

Taking For Himself

By Dragonien

The quiet, rhythmic dripping of water from the roof of the cavern onto the stony floor below was almost hypnotic. The faint clink and clatter of metal on metal the only other sound disturbing the otherwise silent air of the cave as the intruder snuck his way deeper into the monster's lair. He wore a heavy set of plate mail that covered his broad chest and shoulders and curved slightly along the front to make room for his not-insubstantial stomach. His arms were sheathed from the elbow down in vambraces while his legs were protected from the knee down with metal-plated grieves that went across the front of his thick leather boots. In the few areas where there was no metal or leather armor protecting him rich, ruby-red hide shone instead.

Dragonien did his best to stay silent despite his armor as he crept through the cavern. No torch was needed thanks to a cat's-eye cantrip he had cast earlier to allow him to see in the dark. The last thing he needed was an unnecessary source of light giving him away before he could complete his goal. It was a good thing he had made this decision as he stepped out of a narrow passage into a wide-open cavern at the heart of the mountain. Had there been any light coming from him it would have reflected a million times over off of the illustrious piles of gold and jewels littering the ground in piles that, in some cases, even surpassed the eight-plus foot tall dragon man in height! Despite the opulent wealth filling the room it wasn't the sight of enough riches to buy the kingdom twice over that caught Dragonien's eye. No, that honor was given to the cottage-sized black and purple dragon curled up in the middle of the hoard.

Sini was a well-known 'true' dragon, as they were called, that inhabited the mountain ranges. Four legged and with a wingspan wide enough to cover the entire market square of most local villages he was exactly what one would expect out of a beast of legend. Even if Dragonien's draconic lineage came from those same bloodlines there was still something inherently awe-inspiring and regal about seeing a true dragon up close. But Dragonien was no fool, and he dared not waste more than a moment admiring his target before he got to work.

The trek towards Sini was far more treacherous than the walk through the cave not because of any direct danger but from the near-impossibility of staying quite when the entire ground was covered in gems, jewels and coins. Thankfully the over twenty-foot-long beast snored quite loudly and, carefully timing his footsteps to the loud grunts and grumbles of inhaled and exhaled air Dragonien was able to get close without waking him. Before he got all the way to the beast Dragonien took the precaution of wrapping a large handkerchief filled with a mix of herbs around his muzzle to filter the air he was breathing. Sini was a well-known poisonous dragon and even a casual exhale of the beast's breath was said to be fatal... or worse.

He had once met one of the men that had dared challenge the poison dragon in its own territory and survived. It wasn't that the man was injured or lamed or any such physical malady. Rather he had been touched in the head. The man had to be restrained for his own good. Something the poison dragon had done to him had made the man absolutely, utterly obsessed and devoted to the poison dragon. So much so that he had attacked his care-givers and fellow soldiers upon awakening after being found unconscious in the mountains in his desperate attempts to return to, as he had shouted, "Master Sini". Whether by drugs or sorcery the dragon had ensnared the mind of one of the kingdom's most loyal knights and turned him into little more than a crazed cultist.

A power that Dragonien craved.

After extensive research and consultation with sorcerers and archivists Dragonien had discovered that Poison dragons often could create various different types of poisons in their bodies in place of more traditional breath weapons such as fire like his ancestry allowed him. There was even an obscure text talking of another ancient poison dragon, long since vanquished, that had supposedly been able to turn an entire army sent against it against its kingdom with a single breath and a word. Dragonien had then devised a plan to try to take this power for himself. After further research he had come across stories of an ancient artifact that was said to allow subjects to bequeath their powers onto their liege. The dungeon diving had been arduous and he'd nearly died twice but finally he had acquired the item. After that it was a relatively simple matter finding a skilled enough artificer to modify the object slightly to his designs.

The object The Dragonien was now carefully slipping over the massive head of the purple beast. A simple silver chain widened enough to fit around even the nearly barrel-thick neck of the beastly dragon with a small prismatic crystal hanging from the bottom of it. The crystal, even in the pitch black of the room seemed nearly to glow with its own internal light and for a moment Dragonien was terrified it would wake the beast. Thankfully the necklace fell into place around the dragon's neck without issue. Better still, Dragonien watched as the necklace's chain tightened up slowly as if individual links were disappearing until it was the perfect size for Sini. Good; that meant it was working.

