

From the beach, Sini watched Zak and Bruce play videogames on the bottom floor of their tropical island resort building, concocting a plan to stealthily eat Zak. No one could see it coming, not even the fish.

Actually, the fish were the reason *why* Sini wanted to eat Zak. Ever since Bruce (the minotaur) bought the tropical island for himself and Zak (the iguana) with the 0.56 billion dollars leftover from paying back the destroyed city (long story), Sini'd been eating with them nothing but pacific anchovies and halibut, and sometimes dolphins and sharks. Sigh!

Behind the sliding glass doors, the minotaur and iguana sat on a sofa fiddling with their controllers, a curved widescreen colorfully flashing like lights at a faire. Sini could've been playing with them, but he was tired of their games. It was time to play a game of his own: nom the iguana.

That was the thing: being a thirteen-foot-two, 13,200-pound dragon and trying to Solid Snake this kind of stuff. He thought of using the box in the recycling they took the new game system out of. But it'd only cover his head. Besides, that wouldn't help him get Zak away from Bruce. He'd totally holler, "Yo Zak, Sini's behind you!" if Zak didn't see.

Sini thought of a solid plan. He snaked his way across the beach and the cool midnight grass. He crept up to the resort building right next to the sliding doors, did a few mi-mi-mis to warm up his vocals then pulled out of his neckpocket a pitch-raising tonic to raise his vocal pitch. He made his mouth an O and sprayed twice then took a deep breath.

"AHHHHYYYCK! BRUCE! HALP ME, *HAAAAAAALP!*"

Sini heard the game pause and the bottom floor go dead silent. Dead like Call of Duty Nazi zombies. He was red and on the verge of tears, giggling in short bursts into his paw like a hatchling. Then he heard a thunderbolt drop, and his face turned the color of an arctic yak fleece.

It was Bruce's voice. "SAOWPHY ARE YOU ALRIGHT? OH GOD, OKAY, I'M COMING SOPHY!"

Oh shit, Sini was thinking. *Did I make that good a Sophy?*

He heard Zak, who knew Sophy was long gone and who was conditioned to his bull friend's outbursts by now, say, "Should I come with you, Bruce?"

To which Bruce replied, "No! Sophy's needs me, Zak. I have to solo this!" He abandoned his high kill-streak in Call of Duty and charged at the sliding doors.

Hearing the thunder of hooves, Sini wheeled and raced off hurriedly, and hid around the corner where the garage and the resort wall made a right angle. A brutish shape went stampeding out to the beach, looked both ways then decided to search for Sophy inside the nearby labyrinth of exotic vegetation. Sini went *phew*.

"Alright," Sini said. "Now to lure ZAKANO!"

He had to time things just right. Too soon, and Zak would know Bruce hadn't put his all into looking, and be suspicious. Too late, and Bruce would return. "It's like Janga," Sini said, nodding agreeably with himself.

The poison dragon imagined himself carefully pulling a wood Janga block out of the top of a wood Janga tower; and once *imaginary-he* had the block, he galloped back up to the resort building right next to the sliding doors. He pulled out of his neckpocket some Super Testosterone Tablets, made his mouth an O and swallowed them all. He took a deep breath then said in a Bruce-like voice:

"ZAK! IT'S HORRIBLE, MAN, IT'S SOPHY! CAHM *QUICK!*"

Oh shit, Sini was thinking. *I really turned into Bruce for a second.*

He heard Zak, who always had his friends' backs (and even his friends' imaginary friends' backs), say, "One second, Bruce!" He finished up destroying some fascist military vehicles then pressed pause and raced for the sliding doors.

"Hee hee." Sini pranced heavily into the jungle vegetation opposite of the side Bruce went into.

Zak dashed onto the patio, slashing through the shadows with a flashlight. It put a spotlight on a spaghetti spatter of vines and palms, palm trunks and bush things; the iguana thought he heard Bruce's footsteps rumble into there. "Bruce?" he called. "Bruce? Bruce?" He had the flash in one hand and could only holler through one cupped hand, but he felt like an idiot doing that, so he stopped.

