

PEREGRINE QUINN

AND THE
BATTLE FOR OLYMPUS



ASH BOND



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OUR CHARACTERS

Peregrine Quinn

Rowan Strong

Trainee Portal Librarian working for Cosmic Sprite Investigations (CSI)

Callimachus Thorn

Terran Communications Officer, recently promoted to agent

Penelope Quinn

Peregrine's mum and world-renowned archaeologist

Daedalus Bloom

Peregrine's godfather and Grand Architect of the Cosmic Realm

Nimhue Wynn

Hero Support Specialist and owner of Lake Designs

Arthur

A duck

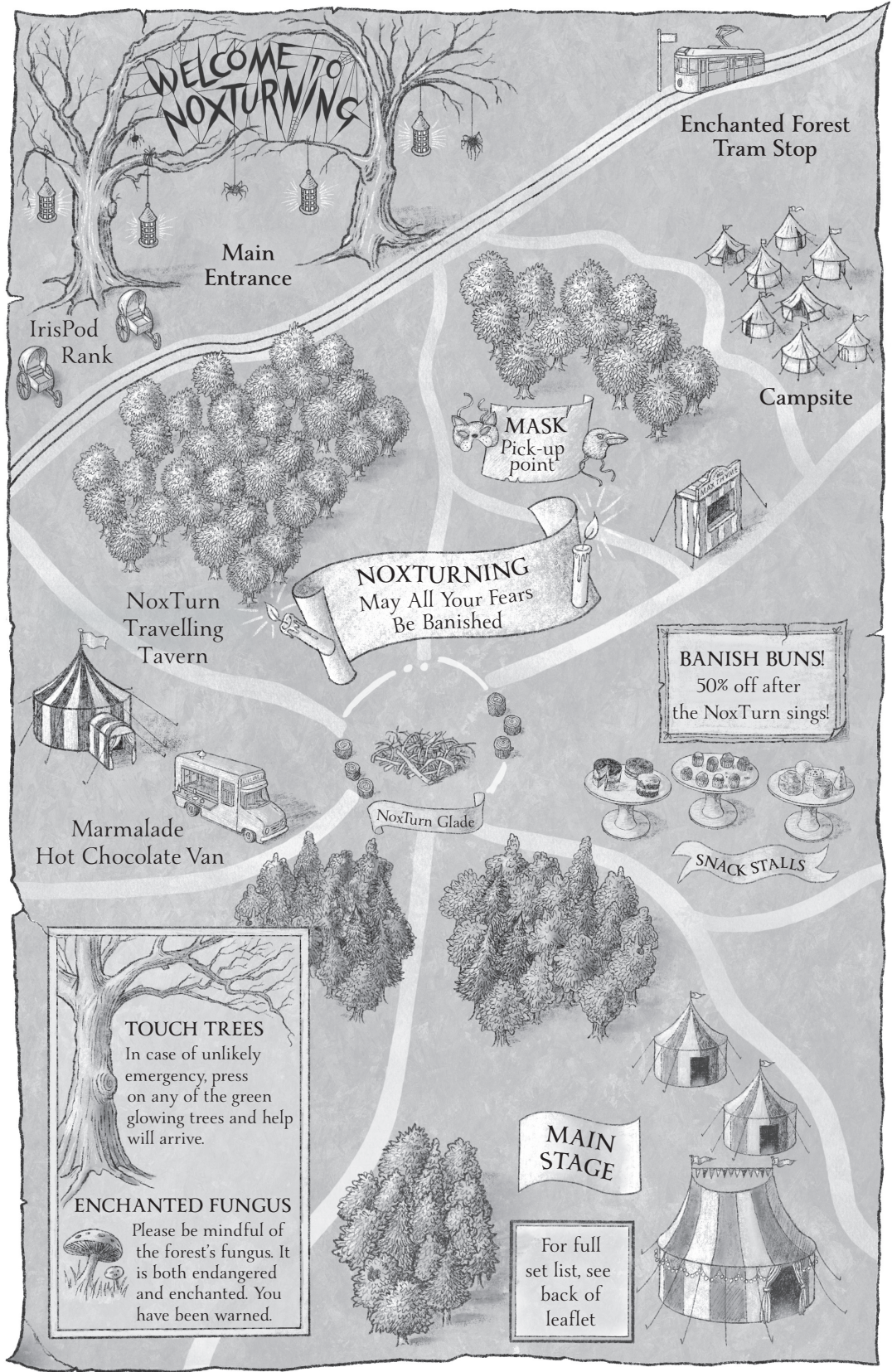
Hades

Lord of the Subterranean, currently on sabbatical as a pet psychiatrist in Manhattan, New York

