Wanderer 59

Chapter 59: Floating

Percy's feelings towards his clones had shifted a lot over time.

His first attempts had been defined by pain and confusion, as he hadn't had the slightest clue how his bloodline was supposed to work back then. Yet oddly enough, those very trips to the Moirais' world and Huehue had proven his most successful ones by far.

Suffice to say, by the time he'd developed a proper understanding of his ability, his greed and anticipation had reached an all-time high. Of course, that had only led to disappointment during his crappy adventure in the gecko's body, which was soon followed by several equally fruitless trips.

That said, things had flipped around once more since then. No, he hadn't found anything else of value, but that was precisely why he had learned to lower his expectations, to the point the shitty bodies and gruesome deaths no longer bothered him.

If anything, he had slowly come to appreciate the novelty of his adventures. Initially, Percy had pitied his clones, who had to endure all those hardships just so he could benefit. Nowadays, he was beginning to think it was his main body who had drawn the short end of the stick, however.

'I'll take freezing to death and getting eaten by crabs over picking apart one more bloody wasp. Or brewing another pot of sludge.'

And it was with this mindset that clone #13 had embraced his new holiday.

Things were looking up for him too! He'd found a suitable body fairly quickly and it hadn't even resisted much – unlike clones #9 and #11 who had imploded before even doing anything. In fact, his new host was even more zen than the lizard, happy to relax and give him the reins. Not out of fear – just pure, unmitigated chill.

'Why am I spinning though?'

Percy tried looking down at his body, but failed to even glimpse at his limbs. A curved wall of grey fur was in the way.

‘Ok… Another beast. Shocker. But why is it so FAT?!’

Getting dizzy, he tried to stop rotating. There was nothing to grab against! Though he wasn’t underwater – he’d already experienced that, and this was different.

‘What the hell is going on?! Did we fall off a cliff or something?!’

After experimenting for a few minutes, he realized he could slow down by stretching his limbs. He still couldn’t see them, but they seemed to respond to his commands all the same. He also had some damn powerful lungs, as he managed to completely halt his movements by blowing the other way!

By now, he’d also verified he wasn’t falling. If he were, he’d have splattered on the ground already. No, his host was floating!In the sky!

‘That’s a new one.’

Paying more attention to his surroundings, he soon noticed he couldn’t see very far. A light brown fog partially obscured his vision. At first, he wondered whether his host had suffocated or been poisoned to death by the substance. However, he instinctively felt there was nothing wrong with it. As if inhaling the gas was the most normal thing in the world.

‘Come to think of it, it tastes a bit like strawberry juice.’

Percy took a few deep breaths, enjoying the flavour. Even if it was harmful… Who cared, right?

Next, he remembered his purpose here, opening his Status.

Percival's clone

Mana cores:

Spells:

???:

He nodded, not seeing anything out of place. His host was at Yellow too, making him one of the luckier clones so far.

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Although, if there was anything of value here, he'd have to look for it. His best means of navigating the environment was to propel himself by blowing air. He didn't know if the beast had something better in its arsenal, but it refused to share if it did.

Since his eyes couldn't peer through the fog, Percy activated Mana Sense, soon getting a couple readings. They were at Orange, so he wasn't too concerned. Not that he had any clue how to fight in his current body, but the creatures hopefully wouldn't attack unprovoked.

He cautiously approached the nearest one, a bizarre animal appearing in his sight. It looked very different to anything he'd seen, but the closest match would be a cat. Maybe. Not really. Its body was round like a ball, covered in long, pink, curly fluff. It actually looked ridiculous as it rotated slowly, without a care in the world. Every time its head spun his way, it watched him curiously, with its three eyes half-opened and its four ears lazily hanging aside.

'Is it the same species as me? Is that what I look like?'

That should be it. After all, why else would it remain so calm when approached by a beast at a higher grade? Although it did appear smaller. Half his radius maybe? Less?

