

Taking another sip of coffee in a bid to stay awake, Chad did his best to keep his focus on the road, especially with the very real threat of a deer walking out and wrecking his car, or possibly worse, his life. He had been on the road for some hours and still had a couple more to go before reaching his destination. And Chad had every intention of making it there safely, and with his car intact.

Yet, seeing something out of the corner of his eye caused him to slow down on the relatively rural road, thinking it safe without having passed any other cars for miles. It was a smallish, brown and white shape, unmoving the center of the road. Thinking it to be an animal, and most likely roadkill, Chad decided to stop anyway, pulling over on the shoulder with his lights left on so that he would be seen. Cautiously, Chad moved toward the figure, shocked when it seemed to twitch slightly. Its massive, forward-facing eyes looked into him in a way that would have made him shiver had he not been accustomed to it. A barn owl, likely a female from the size of her.

With a cry of shock, she went to move, the presence of a predator likely enough to spur her retreat. Yet, with her wing barely moving, and the blood-soaked feathers clearly visible under her white plumage, she was in no state to do so. It was likely she had been hit by a car, and grazed if she was able to get up and react to this degree. But surely she would be victim to the next fox or coyote to come across her, or, at best, to die of starvation without any intervention.

Having volunteered for several years at a wildlife rehabilitation center, Chad was no stranger to aiding animals, even birds of prey, that had been injured. Despite the risk to himself, Chad made the decision to move to his car, hoping to find something to use to place her in. Only having a blanket to wrap her up in, Chad was well aware it would provide little protection against her talons. But it was worth the risk to help her out, knowing that she was dead without his intervention. So, stealing himself, Chad took the blanket, moving toward her slowly so as not to spook her into trying to fly away and injuring herself or Chad. It wasn't an effective tactic, but it was all he had without the proper handling equipment.

Yet, to his surprise, she did not move, instead regarding him with that alien gaze of a barn owl. It was not the first time he'd seen an owl up close, but there was almost something haunting in her gaze that made him pause. If Chad didn't know any better, he would swear she was looking into his eyes in a way that most of the animals he'd helped in the past never opted to do, always staring beyond him or seeing him as a friend. Rather than taking a defense posture, throwing herself on her back with raised talons and intimating him with a clicking beak, she stayed there calmly, as though waiting for him. In fact, as he moved to scoop her up, the owl remained calm, flapping a little from the jarring movement but not making much of a fight, lending to the likelihood she was in a weakened state and that he might already be too late.

To his dismay, the nearest clinic was some miles away in the opposite direction, and closed for the night. Chad was able to get in touch with an emergency after-hours number and was met at the clinic by a blurry eye technician. The owl, thankfully, was still moving, making noise and struggling, though not as much as he might have expected. Getting her inside, Chad was prompted to offer his help, though there was little to do than to get her set in a cage, fed, watered, and to set her wing. With that, Chad was left to look for an overnight motel and make his way back home after sunrise, far too exhausted from the trip tonight but thankful he had made the detour to save a life. And all he'd paid for it was a small scratch on his right arm, something he hadn't even noticed until he was back in his car and found a few drops of blood running down it.

Even as Chad went back to work and day-to-day life, there was something about the encounter that made him recall her often, almost to the point of fixation. He hoped she was on the mend, able to be released back into the wild after a few more weeks of recovery. It was more than concern for her well-being that had his thoughts focused on her, however. The way she had looked at him even faded into his dreams, making him wake in the morning feeling pleasant and rested. Never before had an animal, not even a dog, regarded him with such an intense, all-consuming stare, like she was truly looking into him for the first time. And, the more time passed, the more he found himself hoping that somehow, he might be able to see her once more. Such was impossible, he knew. It would be some hours to drive out there, and it was likely she had been released already. Still, it wouldn't be too out of place for him to call the clinic, ask for an update, and hope for the best possible news.

To his surprise, the owl was not only on the mend but was set to be released the next day. In a surprise move, Chad was even invited to come back to visit her before she was released back into the wild. It was silly, Chad knew. There was no way she remembered him, and it would be a waste of time and gas money to do so. But the more he thought about it, the more Chad felt he would regret not going to see her one last time, to get it was some closure and maybe get her out of his mind. As much as he didn't want to admit it, it was becoming a little unhealthy to fixate on her as much as he had been.