Chief Inspector Sibyll	Head of Cosmic Sprite Investigations (CSI)
Agent Melinda Ford	Head of the Invisibles ('The Grey Ladies'), agents of Hades
Tyron Grey	Former Librarian of the Great Library of Alexandria
Captain Hansel Pine	Agent for the Olympic Punitive Squad (OPS)
Jarvis Mayweather	Rebel convicted of sabotaging the Cosmic Games, also Cormac's uncle
Zelendine Wynn	Convicted con artist who owns a prophecy consultation business
Discord	Primordial force of chaos and destruction
Hekate Jones	Former Grand Architect and acolyte of Discord, with specialties in mist and potion making
Dionysus	Cosmic with special interests in theatre and wine; follower of Discord
Fantasia	Former Games Master with speciality in illusion

COSMIC GAMES CHAMPIONS:

Tappis Holmes	Apollo's champion
Tia Holmes	Artemis's champion
Faizan Khan	Hephaestus's champion
Petra Luda	Poseidon's champion
Cormac Rodriguez	Hermes's champion
Cassius Rose	Aphrodite's champion



WELCOME TO NOXTURNING

Main Entrance

Enchanted Forest Tram Stop

IrisPod Rank

Campsite

MASK Pick-up point

NoxTurn Travelling Tavern

NOXTURNING
May All Your Fears
Be Banished

BANISH BUNS!
50% off after
the NoxTurn sings!

Marmalade Hot Chocolate Van

NoxTurn Glade

SNACK STALLS

TOUCH TREES
In case of unlikely emergency, press on any of the green glowing trees and help will arrive.

ENCHANTED FUNGUS
Please be mindful of the forest's fungus. It is both endangered and enchanted. You have been warned.

MAIN STAGE

For full set list, see back of leaflet

*Girl with wings who soars so far
You do not know yet who you are.*

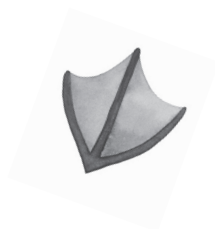
Peregrine Quinn is making a habit of saving the world, specifically, I should say, the Cosmic Realm. This particular realm has long been the haven of immortals and is accessed via one of nine carefully guarded portal tunnels scattered across the Terran world. However, since finding out about this realm, Peregrine – along with her new companions, Callimachus Thorn (a faun) and Rowan Strong (a dryad Librarian) – has had to prevent the ancient chaos goddess Discord from returning not once, but twice. For Peregrine’s mum, world-renowned archaeologist Penelope Quinn, this is twice too many.

In the most recent incident, Peregrine temporarily left the Terran Realm to win the prestigious Cosmic Games and in doing so took a bite of a (magical) golden apple. Unfortunately, so did Discord’s faithful (and . . . unhinged) acolyte, Hekate Jones. After the Games, Peregrine returned to her godfather Daedalus’s (magical) Plant Clinic in Oxford and decided to have a party, which is always the best way to end an adventure. And all was well . . . that was, until Peregrine blew up her birthday cake.

For a fuller history of the Cosmic Realm, please see my notes at the end of the book.

Good luck, dear reader. I rather think you’ll need it.

Nimhue Wynn



Discord waits for the girl, though she does not know exactly how long she has been waiting. Time moves differently here in this place of storms, here in the *Fourth Realm*.

A purple glow blooms in the dark and the monsters howl their welcome. Finally, the girl has returned, and she has brought a . . . notebook.

