

Birds of a Feather

This is something special.

That was your ultimate thought as you decide to wrap up for the night, as you save the game and store your laptop away for the time being. It was such a nice feeling, to be able to do something like this again. After months of nonstop work on a grueling game development project, you had set aside a few weeks to do nothing but unwind and tackle your own monumental video game backlog. One of the first titles there was Undertale Yellow, an unofficial yet top-quality prequel to one of the most famous indie games of all time (and one that you were personally a big fan of!). And so far, you were in love.

The highlight of your playthrough, though, was absolutely a certain character, one who had completely won you over at first sight. That character was Martlet, the clumsy and scatterbrained bird girl that (barely) served in the Royal Guard. Something about her clicked with you from the first possible moment, and it was impossible to shake her from your thoughts. When you looked at her, you practically saw a reflection of yourself.

The rest of the game was phenomenal – you couldn't help but notice how official and charming it all felt, in the best possible ways. And yet, everything was eclipsed in your mind by the clumsy, bubbly bluebird that tried her best to accompany Clover on their journey. In a matter of hours, Martlet had completely taken over your mind, resonating with you in a way you didn't know was even possible.

Almost like you were meant to be her.

You're taken aback by that sudden thought – you'd had those ideas with other characters in the past, but never so quickly. And yet, the absolute instant you saw Martlet, it all clicked. It was hard to put away that thought, because even as you tried to reason with its rashness, it just felt... right. Of course, there was nothing you could actually do about that – no matter how hard you pleaded and dreamed, you were stuck as a human male. That last part could be worked on – and it was – but your humanity was a curse that wasn't quite possible to shake.

It was hard to explain your predicament. Somehow, some way, your brain had been wired to be deeply uncomfortable in a human body. As far back as you could remember, it had been your biggest source of distress and anguish – a completely invisible problem that most of the world couldn't even comprehend. It was a brutal existence. You had always tried your best to deal with this, surrounding yourself with affirmations of the characters you saw your true self in. Over time, you had accumulated a vast collection of merch, a friend group that saw you for what you really were, and plenty of self-affirmations to keep yourself going. It was something, at least.

...It would be nice if you could be her, though.

Feeling the drowsiness set in, you begin to get ready for bed. As you're brushing your teeth, you begin to mindlessly scroll social media before realizing – wait, wasn't it earlier than normal? It was unusual for you to feel this tired this early, but maybe it was just one of those days. If you were lucky, you'd be able to take advantage and get your sleep schedule back on track!

As you collapse onto your sheets and surround yourself with your vast plushie collection, your thoughts once again circled back to Martlet. Maybe it wasn't just a passing thought, after all – maybe, deep down, you wanted to be her more than anything else. You hadn't even beaten the game yet, after all.

Who knows how much stronger this feeling would get when you did? More and more scattered thoughts of that silly bird dance throughout your head, as you sink deeper and deeper into relaxation.

You gradually drift off to sleep, carried out of consciousness by a warm, almost downy wave of relaxation.

You slowly open your eyes, taking in the light of the new day. Though, as you fumble around for your glasses, you can't help but notice that it seems brighter outside than it should be. Clumsily grabbing your phone, your eyes finally focus on the screen that confirms your suspicions; another missed alarm. That wasn't too unusual, but you had gone to bed so early! You should've been more than fully rested by the time the alarm went off, and yet you slept right past it all the same.

No use trying to change that, though. There was still plenty of time in the day, and it was the weekend, so you hadn't missed any obligations. The only thing that really bothered you was that you'd have less time to continue Undertale Yellow, but hey, you'd rather be fully rested for the rest of the experience. You quickly throw together breakfast – well, lunch at this point – and clean yourself up in the shower, wanting to feel fresh and awake to take it all in.

As you dry off, something peculiar in the mirror catches your eye – something had changed in your hair! All across your head, you could pick out strands of hair that had taken on a bright blue color. The more you looked, the more it felt like there were! And did your hair seem... fuller? Softer, maybe? You hadn't done anything differently in your routine. A revelation like this should've worried you, and yet – you didn't mind it at all! If anything, you looked better this way!

Continuing along with your day, you finally find yourself ready to continue the game. You get nice and cozy back in bed with your laptop, and load up your save file from where you left off. You were in the Dunes, and Martlet was nowhere to be found – deep down, that fact motivated you to run through the game quicker and with more fervor, in hopes that you could see her again as soon as possible.

Your heart jumps when you reach Oasis Valley and reunite with her. Even after only a couple days, this bird meant everything to you, and you wanted to cherish every moment. When she gets immediately captured in the next area, your spirits deflate, but knowing that you could still go talk to her was a relief. You make a point to check in on yourse- check in on her whenever possible. Every little interaction captures your heart even deeper, and the more you play, the more it feels like looking in a mirror. It seems harder and harder to believe it was just a passing thought; maybe somehow, you really *were* Martlet.

