

# Igrotzny Hykok

## Backstory

**Species:** Drake

**Sex:** ♂

**Age:** 43

**Height:** 6ft 3in

**Weight:** 200lbs

**Siblings:** 3 siblings, all older. One sister 7 years older born in '68, one sister 5 years older who lived less than one year in '70, one brother 2 years older born in '73.

### Cultural Notes

For much of the history of Igrotzny's timeline, scaled folk like himself have been largely ignored. This includes in media where they have been portrayed as monsters eating screaming women, the soldier who gets shot, minor roles such as servers or extras, or if they were lucky, a superhero's sidekick. It was only since around the turn of the century that scaled folks began to see themselves represented as politically or financially successful in media.

Draconids have an interesting relationship with caffeine. To most, it is a mild stimulant, but to drakes and other draconids, it is much more potent, on a level with high-proof alcoholic spirits or heroin, and highly addictive. It can also function as a potent painkiller. As a result, draconids have government-issued punch cards limiting them to three cups of coffee or regular size chocolate bars per month. As a result, there is a thriving black market for these products.

Many vendors of products containing caffeine in the current day use thumbprint ID as part of customers' purchasing process. Despite the ability of some draconids to shape-shift the majority of their bodies, they can't change their thumb and finger prints, so this makes an effective barrier. There are also drugs that can cause severe nausea or diarrhoea in draconids who have taken caffeine, and some therapists use this as part of their treatment, with draconid clients routinely injected before a session. If they complete a session then a low-caffeine or completely decaffeinated drink is offered at the end of the session.

There is also suspicion among draconids that they are often passed over for housing, loans, and being hired for jobs. While such discrimination is illegal in Igrotzny's country, scaled folk can seldom prove that it's happened to them.

Draconids are also inherently eager collectors.

There is also no universal health care in the culture in which Igrotzny lives.

Igrotzny is an original character. He is a draconid living in a culture where draconids endure a difficult, often unfavourable, social position. He has developed a set of coping techniques to manage this, however these come at a personal cost to him.

### Trust & Confidence

*(newborn)*

Igrotzny was born to a family who lived in a small mid-western town in the US. Much like his human counterparts, he does not remember his infancy, however he also was never told any stories about his infancy by his family. He was the youngest of 3 siblings so believes that his infancy was less documented than his older siblings, but this does not seem to have translated into actual neglect.

His family were very used to childrearing by the point he came along, so although he was indeed looked after, he was neither subject to the mistakes or stresses of the inexperienced parent, nor was he a particular surprise to them. In the current day he is generally unenthusiastic, which suggests that his rearing was considered a routine to be completed, not a special experience to be treasured, by his parents.

### **Freedom & Self-Determination**

*(toddlerhood)*

As a toddler, Igrotzny was more or less left to bring himself up. This was not in any seriously neglectful way – he wasn't left to find his own food, for example – but his parents had 'been there, done that' when it came to having children so didn't dote on him the way they may have with his older siblings. As a result, Igrotzny developed a habit of making his own way.

Occasionally, this tipped over into Igrotzny feeling a little *too* left on his own, to the point that he felt he needed to provide for himself.

As a result of this he developed a habit of trying to capture every little detail to ensure that he didn't miss any relevant facts, and this continued into adulthood. Even in the current day Igrotzny researches thoroughly, whether it is particularly necessary for the situation in hand or not. Even once he has done this, he can often agonize over whether or not he has missed anything. This has led him to feel levels of self-doubt that, while not utterly crippling, have an impact on his life nonetheless, leaving him very aware of his limitations (mainly what he can't do and the things he doesn't know), along with a sense of resentment towards those who don't have these levels of self-doubt.

Igrotzny is sensitive to the idea of falling short, especially when it comes to letting others down (or others letting him down), and of failures in team work due to weak links in the team. To this effect, he doesn't like showing others projects of his own that he hasn't worked on until he feels they are completely finished.

As a result of this, Igrotzny does not like to face others head-on, as he feels there is a risk of not being as well prepared as he thought he was. As a result, he is given to passive-aggression, preferring inactivity, agitation, and (on occasion) over-compliance with others. However, over-compliance is generally the most intense his passivity gets and is his most favoured mode of passive behaviour, although he will sometimes cooperate with others, and sometimes not.

Igrotzny never enjoyed swimming, as in school he had a rather austere instructor who subjected his students to drilling techniques. He also took a dislike to math in school as he struggled with it beyond basic algebra.

Igrotzny is unlikely to hold onto relationships, instead allowing people to come and go to

and from his life as they will. This includes at least some family members (although this makes sense, given that one cannot choose one's family). His approach to material possessions is quite different. As a draconid he loves collecting things and has long been a collector of books, CDs and DVDs, art and animal figurines.

However, as an older drake Igrotzny has owned a few pets, and he has very much come to treasure the relationships he has with those. When he loses a pet he grieves deeply for it, to the point of barely eating for several days.