Leaves rustled, and the chitter of cicadas grew. Stepping farther into the lair of jungle unknown, Zak called, "I don't think Sophy's in here, big guy." No one replied. So he ventured for awhile, raying on gigantic flytraps and monkeys that slept upside-down from their tail-hung states in the highways of branches. Some monkeys woke, screeched, and climbed away.

Sini had meant to play this game a little longer, but was afraid the flytraps and monkeys would gobble up Zak before him, or perhaps rake out his eyeballs. He wriggled out of that place onto the beach, wagged the stickery stickers off his butt then turned around. "GRAHHH! I'M MAD AND WOULD LIKE TO PUNISH A CITY NOW," Sini called into the jungle, in his big jeep voice.

"I'm coming, Bruce! Hang on!" Zakano cried. Sprinting forward the iguana came and leapfrogged off the heads of five sleeping crocodiles across a jungle-river, and swung across a myriad vines to avoid plunging into a pit of poisonous snakes. Vaulting out of the dark place and onto cool soft sand, he shook his back free of a couple of leeches that had grown fat off his blood. He aimed his flash around the beach. No Bruce. No one.

And so Zakano exclaimed his friend's name time and again, crossing the shore with affrighted twists and turns and shines of his beam ahead of his feet. Starfish. Clams. Some of Bruce's underwear for some reason.

Zak was incredulous. "Bruce, why aren't these in your dresser?"

Out at sea, a spot at the surface was boiling like a cauldron of stew. Sini was trying real hard to hold his breath. He *really* wanted Zak to see his bubbles. *Come closer you*, he thought, watching a sunray shimmering from the water move and whirl about the beach. Finally his feet were kicking like a hanged person's. His head exploded, and the splash you could've heard for a quarter mile. *Gasp!*

Zak whipped the flash, and saw the satellite dish ripple of the sea. At this point he was scared to deaf—so deaf, he wouldn't know if someone used an "f" sound and not a "t-h" sound! Yet, too many horror stories had got it into him that bubbling on the sea meant a kraken was down there; and seeing he couldn't see Bruce, he worried his friend might be getting strangled, or worse, becoming calamari for the calamari.

So he said: "I've got you covered, buddy!"

And took out his laser beam.

And charged at the ocean.

And dived.

SPWOOSHHH.

...

At the same time Zak splashed out of the water with a high monotone scream, tossing his flash and laser, a gigantic winged monster erupted out of the waters.

Seaweed clothed the monster's scaly body, and Zak had only seen *that* and a big purple eye, so he thought the lochness monster of the pacific was come for him.

“RAWWWWWWWWWW!” Sini was playing pretend, and was sure Zak would've recognized him before the nom. But his voice was unrecognizable, being that it had the deepness of a bull but the gargantuaness of a dragon, and no bull would say “rawr.” “*I've got you now, buddy!*”

It sounded like two titans on top of each other.

Zak made like hell across the beach for the bright sliding doors that contained happy video games.

The seaweed slopped off of Sini's body across the island's edge as he hounded towards his runner. The iguana threw himself at the door like a flying squirrel. But not only could Sini actually fly; he was hungrier for Zak than Zak was for safety. So as a young, healthy golden retriever seizes out of the air a frisbee, so Sini seized Zak. Landing on his forepaws with a sidestep from the door, the poison dragon padded into a full stop on a dry patch of ground before the garage door.

Blinking on to illuminate his form was the sensor light of the door. Sini padded around in the spotlight and whisked his chin-whiskery head about with pride, smiling to display the torso-on-up of his flailing iguana prize.

