

## A Game of Draconic Chicken

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# A Game of Draconic Chicken

by [Mahlzeit](#)

## Summary

Going birdwatching atop a kobold-infested mountain may prove to be the worst decision Isaac has ever made. Or the best. Who can say? Both he and the mountain's ruler keep their true feelings close to their chest.

## Notes

Will be a two parter. Content warning for this part: human, dragon, gay, size difference, death threats, power imbalance, intimidated by ass, this weird in-between where the protagonist pretends its dubious consent when in reality he loves it.

A big thank you to Dergum for collaborating on this project with me (he made the art!) and for all his feedback on the story. I had a lot of fun writing this one, and I hope to have the second part out soon!





“Don’t poke me with that bloody thing!”

“Then hurry it up!” the kobold squeaked, jabbing the human with the butt of his spear.

“This is ridiculous,” said Isaac. “I already told you, this is a misunderstanding! Not everyone can appreciate a good bird.”

“Save your excuses for our master,” the other kobold said, keeping his spear in check. Together, they forced Isaac deeper down the tunnel.

“I don’t even know where I am.”

“We do,” they said together.

Their words echoed through the vast cavern. Once their voices faded, but before silence took hold, Isaac heard skittering: creatures skulking in the darkness, talons scraping against the stone. Whatever hid in the shadows crept deeper alongside Isaac, awaiting a poor decision — an excuse to lunge and tear into his flesh.

“What do you want from me?”

Both kobolds stayed silent, their expressions unreadable in the dim torchlight.

“Are you both slow?” Isaac braced for another poke of the spear. “Or stupid? Or both?”

The afternoon’s warmth faded as the torch-lit corridor delved into the mountain’s heart. Isaac glanced over his shoulder at the retreating entrance, avoiding the sneer of his captors. The sun’s light, condensed to a golden string, thinned with every step.

Isaac’s question hung unanswered. Little comfort against those in the dark, growing bolder as Isaac’s only escape stretched further and further away. The glint of a scale, the glow of an eye, hushed snickering — all taunting Isaac from every unseen corner.

Desperate for answers, Isaac kept pushing. “What’s wrong? Dumb lizard brains not working?”

“Dumb?” The calmer one snorted. “What’s that say about you? Prisoner to dumb lizards.”

“Come on, be honest: have you savages learned anything more advanced than poking with a pointy stick?” Isaac’s shoulders locked up, awaiting the inevitable jab; his sharp tongue would be his end. “What part of ‘Where am I?’ is too hard for your small brains to comprehend?”

“No part. You’ll find out,” said the spear-happy kobold. “Soon.”

“Very soon,” chimed the other.

“And we would hate to spoil the surprise.”

Though his captors remained tight-lipped, they soon reached a bend in the cavern, and Isaac saw his destination, surrounded on all sides by gloom: a pair of enormous doors at the cavern’s end. Their iron arches shimmered, guarded by braziers alight with blue flames.

Those flames marked his demise — of that, Isaac was certain. An end to which he trudged with his own legs. Those creatures stalking him from the shadows be damned. He needed to break free. He needed to run!

But the prod of a spear at his back made him hesitate, and a snarl from the darkness dissolved his remaining courage. “At least explain who I must answer to.” Isaac clenched his hands. “Someone less pig-headed than you two, I hope.”

With a whisk, the blunt end of a spear struck Isaac’s neck. Gasping, he looked back. The once-polite kobold dispelled the façade with a twirl of his spear and a toothy smirk. “Clever with your tongue, aren’t you? We have ways to deal with that.”

“I’m not being clever, but I guess it’s all relative for you lot.”

“Many, many ways,” said the other kobold. “Keep being a nuisance, and we’ll try out the shears.”

“Don’t got sheep, so we got use ‘em for something.”

“Bloody hell, I just want to know something.” Isaac turned back toward the blue flames at the cavern’s end, dragging his feet to stall for time. “*Anything.*”

The irritable one scoffed. “Best start paying attention. I said you’ll find out soon.”

“But—”

“Our master answers to Devante.” The kobold enunciated each of those three syllables in time with three hard jabs at Isaac’s back. “Don’t mess it up. Unless you’d like your blood added to the paint supply.”