Stepping back from the dragon with less care for whether or not he woke up Dragonien took position near the small cave that he had entered from. He was almost annoyed how Sini still snoozed away happily despite his less-than-quiet retreat despite how much effort he'd taken to stay silent when approaching. After clearing his throat a couple of times with no success of waking the dragon he finally decided to go with something a bit more dramatic. Dragonien was far from a master sorcerer; only knowing a few cantrips and basic spells well but he had just the thing for such an occasion.

Canceling his cat's eyes spell after making note of several points around the room Dragonien raised his hands up and clapped twice. As he did he sent a series of dimly glowing mage lights flying around the room to take positions near the ceilings like hanging lanterns. Once they were in place he cleared his throat and called out at the top of his voice right at the moment he caused the mage lights to brighten bright enough nearly to mimic daylight inside the cave.

"WAKE UP YOU OVERGROWN SNAKE!"

The reaction was instant, and violent. Piles of coils sprayed everywhere and flowed across the ground as the beastly dragon flailed in its perch atop the hoard. Deep purple eyes snapped wide; slitted pupils dilating to adapt to the sudden bright light as a squawking roar of indignation and confusion escaped the beast's muzzle. The dragon's limbs flailed about for a moment as they struggled to find proper purchase on the unsteady piles of gold before finally stabilizing. It took Sini only a moment to spot the intruder after he had finally regained his senses and his eyes narrowed at the sight of the smug-looking red dragon man standing in front of him.

“Who dares-” Sini started to exclaim only to be cut off by Dragonien.

“Yes Yes who dares disturb my slumber I am great and powerful you will pay for this yada yada we’ve heard it all before.” Dragonien quipped, unable to keep a toothy grin off of his muzzle. “You can cut the theatrics with me I’ve heard it before and frankly it’s not necessary. I know exactly what I’m doing, who I’m disturbing and what’s about to happen. So be a good little drake and just accept what’s about to happen.”

For a moment the cave went deathly quiet. Sini was torn between pure outrage and utter shock; completely frozen as the two warred in his head for what type of response to give. The utter indignation of having his home invaded and being spoken too like that mixed with the disorienting method of his awakening along with a far smaller note of concern what the intruder might have meant by what’s about to happen. All of these were shaken off and replaced with a cold, wrathful intensity that settled on Dragonien like a physical presence. Even with his cocky demeanor and confidence in his plan it’s unreasonable for anyone not to be affected by the sheer-overwhelming presence of a creature like Sini. With some satisfaction Sini watched the intruder take a half step backwards as his confident stance softened slightly; practically smelling the uncertainty radiating off of the red dragon-thing.

Much more comfortable with this sense of unease on those around him, Sini began casually sauntering his way out of the middle of his treasure pile; pacing a semi-circle around his cavern towards the intruder. As he did his tail lazily swished behind him and occasionally flicked sharply in one direction or the other and causing the intruder to twitch or cringe away as if expecting an attack. A subtle way of keeping the intruder on his toes and off balance was to leave him constantly worrying that some attack might be coming at him unexpectedly.

“You speak haughtily for someone that would barely constitute a mouthful.” Sini rumbled; letting his deep voice resonate through the cavern.

“Oh please, I’m at LEAST two bites. We both know I’m more than you can swallow.” Dragonien responded.

Again taken aback by the brazen demeanor of the intruder Sini paused his approach again and looked over Dragonien more thoroughly. The armor he wore was well cared for but far from special or valuable as was the sword strapped to his hip. He clearly knew magic from the mage lights floating above but Sini sensed no significant arcane power coming from Dragonien so he doubted they were any particularly impressive caster. The red dragon was big, for a two leg, but still nothing that would even remotely concern him. Sini still stood almost twice his height to the shoulder and probably outweighed him by ten times if not more with ease.

Rather than wait for Sini to continue approaching, Dragonien took the initiative. While he had to take a moment to visibly steel his resolve afterwards he began casually strolling forward to meet the poison dragon halfway; wrapping that aura of control and confidence around himself like a barrier. As he did he made a show of unstrapping his sword from his belt and, after holding it up for all to see, casually tossed it into the gold pile. Now unarmed, Dragonien's grin grew wider as he spread his arms out to either side of him invitingly as he moved within Sini's striking range.

"Come on, big guy. Come get a taste."

