

II - The Dictator of Chickens

For the first planet, I land on is covered in sand, seemingly thousands of miles from any type of human habitation. I am more isolated than a tree that falls in the forest when no one is around. But there aren't even trees here at all.

Thus, you can imagine my amazement, when by the horizon, I witness a figure waddling around.

I sink down and rest my head to my hand; the figure continued its advance to my general locality. Waiting, I drift into a shallow slumber. Thus, you could imagine my surprise at being woken by sounds of clucking, and an odd shadow above me.

“Show me your best chicken dance!” The shadow spoke with an almost showmanship-esque pronunciation.

“What!” I shout back in surprise.

“Dance! Now!” the figure said with command.

“What is going on? Who are you?” I mutter, still startled.





In shock, I jumped to my feet. I blink my eyes hard, trying to comprehend what was laid out before me carefully. There stood a man with great seriousness in his gaze staring down at me. He stood before me clothed in an incomplete chicken mascot suit. A plastic crown losing its shine is shoved on top of a sweater hood with haphazardly glued feathers. The crown lay crooked on his head hiding a slight bit of his eyes.



A clucking quite clamorous arose.

A flood of chickens engulfs us, making a white ocean to where my nearsighted eyes determined is the horizon. Rather pridefully, he adjusts himself to stand higher. Seemingly encouraged by the clucking, he spoke loudly above it:

“If your legs have the ability to work, dance! Greet me properly.”

“What...” in stunned amazement I mutter. I simply can not comprehend the peculiarities before me.

And in answer he repeats, very succinctly, as if he were speaking of a matter of great consequence:

“Dance for me!”

When an abrupt mystery is presented to you, it is too overpowering; one dare not disobey. Absurd as it was, hundred of thousands of miles from any other human habitation and in danger of death, I take this opportunity as a learning experience -

“All right... I’ll perform for you. I will give it a whirl,” I say rather calmly for the situation at hand.

But then I remembered how my studies in education had been concentrated on computers, writing, drawing, and psychology. However, this is not my fault, others in my life discouraged me in my career of ballet when I was a mere age of six years old. I had never learned to dance, except for a slightly sloppy burlesque-type dancing I picked up from minimum club adventures in my young twenties.

Hesitantly, I look at the chap and rather crossly say “I do not know how to dance.”

He answers in a supposed regally calm manner "That does not matter. You need to dance for me..."

I cannot remember how to do the chicken dance, but it seems this chap won’t let the situation go. I wiggle my arms a tad reluctantly in a wave motion, rather lackadaisically.

“No, no, no! I do not want that, I want a proper greeting, I want a chicken dance. A wave of arms does not constitute a chicken’s elegant wings, and your reluctance is quite cumbersome. Where I live everyone does this for me. What I need is a chicken dance. Dance the chicken dance!”

So then I try again.

I fold my arms inward and give some swift up and down movements.

"No. This dance is very sickly looking. Try again," he says sternly.

I search my memory on what to do and try again; this time it went better (or so I thought).

“No. Wrong. Again.” he states dismissively with a wave of his feathered hands.

I do my dance over once more. Once again it is rejected too, just like the others.

“I’m starting to think no matter how I dance, it’ll be met with disapproval by your standards,” I cross my arms.

“Well, that is your fault, not mine. You need to greet me properly or apologize for your rudeness,” the chicken man replies.

My patience is exhausted. I try for a subject change.

“Are you not hot in that chicken suit? It is very hot out.” I ask, making a puzzled face.

“No!” he shouts as if I had accused him of great sin. At least we are leaving the greeting thing behind.

By this time, I wish to see this chicken man spontaneously combust. I place my hands on my hips.

“How? It is scorching.” I say, rumpling my face to hide a smile as the man was clearly sweating quite a bit.



“I don’t believe it is hot, the weather is quite cool as of now.” he declares. The chicken suit looks greatly insulated, the outside having a thick layer of feathers. Sweat pours down the chicken man’s neck and his face on deeper inspection is feverishly red.