The other kobold sniggered. “Mess hall needs a fresh coat.”

The cavern's musk grew sour as the outside light vanished entirely. Isaac may have lacked the courage to run, but his tongue held no such restraint. "For your tribe's sake, I hope your master does all the thinking around here."

The kobold hollered a battle-cry. Isaac's skin prickled as a spear whooshed — thrust right beside his neck, its tip glinted in the torchlight inches from his eyes.

With the threat conveyed, the kobold swiped his spear away. "He's not *master* to you, worm. Address him as Devante."

"Devante is wise," said the other kobold. "Devious, some would say."

"Devious?"

"You'll see. Until then" — another thrust of the spear, narrowly missing Isaac's shoulder — "not, another, peep."

With his tongue in check, Isaac said naught else during his death march. The iron door grew larger, the air grew colder, and even the mutters from the dark dwindled until nothing disturbed the stillness but dripping water and hollow steps.

Isaac shivered. How did a simple day of birdwatching end up like this, stumbling upon an especially angsty tribe of kobolds? Not the sort that cowered from humans. The sort that took them captive. The sort that brandished sharpened steel and marched them to some unknown fate.

An eternity must have passed before Isaac reached the blue flames. They offered no heat, no comfort. The less-stabby kobold waltzed ahead and leaned into the doors, grunting as he pushed them open. With a slow creak, unnatural light poured out from the widening entrance, orange and green.

Before Isaac could comprehend the sight, he gasped — a hard jab at his back. He stumbled forward, spinning as he fell. Two narrowed leers and two reared smirks acknowledged his terror with a croaky cackle.

"Good luuuuck."

Both doors slammed shut. The clink of a lock sliding into place.

"My, oh my."

Before Isaac found his bearings, a boisterous voice rooted him to the ground.

"What, pray tell, have we here? Our newest spy, perhaps?"

Despite their force, those slow-spoken words danced in the air, buoyed by an otherworldly grace.

"You would think humans might learn their lesson... after what became of their last *offering*. Alas."

Graceful, yet it carried a scathing sting. It overwhelmed Isaac's ears, bounded through his bones. Each word carried the strength of stone, reverberating through enclosed chamber he had been shoved into, building upon itself to a caustic resonance.

That was no mere kobold.

And while Isaac couldn't loosen his muscles enough to turn, that danger-loving tongue of his found a second wind. "I'm no spy," he hissed. "Those midwits of yours made a mistake."

"Oh, a feisty one. My *favourite*." Elegance gave way to a condescending drawl. "Pray tell, then, why my loyal servants found you trespassing in my domain?"

*Your domain? Who died and made you lord of the mountain?* Isaac bit his lip. "I was birdwatching. On the summit."

That coaxed a scoff strong enough to snap a tree. "Just admiring the birds, were we? The last spy said the same thing."

"This is giant condor territory — only reason anyone would be arsed to make that hike."

"He said that too. After we left his belongings and surviving vertebrae to rot in the desert sun, one would think his successor ought vary the script for the next attempt, no?"

"There is no script, you—"

"And one would think it best to show a modicum of respect, you rancid excuse for sentience."

Any elegance disintegrated like flesh in acid. Mordant fury burst forth, heralded by bone-crunching snaps and growled syllables. Every word demanded utter reverence, for they carried the unspoken promise of a swift death.

Such biting anger belonged to but one beast. Isaac swallowed. With unsteady legs, he stepped in place, turning to face what he had feared. Lounged in the room's centre — amidst a scattering of extravagant pillows — loomed the heart-stopping glare of a green-scaled dragon.

Isaac felt his chest had ruptured. Even resting on its belly, the monstrosity towered above him. It eclipsed the walls of the cavern. Wayward flames from mounted torches tinged its green scales orange, and sword-sized talons caught the light with a flex, stabbing Isaac's eyes with their reflective glint.

Upon Isaac's gaze, the beast snapped its jaws. Isaac froze, body and tongue. The dragon, however, rose and fell with a slow, lumbering laugh.

“We like our spies a certain way here,” it said, its voice back to its princely suave.

The façade didn’t last.