Infuriated at the provocation, Sini did exactly that. His head snapped forward lightning fast like a titanic snake and his jaws crashed down towards Dragonien with his lips spread wide and fangs exposed. Dragonien, acting just barely in time despite being ready for such an attack, planted his feet and reached up to grab one of Sini's upper and lower fangs respectively as the mouth tried to close around him. With all his might Dragonien pushed against the dragon's muzzle; his boots sliding backwards across the ground as he managed to keep the dragon's head in front of him but was unable to maintain his position. Within moments he was pinned between Sini's mouth and the wall while struggling with all his might to hold the dragon's fangs firm and keep the mouth at bay.

Sini was surprised at his strength but not particularly concerned. If anything he was amused by the predicament the intruder had been put in. The fool had trapped himself directly in front of his mouth. While they had clearly come prepared for poisons from the mask

around their muzzle, they clearly underestimated the potency of Sini's poisonous breath if they thought something that trivial would protect them. Sini was going to enjoy watching this one grovel at his feet after melting their thoughts into little more than incoherent devotion to him. Dragonien saw what was coming a split second before it happened as he felt the air rushing around him from Sini sharply inhaling. In his position, though, there was nothing that he could do to escape. With a chuckle that vibrated through the cavern floor and walls around Dragonien, Sini's chest expanded momentarily from the amount of air he inhaled before finally exhaling a thick cloud of purple hypnotic poison across the intruder.

Or at least, that's what he tried to do.

As he exhaled, Sini felt a strange emptiness in his chest. Air blew forth from his lungs and buffeted the red dragon still pinned to the wall but no purple smoke came with it. Sini suddenly realized something felt strange not just with his body but with his magic. That emptiness he felt in his chest extended beyond the physical and into his magic itself like something had hollowed a piece of him out with a scoop. Then he saw it. Eyes angled down to look out of the corner of his view at the dragon trapped in front of him. That grin was still plastered across Dragonien's face. Suddenly Sini felt a buildup of magic, familiar magic, directly in front of his face. Before he could pull back he watched as Dragonien exhaled a thick, if small, cloud of purple smoke out of his own mouth. Normally it would have been far too little to do much to anyone but with their proximity it was no effort at all for Dragonien to practically exhale it directly into one of Sini's nostrils.

The dragon flailed his neck backwards, jerking his head up and away from the invader of his home as he tried desperately to forcibly exhale the smoke from his nostrils. But he already knew it was too late. It hadn't been much, especially considering his size, but he could already feel his head swimming as if he were slightly drunk. Thankfully it looked like Dragonien hadn't gotten the mixture quite right and the poison he had generated had just muddled his thoughts rather than having the more ominous effects he was used to using it for to influence people's minds. But that didn't explain anything about how the little red dragon was able to do that in the first place.

"I bet you're asking how I did it." Dragonien casually spoke as if reading Sini's mind. "No I didn't copy it from you. I took it from you. Thanks to that new little trinket around your neck."

Reflexively Sini looked down and his eyes went wide as he saw the necklace around his neck; previously unnoticed in the confusion and chaos of his waking. Snarling in frustration Sini reached and taloned forelimb up to tear it from his neck only to have his claws pass right through it as if it wasn't even there. Confusion and shock plagued his face as he tried a second time, then a third to pull the necklace off. Each time he did the jewel seemed to gleam ever so faintly and his claws simply passed through the chain as if it were made of mist.

"It won't come off unless I let it. It's some old artifact I had... modified, just for you! You should feel honored. I paid an absurd amount of money to have it fixed up like this. But I'm rather happy with its results. Originally it was meant to let a loyal subject offer their power to their leader so they could protect the masses. I had it... well, to avoid boring you with the details let's say it's the reverse now. Now it lets the leader take what he wants from the follower. And the follower is whoever is wearing it. So I guess what I'm saying is... You're mine."

Dragonien's words got more confident as he spoke; what little nervousness and fear had been lingering in him melting away. Sini's lips curled back in a feral snarl that exposed the row of knife-like teeth lining his gums as he started to approach the intruder again. Before he got more than step closer, though, a sudden wave of exhaustion overtook him as Dragonien started speaking again.

"I'm actually kind of surprised! I only came here to get your breath ability but apparently this little trinket can do so much more than just that." Dragonien murmured with glee.

By now Dragonien was eyeing the larger dragon less as a predator to be wary of and more like prey to be devoured. As he stared with intent at Sini, the larger dragon felt that sense of exhaustion intensify and for a moment he felt like he might collapse right there. As he stared back at Dragonien he started to notice a change overcoming the dragon that sent an icy dread down his spine.