Discord stirs, her form shifting so the darkness becomes a cloak around her shoulders. The monsters shrink back as the storm becomes a voice. *'It has been a while since I have seen you, my child.'* Discord grows arms inside her cloak, and hands with fingers that stretch. *'You are . . . taller.'*

The girl bows her head. 'I am a fifth year at the Academy now, Mistress.'

'Ah, and are you learning?'

The girl barks a laugh that echoes in the darkness. 'Not enough; not like when *you* teach me. The Academy teachers . . . they won't let me use my powers. They won't let me do *anything!*'

'That's because those at the Academy do not understand.' Discord slinks forward. *'They do not yet know who you are, my child, or what you are capable of. And how could they, weak and powerless as they are?'* She strokes the girl's crow-black hair, long and soft like a river at night. *'They don't understand how precious you are, how . . . special.'*

The girl's eyes shine, as sharp and bright as diamonds. 'But you do.'

'Oh yes, and when you use your powers to bring me back . . .' Discord brushes a finger over the girl's temple. She needs the girl to *want* this future; a future where her powers will be praised; a future where she will watch the Mountain crumble and fall. *'No one will dare question your brilliance ever again.'*

'Because they will be too afraid?'

'Terrified.' Discord moves to hover in front of the girl, her hands tucked back in to her cloak. *'But first you must grow strong. You have been practising what I showed you?'*

The girl nods, proudly. *'I have, Mistress!'* She turns to a page in her notebook and pinches her mouth in concentration. Discord notices that the girl's lips are painted red like cherries. The girl was growing up, and as she grew so too did her powers. Soon these powers would be ripe enough to free Discord from this realm. *Soon. Soon. Soon.*

With one eye still on her teacher, the girl raises a hand and a tendril of purple flame flickers across her palm.

'Now, let us see what you can do.'



PEREGRINE

**Location: The Good Counsellor Pet Psychiatry Services,
24th Street & 8th Avenue, Manhattan, New York, USA**

I'm going to be sick. This was Peregrine's first thought as she blinked at the three plastic dogs' heads bobbing up and down in front of her, nodding in agreement as if to say, 'Yes. Yes, you are.'

Peregrine's second thought was that she was definitely not in Oxford any more. Instead of her godfather's cosy Plant Clinic, where she was supposed to be – where she *had been* just moments before – she was now in some sort of office reception area with a fish tank down one wall.

Hades would like a word. That was what the Invisible (one of Hades' grey-suited agents) had said just before they had grabbed Peregrine's shoulder and – *poof!* – transported her here – wherever *here* was. The Invisible hadn't even *asked* her whether she wanted to go!

'So,' a man with a droopy-eyed chihuahua on his lap raised his eyebrows at Peregrine. 'What are you in for?'

Peregrine held the back of the beige leather seat to steady herself. 'What? I, er—'

'Daphne here –' the man scratched the chihuahua's ruff affectionately – 'is working through some insomnia. It's been terribly difficult, for both of us.' The dog yawned on cue, its tiny pink mouth opening wide.

Peregrine looked at the chihuahua, then at the man and then at the sign above the reception desk.

THE GOOD COUNSELLOR: PET PSYCHIATRY SERVICES
DR L. HAYDEN M.D.

'Pet *psychiatry*?' Peregrine said then, unsure of where she should put the emphasis, repeated, '*Pet psychiatry*!'

'Best in New York.' The man nodded to a door at the far end of the room. 'Better be at these prices, am I right?'

'Right, of course . . .' *New York?* Peregrine screamed inside her head. She was in *New York?*

The office door opened and an impossibly glamorous woman swanned through, preceded by a ferret wearing a rose-gold collar with matching lead. 'You simply *must* come to the Met Gala, Dr Hayden, I *insist*.'

Peregrine gasped. Not at the ferret – though that was interesting – but at the woman. *That* woman was Griselda Fortune, star of her mum's favourite period drama *Winsome Manor*.

Mum! Peregrine's mum had just gone to put the kettle on and would have come back to find Peregrine missing . . . vanished! She must be so worried! Peregrine's hand flew to where her CosWatch would usually be on her wrist. Except that it wasn't there. She must have taken it off just in case her friend Raj (who did not yet know about the Cosmic Realm) spotted it. Raj had left the Plant

Clinic less than an hour ago, right after Peregrine had blown out the candles on her birthday cake and made a *wish* . . .