The dragon’s snout stretched, scaly lips curling upwards. Fangs large enough to hollow Isaac’s head slipped from its widening maw, and with them came a burst of flame. Isaac slumped to the ground and cowered as orange engulfed the room. The cavern’s chill evaporated, the air suddenly alight.

But the heat died as quick as it came, and the pain dulled before Isaac realised it hurt. He gawked at his arms as the cave dimmed. He was paler than ever — but not blackened to ash.

“That’s right,” said the dragon. “We like them well-done.”

Isaac wheezed, unable to move his arms. He twisted his neck, only to flinch away as the dragon’s glare crushed him from above. His legs felt broken, his tongue parched. Unable to move his lips, unable to make a sound, he clenched his eyes shut.

When he opened them again, the dragon hadn’t moved. It simply leered down at him from where it lounged, content to wait. Its forked tongue coiled around its largest fang.

Isaac had never seen a dragon. Is this what a sparrow fallen from the nest feels when it looks upon a human? Scared, weak, unable to discern the intentions of some beast ten times their size.

All Isaac knew was hearsay, and hearsay said dragons were haughty. The one before him — reclined in a grand chamber among opulent pillows — matched that description. An arrogant male, by the sound of its voice.

Satiating that ego might be his only chance. Sparrows may be defenceless, but Isaac still had his tongue. His only weapon.

He eventually found some remnant of courage. Enough to speak. “A thousand pardons, my lord. I was ignorant, unaware this land belonged to one as mighty and breath-taking as you. This is merely a mistake — a misunderstanding.”

The dragon said nothing. He kept staring at Isaac.

“My... my name is Isaac, and I can say — with utmost confidence — that I am no spy.”

The dragon huffed. Black smog seeped from his nostrils and wafted over Isaac, filling his lungs with ash.

Isaac waited for a response — any form of acknowledgement — but the beast remained silent, his expression as firm as the stone walls. Whether it was amused, cynical, or about to tear him to shreds, Isaac didn’t know.

Another huff. Smoke swallowed his air. Isaac felt more lightheaded with every breath. His arms trembled and his chest ached, a gnawing burn, growing ever hotter with each agonising second spent awaiting the dragon’s judgement.

Nothing. The beast didn’t so much as blink. Isaac faltered. He mumbled words his brain failed to connect. “Offer... I can offer, no, explain. An explanation. Can I, explain?”

“An explanation would be lovely, though long overdue.” The dragon’s smirk grew to a gaping fissure. “Could you explain why you address me without proper title — while failing to prostrate yourself, no less?”

“Right, sorry!”

Isaac leapt up, comprehended the dragon’s demand, and flung himself back to the floor, his knees hitting the stone hard. While he grovelled, his mind whirled, trying desperately to recall the dragon’s name. The kobolds had said it. Several times. It was there, floating in the fog of his memory. Yet his head hazed much like the smog engulfing his face.

Isaac had to say something; the silence was crushing. He spoke to the cracks along the stony floor. “My deepest... most sincerest apologies... Lord Dante.”

A stomp rattled Isaac’s rib cage and threatened to split the cave asunder.

When the aftershocks quelled, the dragon simply tsked. “Repeat to me the words that left your soft, delicate lips.”

Isaac swallowed. His throat started to scratch. “I said... my deepest apologies.”

“After that.”

“My... most sincerest apologies?”

A long pause. Even though he stared at the stone floor, Isaac clenched his eyes shut.

“A name bears many burdens, Isaac. One’s entire being — their past, present and future — is inseparable from the spoken word of their address. To recall and utter another’s name is to profess your utmost respect for them, to declare they are someone worthy of being remembered. Do you not agree?”

Isaac agreed without thinking. “Yes — of course!”

“Excellent,” the dragon said cheerily, before his voice darkened to a snarl. “Then repeat, to me, my name.”

*It isn't Dante. It isn't Dante.*

But the misfiring neurons of Isaac's brain welcomed his death, and he knew not what else to say.

"Dante."

He readied for his flesh to melt. But instead of roaring flame, a chuckle made him tremble more than the earlier stomp. "Devante," the dragon said. "Might I suggest you never, *ever*, forget it?"

"Yes, of course, I—"

"For you are now on your second and final strike."