Dragonien was growing.

As he watched, Sini could see the straps on the dragon's armor pulling taut as his body gained pounds upon pounds of newfound muscle mass. His shoulders broadened and pushed up against his pauldrons while his thighs, calves, biceps and forearms all thickened to the point Sini swore he could pick up the sound of creaking leather straps as his armor struggled to contain his growing bulk. His chest flared outwards and pushed against his breastplate enough that it exposed a bit of the under-clothing beneath it between where the breastplate and stomach plate normally would push together. Looking down at himself, Sini saw where the mass was coming from and that dread turned into fear.

Right before his eyes his own body was beginning to wither away. Thick, powerful muscle that lined his frame dwindled and softened as his frame lost its heft and mass. Powerful, rippling slabs of meat for his haunches deflated into thinner, leaner appendages more akin to an agile running animal rather than a powerful draconic hunter like himself. He could even feel his back deflating as the crisscrossing series of muscles unique to species with wings on their backs weakened along with the rest of him and flowed their mass across the invisible tether between them and into Dragonien. By the time the changes stopped he didn't quite look emaciated or frail but he looked nothing like the powerful, imposing monster that had originally stood before the red dragon. He looked a dragon that had skipped a few too many meals; all wiry twitch-muscle and sinew with little real mass to any of his limbs. Sini wasn't even sure if he had the strength to lift off the ground with his wings anymore as even spreading them out as he had done to watch the tendons along them thin out now exacted a manageable, yet noticeable toll on the strength of his back and shoulder muscles.

Meanwhile Dragonien had gone in the opposite direction. Previously well built with a body sculpted through experience as much as combat if maybe had a few too many pastries at evening meals; now Dragonien had become an absolute monster. Thick, corded muscle lined every inch of his form and made his slightest movement give the appearance his muscles were trying to tear through his skin itself and escape. Biceps easily as big as his own head pressed against the sides of a pectoral shelf that jutted out as far in front of him as his own muzzle did. His thighs had ballooned into massive stone pillars and even his gut had hardened up with a nearly visible protrusion of muscle through the padding of his newly-enhanced muscle gut.

Even with Sini's significant size advantage comparing his new thin body to the powerhouse of a red dragon in front of him Sini was no longer confident that he could overpower him anymore.

"What... what have you done to me...?!" Sini exclaimed in shock.

To the poor dragon's horror, even his voice sounded weaker. Losing much of the resonance that came from his thick barrel chest it still was loud due to his sheer size but no longer seemed to rumble through the cave and vibrate the walls and floor. Meanwhile Dragonien's voice was the exact opposite: all-but thundering from his broad chest with enough sheer force that Sini reflexively took a step backwards.

"I helped myself to what is mine, of course! You know dragons. Even us dragon men still carry the lingering hunger for treasures and hoards. It just so happens my hoard isn't so much jewels and treasure anymore as it is you. Everything that you are. Everything that was yours, that now sits there for me to take at my leisure."

At the realization that Dragonien intended to take more, Sini's eyes went wide. He began to move forward in an attempt to stop the red dragon somehow. Before he'd even taken his first full step the smaller dragon's eyes glinted with a devious light as a new sensation overtook Sini.

Vertigo.

As he approached Dragonien he watched his perspective start to dip lower and lower. Piles of treasure that had barely been a sizable bed for him rapidly began to loom above him as he tried to reach out and grab for his attacker. Yet even as he watched the room seem to expand around him, watch the very distance between himself and Dragonien expand with everything else, Dragonien grew.

Unlike the muscle theft that had swollen Dragonien's body the growth of his overall size came much quicker and more noticeably. Sini had far more overall mass in his body than Dragonien did with his quadruped shape so an inch in height and overall size for him was far more for a two leg. Sini watched as Dragonien's armor rapidly began to tumble off of him; steely-muscled limbs bulging with newfound mass that split leather straps and thongs apart like they were yarn. His gauntlets clattered to the ground as his arms ballooned out to the thickness of battering rams and beyond. Grieves and thigh guards fell down around him as his thighs bulged from the pillars they had been before to rapidly approach then shape the girth of the ancient trees from elven forests. His breastplate literally popped off of his chest, tumbling down the protruding swell of his gut followed by the stomach plate moments later as the back straps simply exploded like over-taxed elastic and exposed his powerful upper body. All the while his grinning, hungry expression stretched higher and higher into the sky until, to Sini's horror, he realized he was having to look UP at Dragonien.