Having waited with some anticipation, Chad was a little surprised to find the clinic was empty and closed, even though it was within business hours, and he had called ahead to confirm. It was beyond disappointing not to be able to meet her, especially after having made the trip in hopes of getting some closure. Yet, before he could get to his car and start the long drive home, something hit him in the neck, poking into his skin with a sharp dart of pain. Chad hardly had a moment to reflect on what it was before fatigue consumed him, and he fell to the ground, the world swirling around him before he passed out,

A cool breeze played over his body as Chad awoke, the light from the setting sun streaming in from a hole in the roof above. It took him a few moments to come to terms with where he was, likely the barn behind the clinic where the patients were kept in their cages to recuperate. But as much as he could tell, all of the cages were empty, the sounds and scents of animals absent and leaving a chill to run through his form. Chad's condition was worsened by the fact he was naked, putting his hand over his junk before looking around for any sign of his clothing. There was nothing there, save for what looked like a tag wrapped tightly around his ankle, one with a familiar-looking device attached to it. Chad recognized it as a tracking device, something that was used to monitor birds after they were released. Of course, it was larger to fit around his own leg, but its purpose was unknown to him. Surely, he could just reach down and pull it off, and he went to do so, not wanting anyone to follow him as he left the barn to try and find his clothes and some answers for the bizarre circumstances that led him here.

Yet, the start of an intense itching caused him to keel over, the irritation almost too much for him to bear. It was as though thousands of minute spines were poking from just underneath the dermis and trying to work their way through. It left a series of goose flesh over his skin, and Chad soon resisted the urge to scratch at it, not sure what was going on. While starting on his arms, the irritation soon spread to his chest, back, and upper legs, as though every inch of his skin was holding something under the surface, waiting to burst through.

An expression of shock crossed his features as Chad watched white and brown spears poking from the skin, nothing like what he might have imagined would be the source of the irritation. They seemed to poke their way an inch or more from the skin, irritating the flesh to the point Chad could only moan out his discomfort. Their source was unknown to him, though the fact they were uniform in pattern, as well as creating noticeable patches of white or brown, almost brought a familiar image to him, as much as he couldn't quite place it at the time.

The itching was all-encompassing, even under the hairs on his head, and Chad finally reached up to rub it, shocked when the action seemed to lose the hairs from his scalp in clumps. It was as though the hairs over his body were allergic to whatever was growing in its stead. Soon his groin, his chest, and his head were all devoid of hair, the relatively close-knit spikes several inches now as the itching seemed to finally ease up, as they reached their proper circumference. They were hollow, with some blood flow, though Chad could mostly only perceive them through their connection within his skin, almost as though they were hairs of a sort. But that couldn't be right, not with the way they looked like...

Chad could hardly perceive the feeling of each individual quill starting to erupt, covered with feathery growths all the way to the base so that he could hardly see the former shaft. They were hardly stiff, and his former gooseflesh could twitch slightly, just enough to adjust them though Chad hardly had control over such fine movements. What was more stunning was the

colors they exhibited, white over his belly and so thick they overlapped in some places, making it impossible to see the skin any longer. However, seeing patterns of light brown over his arms, and turning his head to see something akin to a blueish-gray on his upper arms and back, there was obviously a purpose to their pattering, like something seen in nature. It escaped his realization of what the feathers resembled, for now, at least, though it was hauntingly familiar.

Soon, the thickening plumage moved to cover his legs, leaving only his feet devoid of them, itching and obscuring the skin. Similarly, they coated up his arms, down toward his hands, which, too, remained bare of them for the moment. The irritation ran all the way down his back and ass, heating him up and leaving him covered. Even his scalp, now bare of hair, was coated in a light dusting of white and brown feathers. The itching of where his beard once saw poked out until Chad could see the edges of a frill around his face, which, too, was bare for now.

More curious than frightened, Chad reached up to rub the feathers that had replaced his hair, shorter than the ones of his body as much as he could perceive though no less numerous. The texture was familiar to him, having worked with birds before though never having the chance to really rub at it before. The irritation of having them moved out of place made him pull back his hand, though not without confirming he couldn't feel the skin through the layers of interlocking shafts. And it was hardly to be the only change as he soon realized it was hard to move his fingers, as though they were starting to stiffen. Perhaps into the start of wings? How the hell was this happening? And, more importantly, where would it stop before it was done with him?

The sound of a jarring shriek prompted his gaze toward the rafters, where a familiar shape stood watching him with that intense stare that had haunted his dreams. Again, the barn owl was staring at him, into him, head fixed on him and nothing else. Such would normally be unnerving, though Chad soon found himself staring back, noting, in particular, the patterns of her feathers. The same patterns were now adorning his flesh and confirming his fears that he was changing. To become like her? How was this possible?!

It took Chad a few moments to realize that the contours of the room were starting to swirl around him, making him a little dizzy as though he was falling over. Rather, the walls around him seemed taller, as though the building was enlarging. It was becoming more and more likely he was shrinking, as his bones and muscles and organs all reduced toward a smaller stature. It wasn't much for now, but there was every chance his body would reach the same size of the owl above him, lending credence to his theory that the changes wouldn't stop until he was like her in full.