Isaac finally tore his eyes from the stone, meeting the beast's glare. Its amber eyes and scale-hardened face showed not anger, but amusement. Its snout held a wily smirk, no doubt waiting for Isaac to enquire further.

And Isaac, shuddering from fear and adrenaline, took the bait. "What... what strikes?"

Devante lowered his head to the cowering human. "Strike one — forgetting my name. Strike two — forgetting my name *again*. And once you hit your inevitable third strike — chomped in half, so you can watch me devour your legs as you expire." A glob of drool rolled down the dragon's scaly chin. "Because I'm merciful, I didn't count your trespass as a strike. Should I?"

"I already told you," said Isaac, his voice hoarse. "I'm no spy."

"Of course you aren't. You're too crass and dull-witted for that — as evidenced by your two strikes."

"That's... that's right. Your kobolds, they made a mistake. This is all one big mistake." *A bigger mistake than waking up this morning.*

"A pity I care not whether you are a spy." Devante's leer narrowed as he leaned in, coming so close that even his breaths had weight. "For you are guilty of a more heinous crime."

"Please, Lord Devante." Isaac coughed out smog. "I've committed no wrong. Merely in the wrong place... wrong time."

"A bold but hopeless lie, for your sin is rich enough to smell." A huff bathed Isaac in hot steam. Devante breathed deep, and smoke vanished down his nostrils. "It's near irresistible."

Isaac crawled backwards, but a sudden snarl and twitch of the dragon's lip — flashing those spear-like fangs — froze Isaac and his breath.

"Whatever guilt you have accumulated throughout your pathetic excuse for a life pales against the sins of your parents. They thrust upon you a crime for which you can never atone."

"My... parents?" Isaac had never met his parents. How could this horrid beast know of both them and their crimes?

"That's right. Your parents — how unforgivable of them to curse you so." Devante's tongue slid across his lips. "For they made you... *human*."

"My crime... is being human?"

"Indeed. Such vile vermin, you and your kin. You ravage the land and pillage her beauty. You cheat the natural order and survive where mightier and more-deserving legacies have perished. With arrogant, singsong cries, you spread tales of conquest, sparing not one from hearing of your brutality and unearned hubris. But worst of all..."

Devante's claws scraped across the stone, torching the room in sparks. Isaac lurched backwards as those swords swiped over where his hands had been, cleaving the bedrock in two.

Those claws, their tips now a fiery orange, rose and unfurled and pointed at Isaac's neck.

"Your mere existence is a blight. A curse to all who bear witness."

How could one apologise for the mere act of existing? Some iota of dignity bubbled in Isaac's gut, urging him to rebel.

But that pride would almost certainly spell his end. "I'm... I'm sorry, Lord Da... Devante."

"As you should be. I detest you and everything your species stands for." Devante spoke with bitterness, yet a callous smirk clashed with his words. "Any opportunity to crush one of your kind is one I relish."

Isaac mouthed the word once. Twice. Then wheezed it from his throat. "Crush?"

The word hung in the air much like the smog. It weighed on Isaac's back, flat and exposed against the stone beneath.

And just as Isaac recoiled, the dragon raised his paw. It only hovered, but the flexing of talons served a purpose; they bound Isaac to the spot and stripped him of his strength.

"Crush," said Devante. "Figuratively. Literally."

"But—"

"Hush." Devante slammed his forearm beside Isaac's head, talons clenching through the soft flesh of the stone. "Words do you no good. You are no spy, after all, and a mere birdwatcher lacking of both skill and courage cannot hope to bargain for their life."

Isaac wanted to throw up. He wanted to plead, or run, or fight, or disappear, or do anything but die. Paralysed by choices equally hopeless, Isaac's body and tongue fell stiff to his regret of ever being enamoured by that godforsaken condor. He would pluck the wings from every last one if it meant starting the day over.

A mocking tsk ripped him back to horrible reality.

"Alas, my dear birdwatcher, the vultures will never grace you with a sky funeral, for you have earned your third and final strike. If only you had remembered my name."

Isaac lifted his head, and something in him snapped. "Curse you, foul beast." Pleading was pointless. This monstrosity craved only his death. "I've done no wrong by the mere act of existing."

"Nonsense! Your third strike is well-deserved for the unforgivable crime of your humanity."