As his angry, desperate approach towards Dragonien slowed to a stop what little rage he had melted away into fear as he found himself shorter than even the knees of the massive titan of a red dragon looming above him. Staring ahead at massive, three toed feet still stretching across the floor of his cave as even then he continued to grow while Sini shrank filled him with a sense of dread. When would it stop? Would there be anything left of him when the red dragon was done?! Thankfully, as if hearing his concerns Sini felt the sensation of vertigo dissipating and the transfer of size slowed to a stop.

Looking up, he found himself gawking up at the titanic red dragon that loomed above him. He couldn't even see Dragonien's face past the prodigious swell of his enormous gut until Dragonien leaned forward to look down past it at him. It was hard to tell considering he wasn't sure exactly how small he was now but Sini was certain that even if he had been normal sized this behemoth would have utterly towered over his original size. Best guess was that Dragonien had to be at least twenty feet tall if not more while he was lucky if he was even a foot or two tall to the shoulder now. That much mass stuffed into a two legged person instead of a four legged beast had left Dragonien's head nearly scraping the ceiling.

Sini was pulled out of his mental math by a deep, rumble of a chuckle that seemed to thunder out from the dragon towering above him and shook the very ground beneath him. His eyes went wide as a massive hand easily big enough to engulf his entire body and then some

lowered down and wrapped tree-trunk fingers around him. Vertigo again left Sini's stomach roiling and for a moment he was terrified he was shrinking again! Thankfully it ended up just being the rapid ascent some twenty feet into the air by the hand holding him. When the fingers uncurled from around him the now little black and purple dragon found himself sprawled out in the platform-like palm of Dragonien; held directly in front of his widely grinning muzzle.

"Heh heh heh... you're kind of cute like this." Dragonien rumbled, his voice like a low roll of thunder that resonated through the air around Sini. "I think I'll keep you instead of draining you dry. I always wanted my own kobold."

Before Sini could protest or try some attempt at escape he saw Dragonien suck in a deep breath then exhale a thick cloud of red-tinted purple smoke across Sini's miniscule body. This time with the drastic size difference the entire cloud utterly buried Sini in it. The thicker-than-normal fog practically clung to him and for a few moments Sini was able to hold his breath. Unfortunately he had nowhere to go and the fog didn't seem to be dispersing. Eventually Sini inhaled some of it and after that, the rest seemed almost to flow into him of its own accord.

The moment the fog entered his body his expression softened. His lips twisted into a dopey grin and his eyes sagged in an expression of blissful contentment. His whole body relaxed and he nearly fell down onto his side as his body practically gave way beneath him from the complete relaxing of tension in every muscle group in his body. His mind swam with thoughts and images that no longer seemed important or noteworthy; like tiny little voices being shouted from across an empty stadium he could no longer hear well enough to understand. As his head lazily raised upwards he found himself staring up at the titanic, grinning muzzle of Dragonien.

His lazy, dopy grin turned into a true, gleeful smile at the sight. His chest seemed to swell with a powerful sense of awe and reverence. Dragonien was looking at him! The very idea that the red dragon had deigned to notice him was enough to grace one such as Sini with his attention was enough to make the little black and purple dragon almost squeal with glee. The words spewed forth from Sini's lips all-but unbidden. The question that he wanted, that he NEEDED to ask. The only thing that mattered to him now with all the other pointless,

unimportant thoughts no longer taking up any space in his mind after being muffled by the blissful grace of Dragonien's breath.

"What can I do for you, master?"

The question spread Dragonien's grin that much wider. Oh yes, he could get used to this.

As he turned his attention first to the hoard of treasure at his feet and then at the main entrance to the cave behind the treasure where Sini had once entered and exited Dragonien thought to himself how small the cave mouth looked now. Glancing back at the little dragon on his palm, staring up at him in unabashed glee and worship, Dragonien raised his other hand to poke a massive claw tip tenderly against the necklace still hanging from Sini's neck; having resized itself to continue fitting him through all of their changes. When he spoke Sini practically writhed in his palm as if Dragonien's voice alone was enough to overload the shrunken little dragon's brain in utter bliss.

"Why don't we see if we can get this off of you and you can show me where some of your other true dragon friends live. Let's see if we can have some of them try it on next. I'm suddenly feeling a bit... Greedy."