Thankfully, the process wasn't inherently painful, though discomforting as dull aches started to resonate from his shrinking form. Almost akin to growing pains, though in reverse, a

bizarre realization, to be sure. Soon, however, the aches started to center in his feet, as though the muscle and tissue were pushing into them, making them pop audibly. It was awkward and uncomfortable to the point that Chad shifted his weight from one the other. He was not sure if he would be able to stand on them as they expanded before his eyes, twice and more from their former and still altering as he watched. He didn't want to fall over, though his heel started to expand as well, pushing him to stand on the tips of his feet, he wasn't sure he'd be able to remain upright for much longer.

While three of his toes were thickening in relationship to his body, his little toes on each foot seemed not fated to persist on his new body. He hardly had time to care as watched the rest of his toes stretching, aching slightly though not painfully so as they stuck out from under his belly. Though Chad was hardly in a position to try twitching them, it was obvious even now that his gripping power was much greater than before, like that needed by an aerial predator to hunt. Or to grip the rafters or trees like the bird currently above him, watching him intently.

What was happening to his big toe was far more alarming than the other three, as it seemed to be pulled along with his stretching heel, making his hunched-over stance more precarious at best. Yet, a series of painless cracks seemed to force the toe backward to the point that it made him gasp aloud for the first time since the change started. It was rotating to the back of his foot, rotating almost at a 180-degree angle, stretching with the same level of articulation and flexibility that his front toes seemed to possess now. Soon, it was as long as the remaining toes, well on their way to becoming talons if what he saw before his eyes could be believed.

Though there was a persistent ache in his feet as the changes took his toes from him, it soon came to a head when something within the tips of them burst forward. Chad was only able to cry out his pain as sharpened talons tore through, the thick claws digging into the barn floor and holding his stance form as his feet continued to change. It almost overshadowed the prickling of his feet as the skin started to flake, peeling away of its own accord to reveal pinkish-gray scales, until there was nothing left of his human feet but what matched the owl above him, save the disparity in their sizes. They were surprisingly flexible, and despite the implications of owning them, Chad couldn't help but experiment with them, digging them into the ground and marveling over their gripping power.

The sensation of his legs thinning, the bones cracking within made him keel over even further, his pelvis shifting as well as though popping his legs out of their sockets. Such should have been excruciating, though only a dull ache and the discomfort of having to adjust his stance was felt as his body continued to gradually shrink. The position of his legs, altered heels, compressing calves, and thinning thighs seemed to prompt his legs to lay against his belly, though its rounded shape made the position uncomfortable. It was likely his legs would fit well

under the feathers of his stomach, though it was difficult to perceive his body possessing such a stance, even with how much he was already changed.

An ache around his ass prompted him to try to look back, in time to see his tailbone pushing against the skin, providing a minute protrusion. It looked a little out of place until the skin around it erupted with a series of close-knit shafts, longer than the ones that made up the rest of his body. If he focused on them, he could twitch the semblance of a tail, and with it, the shafts, making him think them to be his new tail feathers as they stretched almost down to the length of his legs.

Lost in the changes, Chad almost forgot the owl staring down at him, regarding him with an expression he could almost say was intrigue. It was impossible to equate human expressions to a bird, as obvious as it was to him she was something more. He wanted to ask what was happening, but surely she couldn't answer, and there wasn't anyone else in the barn with him to help. What was the endgame? More to the point, how was such even possible? So much about the process was perplexing, and he had little time to be aware of it before the changes concluded, it seemed.

“HHHERRRREEEEEEEE!” Chad tried to call out, shocked at the sound that came from his lips. It sounded like a terrifying skree, something he had heard before but never something he could have expected to escape his own lips. He hadn't expected his vocal cords to have warped in the interim, but it seemed his cries were for naught as another attempt elicited a decidedly owl's cry. The sound scared him to the core, cementing the fact that he was changing into an animal, and had no way to cry for help as his voice and body were steadily being robbed from him.

Forgetting he was naked for a moment, a sensation of heat suddenly played over his groin, as though his cock was becoming erect. It itched fiercely against his feathers, though if he looked down, he could see the head pressing out from the feathers below his belly, leaking against them. Had he not already been naked and changing, Chad might have been embarrassed about it, but as it stood, he was thankful for the reprieve it gave him, a distraction from the persistent changes taking him over. It was nice to feel a slight bit of pleasure rushing through his form, blood flowing into his modest prick as it started to throb of its own volition. Despite himself and the situation, Chad was almost tempted to touch himself and bring himself to conclusion. Yet, no action on his part was needed as his cock suddenly spasmed and shot a small load onto his feathers and shaft, making him cry out with his avian voice and scaring him once more.

