Say Uncle

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Say Uncle

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Summary

Sooner or later, they were bound to take things too far.

“Tavish! You can’t have us stay in a hotel like this! It’s un-American!”

“Weh? It’s burger themed.”

“And burgers are German! I rest my case.”

“I’ve never seen you rest anything. Nae your outside voice, nae your sense of devilry, and certainly nae anything resembling a case. What would be an *American* hotel anyway?”

“New York New York of course!”

“We’re banned from New York New York.”

“No!”

“Aye. Remember the time before last? We got thrown out and a lifetime ban all because you talked me into doin’ the ‘two Original salute’ off the Statue of Liberty. *Again*.”

“Whose lifetime? Mine or yours?”

“*Yours* is going to be the shorter of the two if you don’t put your name in the bloody sign-in book!”

“Hamburgers are un-American!”

“They are not you daft pillock!”

“They are too!”

“Are not!”

“Are too you skirt-twirling ninny rraaaAHHH!”

The last exclamation was accompanied by a furious Jane Doe leap of attack, a glorious thing if you’ve ever been so lucky as to witness it. Like the mighty deer from which Jane took his name, he pounced upon his unfortunate friend, initiating a wrestling match right there in the lobby of Grimace’s Bud Busting Resort & Casino.

Tavish gave as good as he got, though. The pair landed in a sprawl of arms and legs, a display of bravado that was witnessed by the two most important deities of the realm: the concierge wearing a plush Mayor McCheese head (her aghast expression gaping though the hole in its front) and an eight-foot-tall effigy of Grimace. These stared down reproachfully at the display. Tavish slapped Jane in the side of the helmet. Jane got the RED in a kneebar.

“Admit it!” he demanded. “Admit you booked us here because you hate America!”

“Ach, fine, fine! Uncle!” Tavish said, tapping Jane’s leg. “Let me up you bloody bastard.”

The pair stood, shaking themselves off and no worse for wear. Well, except Tavish, since Jane had heeled him in the balls slightly while performing the kneebar, and his holiday-kilt didn't give much protection.

"Arse," Tavish said mildly, though he rubbed his crotch indiscreetly. "You really going to make me try to find a whole 'nother hotel right on the night we get in?"

"Mmm…negatory. After rolling around on the floor for thirty seconds, I have changed my mind about this place. The carpet had a charming array of spaceships and rainbow squiggles —very patriotic. We can stay."

"That's what I thought."

Despite the hullabaloo that followed them wherever they went, Jane was eventually content to go with the flow as long as he got a bit of mayhem in first. Upon accusation, Jane would say that was ridiculous, but Tavish knew it was more than coincidence at this point. He thought of it as Jane 'saying his piece'. Reminding the world he was there. Using the powerful lungs god had granted him, just so no one would forget that Jane Doe was out here, alive and kicking. Tavish hid his slight smile as he flattened out his kilt.

"Alright." To the concierge, he said, "Should be under Doe."

"R-right…" she said.

"So, what's good to do around here at-" Tavish had to check the sign above the front desk, "-Grimace's Bud Busting?"

"Well!" The concierge fell back into what was obviously a more comfortable script of conversation. "We have our 24/7 burger bar, all burgers, all the time! Next to that is the regular bar-"

"Oo, I like that."

"-Which closes a ten."

"Booooo."

"And of what makes us the jewel of the Strip for burger-adjacent resorts is our massive thirty-foot waterslide and adult playpalace!"

"Oi! Janey you hear that?" Tavish tossed over his shoulder. Jane was busy folding and unfolding his arms in front of the giant Grimace, contorting his face in various expressions in an attempt to get it to break character. "Adult playplace! Perfect for you, ya big baby!"

"She said play*palace*, maggot!" Jane hollered back over the, admittedly, very small space. "Perfect for you, being *Scottish royalty*."

"Yeah?" Tavish said, having expected an insult.

"Yeah." Jane grinned savagely. "What better place to keep a *princess*."

“Oh *you*-”

Sometimes, the Soldier really did make his blood *boil*.