Peregrine winced at the memory, still fresh. *You do not know yet who you are.* Those words had haunted Peregrine throughout this whole Cosmic adventure, and when she'd closed her eyes and breathed in the sweet smell of strawberry icing, they'd appeared once more in her mind. *I wish . . . I wish I knew,* she'd thought as she inhaled. *I'm ready. I want to know who I AM, I want to know what I can DO.*

The flames had turned to wisps of smoke, and for a moment it appeared that nothing out of the ordinary had happened. Of course, it was just a birthday wish after all! What did she *think* would happen? But then the cake had caught FIRE.

Peregrine's eyes flicked to the office door. Had Hades heard her wish? Was that why she was here?

'You are a magician, doctor!' Griselda crooned, waving her hand dramatically.

'No, no.' A man in a sharp sky-blue suit and crisp white T-shirt followed behind her. 'Not a *magician*, I can assure you.' He smiled as he leaned against the doorframe. 'Something much more interesting than that.'

Dr Hayden. *Hades.* The thought was smoke in Peregrine's brain . . . ungraspable and grey. She had seen Hades in statue form when she'd been in the Under Realm – but that had been ten metres high and carved in obsidian. This man was much shorter than that, and what was he doing *here*?

The fish in the tank flashed blue as their scales caught the light, making Peregrine blink to clear her vision.

'Shall we?' Hades pushed himself off the doorframe and gestured for Peregrine to step into the office, his smile widening to a grin as the light above the door turned from green to a glowing, fiery red.



ROWAN

**Location: Subway Tunnel, Near Penn Station,
Manhattan, New York, USA**

‘*Cross-agency cooperation.*’ Rowan repeated this phrase to herself like a chant as she readjusted her TechPack. *Cross-agency cooperation* was why she was here, shivering in these freezing New York subway tunnels and not sitting comfortably behind her library desk alphabetising her index cards.

Rowan looked down at the device in her hand. The spectrometer showed her that the monster had definitely been at this location in the last thirty minutes, possibly even more recently. *Creature*, Rowan corrected herself, not *monster*. No one said *monster* any more.

‘There’s evil about.’ Captain Hansel Pine sniffed the air beside her. ‘I can smell it.’

A weather sprite holding a CosPad launched Rowan out of the way as they leaned forward to get a close-up of Hansel’s face. ‘You *can*?’

‘Uh-huh.’ Rowan could smell things too. ‘*Flooharght*,’ she muttered as her boots landed in something sticky and brown.

The Terran security forces had stopped traffic down the L Train between Jamaica Street and Penn Station ever since the giant hog *creature* had chomped through half a subway carriage. This was a wise choice, but also a convenient one as it meant that their team could now fulfil their mission of tracking down and neutralising the threat without any irritating Terran interference.

Rowan pressed a button on her CosPad and a fuzzy, blinking face appeared. ‘Cal, still all clear on the Terran security cameras?’

The faun’s already overstuffed office now had an additional three screens, monitoring the Terran security network and major television channels. ‘Oh yes.’ Cal’s eyes widened. ‘And did you know that Terrans have a device that slices pineapple? *Only* pineapple?’ He sipped his coffee, his eyes still glued to the television screen. ‘And it’s fifty per cent off if we purchase it in the next two hours—’

‘I *meant* anything about the –’ Rowan bit the word before it had a chance to escape – ‘*creature*?’

‘No.’ Cal shook his head. ‘Nothing on that, no.’

Rowan sighed in relief. All things considered, they’d been very lucky. The carriage had been empty, thank Hera, and OPS (the Olympic Punitive Squad) had managed to replace the incriminating images of a rampaging SpectaMorph tearing through the Long Island Rail Road with footage of a falling girder. Less importantly, Rowan was getting a little worried that Cal was becoming addicted to Terran advertising – she’d have to talk to him about that. ‘Cal—’

A loud guttural grunt echoed through the tunnel. Oh no.