The sticky sensation of semen on his cock was almost enough to hide the feeling of his cock tingling, shrinking though not as though he was softening. Rather, his cock was dissolving,

the tissues being pulled apart and sucked inside of him, to the point that he could not see it as he parted his stained feathers. All that was felt was a single opening for his urethra, though it seemed a little wider than before, and rubbing the area brought with it arousal akin to touching his cock head.

Worried about what it meant for his future, Chad almost missed the ache in his rear, his intestines gurgling as though they were being pulled within his changing body. It was bizarre, though not as much as his anus being tugged forward, exposed now since his ass cheeks were fundamentally removed with the shifting of his lower legs. It was powerfully discomfoting, though not at all painful as much as the changes to his stature and legs had not been thus far. Thankfully, his forward stature allowed it to move seamlessly across the skin, pushing the feathers from its wake until the edge reached the fringes of his open piss slit. The merging of flesh sent a sensual shiver through his being, making Chad screech out with an unexpected owl cry. The contact was powerfully arousing, and though he had just cum a moment ago, it seemed that something within him started to rise to the surface, the ache to be touched at the forefront of his being.

For the moment, he resisted, though it was the realization that he now had an avian cloaca in place of his anus and junk that made him pause. It was beyond his ability to understand, his vent now having multiple purposes but not wanting them performed through a singular exit! There was a part of him that worried he had become female, but that was unlikely, given that owls had no external genitalia for him to use as a reference. It was bizarre, his brain prompting it to clench just slightly as it sent a shiver through his being. It was so sensitive, as though a combination of flesh from both former orifices were contributing to his arousal. It was more likely a facet of the change rather than a testament to avian arousal, but there was no denying how much it did it for him to the point it was maddening to leave it unattended. Yet, how could he do such a thing, and with such a disgusting orifice, no less!

A casual glance toward the female above him caused those thoughts from his dreams to rise to the surface. Something about the distinctive heart-shaped frill around her face seemed to speak to him beyond the fascination with the animal he'd carried all his years of working with local wildlife. Not only had he longed to see the female again, but secretly desired to be more like her in such a context. It was something that hadn't made sense at the time but something there was no denying in her presence with his body warping toward her own. That longing went beyond the spiritual, manifesting into the physical, and raised the lust in his body to know that deep-seated dream was able to surface. Better yet, that unknown ending might come to fruition if only the changes would continue. A fact that Chad was able to steadily come to terms with...

Despite the alien nature of his fused orifice, the sensation of arousal once more burned into his loins, almost to the point he let out another groan, albeit one higher pitched than he was

used to. His singular hole ached to be touched, to be stimulated, and despite his disgust over owning such a thing, Chad was unable to stifle the urge. Even being in the presence of the owl, obviously more intelligent than an animal should be, was not enough to deter his desire. In fact, her presence seemed to spur his drive to tough himself, as though wanting to show off for her in some bizarre display. Either way, his need was growing to the point he couldn't resist the urge to reach down, the flesh of his larger opening more sensitive than his cock or anus alone.

As he traced around the fringes of his new sex, the skin seemed to moisten further, fluids running over his fingers and seeming to stick them further together. It created some desperation in the act, thinking his fingers might be forfeit if he was to slow his efforts. Better yet, the skin was more sensitive, pulsating as much as anytime he had played with his penis before now. It seemed that his arousal over his new cloaca, as well as the lust he seemed to feel toward the female of his soon-to-be species, was enough to bring him to the edge. By now, he was powerfully excited to experience an avian orgasm for the first time, especially from the perspective of being in a half-human state.

Calling out with an owl's cry, Chad felt himself going over the edge and into orgasm, a small quality of fluid coating the edges of his fingers as he pushed them in, desperate for more. It at least confirmed he was male, though such was already to be assumed. It was beyond bizarre to feel himself cumming from a merged orifice, the semen quantity minute but likely sufficient as he shoved his hand in further, trying to prolong the sensations as much as he could manage. It seemed to extend longer than humanly possible, be it a facet of owl orgasm or his own lust for the changes and his new form. Either way, Chad's mind was awash in hormones, letting him bask in the changes as he shrank down toward his eventual size.

Chad's eyes soon settled on the owl above him once more, staring at him with a different expression, one that Chad couldn't help but conclude she was pleased with him and what he had done. There was nothing in his human mind to lead him to that assumption, but as his mind settled on it, there was no denying it was correct. That carried with it a desire, slowly brought on since the night he'd rescued her but not as obvious as in this moment, with her intense stare. He wanted to be with her, wanted more of her presence. And the fact he was changing to become more like her was no longer scary, but even appealing to the point he wished for the transformation to complete. He wanted to talk to her, not sure if she would understand his owl cries. But it didn't matter, not with how much her eyes told him all he needed to know.