Said the iguana, “HAAaaAALILLILP! HeeYAAAlIUULLlulUllULLP! BRUCE, IT'S A SEA—IT'S SOPHY BRUCE, *SOPHY!*”

Just as Zak didn't think it'd help if he said “seaweed monster” to Bruce, Sini didn't think it'd help if he said “I'm Sini” to Zak. Besides, his eyes and teeth were three bright white half-moons as he tasted his prey's salty tail and feet, grinning maw flexing open and closed. A sweep of his tongue invited the cool midnight air, but landed on Zak like pillowy blows from the left jowl to the right jowl.

So ingrained in the iguana's mind was that terrifying mop of seaweed mane, he never looked back at Sini to see Sini. But he squirmed. And tried to flail out of the stinky lower jaw (as though it were a burning building) multiple times. The tongue (playing the role of firefighters with a trampoline here) kept catching and catching him. A wail rippled and echoed out of the draconic jowls. A trembling hand that expected someone to say "here, grab my hand!" spiked out of the thick black lips.

The poison dragon heaved in amusement. Presently, a purple talon poked his prey's open palm and pushed it down. His tongue flapped up and Zak slid down. A tunneling echo howled out of the dragon's flexing gullet—"Somebody—SINI!—save meeeeeeee!"—right before thick black lips smacked together, and the tongue towed them off.

Sini thought, *Oh, I'm saving you alright.*

From getting beat by Bruce at Black Ops again.

Geysers of pure purple poison shot from his nose. Gladly, Sini harrumphed.

If we did an X-ray of the esophagus now, we'd see the iguana fruitlessly scrabbling at its fluctuating walls . . . purple neck-plates alongside him expanding and contracting, such as the coils of a traveling slinky . . . a big paw accompanying him on his squishy, slimy, squelching journey.

Zak dunked headfirst. Into what? A pool of fizzy acids the color of royal purple. Surrounding him were pink walls as plush as tempurpedic foam; though, due to the pool's violet bioluminescence, pink-purple would make more sense to say. And how majestic! How accommodating! If hotels were so temperate, their beds so silky and fleshy, their saunas so perfectly gurgly, why, Zak would for sure want the suite life—even if he had to share it with some bloke named Cody.

As such, he started looking like the Zak we see in the picture (if we scroll up), and ended up looking like a very happy Zak who had plenty of video games. Verily, he wondered how such a vile beast could have such a friendly tummy.

While, a minute ago, Sini's prey had been screaming his face off, Sini now felt the bulge of his belly bouncing around.

The poison dragon lowered his neck then ground out a deep purr. A grumble of music carried out to sea and set a twinkle into the stars. Still his vocals were deeper than they were usually, and sounded rich and sexy, if you'd've asked Sini himself.

Sini let Zak treat his belly like a bounce-house for a while. His plum stomach enzymes blorped and bubbled excitedly. He cooed and neighed little puffs of poison out of a little sliver of open mouth. Then, whapping the ground with his tail thrice, he let loose a great, yawning howl of a belch:

***HRRRrRrrRrRRRoooOOOOOooOAAAAARrrRRRRuUUOooORRRuuuRRRoo
RRAAAAAA
AAAAAAaaAAAAAAaAAAAAaaaaAAAAAAaAAAAAAaAAAAAAaA-A-A-A-
A-A-A-P!***

It put wolves to shame. It sang so as to let the moon hear. It was the stockpiled gas of a poison dragon who had been trying not to be rude for three days.

Hearing this toxic song, Zak knew at once his predator was Sini, for who else came close to him belch-wise, except No One? He sighed and, like a slice of butter on a tipped pancake, he slid slowly deeper into the gassy jacuzzi. He was safe. He was sound. By and by, he slept, and his sleep was sound as well.

Bruce would later run into Sini and get asked if he wanted to rub his belly. Then he would, and he'd calm down, and the three of them would all go back into the building, wherein Sini would rouse Zak from his nap for a final, early morning round of video games.

But right now we're here and it's just Sini and Zak, so relax. Relax here with our friends beneath the stars of the ghost shade sky.