

DEVIOUS IN DUNGEON

CH7: BIRD (BRAINED)

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“We can’t be that far from catching up now.”

Kabru, a Tall-man who organized and ran his own dungeon exploration party, had been hot on the trail of Laios and his group for some time now. That group of adventurers had stolen from his own party not once, but *twice* over the course of the past week or so. Most of his companions were thirsty for justice, yearning to reclaim what had been taken from them or at least deal the justice that was owed.

None of them seemed to recognize that this could have been a misunderstanding, though. Laios’ party had only taken things that would be harmful to them like treasure bugs, or supplies they’d had that would go bad because Kabru’s party had been *dead* on both occasions. Kabru had begun this quest with similar sentiments, but that was *before* he found out who was leading this group of supposed thieves. He had a special interest in Laios Touden.

With the rest of his party back at camp, Kabru had been restless and had decided to scout ahead a short ways. He wasn’t nearly attuned enough to the dungeon to be able to sense any irregularities in its ecosystem, but something *had* been bothering him. Something didn’t *feel* right at all. **“It’s been too quiet after all.”** As he moved through rocky corridors, there hadn’t been nary a sound. They were fairly deep in the dungeon, so shouldn’t there have been monsters about at this hour?

Was it a blessing for their travels, or something more sinister? It was hard to say, but if it meant they could catch up to Laios uninhibited by any danger, he was liable to take advantage of it. **“Still, what could cause a change like this?”** It wasn’t like anything of note had



changed that he knew of. “...**Could Laios have killed the red dragon?**” *That* was definitely a possibility, but seeing as the dragon had been an apex predator, he would have expected the *opposite* effect. If a predator was removed, normally all of the weaker wildlife, monsters included, would feel more comfortable and emboldened to show themselves.

But it was like they were cowering. Or had just *disappeared*. The latter felt much less probable, even though it was the *actual* truth of the matter. Kabru just didn’t have any context regarding the situation to see it that way. “**I guess I should get back to camp. If the conditions are going to be favorable, we might as well leave early in the morning.**” As he saw it, they could abandon their abundance of caution and go full speed ahead without the risk of being attacked on the table.

The issue was that he wasn’t going to make it back to his party.

Just another victim of the curse designed to repopulate the dungeon, Kabru’s own transformation had *already* begun. But it seemed that, unlike what largely had happened with the other victims, his own transformation was getting the more *monstrous* qualities out of the way early on. “**To get back I just need to head... That’s odd, why can’t I remember the way I came from?**” But first, his way home had to be cut off. In this case it was done so *mentally*, and his memories of the past few minutes blurred. He was normally such an attentive guy, and yet his surroundings didn’t seem to be familiar at *all*.

This provided the time necessary to transform him before he could even get remotely close to his camp, and that transformation was already well underway whether the young man himself knew it or not. *And he did not. Had* he, he might have already brought a hand up to touch his ears. After all, they had begun to look very... *odd*. They were lengthening and thinning in a way that didn’t make sense, because as the cartilage hardened? They didn’t really look much like *ears* at all.

More like *bones*. Long, thin, hollow bones that bent in the middle as they stretched to roughly eight inches long on either side. Had they remained bald, they would have seemed uncanny, but they didn’t. Their colors darkened to a dark blue as a downy layer forms around much of them, yet from the backs? Long *feathers* of an identical color extended, solidifying their existence as a pair of tiny *bird’s wings*. “**I can’t hear?**” For a brief moment that *had* been true, but his ability to perceive sound

returned courtesy of two tiny holes that emerged beneath the base of these wings.

“Maybe I need a little more rest...” Kabru swiftly dismissed that concern of his as a momentary lapse of judgement, all while his new wings opened and closed all on their own. The blue of their feathers spread into his dark hair from there, thoroughly dyeing locks that lengthened only a couple of inches and matted against his head in a messy, chin-length bob. **“If I could just remember how to get back... Perhaps then I could connect with someone?”** Were connections really that important in that moment? Perhaps not to Kabru. But what about what or *who* he was becoming?