Igrotzny could not be described as cruel. He has 'poke the puppy' moments but these are exactly as they sound: low-level acts that are closer related to banter or gentle mickey-taking than actual cruelty. He is very aware of the potential to do harm and does not wish to do so.

Igrotzny is capable of becoming almost invisible. This came to prove incredibly helpful when his mother began to experience severe migraines when he was an older child.

### **Ambition**

*(young childhood)*

Igrotzny was aware from a young age that he didn't fit in, in the small town in which he was growing up. He quickly came to the conclusion that he couldn't express himself, for fear of being ostracised. As a result of this, he did not become a very energetic child. Instead he immersed himself in books (indeed, reading became something of a staple pleasure when he grew older. He could easily digest advanced material like Shakespeare by the third grade, and sometimes got into trouble for reading at inappropriate times.) or TV. The closest to being active Igrotzny got was going to the park to find and study bugs.

His first day of school was quite low-key. He didn't cling to his mother nor rush in to explore the school. He simply kept a middle ground.

He did not form many friendships, and much preferred solitude to contact with others. Only a tiny number of people fit with his personality well enough that he came to consider them friends. Igrotzny did not develop the skill to maintain relationships, so many over the years have grown stale and ended up with he and the other person drifting apart.

This life stage is about identifying and beginning to seek to fulfil one's life ambitions, however Igrotzny felt uncomfortable about this, even as a small child. Perhaps that is because he did not fit in, in his native town, so identifying a goal may have been difficult. He had some ideas of being a veterinarian, field biologist, author, race-car driver, archaeologist, paleontologist, wildlife photographer, and others, and in his more fanciful moments, the peace and quiet, and lack of demands, that were associated with being a dog, cat or other house pet appealed to him. Like the animal fantasies of any child however, he discarded these notions long before growing into adulthood.

However, as he grew older he identified some modest (and more easily attainable) goals, including being able to make an income that supported him well enough that he would not need to stress about his wants and needs, and to live to be himself.

Furthermore, Igrotzny felt distaste towards celebrations of achievement. To him they demonstrated a lack of awareness in the celebrators of the temporary nature of

achievement, or of the possibility of victory being usurped at a later date. Therefore he himself didn't, and still does not, celebrate success, either his own or others'.

## **Productivity**

*(older childhood)*

This is the stage where Igrotzny's schooling got more technical and challenging. He responded to this by doing his best to find creative ways to comply with the tasks he was given. He enjoys doing it this way, although it does take him longer to complete the tasks.

At first, he was happy to comply in contributing, often raising his hand. However, after a while his classmates started complaining that he did this too often and never gave them a chance, so Igrotzny cut back on raising his hand and thereafter only did so occasionally and half-heartedly. This succeeded in appeasing his classmates, however some of his teachers became concerned about why he was no longer participating with his initial enthusiasm. In other classes, it was his teachers who had asked him to give other children a chance.

When it came to school work in a team, he preferred to be a team player rather than the leader. He had many ideas to contribute but again, found that these were not always welcome, and he allowed other, louder children to steamroller his contributions. Eventually, because of this, Igrotzny took to questioning the leadership of whoever the leader was in a given project, expressing reservations and adding tweaks or alternative ideas of his own. He mainly did this to get the task completed as quickly as possible so that the need to be in a team could come to an end.

At around this time of his life, Igrotzny started helping his mother with cooking the family's evening meals. At first he set the table, but soon his mother asked him to microwave vegetables too, and he continued to learn from there. Later, whenever she was struck down with migraines, she would give him written or softly-spoken instructions as to how he needed to cook his part of the evening meal. His siblings would take care of the other parts.

During this stage of his life, his mother gave him an ultimatum with after-school activities: to take up either a musical instrument or a sport. He wasn't interested in either but picked the clarinet. He complied with his mother's wish to learn to play it but resented this.

When Igrotzny was 9-10 years old, his mother started having migraines. These may have been cluster headaches given their severity, and happened once or twice per week. When this happened she needed silence and to be left alone to lay in the dark. Igrotzny responded to this by developing excellent stealth skills and became adept at sneaking around, including to go downstairs and watch TV or to leave the house at night. Later in life his mother was diagnosed with fibromyalgia.

Igrotzny's species and gender didn't help with his overall feelings of alienation, or perhaps they were in part responsible for them. The cultural notes at the top of this document go into some detail regarding this. However, he also resented, and continues to resent, male stereotypes, which are imposed on him as much as they are anybody else in his culture. He dislikes the notion of masculine aggression and male privilege, and tries to have as little do do with them as possible.

## **Child to Adult Transition** (adolescence)

Socially, Igrotzny found adolescence difficult, and was not in any of the popular cliques. In fact, he found social life as a teenager so miserable that he breathed a sigh of relief when he graduated, and put his yearbook away in the attic where he could forget about it.