“Is this considered cold?” I ask. If it was, this is not a planet I would want to inhabit. My head tilts to the side inquisitively.

“It’s always this way– it is never hot.” he said as if I did not understand the obvious.

“But sir, this is a desert.” I refute.

“Yeah so, I said it’s never hot, aren’t you listening? Also, where is my greeting? You never greeted me properly. Dance! Dance! Dance!” he commands.

I wonder at the worth a thousand chickens' respect engendered. It seemed rather large but at the same time so very little.

His order leads me to give him a regular greeting of my caliber.

“Salutations, I come from a far off land, I'd like to know who you are.”.

“I am the dictator of this planet. You are now part of my society, as such you should greet me properly. Come on, Dance!” regally he states as if I should know.

“Dictator or chicken farmer?” I mask a chuckle.

“Do you not see my subjects surrounding us with their joyous clucking of my control?” the dictator asks with notes of disbelief.

“Subjects? These are chickens. Has the sun damaged your eyes?” my mouth settles from the chuckle to something more serious now.

“These chickens are my subjects regardless. There are... at least a population of 10,000 happy subjects that I can count with my own hands, toes, and head.” The dictator says with confidence unrivaled, “Now! Where is my apology?”

“What do I need to apologize for?” My eyebrows furrow as I ask him.

“Incorrectly greeting me. How are you this clueless? I gave you several chances, you didn't even think to do it. I had to tell you to dance. You better shape up if you are to live under my control.” exclaims the dictator exasperatingly.

Taking a glance downwards towards the mass of clucking white, I note the chickens are fairly malnourished, and scratched up.



It brings me to question what he said before. “Judging by the state of your domain, are you sure they’re happy?”

“Yes, I’m attentive to their needs. Obviously! How can you even question this?” the dictator raises his voice.

He extends the wing of his costume, holds his hand beneath, he is pointing:
“This one needs grain... Uh... and that one breadcrumbs. I’m attentive to the needs of my chick... citizens. I will treat you well.”

The chickens skittishly move away from his hand or, well, wing as it swings. I back away as well.

“Henrietta agrees, I treat her right, isn’t that right, Henrietta?” He points into the concentration of chickens.

“Which one is Henrietta? How can you tell?” I ask genuinely curious.



The dictator looks confused. His eyes shuffle and scan. “Doesn't matter. They all think I treat them well.”

“Are you sure they are happy with your rule?” I reiterate.

“It is annoying you make me need to repeat myself. Who do you think you're talking to? I'm the dictator of chickens! You need to shape up! This is not acceptable in my domain!” he shouts with slight rage displaying on his face.

“You said there were 10,000 happy chickens before. There are seemingly more than 10,000.” I frown.

“Well, I know what you are thinking... The rest are ecstatic over my rule, I didn't want to say it and scare you with how content my subjects are with my governing. You might've heard the rumors. Yes, indeed, my planet is rated a five-star planet.” he

says while shuffling his wings proudly. “I will rule you among these ecstatic and euphoric chickens.”

“I'm afraid I'm going to have to decline such a... generous offer. Are you sure you're not dehydrated, since you do appear feverish?” All the words came out rather hesitantly. I did not wish for more yelling.

“It is not hot, like I have said. And that is a grave mistake on your part. I have all the gold in the kingdom. It would be better if you stay here.” the dictator announces with his wings wide to show off his kingdom. The chickens skitter away forming a wider radius.

“That's grain not gold,” I say.

“I have all the grain in the kingdom...” he corrects.

“I do not need grain. And I would much rather gold.” I interject.

“I’ll rule you among the chickens. You are their equal now.” he states this as if the decision had been made.

“I do not feel as equal as the chickens. I cannot merely be content with your measly grain as much as them.”

“Excuse me? Measly? I have ALL the grain in the kingdom.” He gestures with his wings again. “If you have a problem you’ll only be able to talk to me about it. I will be more attentive to your needs than the chickens as there will be no communication barrier. However, I will need you to ‘cluck’ on occasion for assurance that you are my subject. There will be no misunderstandings from outside origins as I’m the only one who understands you here. It will be glorious ruling over you. You’re staying.”