A tingling in his fingers likely signaled their death kull, though Chad found he was having a harder time concerning himself about their loss with the promise of flight they brought him. The skin was running together now, fully fused and forcing the bones within to merge, leaving only a single bone within, larger than its human counterpart. They soon swelled out slightly within the remnants of his hands, the bones within his palms broken apart and largely

forfeit. What bones remained were largely thinner, their insides hollowed out and reduced for his eventual form. Chad could almost perceive it happening within, though might have been influenced by his knowledge of anatomy from his previous stint as a vet tech, able to view the experience from a unique perspective.

The bare skin of his former hands soon erupted with the same gooseflesh he was familiar with before erupting out with its own coat of feathers. It was a little alarming not to be able to move his fingers, phantom sensations still triggering his nerves. But the tingling of feather growth soon superseded it, the prickling of quill growth a little more painful from their larger size, akin to the ones from his tailbone. A shorter layer of feathers took place in overlapping patterns between them, rounded on the edges in contrast to the more pointed feathers at the ends of his soon-to-be wings. Two longer layers of feathers made their way from the skin of his arms as well, the skin stretching underneath enough to allow room for the quills to grow. Unlike much of the feathers on his body, the shafts were no longer orientated in the center. Chad was able to see them growing with more detail than perhaps he was used to, a prelude to the level of vision he would develop as an owl.

The same thinning of his upper and lower arms seemed to swell their girth just slightly, a sign they were soon to be wings. His radius and ulna bones, longer in relation to his body now, extended them outward enough that his wings could catch drafts in the air. Shoulders pushed forward, his chest compressing slightly and allowing them to fold over his back, something he allowed to happen with their changes complete. Chad could feel his sternum growing larger in relation to his smaller body, organs shifting to largely eat rodent prey whole. Save for a consistent gurgling, the changes did not kill him, rather fascinated him to think of what was happening within him. His pelvis, having already shifted somewhat, was pushed further against his ribs as his scapulas were left largely minute. It took him a few minutes to notice, but a notch within his sternum allowed his knees to sit comfortably against his, making it almost impossible to discern the length of his legs from a distance.

Yet, with the changes nearly completed, Chad could only fixate on the fact that all the anatomical changes were granting him the ability to fly. What would that feel like? Would he know how to do so once the changes had completed? Would he possess animal instincts or would he lose himself in the process of becoming an owl? Such seemed unlikely, given the intelligence in the female's gaze. With that in mind, Chad welcomed his body shrinking, finally the same size as the female, or smaller, given the slight disparity between the sexes. He was almost as much an owl as she was, with only a little bit more to go before...

A tingling in his lips made Chad wish he had fingers to touch it as it prepared to shift. Still, he was able to roll his eyes down to see the short pale beak sticking from his lips, pulling them taut against its base until they merged with it completely. It was a little jarring to feel his

teeth pulling into his gums, no longer needed as his tongue thinned and grew pointed. His beak was a little heavy on his head, and it felt bizarre to click it together as well, its pointed tip resting just above his former chin. The force of its growth pushed his nose up, leaving it uncomfortably scrunched on his features before it began melding into the flesh of his face. His nasal openings, small as what remained, were soon pushed toward the base of the beak, opening it up and leaving the holes present for taking in air. It wasn't much, though certainly enough for his much smaller body. It took him a few moments to realize his sense of small, the scents of the hay in the barn were largely absent to him now, figuring it to be part of his new owl anatomy and likely not needed for his new life besides.

It was hardly the strangest thing to change about his face, however, as he was soon to find out. A creaking in his neck was followed by a series of pops, and Chad felt it thinning, even as the feathers around it made it appear there was no separation between his head and body. It was almost too thin, and Chad went to move it to remove the irritation. Yet, what he was not expecting was for his head to turn around far further than what he was expecting, to the point it was almost dizzying. Pulling his head back to what he assumed was a more comfortable position, Chad reflected on a common ability of owls to turn their heads around to 180 degrees. Taking a moment to brace himself, Chad did just that, turned his head toward his backside and finding the movement surprisingly comfortable. With it, he was able to look down at the plumage covering his back and his tail feathers, an angle that was bizarre and would take him some time to get used to, he figured.

