Wanderer 99

Chapter 99: Buggy vessel

‘Everything ok?’ the main body asked.

He was holding a half-formed sickle made of teal mana in one hand. Clearly, he hadn’t remained idle, practicing the affinity fusion while waiting.

‘I will be, as soon as you get Micky off me.’ the clone replied.

A moment later the bird lifted its talon, letting the bug move about, getting a better feel of his body.

‘It’s a little on the smaller side…’ he couldn’t help but notice.

Naturally, this wasn’t his first time possessing a beast at Orange, or even Red. Since their size was often correlated with their grade, some of his past incarnations must’ve been tinier. That said, he’d never had an adult from Remior available for comparison before. Standing up, his new vessel struggled to reach the main body’s knees. Even the crow was larger than he was.

As for his limbs – Percy was already accustomed to having an extra pair. A cursory buzz of his wings revealed they still worked too, which was a welcome bonus. It was a miracle they’d survived the rough handling.

‘How long have I been out anyway?’ he asked the original.

‘All night. The sun should be up soon.’ the main body replied.

That certainly explained the extent of his host’s deterioration. Still, it could’ve been worse. At least, the first test had succeeded. They’d confirmed he could return to Remior and even take over a specific body. Of course, it would be harder if said body was further away, though that was a project for another day.

‘Go home then. You might make it in time for a nap.’ he said.

They'd already taken their biweekly break yesterday. Percy couldn't afford another day off.

'You sure you'll be alright?' the original asked again.

'I can easily last a couple days like this. Just remember to send me mana later.'

While his host's soul wasn't in great shape, the clone could probably survive for a very long time with the others helping. In fact, it should be possible to heal the bug completely over time, if he wanted – though that would only kick him out of the vessel.

As for his physical body, it was lucky they'd taken extra care to leave it intact, since there was no way to repair it. The second core would suck all the life mana out of the healing potions before they had the chance to do much.

Nodding, the original waved him farewell before heading off. The crow soon followed, flying down to the first level. The two had already wasted too much time on him – they had their own roles to return to.

'And I have mine…'

Stretching his legs, he took a few minutes casually strolling atop the giant mushroom, getting used to his new body. He wasn't feeling brave enough to try flying just yet. It was probably best to leave it for tomorrow, assuming he got a hang of the ropes by then.

'The headache isn't doing me any favours either…' he groaned.

Since the moment he first tapped into his host's senses, he'd felt a constant buzz in his brain. Had Micky smacked his head too hard or something?

'Hopefully it goes away soon.'

But it wasn't all bad news. The air here felt quite refreshing. Pausing, he activated Mana Sense to observe the phenomenon in more detail. Like most bugs, Starry Wasps didn't inhale through their mouth. They didn't even have lungs! Instead, they breathed through openings in their exoskeleton. Still, that didn't stop him from absorbing the colourful motes around him. In fact, he seemed especially efficient at it – nearly none of the particles entering his body ever escaped.

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'It makes sense, really. The wasps have adapted to this environment more than any other creature.'

What could he do with all that ambient mana though? He clearly didn't need that much to survive, nor could he store any more inside his core…

Examining himself for a few minutes, Percy soon had his answer.

'Of course… the gland…'

The excess was converted to beast mana inside his core, before flowing out, accumulating in a special organ a few inches below his sternum. That was where it would presumably end up condensed into the familiar amber fluid everyone knew and loved. In fact, tapping into his host's instincts, Percy realized he could…

BLUUUUURG

'Eeeww… This went better in my head…' he thought as he looked at the tiny pool of nectar he'd just vomited.

Using a forelimb, he swirled the viscous liquid a few times, before making up his mind.

'Yeah. I'm not eating that again.'

Not like his main body drank six doses of it per day or anything…

And with that, Percy had some idea of what his current vessel was capable of. Well, there was the stinger too, but he wasn't particularly interested in it. The worker's acid wasn't very potent. Plus, he hoped he wouldn't ever have to fight in this body either. He had other plans for it.

'Ok. That's enough playing around.'

Creating a local clone was only the first item on the agenda. The second one involved his Status.

Percival's clone

Mana cores:

Spells:

Decrees:

There it was!

Percy felt the urge to laugh – though he doubted his host's physiology allowed that. Ever since he returned from the Vault, he'd been itching to go back. But he couldn't risk travelling there with his main body. Even on the off-chance Metatron let him be, Percy would be stuck there. Yet…

'This changes everything!'

His clone had inherited his latest Decree too!

Percy had hoped it would be the case, but it hadn't been a sure thing. Each Decree worked differently, so it was a matter of chance. From personal experience, he'd placed his odds at two out of three.

‘Well?! What’s the situation?’ his main body suddenly asked through their link.

The clone wanted to roll his eyes, but they appeared fixed in place.

‘Just go to sleep already… You’ll get my memories when I’m done anyway…’

But the original wasn’t having it.

‘Like hell I’m going to wait weeks for an answer! It’s a yes or no question!’

The clone remained silent for a while, amused by the novelty of arguing against himself. Though a wave of irritation soon seeped through the cord, snapping him out of his reverie. In the end, he didn’t keep his main body in suspense much longer.

‘It’s here!’

The annoyance was replaced by excitement, though the original didn’t say anything else.

In any case, this was massive! With this, they could access the Vault’s secrets at a much lower risk! Of course, it would ultimately depend on Metatron’s stance. Percy was sure the titan would notice and could easily put an end to his ambitious plan if he wanted.

‘Hopefully not everyone there is as stingy as Gabe…’

Either way, this wasn’t the time for that. The Starry Worker wasn’t a suitable body to send there. Percy was probably better off waiting for a sentient host. Preferably one at Yellow or higher too. That way, he’d stand a better chance of communicating with the locals and practicing magiscript. Anything less and he might be killed on sight.

‘Well, they might not take kindly to a foreigner either – though I suppose they’re used to coexisting with different races…’

Then, there was the question of whether it would be moral to bring an innocent person to such a dangerous place to begin with. Generally, Percy wouldn't do that without consent – though it would also depend on who his host was.

'Maybe if they're an enemy… or a huge asshole… or if they've got nothing to lose for whatever reason…'

But the clone shook his head. One of the perks of not being the original was that it wasn't his job to waste time on ethical dilemmas. Besides, he had his own task to worry about. After all, there was a reason Percy had chosen a wasp as his host.

'Let's see… where's the nearest hole?'

While he'd ignored them all these years, the Fungal Spire was full of openings leading to its interior. Many of these entrances could be found on the mountainside itself, but it was possible to enter the natural wonder through plenty of the colossal mushrooms too. Of course, most of the people hunting on the Spire wouldn't dare doing that, not only because it was strictly forbidden by the Guild, but also because they didn't have a death wish.

'Or a wasp clone.' Percy wanted to grin, but the mandibles didn't help.

Walking around the mushroom, he failed to see any openings. Neither did he find any on the next three fungi. Though he did eventually get lucky, spotting a narrow tear along the underside of one of the stems. The hole was a few metres long, but quite narrow – only about a quarter of a metre wide. Just enough for Percy to barely squeeze through.

'Great. Now let's find me some wasp eggs.'