It was fine most of the time, the gentle—and sometimes less than gentle—ribbing all part of the game they played. The price of admittance for their particular vintage of friendship. But as much as Jane drove him crazy, he also drove him *crazy*, in the itch-under your skin sort of way that was impossible to distinguish from their regular back and forth. All was equally permissible to Jane. The only thing stopping you from experiencing what life had to offer was your own gut instinct: that was his philosophy, one that Tavish had been grateful to learn bit by bit while shedding his own stifling ideas about propriety. Where else would he find a friend so up for a good, hearty tussle, anytime anywhere? It was worth it for occasionally crossing the line.

Still. That didn’t mean the slight would go unavenged.

As they devoured their burgers, sitting on the same side of the table and warmly jostling their shoulders against each other, Tavish plotted. The plot became a plan, and the plan became a scheme for when dinner was over and Jane’s guard was lowered. As they toured the rest of the resort’s…many splendors, that was when he put his revenge into motion.

He ambushed the Soldier at the top of the highest spire in the grand plastic playpalace. Jane crashed backwards against red, spongy floormat, and Tavish cried the battle cry of his ancestors, wrestling his sometimes-friend-sometimes-rival into submission. Or at least, that was the plan. It went downhill rather quickly, Jane turning the fight around after only a moment of furious scrabbling and mutual name-calling. It went *literally* downhill when the pair tumbled down the incline of a large foam wedge, landing in a tangle inside one of the clear plastic viewports that bubbled from the castle’s side. If anyone were to look up, they would see two men in perfect profile, the kilt-clad one suffering a near-side cradle as his helmeted assailant demanded surrender.

“Say uncle!” Jane bellowed.

“Guh,” Tavish said.

Damn, he’d really thought he had that one. Even with the element of surprise he’d lost *again*, and the indignation made him clench his teeth against their designated word of capitulation. For his silence, Jane strained the cradle harder, the muscles in Tavish’s neck yanking the ones in his back along for the ride, and he marveled not for the first time that the Soldier really had no inhibitions. Without the mores of company policy and manly honor, there was truly nothing Soldier wouldn’t barrel into, no internal voice telling him there were lines not to cross.

Tavish wondered how far Jane would go if he simply didn’t say anything. It wasn’t like they’d never hurt each other before; far worse than this, with bombs and broken bottles pushing past the ultimate point-of-no-return and into the devil’s waiting arms. As he thought it, the pressure lifting his neck increased again.

“You’re done, *princess*,” Jane crooned in his ear. It sounded huskier like this, their bodies unprecedentedly close to each other, testing the limits so hard they might snap. “Say it.”

One more notch, one more increase, and Tavish found a whimper escape him.

There was an immediate hitch in the breathing next to his ear.

But Tavish was done with this experiment, his aching muscles demanding he swallow his pride. “Uncle,” he grunted out, and the cradle disappeared instantly, feeling rushing back to his extremities.

He was surprised how quickly Jane jumped to stand. Tavish himself took the usual languid pace to get up and stretch out, readying himself for the requisite round of heckling, but after dusting himself off he found Jane’s expression peculiarly unreadable. The helmet hid the eyes, but his mouth was also ironed into stalwart neutrality.

“What’s that face?” Tavish said, still a little out of breath. “You look like a right knob, all serious in the middle of some oversaturated toy bin.”

If Jane could stiffen more he would have. But after a moment he belted out, “I am just admiring your failure! Even while sacrificing your so-called Highland honor in a cowardly display of subterfuge, your ancestors are still laughing at your sorry excuse for a counteroffensive.”

“Oh *you’re* one to talk: I’ve seen you go all craven too, you just call ‘em ‘sneak attacks’.”

“Yeah. The difference is that I win when I do them.”

“You smug bastard-”

Whatever the odd moment was, it faded as they got their bags to their room and argued all the way down to the pool. They razzed each other, made elaborate boasts about how many Vegas cops they could take in a single fight, and all in all made a mess of the pool chairs that’d been given the unenviable task of supporting them through their various scuffles. It was always like this with them: bragging and showboating and the threat of physicality looming along the horizon. One of the chairs was thrown into the pool, sinking to the bottom of the pristine waters, and by the time it hit the deep end Tavish had already forgotten what they were fighting about. It was strange; to any outside observer, they were in constant conflict, but until he’d met this barmy American at a projectile weapons convention, Tavish had never felt so in sync with another person. They were in perfect tension, two sides of a tug-o-war, constantly testing the limits on how far the other would give.