Life was quite changeable, even chaotic, at this time in Igrotzny's life, so whenever he felt a need for stability he would read. This almost always made him feel better. Aside from reading, he would study random subjects that appealed to him at any given time, indulge in a spot of creative writing, play tabletop RPGs and driving simulators, and enjoy some music (especially The Beatles, but also Pink Floyd, jazz, ska, and classical). The bandroom became a place for him to occasionally hang out and he would often spend time with his bandmates there. In truth, he preferred to be alone but this gave him some cover to appear to be more sociable.

Later, he took to joining chat rooms where he felt he could be somebody other than himself.

Igrotzny was still not very sociable by this time in his life and did not culture particularly close friendships. If he did, then he based his friendships with them more on their interests than anything else. On the other hand, if a person either sneered or came on too friendly to him, he would simply be civil with them, neither becoming vehemently unfriendly or responding in any other strong way.

Given Igrotzny's heritage as a scaled person (see Cultural Notes), he didn't need to go out of his way to find enemies. In his own words, "I have enough people volunteering for the job". He has been bullied by classmates before but will try to avoid conflict where he can. However, when pushed hard enough he will fight, and has been in a small number of fights due to this. The bullying he has experienced includes kids who repeatedly tried to trip him on the stairs, ruined his main school clothes when he was in his PE clothes, shoved him into lockers, tried to give him swirlies (although a few tried to do this, none succeeded), stepped repeatedly on his heels while following him, or just walking by and punching him. It took a lot of provocation before he would react, and even then his initial attempts to resolve the issue would involve him asking his persecutor to stop. If this didn't work he would slam them up against a wall.

Igrotzny's role models were his father, Coyote, Djheuty, and Buddha.

He didn't have any particular interest in dating during his teenage years, but had a mild interest in a springer spaniel named Sally. However, he mainly exaggerated this to act as a cover, since being male and not being seen to be interested in a female would have invited more aggravation than he already got, in his school.

## **Closeness in Relationships** (young adulthood)

Igrotzny is quite strongly focused on work and almost self-identifies as a workaholic. However, he refuses to work hard for poor pay. With that said, he also has days where his mind is elsewhere, and other days when he feels particularly unsociable and melancholy.

This happens between one and three days per month, especially if he can't take the day off to allow himself to recover.

As far as relationships go, he is romantic but asexual, and he only enters into any such relationship with a person he has come to trust. Igrotzny feels that he cannot simply allow himself to become an open book, even to partners, so when anyone does remain loyal to him, he finds that deeply touching. He becomes fiercely loyal to anyone who is this loyal to him.

In particular, he met a raven in college who he developed a relationship with. She nudged him to propose to her but he didn't for a long time. 11 years into the relationship, he finally did. He didn't want to ask and as ever, he felt controlled by this, but this sentiment was only fleeting and at other times he would revert to feeling as if he would do anything for her. At times she spends more than they as a couple can afford, and he resents this.

Igrotzny became addicted to caffeine. It started when he got a bad molar and couldn't afford healthcare to have it treated. Regular painkillers didn't work, but coffee did. He took to shape-shifting into another species for a few minutes and would buy a coffee using cash (never his card).

Over time he lost his job, his apartment, and almost his fiancée, to this habit. He tried hiding it with peppermint. One night, maddened by the pain of his tooth and out of coffee from the hidden stash in his home, he went out to find some more and was discovered trying to claw into a locked dumpster behind a coffee shop late one night.

He now has his addiction under good control and has reduced his consumption from three pots and four mochas per day to one cup a day and one mocha per week. He is seeing a therapist who helps him maintain this but occasionally he slips up.

Igrotzny's extra caffeine rations happen less often than they used to, partly due to his own personal control but also due to the use of thumbprint ID technology by vendors.

Between Igrotzny's caving into societal issues and his feelings of being controlled in almost every way he could possibly be, along with his apprehension and dislike of communication, he has undiagnosed depression. His father was a pharmacist so when he first began to suspect he had depression he researched the potential side-effects of anti-depression medication, and this deeply unsettled him, putting him off using them to help with his condition.

### **Passing on Responsibilities**

*(older adulthood)*

Igrotzny usually finds work as a pet care attendant at a boarding or daycare facility, usually looking after cats. He is not particularly interested in developing a career, and doesn't expect to earn much doing what he does. However, the most he hopes to have built for himself by the time he retires is to have spent his time working for a great boss.

He doesn't have any children, but he does have two cats, who, like many besotted pet owners, he counts as his babies and takes enormous pride in.

## **End of Life**

*(old age)*

It should be noted that Igrotzny's father, who was a workaholic much like Igrotzny himself) died of a heart attack. While this is not inevitable for Igrotzny himself, there is potential for the pattern to repeat.

Igrotzny wouldn't admit to feeling afraid of death, partly because both of his grandfathers developed dementia so were most likely unaware of their deaths. Despite this, he hates the idea of becoming a burden to anybody and hopes that he dies without developing dementia.

## **Credits**

Based on theory by:

Erikson, E., (1951) 'Childhood and Society', W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. chapter 7.

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~Hayley, The Character Consultancy