

Chapter 5: The Tournament

By Champ (<https://champtehatter.com/>)

"So did you sleep together?" asked Vincent the next morning at Sunday brunch.

"Yes, we did," said Demetrius with a smug grin as he left it at that.

"Okay, smart Alec," said Vincent rolling his eyes. "And what else did you do?"

"That's all, just read him a bedtime story and went to bed," said Demetrius.

"That's it?! Aww man. Since when did you become so boring?" Demetrius chuckled and smacked Vincent's arm playfully.

"Okay mister interesting. What did *you* do in bed lately?"

"What did *I* do? Well, how's this for interesting: First, I met a guy into dragon pet play. I went over to his place and he wanted me to roleplay as a dragon tamer. You won't believe what he asked me to do..."

Demetrius smiled to himself as Vincent shared his latest escapades. The end to his night with Kiddo may have sounded boring to Vincent, but Demetrius found Kiddo plenty interesting, and he couldn't wait to take things further.

"Um, excuse me! Earth to Demetrius. Are you even paying attention? I was telling a *story*," said Vincent, looking visibly annoyed.

"Oh, sorry," said Demetrius, absentmindedly, doing his best to look attentive but soon slipping back into his thoughts of Kiddo. Vincent paused.

"Okay, Demetrius. You've clearly got your mind on something. What are you thinking about?"

"Nothing."

"I know that look... Oh my gosh," said Vincent, grinning as realization suddenly dawned on him. "Oh my gosh! It's finally happened hasn't it? Big Bad Daddy Demetrius is in love!" That earned a scornful look from Demetrius.

"What?! No, don't be ridiculous. Just because I want to see him more and I like to spend time with him doesn't mean I'm in *love*."

"Hmmm... okay, then. If it isn't love, why don't you explain it to me," said Vincent, twirling his finger in a 'get on with it' gesture. "Cause I'm not quite getting it." Demetrius thought for a minute, searching for the words to explain how he felt.

"Well, he just fascinates me, is all. I just like learning about him... and I've learned so much... about ABDL... about magic cards... Oh don't give me that look. It's not all about releasing your sperm, you know?"

"If you say so," said Vincent, looking unconvinced. "I mean, he's cute, I'll give you that. And he has a *nice* ass. But so far you haven't told me anything that would blow my socks off..."

"I don't know, it's just something about him... the way he behaves... almost like he's a lost little boy in the big wide world... I can't help but feel a little protective of the guy, you know? It feels good to keep an eye on him and uh..." Demetrius paused as he saw Vincent looking at him with a raised eyebrow. "...What? What's that look?"

"You're rambling..."

"No, I'm not. And so what if I am?"

"That's what people in *love do*..." said Vincent in a singsong voice.

"I'm *not* in love," said Demetrius, crossing his arms and huffing in a way that was oddly and unexpectedly adorable for such a buff and beefy fellow.

"Alright, if you say so. Just make sure you *two love birds* invite me to the wedding... or adoption... or whatever..."

Demetrius excused himself and took a long hard look at himself in the bathroom mirror. It seemed that what had started out as a natural impulse to chase that juicy bubble butt had become something more.

"Am I... falling in love?"

For the next couple weeks, Demetrius spent more time visiting Kiddo for snuggles and bedtime stories and less time distracting him in the comic shop. When he did visit, he preferred to play other players and allow kiddo to do his work undisturbed.

Mr. Books seemed pleased with these developments. It turned out that Demetrius was a fun and charismatic player despite his initially intimidating appearance. He added some welcome variety to the gaming table, and he never took himself - or the game - too seriously. Meanwhile, Kiddo had a glow about him that made him even more enthusiastic and bubbly, increasing his productivity and his sales.

"What are you daydreaming about?" asked Mr. Books one day, smirking as he watched Kiddo at the counter, hand resting on his chin, staring at Demetrius with a love-struck look.

"Oh!" said Kiddo, snapping out of it. "Sorry, Mr. Books."

"I know that look," said Mr. Books with a knowing smile. "You're in *love*." Kiddo just blushed and looked down.

"Well, maybe a *little*," he admitted quietly. Mr. Books put a hand on Kiddo's shoulder. "I'm happy for you, Kiddo. Don't let your doubts get in the way of giving love a chance. Just enjoy yourself. While you're young!"