An ache in his skull prompted him to blink a few times, trying to eliminate the disorientation. The larger part of his skull was starting to become sunken, creating massive orbs in which his relatively smaller eyes sat. They were not to remain that way for very long, his sockets expanding and the eyeballs within soon expanded to keep up. Chad could hardly fathom the changes in the optic nerves that came with much larger eyes, and looking through the world with the alien gaze of a barn owl was a little beyond his ability to imagine as well. But as he opened his eyes, Chad was immediately greeted to a wider world-view than he was used to, staring out into the dark with an acuity that made it seem like daylight. The oncoming night, creating shadows within the barn, was of no trouble for him to see now, in far more detail than he was used to. Colors were a little washed out in the dark of night, but it was a welcome loss if it meant he could be granted a view of the night that only members of his new species could enjoy.

With the reshaping of his head, Chad was barely aware that his human ears were being absorbed into the sides of his head, the pinpricks of feather quills erupting over the last bits of human skin on his face. But with the way the feathers were patterned as a sort of facial disk, in conjunction with the size of the remaining ear canals and their asymmetric configuration on his skull, Chad was almost shocked to be granted a wider awareness of the outside world. All the sounds of rodents skittering in the grasses was something he soon concluded his new physiology

would be fixated on, whether or not he found it unpalatable. Having known the facts of owl senses from memory was one thing, but it was another to experience it first hand, and knowing there was every chance he would experience the world from this point of view for the rest of his life.

Though his head was largely altered in shape to support his new haunting eyes, the final remnants of his humanity were soon to be removed, and with it, the shape of his human brain. How it would be possible for his human self, his consciousness could persist in an owl's brain, Chad had no idea. And as the tingling of his skull compressing, Chad braced himself for the sensation of his human awareness fading into nothing. Yet, the tingling changes soon concluded, signaling he was an owl in body now. And he was still himself, still Chad. The natural urges of his humanity, however, were largely absent. He didn't feel embarrassment over being naked, or concerned with the cool night or the soreness of his body. Rather, he was hyper-fixated on the sounds of mice beyond the barn, nervous about being on the ground and wanting desperately to be higher up. And, of course, there was the sight of *her* in the rafters, seeming to understand his changes were done and pleased with whatever she had evidently helped to create.

With a flurry of wings, the owl was on him, swooping down beside him to the point he could reach out and touch her if he still had hands. She was soon to rub against him, the feeling of her body against his triggering a brief quivering in his cloaca, though not enough to bring him to full arousal. Still, it was a wonderful sensation of connection, and the sounds of a purring croup hit his ears, one he had never heard an owl make before. It had to be something she did in the presence of a male, though lost in the new sensations of change, Chad was hardly in a position to know what to think of that. All he understood was that, now, more than ever, he wanted to be with this female, wanted to follow her, and delighted in the knowledge that, she, too, seemed to desire the same thing.

After a few moments, the female pulled back, waddling awkwardly on her splayed talons as she made space. Without a word, she took to the air, not aiming for the rafters this time but rather up through the hole in the ceiling and into the oncoming night. With his new owl vision, he could see her flying high above the barn, even as she appeared to be little more than a dot in the sky. Naturally, he longed to join her, not only from the standpoint of desire but his fascination of flight now that he had the ability to do so. Still, Chad felt his nervousness rise to the point he wasn't sure he could do it. Something within his instincts told him he needed to get off the ground, that he was in danger there. So, letting himself go within his instincts, Chad looked to the hole in the rafters, and reflexively flapped his wings, raising his legs toward his body and lifting himself self through the air. He was moving far faster than he was expecting, and it was more than a little alarming for the human parts of his mind. But it was easy for him to let his mind go and look at the experience from an outsider's perspective, feeling the cool wind in his

feathers as they made thousands of micro-adjustments that allowed him to take flight and move through the sky as though he belonged there.

Though she was some miles ahead of him by now, with his newer eyesight, Chad was able to follow her with ease, seeing even the details of her feather patterns from this distance. It was comfortable to keep pace with her, as though he was swimming through the air. It didn't feel he was going as fast now that he was in the open sky, though the ground was far below him now and passing steadily by. There were certainly instincts there, and Chad found his eyes scanning the ground for movements, neck shifting, and directing his ear canals toward the ground, likely in an effort to hunt. And he was hungry, he realized, given the toll the change had taken on him. But there would be time for that later, he reasoned, figuring it was in his best interest to follow the female wherever she led him. She had obviously intended him for this life and had a purpose for him beyond seeing him change and leaving him be. What that was, he didn't fully understand, but he would follow her to find out, perhaps for the rest of his life...

It had been some weeks since Chad had been human, still recalling all he had been and the events of his life that had led him to this point. But it now seemed more like a distant dream, one he awoke from every morning to be in the body of an owl. One that was starting to feel more like his natural form than the human he had once been. Perhaps there was something the female had seen in him that made her know he would be worthy of her species. Perhaps she was trying to thank him in some way by giving him the gift of flight. It mattered little, nor did it matter what method had been used to change him. He was a barn owl now, and content to live his life as such.

