

The Visitor (part 1)

Birth isle.

PurpleDee found herself standing in the middle of a huge ring of stones. She glanced around and saw that there were 11 of them in all. First there was a really huge one that towered over all the others, then to either side of it there were 5 more that appeared to curl over slightly towards the center of the open space in which she now stood. She looked up at the large one and was pretty sure that there was another rock on the top of it but from her vantage point, she couldn't really make out what it was. Opposite the large stone was an opening in the ring. She could easily have gone between any two of the smaller stones but the main opening looked like a better bet so she set off towards it.

Beyond the opening she saw a strange land of vibrant colors, Beautiful green grass covered the distant hills while closer to her there was a large expanse of sand. Above the grassy hills, palm trees reached up into a perfect blue sky while at the other edge of the sand there was a perfect blue-green ocean lapping against the beach. It appeared to be an absolutely idyllic location.

As she walked to the gap in the stones, she looked down at her own body. She was dressed in some kind of very skimpy Roman style wrap around skirt and a swathe of white cloth criss-crossed her chest and continued across each shoulder. Her feet were bare, as were her arms and hands. A gentle breeze blew a lock of her shoulder length hair across in front of her face and she absently noted that it was bright purple. Somehow this seemed a little strange but she couldn't quite put a finger on why.

She stepped out onto the beach and looked up at the beautiful sky once more, then reached her arms outward and up as she stretched her muscles. The sand felt wonderful between her toes as she flexed them and she felt more alive than she had ever felt before. It suddenly occurred to her that she had never felt anything before. In fact she had no memories whatsoever of anything before appearing in the stone circle. What the heck was going on? She began to examine the things that she did know. There turned out to be a few of them. First she knew her own name. She was PurpleDee. It seemed somehow appropriate. Secondly she knew that she was not alone. She actually had an older sister by the name of PurpleYouko although she had no recollection of the two of them ever having met. The third and perhaps strangest thing that she knew was that she was being watched by someone impossibly distant.

"Hello!" The soft melodic voice brought Dee out of her momentary reverie and she glanced across to her right to see where the voice had come from.

Floating in the air in front of her was a cute little fairy wearing a lovely little green dress and gently flapping her butterfly-like wings.

"Hello", said the fairy again, "You must be PurpleDee. I have been expecting you. I am Aura's Fairy and I have been sent to greet you. I expect you have a number of questions so ask away."

"How about you tell me what I'm doing here first. How come I have no memories?" replied Dee.

The fairy performed a small bow in mid air, then began her explanation.

"You are what is called a Visitor. Also known sometimes as a small soul. You have been called here and given a body by the great Goddess Aura. She has need of your

services and those of many more like you. You will never age while you live here in the world of R.O.S.E. nor can you ever die. You will become a great warrior in the battle against the evil of the God Hebern”.

“Hold on a minute! What makes you think I want to be a warrior? I kind of fancy the life of a trader actually. And what is this R.O.S.E.? and why does it have periods after each letter. Come to that, why does everything that you or I say appear in a funny little speech bubble above our heads? This place is weird!”

“Ahhh... I see you noticed already,” said the fairy. She looked a little despondent. “Most visitors don’t realize that for quite some time. Do you want the **real** truth or the line that we tell to the less astute ones who come here”?

“I’ll take the **real** truth please”, replied Dee

“OK”, said the fairy, “but first I will have to tell you the background story that we tell everyone. It goes a little like this.”

“There are seven planets in the massive multi-player online roll playing game in which you now find yourself, or at least there will be once Triggersoft get the other four finished...”

“GAME??” exclaimed PurpleDee. “What do you mean by GAME”?

“Oops.. Sorry about that”, Replied the fairy. “That kind of slipped out a little earlier than I had intended. Anyway please let me finish the story first then you can ask all the questions you like later on”. The fairy’s face was looking a little red and she looked so apologetic that Dee decided to let her continue.

“Anyway, The Goddess Aura decided to create the seven planets of R.O.S.E., which stands for Rush On Seven Episodes, They were all beautiful and perfect and all the residents of the worlds lived happily on them. Then came the evil one, Hebern. He saw how lovely the planets were and determined to take them for himself He managed to wrest the seventh planet away from Aura then renamed it as Hebern after his own name. He then launched a campaign of evil against all the other planets. That is why Aura began to create the Visitors like yourself. We really need your help PurpleDee”. The fairy tailed off and looked down at her own feet.

Dee began to feel sorry for the poor fairy but she wasn’t about to give in that quickly. “So what is this business about a game”, she inquired through gritted teeth. “Come on! Spill it Tinkerbelle”.

“Well”, said the fairy, still looking down at her feet which she was absently tapping in mid air, “you must have had that feeling that you are being watched by now. Right”?

Dee nodded affirmatively and the fairy continued her explanation.

“The one watching you is your player. He or She will help to guide you as you journey through the seven planets, heal you when you are injured and generally look after you. We don’t really know much about the players. They are a mysterious force from outside of the universe of R.O.S.E. and are thought to be of equal or even greater power than the Gods themselves. All we really know is that whenever a new visitor arrives, they carry with them the aura of a player. Maybe they too hear the call of our poor besieged Goddess and answer by helping to create a new Visitor. Your name comes from your player too. You have a sister right”?

Dee nodded again. “How did you know that”?

