Wanderer 61

Chapter 61: Holy ball of fur

Over the past several hours, Percy had learned a lot more about the dynamic between his species and the natives of this world.

While they were prohibited from touching him for any reason, he wasn't. He had approached and tapped the villagers many times over, always eliciting a smile from them. They seemed to see his presence as a good luck charm, treating him like a guest of honour – no, a sacred creature even.

'A bit weird but I could get used to it.'

In any case, this only made his life easier. Between their overt friendliness and the fact he could survive on nothing but the brown fog, Percy was free to float around the village and observe it to his heart's content.

Their understanding of magic was as poor as expected. They appeared to possess the same common affinities he was used to, although he hadn't seen them cast anything more complex than a Crude spell. He also had no idea if they could be born with rare or composite affinities. Less than 1% of the population had them back on Remior. His sample size here was too small.

Either way, Percy could see how they survived in such a hostile environment. Even though he'd spotted several Green beasts on the way to the village, such a large group of Yellow and Orange mages shouldn't have much trouble taking care of themselves.

He sighed.

'I suppose it's time to leave.'

As relaxing as it was floating around and being worshipped, Percy was confident there was nothing to gain here. He was about to wave the villagers farewell, when some commotion drew his attention.

'No harm in checking it out before I go.'

Flying above the crowd, he saw a distraught father carrying his unconscious daughter in his arms. She looked to be in her mid-teens, although Percy wasn't sure how well his pre-conceived notions about aging translated to this place.

More importantly, the girl was afflicted with the worst instance of the disease he'd seen yet, her Yellow core seemingly on the verge of dying out. The man hurriedly brought her to one of the largest huts, before kneeling by the entrance. He then spoke in an anxious tone, probably pleading with somebody.

'Ok, colour me intrigued.'

Percy wanted to watch how the natives mitigated the poison. Whatever they did was clearly nothing more than a half-measure, as none of them were in perfect condition. Still, he'd be lying if he said he wasn't curious.

Someone walked out of the house. An old lady. She was only at Orange, but her core was among the healthiest he'd seen, despite her age. She held two small bowls – carved out of bone presumably. Leaving one on the ground, she tilted the girl's head up with her free hand, before placing the other bowl under her nose. A green liquid was swirling inside, emanating thick smoke of the same colour.

Some of it entered the teen's nostrils, as Percy paid closer attention, using both his regular sight and Mana Sense. Nothing changed in the girl's core, but she soon creased her brow as if in pain, before opening her eyes weakly a few moments later.

'That's not the cure. It was just to wake her up.'

The old lady picked up the second bowl again. This one contained a fine cyan powder. She spoke a few words to the girl, seemingly explaining something as she pointed first to the bowl and then to her stomach. Next, she gestured to a man in the crowd, who manifested a few drops of water above the powder.

Stolen from Royal Road, this story should be reported if encountered on Amazon.

Nodding, the girl picked up the bowl, mixing the contents into paste with her fingers before swallowing it. What followed made Percy's eyes widen. He saw the mana flow from the girl's core to her stomach and then back, much like what he did on Remior whenever he used an elixir.

'But that's not what this is.'

The purpose of the paste was very different. Every time it washed over the core, the latter regained some of its lustre. The change was minute, almost imperceptible. Percy would have certainly missed it if he wasn't actively looking for it. Even several minutes later, after she was done, the girl's situation had barely improved. Still, the tension on her forehead seemed to ease slightly. She was also able to stand, albeit with her father's support.

'They can't do anything to remove the poison, but they can mend some of the damage.'

The father and daughter both bowed their heads to the old lady, as the former said something in a sombre tone. She didn't reply, but she made a gesture with her hand Percy didn't recognize, before returning to her hut. It didn't take long for the rest of the crowd to disperse.

'Now what do I do?'

Percy was reconsidering his decision to leave. Strictly speaking, all of this was irrelevant to him. The brown fog wasn't something they had to worry about back home. Furthermore, the effect of the cyan powder was quite underwhelming. He couldn't figure out what it did, nor did he know if it could be used for anything else. But that was exactly what made him want to learn more. This was the first thing the natives did he didn't fully understand.

'I must at least find out where they get it from.'

Having made up his mind, he descended next to the old lady's hut, peeking inside. It was a little creepy spying into her home like that, but he doubted she'd take offense. The woman was sitting on a piece of stone roughly shaped like a cube, sipping some orange broth from a cup. As expected, she only gave him a smile upon noticing him, not bothered by his intrusion in the slightest.

'If only I could fit through the door…'

Being larger than the rest of his kin, Percy's host was as tall as one of the adult villagers. However, he was much wider than them, his frame closer to a bear's than a cat's. Shrugging, he plopped down, taking a seat on the ground outside. He nearly rolled on his back too, just barely managing to grab the stone wall to keep himself upright.

The old lady failed to stifle her laughter at his antics, choking on her soup as some came out of her nose. Percy rolled his eyes, but internally suppressed a chuckle of his own. He knew he looked ridiculous.

'Anyway, I'll stay here until I see where she gets the cyan powder from.'

Feeling a little peckish, he took a couple deep breaths, greedily sucking all the brown fog he could, savouring its flavour. A few minutes later, the air inside the hut already looked cleaner, as the old lady bowed her head in appreciation. She said something Percy didn't understand, although he did recognise some of the words of gratitude the girl's father had spoken earlier.

'Ah right. I almost forgot I can help them like this.'

Percy made an odd expression. In theory, nothing stopped the locals from kidnapping a few of the furballs to lock in their houses. It wouldn't fix everything, but they could at least improve their quality of life that way. Would these people rather die than disrespect his kin?

'Well, I can do whatever the hell I want.'

Getting up, he took another deep breath before exhaling downward, taking off. A few minutes later he returned to the village with two of his younger relatives in tow. The creatures didn't even struggle as he threw the first in the old lady's hut, before locating the sick girl's house and tossing the second one in there.

Percy ignored the villagers cheering him on as he ascended again, repeating his actions a few more times. Only when he had stuffed a furball in each hut did he return to his spot by the old lady's entrance, clumsily sitting down again.

More people surrounded him, eager to express their thanks. However, it wasn't their gratitude he wanted. Sadly, he didn't understand their language and he suspected he couldn't speak it anyway. His rotund frame made it difficult for him to relay his request via gestures too. Furthermore, it probably didn't help he was immune to the poison, thus having no reason to be interested in its remedy.

'I'll have to be patient until they show me what I need by themselves…'

Luckily, he didn't have to wait for long.