"Thanks, Mr. Books," said Kiddo, suddenly becoming more formal and stepping back. Mr. Books tactfully changed the subject.

"So, are you ready for that new tournament coming up? It's not long now." Kiddo's look changed instantly to one of determination and excitement.

"Yes, I'm ready. And I'm planning to *win*."

"That's my boy!" said Mr. Books.

The tournament was, in fact, only a week away, and it was to be held at a neighboring shop in the city called Gremlin Games. Kiddo was super hyped about this tournament, and even more hyped by the fact that Demetrius said he would be there. He lived for the competition, the thrill of playing against other players, and as he imagined competing, he could almost feel the feeling of victory spreading through him like a warmth.

"Kiddo," said Mr. Books, interrupting Kiddo's daydream. "I think you've sprung a little leak there."

"Oh, no!" said Kiddo "Not again!" he waddled back as fast as his little legs could carry him to the break room to grab his diaper bag and get changed, leaving Mr. Books to chuckle and shake his head as Kiddo loudly crinkled by, his obvious accident surprising no one within earshot. Demetrius came over from the gaming tables after Kiddo waddled off and exchanged a knowing glance with Mr. Books.

"Another leak. That boy needs someone to look after him," said Demetrius, sighing and shaking his head. Mr. Books held up his hands.

"Don't look at me! I'm way too old to be dealing with dirty diapers. Maybe *you* should do it."

"I assure you, I'm way ahead of you," said Demetrius, with a wink. "He just needs a reminder is all. And I don't think those energy drinks are doing him any favors in the diaper department."

"No. They're not particularly healthy, either. We only carry them begrudgingly because our clientele demands it." said Mr. Books.

"Too bad there isn't another healthy alternative," said Demetrius, rubbing his chin, "although... That gives me an idea..." Demetrius's entrepreneurial wheels were spinning. An alternative to energy drinks? Or maybe energy drinks and diapers for the gaming crowd? A slogan like, "What the champs wear?" It was a cute idea, an energy drink, diaper, and other apparel company for gamers of all types.

"What are you smiling about?" asked Mr. Books, cocking his head.

"Oh, just a crazy idea I had, but I'm sure there's no real market for it..." Mr. Books' curiosity was Piqued.

"Try me..."

The day of the tournament finally came. Kiddo stood in front of Gremlin Games looking at the time. He was concerned that Demetrius hadn't arrived yet. Where was he?

"He said he'd be here," said Kiddo, looking at the time again. "Maybe he's busy?" Kiddo sighed. It wasn't that big a deal if Demetrius couldn't make it, he said to himself, even though he was beginning to feel the fear of disappointment.

Kiddo looked at his phone one last time and decided he couldn't wait any longer, but just as he turned to go inside, Demetrius pulled up and jumped out of his car with a bag slung over his shoulder.

"Sorry I'm late, Kiddo! I just had a little emergency, but it's all taken care of."

"Boy am I glad you're here," said Kiddo. "I was beginning to think you wouldn't make it."

"I'll always make it," said Demetrius, "Don't you ever doubt it. Now, the question is are *you* ready?"

"Totally," said Kiddo, balling up his fists with a look of determination. Demetrius noticed the distinct lack of a diaper bag on Kiddo's shoulder.

"All you have is your cards. Are you sure you've got *everything*?"

"I'm sure," said Kiddo.

"All *right*," said Demetrius, shrugging. He could see that Kiddo was double padded under his pants shorts by the obvious bulge he was sporting in front and behind, but Demetrius wondered if it would really hold. Still, Kiddo seemed to know what he was doing so Demetrius just nodded and patted Kiddo on the back and they walked inside.

The moment Demetrius and Kiddo entered the game store, it seemed like all eyes turned their way. Kiddo froze.

"You okay?" whispered, Demetrius.

"Y-yeah," said Kiddo, clearly fighting to calm himself down. "New store jitters is all." Demetrius looked around and saw that the store was no bigger than Mr. Books' store, and this was almost certainly not exactly the 'big leagues' as far as MTG tournaments went, but the psychological effect of playing away from one's home turf could not be understated. In addition, Demetrius was used to turning heads, but he was fairly certain that Kiddo was not so comfortable with the sudden looks they got. He put a comforting hand on Kiddo's shoulder as they walked to sign in.