The pool couldn’t hold their attention for long, even if the lone attraction (a grotesquely sunbleached waterslide) *hadn’t* been shaped like a giant tongue. The bar was closed and neither felt like skinny dipping, so empty of distractions they hauled their sorry asses back up to the third floor.

If Jane was acting odd, well, Tavish hardly noticed. He was only the ‘perceptive’ one of the two due to the setting of a very low bar. If he saw the way Jane watched him more than usual,

he chalked it up to jet lag.

“We should convince them to let us back into New York New York,” Jane said, throwing his Hawaiian-print button-up across the chair.

“We’re right bad at convincing anybody to let us do anything,” Tavish said. “Historically speaking. Why did you even want to go on top of the statue in the first place?”

“I was checking for skeletons and needed assistance.”

“You thought some daft bastards were up there *before* us? And not only didn’t get caught but fecking *died* up there?”

“Not *American* skeletons. French!”

“French.”

“The invading French army that stored themselves in the Statue of Liberty in order to launch a by-sea invasion of the continent? And after the airholes were filled in because no upstanding American would fall for such a trick, they sent a second Statue of Liberty to Las Vegas to try again? Come on Tavish, this is first grade!”

“There aren’t any French skeletons at that bloody hotel, and there aren’t any skeletons in the real Statue of Liberty either!”

“You have not checked!”

“I don’t need to check to know you’re blowing smoke out your arse and expecting me tae sniff it.”

“Are you calling me a liar DeGroot?”

“Nae a liar; a *damned* liar- oof!”

Nearly ninety-five kilos of raw Soldier tackled Tavish to the bed. The routine of it was easy now, but a whole day of humiliating defeats had left Tavish bruised, just dying to avenge his smarting ego. He was barely on the bed for a second before he trapped Jane’s leg with his own, rolling them into a position that was much closer to an equal playing field. They grappled on their sides, fighting for the upper hand.

Until, finally, *miraculously*, Tavish pulled a victory out. He was breathless and they were both sweaty in the cramped room in the middle of Nevada, bet he had Jane pinned by the throat.

“Ha!” Tavish panted. “You lose, Doe.”

Jane snarled up at him.

It wasn’t until over until Jane said the word though, and Tavish—flushed with triumph—reveled in one the few victories he’d managed to rack up in their long ongoing game.

“What’s the matter lad?” he taunted. “Nae so cocksure now, are ye? Let this be a lesson to ye, next time ye ever think you can beat a Scotsman on his home turf.”

“-No-t yo-ur t-turff-fuf, m-maggot,” Jane managed to choke out around the pressure on his windpipe.

“*Wrestling*, feats o’ manly strength, that’s my turf boyo.” Tavish leaned in. “You’ve just been drawn into *my* Highland Games.” He was practically nose-to-nose with him now. “How’s it feel with someone else landin’ on top, eh?”

Again—if Tavish were a more perceptive man, he might have noticed the change in Jane’s eye before it was too late.

The not-so-defeated Soldier roared, tapping into some heretofore unknown pool of strength, and lunged to grasp Tavish’s bent-forward shoulder. He jerked it down so fiercely Tavish’s back landed against Jane’s chest, something that seemed impossible only a moment ago, which was quickly followed by a headlock. Tavish snarled in frustration, and the pair began another round of furious twisting, each trying to break free and wind up with the advantage again.

But Jane had never fought him like *this* before. As the headlock tightened, Tavish wondered if maybe he was wrong. Maybe Jane *did* know how to hold back, had been holding back this whole time, and only now was he willing to unleash his true ferocity.

Jane’s grip forced Tavish’s chin upwards, the pair scrabbling on their backs like overturned bugs. He bellowed, “Say uncle!” and it might have woken neighbors if the hotel hadn’t proved itself to be impossibly empty in lobby, restaurant, and pool all.

“Fuck you!” Tavish spat back.

He hadn’t been so close to victory just to have it snatched away from him. Stubbornness, that’s what his family legacy had ingrained in him, never giving up even when you maybe should. He dug in his heels—literally too, kicking backwards to try and reclaim the glory that should have been his.

