

Gregory peered out from the side of the rock wall he'd chosen as a good hiding spot. He didn't know what was inside that cave, other than a great hoard of treasure. That's what that old man had said anyways, and he was well respected in the tavern. A relic of older times, when people weren't so cold and orphans could scrim off the generosity of strangers and not go as hungry as Gregory was right now. Gregory didn't want much, and he wouldn't have been doing this had he not gone so many days without food. He was only planning on stealing enough to eat, maybe a little more for a decent meal after months of table scraps. Not enough to buy a house or anything; he was content with the alley behind the tavern.

Gregory felt towards his right... and remembered that he didn't have a sword. This was nothing like his daydreams. He was exhausted just by the walk over to this cave. If the old man was correct in that the cave was protected, he was in some trouble. Gregory didn't really want to go against his words, the odds that he was wrong was pretty slim. Still, no choice...

The seventeen year old turned into the cave's entrance and went down into a crawl, his buttoned tunic pressing against his slim chest. Everything below his shorts scraped against sharp rock as he moved forward, but it was still better than being seen. It didn't really occur to him that anything that could see him in this now blacker than pitch tunnel would be able to see him without trouble. Even if he'd known it, though, he'd probably still be staying down.

Eventually he reached an opening that led into a huge, humid cavern. Sunlight trickled down from a large hole in the ceiling onto a massive pile of golden, silver, platinum... every single metal that was worth something was in this pile as a object and scattered around the cavern in large piles of their own, and almost each one of them was studded with jewels. Gregory was simultaneously dismayed and pleased by this, his mind torn between the pleasant future of splurging on food and the horrible one involving seeing just what connects his arm to his shoulder. Gregory quickly ran behind a pile of particularly glinty beer mugs and peeked out from it, looking around the cavern. He winced as he heard something like leaves being crushed, and looked down to see he'd stepped on an old looking shed scale.

... He expected after a few minutes of watching something would happen. The cave was dead silent though. No movement or anything. ... Huh. The old man was probably right in his own way. There'd been a guardian here before, a huge one judging from the size of the scale. It'd moved on, though. The cave was abandoned, and Gregory could simply grab what he wanted and head back.

His legs were jelly, though. And although he'd been warned not to stay for more than needed, the cave felt warm, and much better than any old alley. There'd be no harm in staying and resting for just a while.

Gregory found a nice spot near the large treasure mound and layed his head back against it, then promptly yelped as something stuck into him. After that, the floor of the cave looked more inviting.

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Gregory's hands went towards his stomach as he woke up the next day. He expected hunger pains and got exactly that. Such a shame too... He wanted to stay put, if just for a while.

He got himself to his feet and headed back to the cavern entrance, but not before pocketing a few objects to sell. When he reached the opening out to the tunnel, he stared back wistfully at the pile. It looked so pretty, glistening in the sunlight like it currently was. Gregory wouldn't have minded if he was forced to stay a few more days...

As he stared, he noticed a wooden door on the other side of the cavern. Strange, that. Somehow he'd failed to notice it on the way in. He could spare a few moments to check it out...

Gregory stuffed his pockets with a few more baubles as he moved towards the door. Opening it, he found his wishes of being able to stay for a while seemingly answered, in the form of a large pantry. Shelves lined with spiced, salted, and preserved jars of food and a small fountain in the back seemed

like a godsend to the teen, and he quickly grabbed a few of the jars and an empty one that he filled with water.

Sitting with his back against the treasure mound, he had to wonder to himself how weird this all was as he took a bite into a spiced apple. You had an abandoned treasure hoard, and yet the food in it was of perfect quality, almost as if they'd been prepared yesterday. The water wasn't stale like he'd expect, it was like it came from a spring or at least had been filtered. Something in his head told him that if he acknowledged it and rejected it as too weird, this would all end up as a dream and he'd be waking up back in the alley. So why would he look a gift horse in the mouth? He had food now. Water, even. All he needed to do was stop thinking, sit down, and eat.

And eat he did. Each jar was filled to the brim with their respective objects; Gregory'd never been in possession of so much food, so he was overjoyed as his teeth bit into the jerky and fruit inside the jars. After a minute or so of eating, Gregory would take a large gulp of the water, the jar seemingly having an unlimited supply to give to him. He attempted to stack each jar up neatly as he ate, but as time went on and he emptied more jars they began to haphazardly end up in a small circle near him.

The last jar was dropped onto the circle, cracking, as Gregory laid back onto the mound, belching and rubbing the small bulge in his tunic. He thanked whatever diety had caused this, because this was nothing short of a miracle to him. And yet...

He was a bit disappointed in some sort of way that he was full. Whatever divine providence he had received was probably gone by now. He'd look back, and find that the door would be gone, a stone wall in its place to send him on his way home, to deny him the excuse of staying here. Thinking about it... He found it a bit unfair. It wasn't wrong to want more than what you needed, right? Priests only needed the words of their god and sustenance and yet they were allowed all the luxuries life provided. Why would a god deny him that if he was being a beneficiary? Gregory looked back and winced, still a little doubtful of what he was thinking.

The door was still there, and... Gregory stopped to sniff the air. The scent of baking pastries and roasting meat filled the air. His question had obviously been answered. Of course it wasn't... wanting wasn't wrong at all. He could want all he wanted to...

