



MAGPIE



Chapter One

My family and my cousin's used to live together for quite a while, and me, Crow, had always been the preferred son in the household. I should probably thank my cousin for making me look better than I was.

My cousin Magpie was truly a character. He would always behave

... differently than all of us, as if he did not fit in anywhere he had been.

We had a hard time explaining to him why we should always dress up decently in public, it was impossible to make him follow any rule. Magpie had put no effort into the academics, although all birds were seeing top collages as their only pathway to enter large enterprises. However, he would sometimes surprise us by casually mentioning the most random knowledge such as

"water can boil and freeze at the same time."

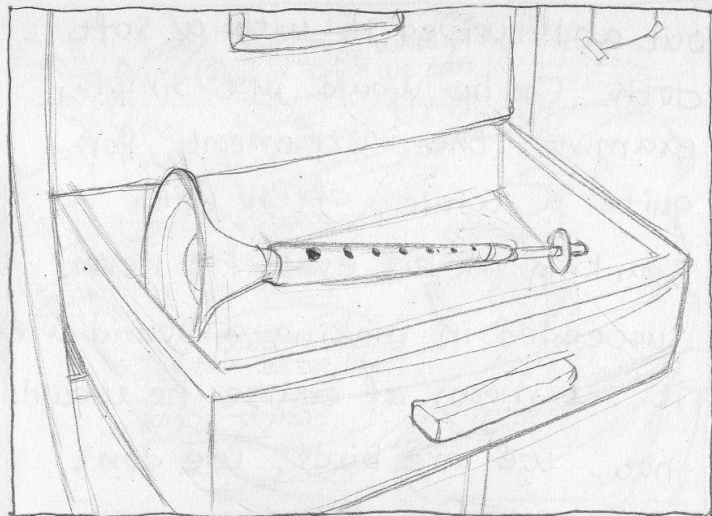


Chapter Two

Ever since we were little kids, I could tell Magpie was something different. Back then we were never short of toys, but we always ended up fighting over the ones we both wanted. In the beginning, I thought it would be pretty easy for me to win because I was older and stronger until I found out about

his strategy. Whenever I was so focused on grabbing the toy with both hands, he would instead grab the toy with only one hand and use the spare hand to slap me.

I always ended up losing.



Chapter Three

Magpie kept a surnay horn in his 'neat drawer' (the only place in his room that doesn't have dust and paper scraps). I never figured out where did he get this strange instrument from and why. All I remembered was once in a while he would take the surnay horn

out and wiped it with a soft cloth. Or he would just simply examine the instrument for quite a while, often with Sparking in his eyes. He never succeeded in making a sound with it. I mean of course he would not, we are birds, we don't have lips.



Chapter Four

It had been pretty hard to follow Magpie through conversations since he jumped among different topics non-stop. He generally asked way too many whys to the most common things everyone does.

"Why do I have to go to school?"

"Because you want to get a good job."

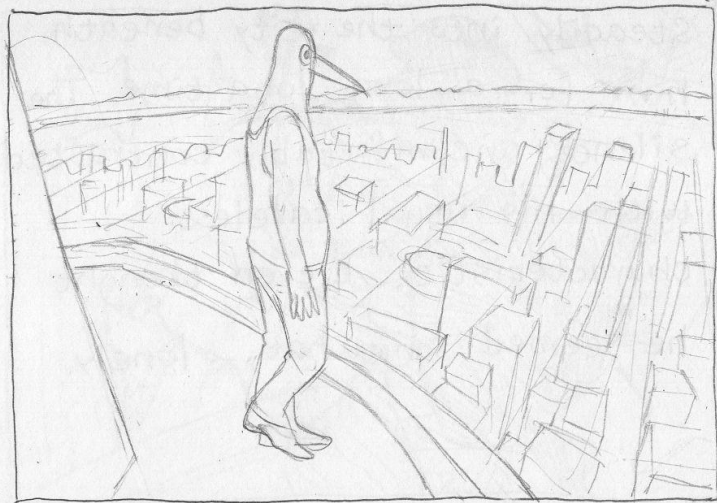
"Why do I want to work a job?"

"So you can have enough money to build your own nest."

"Why must I live in a nest?"

"...."

And that was when I usually cut him off by saying if he spent the time he wasted on this nonsense studying, his dad would never shout at him over his GPA again.



Chapter Five

Magpie, being overly energetic and chatty most of the time, had his quiet side too. I wouldn't believe this either if I didn't encounter him wandering around the top floor of our apartment building by himself. For a few times, I caught him gazing

Steadily into the city beneath him for a long, long time. The silence uncomfortably contrasted with his usual careless characteristic. I even thought he seemed somewhat... lonely.



Chapter Six

After graduation me and magpie were seeing each other less and less often, mainly because he moved to Oceania seeking opportunities. I figured it was, once again, a Magpie choice to make. He just had to do something different than everyone else, I mean we

Corvidae are not migrant birds, we are supposed to live and die in our homeland, not moving around too much. For a few years, Magpie was not home for Christmas.

When I was doing Christmas shopping last year, I passed by this gift shop.

Something inside the window made me stop by and thought of Magpie.

It was an ornament in the shape of an angel, an angel who was playing a horn, and in his back there were ... wings.



Chapter Seven

Years passed by without Magpie being around, until this summer when he suddenly called me saying that he was traveling back home for vacation. I chose a local night market as our meeting spot, considering that any place more formal would be too prim for

Someone like him. To my surprise, he showed up wearing a decent suit, which seemed nicely ironed. I had never seen him looking like this. He told me that he had been eating healthily, and suggested that I should do it as well.



Chapter Eight

The last time I saw Magpie, or at least when I believed I saw him, was a few months ago. I was laying in bed one night not finding myself sleepy, at some point I started to hear odd noises coming from outside my window. It almost sounded like a huge flag flying

up and down. I got up and opened the curtain, as I did this, a figure outside hurriedly turned around and fled. Under the moonlight, I saw the distancing back of a bird, who was flying into the night with what seemed to be a pair of wings. Through out my life I was never told that it was even possible for birds to have wings or to fly, I got frozen in place and was sure that this scene would from now on be seared into my mind for ever. I just knew that it was him I saw.

I just knew that if there was one bird who could fly in this world, it must be Magpie.