"You just want an excuse to kill me." Rising from the ground, Isaac dug his nails into his palms. He refused to die begging. "But you weasel around your bloodlust like a coward."

"I am no coward," said Devante, "for I admit it wholeheartedly. You are neither the first nor last to perish at my talons. In time, your kinsfolk will join you. Every last soul."

Isaac stepped closer. His skin flushed from fury and the heat seeping from the beast's jaws. "So you admit it? You admit you're a murderer cowering behind some regal farce?"

The dragon scoffed, and his breath lashed at Isaac like a wildfire. "I'm quite the opposite of cold. Now, which leg shall we part you of first?" The closest paw twitched, its talons shuddering against the stone. "I must warn you — I enjoy savouring my meals, piece by bloody—"

Isaac struck out with his right fist, punching hard between the dragon's nostrils. It was like striking a cliff face. Isaac bit his lip in pain, but he refused to relent. He swung for a left hook. Even as blood ran down his fingers, he punched again, landing a solid jab on the beast's upper lip.

With each hit, the dragon flinched. On the fifth blow — smacking the steely enamel of his fang — Devante retreated his snout, blinking at the snarling human.

"What's wrong, coward?" Isaac swung his bloodied knuckles at nothing. "Too much for you?"

Devante blinked faster. "You can't be serious."

"Not too used to someone fighting back, are you?"

"You're just hurting yourself!"

Isaac hopped closer, taking quick jabs. "So long as I'm hurting you." He missed each punch as Devante moved his head, making more and more distance between them.

"Stop, you fool!"

"Never!" Unable to keep up with the dragon's snout, Isaac rushed for the nearest paw and punched the soft hide between its talons.

"Enough!" That paw shot out and snatched Isaac, tearing him from the ground. Talons tightened around his chest and bound his arms.

But still, Isaac writhed and contorted. "Fight me like a man, you coward!"

"I am no worthless man! That is your fourth strike!"

"Fuck you and fuck your strikes! If you won't fight, hurry up and kill me, you winged chicken!"

"Chicken!?" That insult stung worst of all. "Chickens already have wings."

"How about obese cock? Better?"

Devante lifted Isaac — who still struggled between talons larger than his entire body — to his yellow eye.

And Isaac spat.

It didn't make the distance.

As he readied a larger wad, Devante pulled him back several feet. "Perhaps I was a tad... hasty, in dismissing a deal."

"What?" Isaac huffed. "So *now* you want to bargain?"

"Yes..." Devante tilted his head, and his sardonic smile stretched the widest yet. "Your outburst — though pathetic and utterly meaningless — demonstrated so much resolve. Will. The very embodiment of that human spirit I've heard oh-so much about."

"Let me guess: you despise it."

A rolling cackle trembled through Isaac.

"You learn quick," said Devante. "Indeed, I will no longer be satisfied with simply killing you, for that spirit will live on, thrive, inspire others of your loathsome kind. And we can't have that, can we? No, no, no. I must break that spirit — before I break you."

"Lucky me."

"So what say you, *Isaac*?" Devante rolled his name into a long, oozing hiss. "Your dignity for your life. A fair trade of two equally worthless goods."

Isaac panted as his adrenaline wore down. "You say it's fair... though I suspect taking my dignity brings more joy to a fiend like you."

"And I suspect you similarly prefer my end of the bargain, for humans love to perpetuate their hollow existence."

"What are you planning on doing to me? Torture?"

"Not in the traditional sense, no. It will sting a lot less than your punches." Devante's tongue swiped at the air, narrowly missing Isaac, and lathered his lips. "I promise to deliver but one thing, my poor, delectable human. Your utter humiliation."

Isaac had no choice. That he knew.

But that didn't mean he couldn't fight back. Even the smallest protest would preserve some scrap of his soon-to-be-taken dignity — and wound the arrogant beast in the process. "I'll accept... on the condition that, for whatever you have planned, I have one veto."

"What lunacy!" Devante's smug veneer dissolved into exasperation. "You're hardly in any position to bargain, worm."

"Two vetoes," said Isaac. "Or crush me. Pop me like a grape right now. No need to draw it out any more."