The teen's hands dug a small gouge as he walked across the mound, stuffing trinkets into his pocket to the point where they bulged out the cloth, the seams straining to hold them. He swung open the door and was instantly blasted with the fragrance of everything inside the place. The jars had turned now into pie tins and bowls filled with freshly prepared steaks. Gregory wasted no time in grabbing all he could. His arms filled quickly with each container, too quick in Gregory's opinion. He managed by precariously balancing more bowls and pies onto what he had.

Gregory slowly walked back towards his spot and sat down, food falling off the pile in his hands as he walked. As soon as he sat down his hands shot out for a steak. It was gone in a matter of seconds, and his hands went instantly towards a particularly savory looking pie.

He leaned back against the pile as he ate, the gold having become quite comfortable now. The more he ate, the more full he felt, yet he couldn't stop eating. It all tasted too damn good. He couldn't slow down either, and a multitude of stains soon collected on his clothes.

He shifted position naturally from laying back to a sitting position as he devoured whatever he could get his hands on, his bloated stomach taking on a rounded curve and slowly expanding as he ate. He could feel as his stomach slowly filled out and then pushed against his tunic, but he could barely care. He was fully absorbed in eating now, his sharpening nails gripping tight on every piece he snatched up, making up for having to reach over his stomach.

By the time Gregory was finished, he was going so fast that he almost swallowed the last steak whole. The lack of food led to a huge crash for Gregory. He groaned as he searched around, looking in the now large pile of jars and containers next to him for errant bits of food he'd missed. His tunic strained as he moved, the fabric outlining his new gut becoming undone. As Gregory got back onto his feet, he heard a loud ripping sound as watched as his tunic tore off him, his beige and lined stomach

flopping out and nearly catching him offbalance. He steadied himself... and started walking back towards the door. He was determined now. He'd take and eat as much as he could, just to deny it from anyone else coming in here. He'd found it, hadn't he? Didn't that make it his? Didn't that make it all his?

He stopped and looked back into the mound, and dug both his hands into it, pulling out great handfuls and putting them into his pockets, not stopping when said pockets had imploded on themselves. It was all his, he could do what he wanted with it. The teen didn't stop until he felt a sharp pain in his hands, the bones inside them feeling like they were shifting. He pulled them out and continued to walk, not even registering the fact that he'd lost two fingers on both hands, his nails had grown and become a dark black, and that the skin around his nails was graying and hardening.

Gregory nearly broke the door as he thrust it open. Once again, the contents of the room had changed. A normal person wouldn't find the slabs of various cooked animal flesh all that appetizing, but Gregory found it mouth-watering. He couldn't wait long enough to simply take it back with him. He simply grabbed the nearest piece he could get and dug his claws into it, pulling it onto the ground and dragging it a few feet away from the room before chewing on it, not even bothering to tear pieces off it.

Gregory had to work hard now just to eat, his teeth hurting as he bit into the flesh. He hunched over the slab as he struggled to chew, planting his hands down palm first onto the ground. He moaned loudly as his wrist bones snapped loudly and his wrists bent further backwards than usual and then locked there, feeling the same pain and sound coming from his ankles, his feet changing to match his hands. Scales seemed to wash over both, flowing quickly and giving his skin a leathery texture to the middle of his arms and legs.

Gregory attempted again to work off a piece and winced as his teeth sharpened, allowing him to take a nice big chunk out of it. He swallowed it and groaned again as his tailbone expanded, pushing out a small mound of flesh against his pants. He couldn't stop now, though. He had to make sure no one else got this food. His mouth went down again, the scales surging forward, his shoulders and hips now leathery and gray.

He continued to bite more and more chunks off, the slab halfway gone when he felt his pants rip open as his tail pushed out against it. The scales were now everywhere except his head, and they soon remedied that. As they crawled across his scalp, his hair melted into his head. A few more bites and his arms and legs extended as bones cracked in his back as his spine reformed. His belly pulled off the ground, feeling even larger to him. He moaned in pain as his body shifted, his voice lowering an octave and gaining a small growl.

Gregory stuck out his tongue in an attempt to reach the remainder and found it large enough to reach downwards and grab it in a coil-like fashion, pulling it down his throat as his face grew scales. The changing boy felt his face with a claw as it began to stretch painfully into a muzzle. He cried out as he felt small horns push up through his forehead, his ears now gone but replaced with new ones that could hear as his voice became low and booming, roaring out his pain as his body stretched and he grew to the proper stature of what he was now, the belly stretching and churning as it grew to proportion. A popping sound brought a roar that shook every window for a hundred miles heralded the arrival of his new wings. New thoughts entered his head amidst all the pain, and eventually he fell over, his elongated neck flopping onto the treasure mound, sending gold flying everywhere.

Eventually Gregory managed to regain a sense of normalcy and stood back up onto his front claws. He looked back to find that the door was gone. A shame. He thought it was a nice addition to his cavern. Well, at least he had his gold.

The dragon stretched out his claws, gathering all the loose valuables in the room into one single pile that he promptly laid down upon, the cavern vibrating loudly as he set down. He growled in delight as he idly scratched at his stomach, the mound feeling like a down bed to Gregory. All his... His to protect and admire. To grow.

He chuckled at that thought. Oh, he'd grow it. The world was filled with people smelting things, people mining for diamonds, people gathering coins together. All for Gregory. He'd be able to swoop

down on towns, devour everyone, and take everyone's hard world for himself. It was like the world and all its inhabitants worked solely for him.

The dragon yawned. Tomorrow. Tomorrow he'd do something. And so Gregory started to plan for the future.