Nothing—not in his rivalry with the Soldier, not in the numerous scuffles and brawls he’d conquered before that—could prepare him for the suddenness with which the fight was no longer in his favor. Jane flipped them. All at once, he was laying belly-down on the bed, Jane’s weight heavy behind him, one of the most hopeless sorts of grapples one could be in. It wasn’t even a proper cradle: the headlock still holding him in place, his limbs without a drop of leverage.

“Say it,” Jane said, breath wet in his ear.

The pause where it was clear there was no path to victory (but still with no will to admit defeat) rang throughout the room. Tavish grit his teeth, burying his forehead against the mattress, feeling flush and fire in every blood vessel, refusing to bow to the humiliation.

But Jane didn’t force the confession out of him. Not in the straining of the hold, not the way their bodies usually met each other in glorious violence. Instead, the hand not gripping Tavish moved along the bed, drawing backwards onto their bodies, uncharacteristically hesitant.

It rested on Tavish’s kilt. And it sat there, long enough for Tavish to grow confused, to wonder why he wasn’t being pushed to his breaking point, Jane’s breathing irregular above him.

Then the hand took a great fistful of the fabric, and Tavish’s heart leapt into his throat.

Jane slid the kilt upward, slowly exposing Tavish’s leg, the tartan coming free in bursts where it would temporarily snag between their bodies. Despite the warmth of the room the air felt harsh against his skin, the slow unfurling of what had been trapped by decency. When it was fully out of the way, fingers, just two, freed themselves from the fist and gently trailed up Tavish’s inner thigh.

“J-jane?” he had to ask.

He didn’t know what kind of answer he expected. What sort of answer could possibly justify why Jane’s hand was where it was, what he could say that would make the palm between Tavish’s leg and the mattress make any sense. Or when it began to move in small circles, fingerpads dancing over sensitive flesh, each circulation daring to move a bit closer to the place where thigh met groin.

Jane mumbled something. Even straining as he was for an explanation, hanging on every word, Tavish still couldn’t make it out.

When he’d been blindly gloating, Tavish had missed a very key detail in this insane fucking mystery: the deep need in Jane’s voice. The same need when he’d thrown himself at Tavish, now straining his vocal cords in ragged breaths as he braved the last few inches.

And wrapped his hand around Tavish’s shaft.

Tavish yelped in surprise, but Jane didn’t react to that either, didn’t immediately jerk his hand away like any sense in the world would demand he do. Instead, he began to move his wrist, unhurried and deliberate, forcing out a groan from the Demoman as surely as he’d forced out surrender. Tavish twisted at the touch, halfhearted and confused, but even if had known what he wanted his body to do he couldn’t have managed it—a pin was all about leverage, and Jane now had all the advantage in the world.

The roaming hand drew back slightly, and the relief of it taking its confusing feelings with it was short lived as it began to trail up the *back* of Tavish’s thigh.

“Say it,” Jane said one final time, this one almost a plea.

That was an out available to him. A single statement and this whole thing would stop—cease, never go further, leave the dangerous questions between them unasked. Tavish’s hanging mouth considered it, but didn’t comply, not even when Jane’s hand began to fondle higher, when it took one of Tavish’s cheeks and squeezed hard.

“Aah-!” Tavish gasped.

He didn’t say it, because even though Jane had let go of his shaft he was harder than he had ever been in his life; the groping of his backside growing more and more brazen and still he wasn’t repulsed. Even as the chokehold dragged his upper body along the bed, tilting his hips at an angle. Even when fingers began to circle the ring of muscle between his cheeks, massaging an area of his body he’d never even considered a factor.

This wasn’t about winning any more.

Jane’s lips brushed the back of Tavish’s neck. Then desire overrode hesitation, and Jane fumbled on the side of Tavish’s good eye, grabbing one of those stupid little bottles of complimentary hand lotion Tavish thought no one ever used. He was proven wrong when cold fingers found their way inside him, and he whined, a wave of noise falling from his mouth that only spurred Jane on. He squirmed, still acting on instinct, but his struggles were effectual only in that they pushed him into a slightly more comfortable position as the intrusion worked him open. He bit his lip against any words, afraid the wrong ones would slip out by accident, instead gripping the sheets as his muscles were loosened.

He could feel Jane’s anticipation in every inch where their bodies touched, still so much frustrated by clothing, by undershirts and boxers, only the lifted back of Tavish’s kilt allowing contact. Where his neck and shoulders met Jane’s arm, he swore he could feel them as pricks of static. When Jane finally pushed down his boxers and let his cock slap heavily against Tavish’s back, the electricity was almost tangible.