By this point, he had gotten used to most of the facets of his new life, avian physiology far removed from humanity. Using his cloaca was comfortable, much easier and more efficient, in fact, to the point he soon didn't think much of it. Spitting up owl pellets was more troublesome, a facet of his new diet less palatable and more frequent than he would like. But soon, it, too, was another habit he grew accustomed to, all worth it for the privilege of the owl form he was granted. He had to spend quite a bit of time preening, running his beak through his feathers to ensure they retained their proper shape from wear, but it was a task that made the hours pass easily, he soon found, and didn't mind the activity.

It was the gift of flight that he relished, and owls were among the most gifted fliers of the animal kingdom. At night, he was an apex being, soaring over all that he considered his domain from others of his new species. His eyes lit up from even the minimum of moonlight, and even in the dark, the contours of his feathers redirected every sound to his ears, making him aware of all the goings on in the forest. Granted, it was mostly the sounds of rodents, or the few potential

predators that drew his notice, humans and their activities far removed from his care even if he had chosen his territory close to their world. It was a simpler world, yet its nuances were enough that the human parts of his mind were never bored, and the owl urges were always stimulated. He took flight usually at dusk from his hole in a tree, one he had found abandoned, likely used by another creature such as he. Several such nests persisted for his use within the territory he had established, though the first, the largest, was his preferred choice of rest. Generally, he took to the closest location before the end of the night, not wanting to get caught out after dawn. Once being mobbed by crows was enough, and even his talons were useless against multiple birds all angrily cawing for his blood. They tended to swarm him should he stray from his territory, and the human him saw that fair enough, twilight returning the skies to him.

While he spent his rest alone, the female was never far behind. He was sure their territories overlapped, if not persisted exactly together, but it mattered little. There was certainly sufficient prey for the two of them in the territory, after all, and even if it caused him to suffer, Chad wouldn't want to be away from her for long. No matter where he slept during the day and flew from at night, she was soon there close by, ready to guide him in the ways of his new life. Even though he was starting to get the hang of things, it was still nice to know she was nearby, at least in terms that owls could understand. He could see her, hear her from miles away in human terms but meant nothing for beings that took to the skies and could see all the world around them.

Of all the facets of owl life, it took him some time to get used to hunting. Instincts provided much in the way of his success, but he lacked the natural experience that owls were given growing up to the point his first several attempts were clumsy at best. As hungry as he became, Chad forced himself to be patient and watch the female, trying to mimic her tricks to make him more successful. Finding prey was easy; the best places to look were patches of field bordering forests, Chad flying silently in a circular pattern before honing in on a target. His knowledge of owl anatomy recalled something about serrations on the edges of his feathers breaking air flow over the wings to reduce sound, in tandem with hair-like extensions to minimize drag. Even the acute hearing of mice or voles was no match for his abilities as he made his rounds before honing in on prey. Better yet were his asymmetrical ears, able to focus in on a specific location, and better yet, height from the ground, making digging into the undergrowth all the more efficient. Hell, he didn't even need moonlight, as much as total darkness would have bothered the human him once. With his acute hearing, such was hardly needed for him to make a successful hunt.

When it was time, making the actual strike was rather quick, Chad learning to reach out with his slender legs and the wide birth his spread talons gave him to grab into the shrubbery and grasses. The first several times, his strikes were misses, but the first time they wrapped around a rodent, a sense of elation rushed through him, knowing he had done it. It was the bare minimum

he needed to do to survive as an owl, surely, but it was still a triumph of sorts and something he soon learned to appreciate. Not all hunts were successful, after all, as much as he observed with his female. He was soon to learn that he needed to eat a ton, his metabolism much higher than what he might have expected it to be. And with his hunts not always being fruitful, he soon got the idea to store extra food in his nest, seeing the female carrying off prey and not eating it right away. It seemed like a nasty habit, but to his owl self, it made sense, and was thankful for having done so on rainy days or other times when hunting was not preferable.

Yet, as the weeks went by and settling into an owl's patterns became the norm, one thought pervaded his mind, a fixation on *her*. The more his thoughts drifted to her, the more he longed to be closer to her, not really sure where such would lead but unable to get it out of his mind. Eventually, he decided to go for it, and start to nest with her, something that was not rejected and in fact welcomed. Yet, it only served to reawaken that desire, to the point that Chad felt his instincts taking over, and found there was no other recourse but to follow those urges to their obvious conclusion.