Devante said nothing. His glare tightened for the hundredth time, as did his grip. Isaac refused to react. This was a bluff. Even as his ribs ached and his lungs failed to draw air, even as his breath broke, Isaac repeated to himself: this was a bluff.

And as his sight began to dim, Devante loosened the pressure, and Isaac gasped much-needed air.

"As far back as I can recall," said Devante, "never have I laid claws upon a more... *intriguing* plaything. Two vetoes it is. But I so dearly hope you can keep up this façade. It will make it all the sweeter to break you."

"I don't... plan... on giving you the satisfaction."

Devante snickered. "On the contrary, I think you *will* satisfy me." His talons loosened. Isaac slipped from his grip and hurtled to the ground, tumbling over the coarse stone.

When he came to a stop, the booming thwack of a tail cracked at the ground mere feet away. Isaac leapt to his feet, ready to dodge, but that tail curled past his waist. He spun to follow it. And came to face a part of the beast so unexpected — so illuminating as to the dragon's intentions — and so beyond anything he could have ever imagined.

Devante's huge rump.

"My, a stilled tongue for once? What happened, *Isaac*?" Devante warped the hiss of his name into a snicker. "Regretting your decision so soon?"

Though Devante's tail covered the centre of his meaty behind, Isaac still found his face suddenly alight, hotter than that earlier burst of flame. "No matter what you do, I'll never regret it."

"Wonderful. Perchance you'd like a better look, then?"

"A... better look?" Despite having just stared death in the face, Isaac's voice shook more from staring at Devante's behind. "What are you..."

Devante interrupted with a wordless wiggle of his tail. It curled and swayed and twisted. As if hypnotic, the dancing tail demanded Isaac's full attention — until it ended with a coy flick of its tip.

"And before we begin," said Devante, "if you fail to uphold your end of this bargain... I'll scoop out your eyes."

*And this would be the last thing I ever see.*

The tail rose like curtains on a play, revealing the headline act. Isaac held his breath. But he had no time to appreciate the dragon's imposing girth, for something unexpected caught his eye. It wasn't the supple ripples coursing through the plump hide from the slightest motion. Nor the riling prod of Devante's tail tip against his right cheek, smooshing the soft chub. Not even the faint sheen of moisture that glistened the curve of his rump.

No. It was the colour. How Devante's green scales faded on the approach to his crease, softening to a creamy-coloured hide. The colouration came to a point at his taint, then thickened outwards in two loops, around the curve of both cheeks, before reuniting underneath his tail.

The shape resembled something awfully familiar.

"Wait," said Isaac. "You've got a love heart on your ass?"

“Oh, I know your kind all too well,” said Devante, wiggling his rump. “That’s right. Have a good, long look. The one who shall bring an end to your pitiful species has an adorable love heart on his rump. A love heart *you’re* going to glisten. A love heart *you’re* going to worship.”

“It’s... it’s...” *Adorable? Bizarrely hot?* “Surprising, is all.”

“Oh? What’s so surprising about it?”

*How badly I want to bury my face in it?* “It’s just... doesn’t suit you. That’s all. It’s rather cute, actually”

“Cute?” The dragon laughed, leering at Isaac from over his flank. “That’s my ass, you fool. But if my rear is so cute to a cretin like you... why not show it some love?”

Isaac’s heart quickened. His knees wobbled. As frightening a voice the dragon put on, and as much as Isaac loathed to admit it, the thought of *showing it some love* excited him beyond belief. Before him tensed the fattest, plumpest ass he’d ever had the privilege of admiring. Slick with sweat, it radiated immense heat; the warmth flushed his face from several paces away. Where the cheeks curved and squished beneath the tail’s base, they formed a dark, triangular crevice where, no doubt, an equally plump tailhole awaited the attention of Isaac’s tongue.

Taunting him further, the glory of Devante’s rump was framed within, of all things, a *godforsaken* love heart. And Isaac was being asked — no, ordered — to worship it. This was a celestial reward for a life of good deeds, not some horrid punishment for his humanness.

But Isaac dared not say that aloud. He couldn’t break the façade. If Devante formed any inkling that Isaac was enjoying his so-called punishment, the beast would murder him without hesitation. Of that, Isaac was certain.

This was one game of chicken he couldn’t lose.

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