do!?

Less: What a bunch of trouble! Let's follow him!

Bobuto: Right!

The three follow Conando as he walks into the door. Inside, a group of soldiers from upstairs assemble to meet Conando.

Soldier: Stop right there! Who do you think you are, challenging our Sergeant Major and screaming in the middle of the night!?

The soldiers stare in awe as Conando stands in the center of the room, realizing who he is.

Soldier: C-Corporal Conando! We're so sorry for raising our voices and questioning you!

Conando: Sorry men, but I'm no Corporal anymore.

Conando pulls out his blade.

Conando: Now I'm your enemy!

Conando swings his blade in a circle around the room, throwing the soldiers up into the air.

Conando runs up the stairs, while the others run through the front door and follow him to the second floor. The staircase leads to a narrow hallway leading straight to the next set of stairs, with two doors on the left side of it.

Barbery: Stop right there, Conando!

Conando: Ah, it's Corporal Barbery. It's been awhile since we last met!

Barbery: Yeah, when we last met you were only a Private! Now you're not even a part of the government anymore! It's one thing to lose your job, but it's something else to challenge the United World Government! You've got guts, Conando, too bad that doesn't include a functioning brain!

Conando dashes forward, hitting Barbery in the back with his blade so he falls forward.

Conando: You're as clumsy as an oaf as ever, Barbery.

A bullet whizzes past Conando's face and a man walks out of the shadows near the staircase and into the moonlight coming through the windows.

Sazaru: So, an ex-rookie, huh? I don't believe we've ever met, but you've got a lot of nerve coming into my turf, jackass. I'm Sergeant Sazaru, the best damn sniper in the Desert-Oasis Strip!

Conando: Troubling pest. You're in my way.

Less and the others walk reach the top of the 2nd floor staircase.

Less: Wait!

Conando: What are you fools doing!? You'll get yourselves hurt!

Less: You have to save your energy for Blake, Conando! We want to fight too, so leave those guys to us!

Conando: If you say so, just don't complain if you end up injured, or worse.

Conando dashes forward again, putting his blade flat up against Sazaru's back, and throwing him forward on top of Barbery. He then runs up the stairs while Less and Bobuto ready their weapons to fight the government soldiers getting up off the floor. When Conando enters the third floor, the lights are off, but Conando can see a large bed with a United World Government flag pinned to the wall above it. The room is only decorated with a lamp and a few drawers for clothing. Suddenly, Blake dashes out of the shadows, thrusting his blade forward and connecting with Conando's new sword. They grudge their blades and stare at each other's faces.

Blake: So you're Conando, huh? I heard you got your ass beaten by the Cheese Heads! What makes you think you can beat me!?

Conando: Anyone who dares to call themselves a great swordsman dares to challenge me!

Blake leaps backward to disconnect their swords.

Blake: I see... Well I'll have you know I'm an honorable man, and if you can win this fight, I'll never deny the fact that YOU are the best swordsman in the entire Desert Strip!

Conando: Said like a true swordsman. If I may ask, why is half the town behind bars? My guess is government fees.

Blake: That's correct. I have no choice but to uphold the law!

Conando dashes forward, and Blake holds up his blade to counter Conando's.

Conando: You do have a choice.

Blake: What are you saying?

Conando: The people in this world always have a choice to do the right thing. A young swordsman and his friends taught me that! Listen up, Blake, because the World Government's got a new opponent to face. My name is Conando, leader of the Red Scarf Rebels!

Blake: A-Are you mad!? A rebel union!? You've got to be kidding me!

Conando: I've never been more serious, Blake.

Their swords fling away from each other, while Conando moves to Blake's right. He swings his blade again, but Blake blocks it with his.

Conando: I'm expecting a challenging fight from you. Please don't disappoint me.

Blake: Trust me, I won't!

Their blades spark and disconnect once more.

Blake: I am a true patriot to the United World Government! It is my duty to turn in rebels and traitors, and you are no exception, former Corporal Conando!

Blake slashes his blade and Conando dodges it, moving back to Blake's left.

Conando: Patriotism... A patriot does not blindly follow rule! A patriot admits their government's flaws and strives to make it better! A patriot loves not just their country, but true justice as well!

Blake: Who are you to mock me!? I've got just the thing to shut your trap. Get ready rebel scum, because you're about to face my deadliest technique! A Thousand Thorns!

Blake jabs his sword in the air repeatedly so fast that it looks as if Blake has a dozen arms with swords stabbing the air in front of them. Conando holds his large blade flat in front of him, to

cover as many blows as he can while the rest of his body is stabbed. He cringes in pain as his shoulders and legs are cut.

Conando: (I've never seen such speed! This must be why people call him the greatest swordsman in the Desert-Oasis Strip!)

Conando's blade briefly glows, and black aura excerpts from it and flies into Conando's body.

Conando: Devil's Blade, Midnight Slash!

Conando vanishes into his shadow, and slides underneath Blake. He then reappears behind Blake and slashes away at him. Blood gushes from his side as he falls to one knee.

Blake: What kind of trick did you just do!?

Conando: This power... The power to control darkness and shadow. It's the new light of my revolution. Now...

Conando puts his blade on Blake's shoulder, the side opposite of which he was cut.

Conando: I suggest you surrender before this gets ugly.

Blake drops his blade. Less and Bobuto defeated Barbery and Sazaru while Pomipe looks over them. With all of the soldiers defeated, Conando and the others head to the prison where the town members who couldn't pay the fees were freed. Then Conando gets a boat at the docks and Less, Bobuto, and Pomipe see him off.

Less: You're leaving already? The town's throwing a celebration in your honor!

Pomipe: Yeah, everyone in Zamboria is free from Sergeant Blake's rule! He and all the military fled the city!

Bobuto: You gotta stay with us, please?

Conando: Sorry, but I'm on a journey. I have an important man to meet and I'm already falling behind to meet him. I heard they're going to the Ocean Strip and I tend to catch up with them there, hopefully.

Less: Aww, well stay safe out there.

Bobuto: The sea is dangerous, be careful!

Conando: Thanks, it was a pleasure meeting you all. I hope we meet again someday!

Conando heads unties the boat from the docks and begins paddling away.

Pomipe: Wait! Conando!

Conando turns his head at Pomipe waving his arms.

Pomipe: I want to tell you something! I... You inspired me! I wanna change the world for the better and you've inspired me to help fight for a change in any way I can! I'm gonna get stronger, really strong, and then I'll help make a difference in the world!

Conando smirks and waves.

Conando: That's a fine dream, Pomipe! I'll see you again someday! Farewell, boy, or should I say man? You've earned that title today!

Pomipe starts to cry.

Pomipe: Thank you so much! I'll be a great man Conando, just you wait!

Conando paddles off into the Ocean Strip.