Percy inched closer, trying not to startle it. His worries were unfounded though, as the furball wasn't fazed in the slightest. When he was in front of it, he shifted slightly. Roughly estimating where his paw

was, he gave it a gentle shove. Was that rude? He didn't know, nor care. The creature didn't mind either, continuing to inhale some fog of its own as it drifted away.

'Am I definitely a clone? Maybe this is just a dream...'

Well, dream or not, he fully intended to get his time's worth.

Falling back to Mana Sense, he moved around, examining a dozen more creatures. They all looked the same, but their fur was either pink, brown or black. He'd yet to find another grey one like himself. And they all had Orange cores.

'Hmmm… Maybe my host died of old age? It would explain the different colour and grade.'

In any case, he had to get out of the fog. Harmful or not, he could barely see past his nose. That kinda went against his goal of finding something useful. He decided to descend to the ground, when another question popped up in his mind.

'Does this world even have a ground? Or is it all sky?'

If there was any gravity, he couldn't differentiate it from the buoyancy holding him up. Not seeing any other solution, he exhaled as much air as he could, causing his body to shrivel slightly. That seemed to do the trick as he began falling a certain direction. After falling a few metres, he inhaled again to slow down. He had no idea how high he was, but he'd rather not turn into meat paste so soon. Luckily, his situation changed after a while.

'Now we're getting somewhere.'

The brown fog thinned as he descended, letting him see further. It wasn't perfect, but he could now vaguely spot land underneath him, as well as some rocky peaks in the distance. He saw more of his species floating around too.

Shrugging, he continued his controlled fall with more confidence than before, stopping when he was a dozen metres from the ground. The fog still surrounded him, but it wasn't as intrusive.

‘It’s also less tasty…’ he frowned.

No wonder the rest of the cat-thingies preferred floating higher. But this wasn’t the time to indulge in alien delicacies, so he simply began moving towards a random direction, parallel to the ground. Hopefully his higher vantage point would help him find something interesting soon.

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This was getting annoying. Percy had to blow opposite to where he wanted to go, so he was forced to turn around every few seconds. It had already been a few hours since he descended, and he’d travelled a fair distance. His higher grade helped some, although his host didn’t seem to be the fastest flyer. Well, either that or he was doing something wrong.

‘Maybe these things move by farting?’

He briefly entertained the idea of giving it a shot, but he shook his head. Inconvenient or not, he’d rather keep his dignity.

Percy hadn’t found anything either. It was just more rocky plains and hills all around him. He had no idea how far they stretched, and he hadn’t seen any other living beings either. Well, besides the furballs. His species seemed to be extremely abundant in this world. Or this region at least.

The only slight oddity he spotted was a higher concentration of both the fog and the cats somewhere in the distance. It was difficult to make out, but it appeared there was some large vent there, spewing the brown gas into the air.

‘I guess it’s a natural phenomenon. It all comes from the ground. Should I check it out?’

Judging from everything he’d seen to that point, not only wasn’t the substance harmful to him, it was beneficial even. If he approached, he might find something interesting there, or at least he’d get a better taste of the strawberry vapor.

‘But it’s going to be a pain to navigate out of it.’

In the end, he decided to circle around it for now. He could consider returning later if he found nothing else.

SHREEEEEEE

Hearing a shrill cry, he snapped his head to the right. A shadow was approaching rapidly, bringing up some bad memories.

‘Not this again!’

Whatever it was, he knew he couldn’t outrun it, so he began blowing downwards to gain elevation. His only hope was to ascend high enough to lose it in the fog. However, the monster was getting closer much faster than he climbed. He’d never make it in time!

A few seconds later, he could already make out its features. It was a fierce lizard-like creature, with its two forelimbs ending in large membranous wings. He thought he saw three ruby-like eyes glinting on its face too. And it was five times his size.

‘Whatever, I guess it’s another bust.’

Resigning to his fate, he stopped struggling after noticing the Green core thrumming in the creature’s frame. Yet, when he was sure the monster was about to pounce on him, something strange happened. It just circled around him, continuing on its way, ignoring him entirely!

‘What’s the deal with this place?!’