"You got this, kiddo."

The attention they were drawing did not seem to be dissipating. If anything, there seemed to be *more* people watching them and murmuring as Kiddo and Demetrius approached the sign-in table.

"Who's *that*?"

"Is he competing?"

"I hope I don't have to battle him. He looks fierce." Demetrius stuck out like a sore thumb, and he quickly realized through the snatches of conversation that he could catch, that *he* was the one drawing all this attention.

"Wow," said the guy signing them in. "You gonna compete, big guy?"

"Haha, no, not this time," said Demetrius, loud enough for anyone to hear. "I'm just here to support my lil' guy here." He patted Kiddo on the back and the tension seemed to drain from the room as several players visibly relaxed.

"Heh, too bad," said the man with a smirk. "You had them shaking in their boots thinking they were going to compete against you. Coulda made for an interesting tournament." Demetrius scoffed.

"Hey, just because I'm buff in *real* life doesn't mean I'm strong in the game."

"Hey, psychology is half the battle. Don't underestimate the power of appearances." Demetrius raised an eyebrow. He wasn't convinced. After all, nobody had mentioned anything about that in the time he had been training at Mr. Books & comics. Then again, the gamers there had had time to get used to him. He filed this information away for later use in case he ever got to compete in a tournament himself.

After signup, Kiddo had to wait to be matched.

"How are they gonna do this?" asked Demetrius.

"Well, usually you're matched with people that are close to your level, but this is a 'commander' type tournament. In this one, we'll be put in 'pods' of four and placement will be random. The last person standing advances..."

"If only one in four people advance each round, it's gonna be a short tournament," said Demetrius, looking around.

"Well, it's first to two victories, so maybe not."

"You'll wipe the floor with 'em, champ."

The sign-in guy's voice came over the speaker.

"Alllll right guys, gals, and non-binary pals. Seating numbers are going out. When you get your number, sit at your table and get ready to... command!"

Kiddo got his number and sat down with a loud crinkle at a table closer to the entrance. He was soon joined by an edgy emo kid with a black deck, a new-agey lady with blue decks and some crystals that she sat down in her play area. The final competitor in the pod was a big stinky guy showing off his plumber crack behind.

"Peee-yuuu!" said the crystal lady. "You're totally messing up the vibe. This is so not *namaste*."

"I know," said the guy with a grin as he let out a loud fart. "It's all part of my strategy. If you can't dazzle them with strategy, baffle them with B.O.!"

"Gross," said the emo kid. "My deck is as black as my heart, but your noxious fumes are even darker. You are so going to be my first target."

"Yeah, I don't care who wins as long as we cleanse this tournament of this stinky aura."

"I want a good clean game. No cheating and show good sportsmanship," yelled the announcer. "Match begin!" And the game was off.

Demetrius rooted for Kiddo as he played. He could already sort of pick out the play styles of the other players from the knowledge he had gained while playing at Kiddo's shop. Predictably, the new-age lady had a blue deck with a lot of healing spells that boosted her life, while the emo kid had a destructive black deck that focused on draining life. The stinky guy didn't seem to have much of a strategy at all. He just picked the strongest creatures he could for his deck, but they were of various types and he had to waste a bunch of turns putting down different color lands so he could have enough mana to summon his monsters. That cost him dearly and despite his distracting stench, he won zero games. Kiddo managed to win two in a row and so he and Demetrius got to watch some of the other games while waiting to advance.

Kiddo whispered commentary to Demetrius as they watched the pod next to theirs finish up a game.

"That player is what we call a grinder. He'll make you grind through your entire deck and lose the game by default. You've got to take his life points quickly before he makes you discard all your cards."

Just across from the grinder sat an opponent whose aesthetic was very fiery; flame bracelets, flame shirt, even flame hair style dyed red and gelled to stick straight up like a candle flame.

"What's *his* strategy?" asked Demetrius.

"Aggressive," was all that Kiddo said.

