

Right Place, Wrong Hero

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Roger the Rogue strolled idly along the outskirts of town, enjoying the crisp evening air. With the dusk light fading, the townsfolk were all indoors, leaving the street empty. Suddenly, a fiery object pierced the thick cloud cover and streaked across the sky. The tall, lanky man followed it with lazy eyes, tracking its rapid descent carefully. A few seconds later, the flaming projectile fell to the ground on a ridge just outside town, landing with an unexpectedly muted crash.

His curiosity aroused, Roger wandered up the ridge to explore. At the top, he discovered that the object was in fact a large meteorite, easily twice his size, embedded in a shallow crater by the impact. The rock radiated immense heat, its seared surface riddled with glowing red cracks. As he approached, the meteorite split open like an egg and released a beam of brilliant white light. The light slowly faded away, revealing a tiny insect emerging from within the stone. The creature flew towards Roger, coming to a stop a few inches away from his face. It hovered there in silence for a few moments, almost seeming to examine him, and he mentally noted that it looked very much like an ordinary bee.

"A bee I am not," the insect said as if reading his mind. It spoke in a buzzing, high-pitched voice that made Roger's head vibrate strangely. "I am a traveler from a distant time and place. In the future, all is devastation and madness! Giyjax, the universal destroyer, sent all to the horror of eternal darkness! However, where I am from, there is a well-known legend that has survived since ancient times. It states that the chosen hero and his companions shall walk the path of light and defeat Giyjax before his monstrous plan can come to fruition. It is my opinion that you are that hero..."

The creature paused briefly. "What is your name, great hero?" it asked after a moment's hesitation.

Roger blinked a few times. "Uh, Roger."

"Roger, excellent!" the insectoid exclaimed before continuing. "If you start to confront the enemy immediately, you may have time to counter the evil intentions of Giyjax. Do not be anxious about the future! I shall assist you with every fiber of my being, and together with your friends, we will be victorious! Do you understand what I have told you?"

Roger put a hand on his hip and rubbed his chin thoughtfully, then nodded. "Yup," he stated simply.

The bee-like alien hovered in silence for several long seconds. "Yup?" it asked in a confused tone.

"Yeah, I can dig it," replied Roger confidently.

"You do comprehend the magnitude of what I'm saying, right?"

"Sure."

"And that your foe is a cosmic horror from beyond space and time with unfathomable power and an unceasing hatred of all existence?" the insect pressed insistently.

Roger flashed a thumbs-up and smiled. "No worries, I'm down."

The creature made a nervous-sounding buzzing noise. "You seem to be taking all this surprisingly well."

"Well," Roger explained with a lackadaisical grin, "you're a talking bee that came out of a meteorite. So either I'm *really* high, or you're telling the truth, and I don't remember getting high tonight. I remember getting high *last* night!"

The insectoid buzzed around Roger's head angrily. "Great, just great!" it shrieked. "What the hell kind of drugs have you been taking, anyway?!"

Roger pursed his lips as he struggled to think. "I don't remember," he murmured pensively. "Come to think of it, maybe I *did* get high tonight. Would explain the talking bee."

When it became clear that no answer was forthcoming, the alien stopped its frenzied flying and let out a tiny sigh. "I'm just...gonna go. Sorry about the case of mistaken identity." It started to fly away towards the town, then turned to look back at Roger. "It was nice talking to you, Roger. Have a nice life."

Roger watched the creature fly off until it vanished from sight. Shrugging, he ambled down the ridge and made his way back home in no particular hurry. When he opened the door, he noticed Frank reading by the fireplace. "Frank, you'll never guess what happened to me tonight!" he called to his friend.

"Did you get high?" Frank queried without looking up.

Roger grinned toothily. "That and *more*!"