“As tempting as that sounds... I will not be staying.” I say crossing my arms again.

“Didn’t you say you don’t like your family?” he says confidently.

“What? I haven’t talked about my family,” I reply, firmly.

“All the more reason to stay. You obviously have issues with them due to your lack of conversing of them.” The dictator smiles. “I’ll be your family, and your closest only friend”.

“Well, now, I am certain you have problems in your family... or life. And I really do not think you are a real dictator.” I say frowning.

A look of displeasure crosses the man’s face. Raising his voice:

“I AM THE DICTATOR OF MORE THAN 10,000 CHICKENS, YOU WILL...”

The words trail off, his mouth returns to a scowl akin to a tangled snake.

The man goes quiet. Folding his arms he turns his gaze away.

“Mister, are you all right?” I ask, concerned that his face looked not long for an eminent aneurysm.

“I’ll answer you but only if I want to.” he grumbles quietly from the corner of his mouth.



“Mister? Chicken farmer? Dictator...” I say.

He tilts his head over to the other direction when I speak. He is ignoring me rather childishly—shuffling his arms in flapping motions to show that he is much too preoccupied to give me attention. I want to wave my hands about his face to be a nuisance but the man is much too tall.

And that is how I did not make the acquaintance of such a man. I take some chickens to have wings to leave the planet on. And well, they deserved better.



After leaving I realize:

The dictator continually did that action, I am forgetful of the word for it. But I'm sure that is how the word worked— having something to do with the lighting of gasses. I believe it is called being an insurance liability, or an endangerment to others (leaning towards the latter). If not those, then I am certain that I have been led too far astray from acknowledging its existence.

I still doubt myself months after departing this planet... I keep a note upon my transport's dashboard telling me the truth behind the dictator of chicken's reality as a reminder. I am glad I did not stay longer in his caravan of chickens.

Reality behind The Dictator of Chickens:

In the actuality of my situation, I decided to accompany the dictator of chickens. Initially, he seemed cocky. He saw himself the leader among a population which barely acknowledged his existence. I enjoyed the weirdness presented forthright. I am not regretful or ashamed of my choice as I compiled knowledge about myself and experienced new emotions during the process.

But, the man I now recognize has a strong desire to be in control. Even in trivial ways... many trivial ways. Most of which barely qualify as a "way". There are actions spoken or otherwise, that come to my mind. It started out subtle then grew to be blatant.

He played reality like a harp, and unfortunately I found the sound prettier than my own. The conclusion that reality is a symphony of more than 10,000 chickens clucking was a harsh one. That my reality was not his and neither were both anyone else's.

Much like the dictator:

I'd be told, "I thought you said you hated your family," which as a statement I cannot say resonated with my heart nor do I know where the basis came from.

I was told to discuss matters of our relationship only to him, to prevent "misunderstandings," but besides the obvious unhealthy commandment, one cannot do that if it is followed by treating me to silence. I know for certain from other relationships too; I have a tendency to talk only to the person responsible regarding their actions. But, he consistently avoided answering any inquiries.

Not as frivolous as performing the chicken dance correctly, but this individual lacked happiness in most of which was done out of cordiality for him. Consistently, something in my behavior was "wrong" and he felt personally insulted by it.

Acting kingly in his statements only to me, of last:

- "You should be thanking me for giving you a chance to prove me wrong... You're taking a long time to say thank you."
- "Where is my apology? I gave you time to even think to give me one."
- "I'll answer you if I want to."
- "It is annoying you make me need to repeat myself."
- "Who do you think you're talking to?"

Commonly, boasting to others I was under his wing with such statements. If I asked not to boast, the boasts only increased.

I find myself wishing I was a chicken (of the opposite sex, or anyone else besides myself often) - so I could be treated like the rest of them. I came to learn his chickens were more respected and attended to. Also, I doubt most knew of his faked existence and rule. How he treated the chickens gave me hope that he could one day treat me the same. But, unfortunately, that would have never been the case and I am not content with only grain.