As you reach the end of this section of the game, a sudden wave of drowsiness overtakes you. How was this possible, even after all that sleep? Begrudgingly, you close your laptop and succumb to a small nap, feeling that same soft, downy feeling as the night before.

You had no idea how much time had passed, but subconsciously rolling over brought the sunlight from outside your window directly into your eyes, knocking you out of your dozing state. Instinctively, you lift up your arm to shield your eyes, but the sight that replaces the light causes you to shoot straight up.

It's hard to process what you're even looking at, but as your vision refocuses, the realization hits. Your arm was covered entirely in soft blue feathers! Shocked, you lift up your other arm to see the exact

same thing! You can't believe your eyes, but yet again, you don't find yourself panicking. Deep down, it feels right – like it was meant to be.

At this point, you caught on to what was happening. Seeing and feeling all these changes, you could only plausibly conclude one thing – you were turning into Martlet, just like you had wished the night before. It felt almost like the universe had recognized your desire, acknowledged all the pain you had endured, and finally decided to answer your pleas now that you knew who you were truly meant to be. After everything, you were becoming *yourself*.

That realization filled you with a bubbly excitement that seemed to permeate your very soul. It was really happening! Soon enough, you were going to have your feathers, and your beak, and your wings, and-

Wait, *your* wings?

No, that was right. The body you were slowly but surely gaining really was your own, far more than the one you were leaving behind. By the end of all this, you'd have a form perfect for an adorable bluebird girl such as yourself! Your thoughts began to race between scattered ideas of everything you'd be able to do, all the new possibilities and-

Huh. Were you always this easily sidetracked?

One way or another, the best thing you could do was embrace the changes and go about your day as normal. You certainly had no desire to stop them, after all. You prepare yourself a nice dinner and clean up around the house, ultimately deciding to use the final hours of your day to play Undertale Yellow just a little more.

The following day, you woke up even later, but feeling more awake and invigorated than ever! You felt a sense of renewed energy behind your step; if anything, perhaps you were a little overeager to get moving and go about your day. It took you ages to even realize you had never grabbed your glasses – your vision had seemingly improved overnight! Martlet didn't wear glasses, after all, you had the eye of a hawk! Well, maybe not a hawk, you weren't that type of bird, probably more like...

Regardless, that was far from the only change you had observed today. Seemingly overnight, you had taken on a much more feminine figure. It became apparent that your chest, hips, and thighs had all developed – just a modest amount, yet still far more than hormones had ever accomplished for you. (Another change had occurred around that lower area as well, but not one you wanted to dive into the details on – regardless, you were finally a woman through and through.) Your normal wardrobe fit poorly now, but thankfully you spotted something more suitable in your closet. You slipped on a light blue sleeveless shirt and jeans that stood out amongst the rest of your ill-fitting clothes, completing the look with a pair of puffy brown boots. Somehow, it fit your figure perfectly! You had no idea where this outfit came from, but it never actually crossed your mind to question it. What mattered was that you looked great, and your outfit was nice and practical for the artisan you were.

The shift in your hair had also continued, with less and less of the original brown appearing in a sea of bright blue. Your mouth, nose, and the surrounding area had distorted and pushed outwards into the beginnings of a beak – an awkward phase of your transformation, but one that would be totally worth the end result. Your downy arms had started to develop further into proper wings, with your hands and

arms giving way to appendages far more suitable for flying (well, not yet, but definitely when they're done!). Thankfully, you still seemed to possess perfectly controllable “fingers” at the ends, and an array of impromptu experiments proved that they were just as capable as before.

The feathers weren't exclusive to your wings, either; they had begun to spread across your entire body, both creeping outwards from where they began yesterday, and appearing in new splotches all over. They actually took on a different color around your neck, seemingly starting to form a large fluffy “collar” of dark blue feathers. You couldn't help but feel how incredibly soft they were, and that realization sent chills down your spine – these really were your own feathers, finally covering up the flesh you always found distressingly barren. The only area spared was your feet, which were instead shifting into powerful talons. Five toes had merged into three – each adorned with sharp claws where nails had once been – with one slowly pulling its way to the back of your foot. The structure of the feet themselves had also changed to a more avian form, switching up your entire stance. And yet, despite that, you never had any trouble walking. It was natural – you were a bird, after all, why wouldn't it be?

After taking in the changes that were only spreading further by the second, you decide to continue along with your day. You wanted to continue the game more than anything, but at the same time, the creative juices were flowing! The game wasn't going anywhere, but who knew how long your spark of inspiration would last? You grab your tool box – which you apparently had? - and clear out an area to work.

Woodworking wasn't too far out of your element – you loved to create more than anything, but your body's limitations had always kept you out of this specific field. The feeling of wood against your bare flesh was like nails to a chalkboard, and your hands were too unsteady for such precise and irreversible work. Wings, though, were perfect! Your new plumage acted as a cushion against that feeling, and your wings were far more steady and natural to control – almost as if you were meant to have them all along. Just like that, a new realm of possibilities had opened up to you, and you were loving every second of the process! You had no idea how much time was passing, but you were in the zone and had no plans to stop.