The sheer size of it almost made the word of surrender roll forward in Tavish’s brain. There was no hiding from what they were doing now, no denying where *exactly* the logical conclusion of their games of domination were about to bumble into—not with a Soldier’s length grinding against him and crappy lotion permeating the air with the scent of salt.

But again, he didn’t say uncle. Instead, what escaped his lips was Jane’s name, and what was returned to him was a shudder of absolute need from the Soldier.

As with everything Jane Doe, he entered Tavish with little warning. Tavish cried out, wishing he had something to bite on, ravaging his own lip until it turned bloody. But a solution presented itself in Jane’s slipping form: he’d been distracted enough to let the headlock weaken, loose enough for Tavish to tuck his chin downward and bite his arm. Tit-for-tat, but it was the smallest bit of revenge compared to the unparalleled ferocity with which Jane crammed himself deeper. That was how they tormented each other as the Soldier began to thrust and the Demoman sunk his teeth.

Jane’s weight kept Tavish pressed as the already unbearable air filled with sweat and body heat and the grunts of two men who wouldn’t give in. The unfamiliar bliss of Jane diving so deep into him put spots across Tavish’s vision. It wiped away all thoughts, all memory of the original fight before this became what it was. The only thing that mattered was the blank whiteness in Tavish’s mind and the little Ms that decorated the sheets before him.

A hand, still coated in lotion from that stupid little bottle, snaked forward and fondled him once again, squeezing his balls, rubbing the back along his shaft.

Directly behind him, the lips still pressed to his neck whispered, “Tav…”

Tavish came. He came like he’d had a thousand releases pent up inside him, one for every day he’d known this man and they’d whetted their strength against each other. The hot gush coated his stomach, Jane’s hand, the Happy Meal themed sheets—he felt it would go on forever, his whole body liquefied and squeezed out through the tip of his cock.

That was when the last of the fight went out of him. Some part of him must still have been resisting, even without realizing, but only then did he truly go slack. Jane withdrew a bloody arm, shoving Tavish’s used body flat once again, trusting at a new angle until he, too, came.

The noise that escaped him sounded more like a cry than anything Tavish had made.

And, when it was all over, it was Jane who finally gave up, who drew himself off Tavish and curled into a ball on the other side of the bed.

It was a bloody dumb thing to think about, their stupid competition, but that’s what ran through Tavish’s mind as he tried to find the strength to roll onto his side. Even if he was technically the winner, he certainly didn’t feel it. He just felt tired. But he couldn’t close his eye and let exhaustion take over, not looking at the blocky form of Jane’s back.

“Jane? Jane you alright?” Tavish dragged himself closer, hand against the thin fabric of Jane’s tank top, but when he leaned over the Soldier twisted his face further into the mattress.

“God. I fucked up didn’t I?” Jane said.

“Maybe. I dunno. I can barely think straight meself. Fucked up how?”

“Did something. Can’t take it back.”

“Ah. Well, aye. That’s true. But that happens lots, doin’ things you can’t take back.”

Jane clamped both arms over his helmet, blood already sticking between the hairs. Tavish could feel uncomfortable liquids of his own covering his stomach and hem of his shirt. That, plus what Jane left inside him, leaking out and coating his thighs.

His palm began to rub slow circles in the Soldier’s back.

Eventually, Jane pulled away his arms, and the look he pointed up at Tavish said it all: the desire was still there, even behind all the shame that made him flick his eyes away.

“Ah Janey.” The name bubbled forward, barely prompted, barely a thought behind it. But it felt right to say, now that there were doors that they had opened and couldn’t shut, but also questions they’d answered. “C’mere lad.”

He motioned Jane closer, and after another hesitation the Soldier complied, and Tavish was finally allowed to fall sideways with his friend in his arms. Jane began to return the favor, rubbing the tense muscles in Tavish’s back, chasing away some of the ache.

Not the worst of it though. He wondered if there would be hand-print bruises on his backside with how roughly Jane had gripped him, and of course there were smears of white and red on them both. But they could clean in the morning. For now it was enough to have tested the limits, and found they were still just as right as before.

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