



# Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

## How Drakestail Went To The King

*Carolyn Sherwin Bailey*

Once upon a time there was a wee little duck, with a very long tail, so he was called Drakestail. Now, Drakestail had some money of his very, very own, and the king asked if he might take it. So Drakestail loaned all his money to the king.

But the king kept Drakestail's money for a year and a day, and still he did not send it back. Drakestail said he would go to the king and bring back the money himself.

So off he started, one very fine morning, for the king's house. The sun was shining on the ponds, and Drakestail waddled along in the middle of the road, feeling very fine. As he traveled, he met a fox, and the fox said, "Where do you go this fine morning, Friend Drakestail?"

"To the king," said Drakestail, "for he owes me money."

"I will travel along with you," said the fox.

"Ah," said Drakestail, "your four legs would soon tire. Come along with me this way," and he opened his wee little bill very wide, and down his wee little throat went the fox.

Then Drakestail traveled on a little farther. As he went he came to a ladder lying beside the road.

"Where do you go this fine morning, Friend Drakestail?" asked the ladder.

"To the king," said Drakestail, "for he owes me money."

"I will travel along with you," said the ladder.

"Your wooden legs would soon tire," said Drakestail. "Come along with me this way," and he opened his little bill very wide, and down his wee little throat went the ladder.

Then Drakestail traveled on a bit farther until he came to his friend, the river, lying and glistening in the sunshine.

"Where do you go this fine morning, Friend Drakestail?" asked the river.



"To the king, for he owes me money," said Drakestail.

"I will travel with you," said the river.

"You would soon tire if you ran so far, my friend," said Drakestail. "Come along with me this way." He opened his wee bill very wide, and down his wee little throat went the little river.

Then Drakestail traveled and traveled until he came to the king's house. Now Drakestail thought that the king would meet him at the gate, so he called out very loudly:

"Honk! Honk! Drakestail waits at the gate."

But the king did not come out to meet him. Who should appear at the gate but the king's cook, and the cook took Drakestail by his two little legs and flung him into the poultry yard. The other fowls, who were ill-bred birds, ran up to Drakestail and bit him, and jeered at his large tail. It would have gone very badly with Drakestail, but he called to his friend, the fox:

"Reynard, Reynard, come out to the earth,  
Or Drakestail's life is of little worth."

So the fox came out, and he ate up all the ill-bred fowls in the king's poultry yard. But still Drakestail was badly off. He heard the king's cook putting the broth pot over the fire.

"Ladder, ladder, come out to the wall,  
Drakestail does not wish to be broth at all," he cried.

So the ladder came out and leaned against the wall, and Drakestail climbed over in safety. But the king's cook saw Drakestail and set out after him. He caught poor Drakestail and clapped him into the broth pot, and hung him over the fire.

"River, my sweetheart, put out this hot fire,  
The flames that would cook me rise higher and higher," cried Drakestail.

So the river put out the fire with a great noise and sputtering, which the king heard. And the king came running to the kitchen.

"Good morning to you, King," said Drakestail, hopping out of the broth pot, and making a very low bow, "are you through with my money, which you have kept for a year and a day?"

"That I am, Drakestail," said the king. "You shall have it at once."

So the king gave Drakestail the money that he owed him, and Drakestail waddled home again to tell of all his travels.

---

Stories help us explore cultures, learn moral lessons, connect with nature — or simply have fun. That's why ririro.com offers 3,000+ free stories — fairy tales, fables, bedtime stories, myths and more — for every age, in 13 languages, with free printable PDFs and often audio. Reading should be a right, not a privilege. Share

ririro.com and spread the joy of reading.  
Instagram: @ririro\_reading · Pinterest: [pinterest.com/ririrocom](https://pinterest.com/ririrocom)