They watched as the flame haired young guy, brimming with cocky confidence, laid down a blazing fire attack that burnt the grinder's life points to a cinder.

"You just got *flamed!*" cried the man. "Better luck next time, newb!"

"Wow, that guy's kind of a jerk," whispered Demetrius.

"That's Flamin' Jasper," said Kiddo, whispering back. "It's kind of his M.O."

Jasper stood up from the table and stuck his hand out for a handshake, but pulled it away at the last moment, faking his opponent out.

"Too slow!" Jasper dusted his hands off and stepped away from the table, then caught sight of Kiddo and sneered. As luck would have it, they were to be opponents in the next round.

"Well, well, well, if it isn't *diaper* boy," he said, taking the chair opposite Kiddo.

Demetrius glared at Jasper and put his hand on Kiddo's shoulder.

"I believe he prefers 'Kiddo'."

Jasper's eyes went wide for a second, scanning Demetrius up and down before returning to his disdainful and cocky look.

"So you brought protection this time, huh? Well, it isn't going to protect you when I flame you with my deck."

"You haven't won yet, Jasper," shot back kiddo, "But you're welcome to try."

"And you're welcome to *cry*. When you lose, that is. With my new red dragon deck, I am going to eat my opponents for breakfast and snap up that prize like a dragon's hoard." Jasper smirked and crossed his arms. "Whatever strategy you've got in mind is bound to go up in *flames*."

Kiddo and Demetrius exchanged glances. Since Demetrius had favored dragon decks, Kiddo had a lot of practice recently fighting them. It was now Kiddo's turn to smirk.

"Bring it on, Jasper."

Soon, the last of the first round of battles had ended and the tables were populated with the second round pods.

This pod had an interesting mix of players. Aside from Kiddo and Jasper, there was a girl named Fae. She was dressed like a druid-class role player and had a forest elf/faerie deck. Then there was a girl named SeaMantha with a full on pirate costume to match her pirate deck. They had barely had time to introduce themselves before the announcer's voice rang out signaling the start to the match.

"Game on!"

Round two began with Jasper laying down his most aggressive card - SunBurst - a bombastic move that took one life point off of every player in the game, including himself. Kiddo and the other two players looked at each other, stunned.

"Shiver me timbers, ye scallywag! That was a blow to me starboard bow!" said SeaMantha.

"That wasn't very fair-y," said Fae. "I say we team up to spirit him away from this game!" And just like that, the three were set against Jasper in the first round.

"Hahaha! Just try it, pipsqueaks!" said Jasper. "Your plan will go up in *flames* against my red dragon deck! Fight with the best, and lose like the rest!"

Kiddo knew just how to defeat a dragon deck, and so he had taken care to reorganize and change his deck specifically for that purpose when he heard Jasper's boast before the match.

"Try this on for size!" said Kiddo, activating a card that instantly wiped out one of Jasper's creatures. The other two picked up on the technique of going for quick creature kills, and SeaMantha in particular struck pirate's gold with several cards to 'swab the deck' with. Jasper hardly knew what hit him. In three rounds, he was out of the game. Jasper sat back, in shock at the fact that he had just lost.

"No way! You beat my Dragon deck..."

"Better luck next time," said Kiddo. "You might want to mix up your deck a little bit in the future."

"And maybe think twice before you bully your opponents," said Demetrius, crossing his arms as Jasper got up and stormed off. SeaMantha called after him as he was leaving.

"Yarr! Looks like the hothead flew a little close to the sun!"

"Is he out of the competition?" asked Demetrius.

"No, just a quick water break," said Kiddo. "It's based on overall points so he can still play."

"Too bad."

Eventually, Kiddo and SeaMantha ended in a draw, with each of them taking a single point instead of the 3 normally awarded a winner. They stood and shook hands.

"Good game," said SeaMantha. "Yeah, you too," said Kiddo. "Thanks for playing, guys," said Fae.

"You were great out there," said Demetrius, patting Kiddo on the back.

"Not good enough," muttered Kiddo, looking somewhat sullen.

"Hey, you were a good sport, and you played a good game. That's what matters most, Kiddo," said Demetrius, moving his hand lower to pat Kiddo on the butt. "And what matters second most... is whether you need a change..."