Not really sure why he was doing it, Chad found himself flying out at dusk one night before the female had risen, flying in circles around the nest and twittering in a tone he'd never heard an owl make before. It was some time before the female joined him, but there was a notion deep within him that she eventually would, that his efforts would not be in vain. Soon, she eagerly did just that, chasing him as he turned and twisted in flight like a bizarre sort of acrobat. It was exhilarating, reawakening his love of flight and his new form in a way that defied his experiences as an adult human. They called out to each other all the while, that shrill sound whose meaning escaped Chad, but one that he was happy was reciprocated in kind.

This action continued for the next several nights, each carrying with it more expectation than the last. Chad had some idea of what was going on, though there was no way to voice or question it. He allowed himself to give in to his instincts, even going so far as to hunt and bring back trophies for her, while she spent her time in the nest instead of joining him. Chad didn't mind, however, feeling some pride in showing her how well he could hunt. It simply felt *right* for him to bring her gifts, appealing to both his instincts and his humanity. She thanked him by eating eagerly, and Chad couldn't help but feel elated, loving the actions of spending time with her, reminding him of those times in his late teens, the first time he had...fallen in love? Was that correct? Yes, he soon concluded, at least as much as owls felt such emotions. Quite strongly, it seemed, given that he knew owls to be monogamous for life. As much as any human feelings, animals are not deprived of such connections, in fact feeling them stronger in some cases.

Chad wasn't sure how he knew it was time. His mate, as he'd come to think of her, was waiting for him, taking his gift and eating it quickly. Yet, there was something in her body movements that prompted Chad to stay there and wait for her to...what? It wasn't until she

hunkered down and cooed toward him that Chad understood what was going on. She was inviting him to mate with her, he had been courting her, and she was receptive to him. Part of him knew that their actions were leading to this moment, but it had never really hit him until now. Could he go through with it? Yet, how could he not?

Chad was left to allow instinct to guide him once more as he hopped over to her, not sure of the angle he needed to mate. He was sure he needed to rub their cloacas together, the sensations of need in his own almost akin to the day he had been changed. He had lost his ability to touch himself since, though it was not something that occurred to him until now. And the need in his loins soon grew to an apex that only his female mate could satisfy. It was a struggle to understand how to go about things from his human knowledge but the owl he was had some idea, and soon he was on top of her, angling his cloaca against her own and making her chitter her approval. The flesh was as sensitive as he remembered, though rubbing against her feathers was hardly doing anything for him.

It wasn't until something moist and open touched his own that Chad was prompted to thrust forward, feeling his opening being stimulated as he started to rub them together, gently at first so as not to lose his place but more frantically as he found his rhythm. Having a fused opening, with the sensitivity of both his cock head as well as his anal ring was bizarre, to say the least. And the mating act itself was rather quick, with not much time left for introspection. Chad was aware of how much his outer rim was being stimulated, and how much it seemed to trigger something within him, where he would assume his testicles would sit if he had the spare cognizance to reflect on such things. It was simply pleasant, and Chad was lost in the moment, body vibrating in a sort of owl chitter that was reciprocated by his mate.

The actual mating act ended only after about ten seconds, but to Chad's mind, it seemed like an eternity of pleasure, the culmination of an instinctual act more powerful than most in his humanity. He could barely feel the small quantity of semen falling from his cloaca and into his mate, though the slight sticky sensation and the surge of pleasure before orgasm were enough for him to assume he had done the deed. Sex now overstimulated, Chad was prompted to dismount, a little stunned from the act and lost in his thoughts trying to rationalize things. It seemed the female had no time for such, rubbing against him and vibrating with that same warmth that allowed Chad to relax into it. He was sure it was an affirmation of their bond, that they were mates, likely for life. And Chad would have it no other way, her being the one to guide him to a new life and purpose removed from his humanity but fulfilling all the same.

The mating act was repeated once a night for the next week, much to Chad's excitement. It was beyond exciting to bring food for his mate only to have her eat and expose herself for his inspection. None of the actions were as fulfilling as that first time, but each held their own satisfaction, and he was eager to partake in the act whenever it was offered. It seemed his mate

had similar inclinations and offered herself whenever she was able to. It served to cement their bond, and naturally to provide for the future, though it was something that escaped Chad's notice at the time. Eventually, she stopped offering, but Chad was OK with that, compelled to hunt more often for her and thankful for everything she had taught him.

Of course, there was a purpose to his actions, one that was as obvious to his human inclinations as well as his owl instincts. He somehow knew that eggs would be coming soon and he would be the provider for her and eventually, their offspring. Having never wanted children, it was a daunting prospect, but something that sat right with his new life and mate. And with everything else he had experienced, Chad was affirmed with the notion that this life, this existence carried with it promise beyond what he was able to see. A life to make him truly happy, glad he was to live with his mate and their soon-to-be aid clutch, raising the next generation and relishing all owl life had to offer.