“I had the pleasure of welcoming her to the world of R.O.S.E. a couple of months ago”, replied the fairy. “I recognized the aura of your player immediately. PurpleYouko was not an easy charge. She is incredibly headstrong and didn’t take it at all well when I told her the information that I am now telling you. In fact she threw a complete tantrum and destroyed every mini-jelly bean for hundreds of yards around with her bare hands. She gained almost 6 levels before she calmed down enough for me to explain how to use a basic weapon. Since then though, she has become one of our staunchest warriors, a mage without equal.”

“Oh...”, said Dee as she sat down on the floor. “I guess that explains a lot then”.

“Oh good”, said the fairy in a voice almost too quiet to hear. In fact Dee would have missed it entirely if not for the lingering speech bubble above the fairy’s head.

“I see you have learned to sit already”, said the fairy in a much louder voice. She seemed to be getting her composure back a little now that she was reasonably sure that Dee wasn’t going to follow in her sister’s footsteps and wreck the hole of birth isle. “You are going to need that skill quite a bit once you start fighting the Mobs”.

“Mobs?” enquired Dee in the calmest voice that she could muster. “What the heck is a Mob?”

“Why, those are Mobs”, said the fairy, making a sweeping gesture with one arm. “All the creatures of the planets are collectively known as Mobs”.

When Dee looked in the direction that the fairy had indicated, she saw a bunch of little green things with arms, legs and faces. They would jump up and down on the spot for a minute or two then run along the beach to a new spot and do it again. As she watched one of them, a strange floating arrow moved over to point at it and a yellow name tag appeared above its head. It read “Mini Jelly Bean”. It was just as well that Dee was already sitting down or she would have fallen on her cute little butt in surprise.

“What the...” Said Dee as her voice trailed off to nothing.

“That’s just your Player’s cursor”, said the fairy. “It shows you what things are and how difficult they will be for you to fight. It will also give you advice on where to go and which Mobs to attack.”

“OK then”, said Dee “How do I attack these things? And what’s in it for me if I do?”

“I thought you would never ask”, said the fairy, cracking her knuckles as if to get down to work.

Over the next few minutes, the fairy explained about the magical inventory, a transparent window which would appear in front of her whenever she wanted it too. It would actually be summoned by her player but to Dee, it appeared that she and her player must be thinking exactly the same thing at the same time because each time she imagined it there in front of her, it would immediately appear.

“Cool”, thought Dee as she reached into the mirage like window and grabbed the equally mirage like wooden sword. In her hand it suddenly became real. She waved it around in a slashing motion a few times to get a feel for it.

Next the fairy explained to her how to walk and run, at which point a pair of sandals appeared in her inventory. Dee put them on and then noticed the brown shorts and blue T-Shirt that were also there and put them on too.

The fairy went on to explain how she could trade with other visitors, set up vending stalls, form parties and a huge number of other things. Soon a bright column of

light appeared around her and Dee suddenly felt older and stronger. The fairy explained to her about experience points and told her that she had learned enough to level up. Then she went on to show her how to add points to her basic statistics. Dee decided to put the extra points onto her strength for now as it helped her to swing her sword a little stronger.

Eventually the fairy told Dee that she was ready to try fighting and bade her to bring back three proofs of kills for Jelly Beans or Mini Jelly beans. With sword held out in front of her, Purpledee approached her first Mini Jelly Bean. As if by magic, her player's cursor appeared in front of the chosen Mob, thereby making its name appear above its head. The name was yellow so Dee knew it was a battle that she could win. Then something strange happened. A tiny click sound came from the cursor and suddenly a red horizontal bar appeared around the bean's name and it became suddenly a lot more aggressive toward her. Simultaneously she experienced a sudden bloodlust and charged the Bean, swinging wildly. It only took two hits to kill the bean. It was enough to level her up again. Once more she put all her new stat points onto strength and feeling much more powerful set out to follow the cursor as it zeroed in on her next victim.

Soon she had all three proofs and suddenly felt the need to look at her inventory. She quickly found that 10 apples had appeared in it. She knew somehow that these fruits could be eaten in order to regenerate any health points that she might lose if a Mob should succeed in hitting her during a battle. She also noticed that the third bean had dropped an item on the floor. At first glance she had no idea what it was but she got the strangest feeling that her player was doing something fundamentally important. Images of a strange device appeared in her mind. It was long, thin and black. On its surface were a series of buttons with letters or symbols on each one. In her mind's eye she saw a finger press and hold down a button labeled "Alt" while another finger pressed a second button labeled "Ctrl". The image in her mind dissolved as an almost imperceptible ripple passed through the very fabric of her universe on a level that she was almost certain that she should not have been aware of. Once the aftershock had cleared from her mind, she looked once more at the thing that the Bean had dropped. It now had a label clearly floating in the air above it. Just like the speech bubbles that she had encountered previously, the label faced her precisely no matter where she walked. She circled the item a number of times before bending down to pick it up. The label read "Bamboo Spear".

Taking her new weapon from her inventory she decided to test it out on one more Bean before returning to the fairy. Her player selected a suitable target and PurpleDee charged it, spinning her new spear around as she ran. When she reached the Jelly Bean (this time not a Mini one) she was pleased to see that it too fell in only 2 hits. Both times a big purple label appeared above the Jelly reading "Critical". The battle resulted in yet another level up.

At fourth level, PurpleDee returned to Aura's fairy as a triumphant warrior in order to continue her training. She felt a strong disembodied feeling of pride and knew that it was coming from her player. This was going to be a great partnership.