As you idly hum to yourself (wait, was that your theme?), you're taken aback by the voice that comes out – something bubbly and feminine, completely unrecognizable from the voice you had always hated. Undertale Yellow didn't have voice acting, but if it did, you imagined that Martlet would sound exactly like you did now. For the first time, that was *your* voice.

Finishing up your handiwork, you dust off your wings and step back to admire the craft. The room was an absolute mess now – tools, dust, and wood pieces scattered everywhere – but the product of your hard work was incredible! It was a beautiful... uh, something? You weren't actually sure what you were looking at, but it was well made! You definitely had a knack for this stuff. Maybe you could use this... thing... in a puzzle?

It isn't until now that you realize – the sun had completely set! You were so lost in your work that the entire day went by, but you probably still had a couple hours left in you! You quickly get ready for bed and lie down with your laptop, ready to play even just a little more of the game, but... surrounded by cozy blankets and plushies, the drowsiness is far too powerful. Almost in an instant, you're out cold, buried deep into comforting dreams of bluebirds and soaring the skies.

You open your eyes to the light of another morning, stifling a yawn with your wing. Begrudgingly, you roll out of bed and land cleanly on your feet, talons digging into the carpet. You make your way to the kitchen for a quick breakfast, then groggily trudge to the bathroom to clean yourself up. As you arrive, though, the sight in the mirror causes you to jolt awake in an instant.

Staring back at you through the glass, you see nothing but Martlet. All the changes that weren't quite finished the previous day had now entirely come to pass. Your wings had fully developed into their large, powerful shape, and every last inch of your body was finally covered in those soft blue feathers. Your mouth and nose had completed their shift into a beak befitting of a bird like yourself, while your feet and lower legs had entirely adopted their new avian form. Your entire body was now adorably soft – your hair, now completely blue and shaped into her exact style, had become far fuller and fluffier, while the dark blue “fluff” around your neck poofed outwards in its fully complete form. And that wasn't even to mention your cute little tail feathers! Not a single ounce of humanity remained in your new form; after all the excitement of the past few days, your transformation was finally complete.

The more you looked at this reflection, the more familiar it felt. The clumsy bluebird girl you saw in the mirror was the truest possible manifestation of yourself. That realization brings you to tears – somehow, in a matter of days, everything you ever dreamed of had become a reality. All those years of pain and uncertainty, living in a body you couldn't recognize despite not even being sure of what you really wanted, were finally over. They had finally paid off, in the best conceivable way. As you cry from the absolute bliss of finally being yourself – something you always thought impossible – the truth solidifies itself in your thoughts. This is who you were meant to be.

But there was one last step.

In an instant, a whirlwind overtakes your mind. The more you try to think, the faster and more illegible all your thoughts become, until something brand new enters. The thoughts that had grown louder and stronger over the past few days completed their emergence, and a tidal wave of memories came flooding into your head. Your life in the Underground. Joining the Royal Guard and trying your best to keep up with their expectations. The joy and accomplishment you felt crafting the puzzles across Snowdin. All these ideas rose to the forefront of your mind, pushing everything else back.

Your old memories were still your own, but the idea of ever being human felt... distant, and incomprehensible. You knew they were true; your old human life hadn't slipped through the cracks, but the baggage and pain that form brought you melted away in an instant. You aren't human, silly! You're Martlet, and you always have been. And you couldn't be happier about it!

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Were you dozing off again? You couldn't keep doing that! You couldn't afford to lose your position in the Royal Guard, and dozing off was against the rules according to the guidebook's Section- uh... well, it was probably in there somewhere.

What a weird dream, though. You shake it off and stand up, looking at the snowy landscape around you. There was a lot to do! You could go to your post, but there were so many puzzles you could go touch up – oh, or maybe even make a new one! There was so much that only you could do, and experiences that only you could have, after all! The possibilities excited you so much!

You get into a takeoff stance and begin to flap your powerful wings, letting the brisk winter air brush

against your face as you ascend. The wind pushes strongly against your plumage, and in that moment, you feel... free. Wherever you came from, wherever you had been before, what mattered was who you were now. In that moment, you were no longer bound by that strange human nightmare – you were yourself, comfortable in your skin, and given the wings (literally!) that freed you to live the life that was truly yours.

In a sense, the Underground was a prison for your kind. Objectively, that was true – though, something deep within told you that you wouldn't be down here forever. Yet, even now, deep beneath the earth in this vast cave ecosystem, you felt more free – more *you* – than ever before.

Soon enough, you're soaring high above Snowdin, beating your wings here and there to keep your momentum. It all felt natural; this was who you were meant to be. Where was your destination? Well, you could figure that out later. In the meantime, it just felt great to fly.

The lingering thoughts of that dream fall back into the depths of your memory – still there if you needed them, but you had so many new memories to make anyway! There was a whole new life ahead of you!

You're Martlet!