Regardless of that identity, seemingly they were much more *birdlike* than his new wings already let on. More feathers appeared, though this time from *much* lower on his body. A slight bump had emerged from his tailbone, which by itself could only *be* a tail. But from this bone? Several long, blue tailfeathers emerged, long enough to reach the backs of his knees. Still, this tail wasn't very disruptive, just like his new wings.

But not *all* of the changes would pan out this way for him. Kabru's steps, while taken without much direction, seemed to be becoming a little *uneven*. You couldn't tell with his pants and boots in the way, but something just as *avian* was in development when it came to his legs and feet. His dark skin had been drying out, almost taking on a *scaly* texture... while the dried skin darkened to a purply blue itself. This all transpired beneath the center of his thighs, and tufts of feather appeared around the upper border.

Several raised, almost *armored* 'scales' rose down the front of these legs, while the man's dried feet underwent a much more *drastic* change. His heels were lifted within his boots, forcing him to basically stand on his toes. But as his feet were somehow much more *muscular*, it was easier to do so – and it was an even *less* burdening posture once his pinkie and big toes merged into the ones beside them the three that remained developing long, hooked claws that stabbed *through* the soles of his boots. He had the legs of a bird.

Fortunately for him, he wouldn't become much more bird-like than this. *Unfortunately* for him, however, this only really marked the halfway point for his transformation. **“It's so dark and scary around here. How will I ever find anyone?”** These weren't the words of an experienced adventurer. They were more like the words of someone who had never set foot in a dungeon in his life, much less *this* dungeon.

Kabru still fumbled about in his boots, talons clacking against the stone floor through their material. The fit of his outfit as a whole was

becoming *incredibly* inconvenient to move about in, largely because he wasn't, well, *as large*. The inches had begun to peel off his height, though simultaneously he began to appear *younger* too. He dipped back into his teens as his height encroached upon the *five foot* mark, an almost childlike youthfulness left upon his face that bordered the androgynous. But considering the fates of everyone else that had succumbed to the dungeon's power, it wouldn't remain androgynous for all that long.

This trend was upheld, seemingly. “**Hm!?**” Because *she* squeaked at the sensation of her sex changing, though she didn't really pay it much mind after the fact. It just felt *right* to be a girl, and her sex wasn't of much importance to her at this point anyways. It didn't offer her any further benefits really, either. Because while she was now a girl, physically she couldn't really be much older than *thirteen* or so. The mounds that developed on her chest were hardly even *A-cups*, and her thighs and butt only bloated enough to show the slightest bit of femininity.

It was her face that her girlishness was on full display, for beneath her messy, blue bangs her features had become small and cute. She wore the most adorable smile as eyes, now turned blue, flickered about curiously. All that really remained of her past life now was the color of her skin, but it paled considerably until it was a cream color. “**Is sleep truly a concern for me?**” Why had she been blaming a lack of sleep for things. She didn't *need* to sleep!

All that remained was a change of clothes, and so the girl was outfitted in a light blue dress with a dark blue robe held overtop by a silver brooch with a blue gem in the center. Her bare bird feet pattered across the floor as she walked, no longer burdened by boots. And despite all that had just happened to her? In the end she *appeared* to be in good spirits. She was ignorant to the fact that her body had just transformed, after all.

“**Hm? How odd. This place is so dark and cramped.**” The blue haired girl bound her own fingers together behind her back as she paced about on bird-clawed toes. She was clearly a *monster*, but the part of her that was just a young girl couldn't be denied, either. *Meteion* felt much more human than beast, even if she couldn't be classified as the former in any capacity. The tiny wings on the sides of her head stretched and her tailfeathers twitched as she attempted to adjust to her change in scenery.

Like the others, she understood *why* she was in the dungeon. A strange force had pulled her there. But it



didn't sit well with her to be likened to a common beast, not when her creator had put so much work into her creation in the first place. **"I suppose... I will need to connect with some people here! Surely if I share in their emotions, I'll be able to understand what is happening."** As she had the ability to feel what others did, that *was* a possible solution!

...Though hopefully it didn't end with her feeding on an negativity.