‘The danger is close.’ Hansel unholstered his laser blaster. ‘I can *feel* it.’ He nodded to Agent Marvit, a sharp-toothed, dull-brained dryad who was standing next to him. Rowan scrambled up onto the station platform – as the CSI mission representative, she was under

strict instructions *not* to get in OPS's way. Creature hunting was far more in the remit of the Olympic Punitive Squad, as was basically anything that involved explosives.

Scrrrrrr-SWISH.

Rowan turned to see Agent Marvit unsheathing a long, serrated knife. Where had he got *that*? Rowan knew Olympus Inc. were making efforts to replace the HekTek (due to it having been designed by Hekate, the former Grand Architect and confirmed enemy of the state) but since when had *swords* become standard issue? It seemed like a very backwards step.

The weather sprite leaned closer. 'What are you feeling now, Captain Pine?'

Rowan groaned. In an effort to distract everyone from the disaster that was the Cosmic Games, Hansel had gleefully agreed to be part of *A Day in the Life* – an Olympus Inc. documentary – which is why Sibyll had sent a CSI-approved camera operator with them.

'This is where the training comes in.' Hansel's stance was feline in its alertness. 'All of your body: your muscles, your skin, your very bones . . .'

Rowan looked down the tunnel, her eyes narrowed. She could have sworn she saw a glint of green . . . Her Librarian-trained mind quickly flicked through the mission briefing. They'd had intel that the SpectaMorph target had the capacity to dissolve into mist before reforming, making it extra difficult to pick up on their sensors. Rowan pulled down her CosGogs and blinked once slowly to switch to the CosGogs' thermal imaging, just as the hairy, hulking shoulders of a creature as wide as the tunnel fuzzed into view. Rowan gulped. There it was; its snotty, snuffling snout as wide as a tram and with deadly tusks just the right size to gore her with, protruding from a snarling, dripping mouth.

Hansel was still listing. ' . . . your fingernails, your eyelashes—'

‘Captain Pine!’

‘What?’ Hansel snapped. The weather sprite glared at Rowan as he pointed to the camera and mouthed, ‘*We are FILMING.*’

‘*I know,*’ Rowan mouthed, before pointing over their heads and yelling, ‘It’s HERE!’

She heard Hansel utter, ‘Are you . . . filming . . . this?’ just as the creature pounced.

The camera operator was *definitely* filming this. He angled the camera up as the creature sailed over Hansel, clipping the back of the weather sprite’s head with its trotters as it did so, and landed in front of Rowan on the station platform.

Rowan scooted her feet back away from the creature’s shimmering form. She could see the snot dripping from its hairy, dilating nostrils as its meaty shoulder bashed into a steel girder, making it crumple instantly. A skull-shaking, metallic groan echoed through the tunnel as cement dust fell from the subway ceiling like snow.

Rowan turned and threw herself through the revolving turnstile that blocked off the platform from the stairs that led to the street. There were bars around it so this should buy her some time. ‘Aargh!’ She leaped backwards as the bars shook. Maybe not *that* much time.

The SpectaMorph had pushed its tusks through the bars, squeezing its slimy snout against the metal. Its breath puffed towards Rowan – as hot and rank as steam from a Terran sewer. She felt her face turn vomit green.

Do *not* be sick, she told herself firmly. Think *now*, vomit *later*.

The creature reared its head back from the bars of the gate, its huge trotters forming cracks in the platform as they smashed down.

‘Help!’ Rowan screeched. She could hear Agent Marvit shouting something, but couldn’t make out what it was over all the snorting.

Trying to get her breath under control, Rowan ran the mission

instructions through her brain. If capture was impossible, the team had been given the go-ahead to eliminate. At the time, Rowan had thought this was a bit of a shame, but now as the SpectaMorph shoved its snotty snout at the turnstile bars and gnashed its brick-sized teeth at her, she was coming round to the idea.

The turnstile creaked. These bars wouldn't hold out much longer – perhaps one more minute? Maybe two if Rowan was lucky.

But Rowan Strong of the Seven Strong Sisters had never been that lucky.

'Oh no,' Rowan muttered as she watched the SpectaMorph's form begin to fade. It was becoming mist again! 'Agents! Now! The SpectaMorph is mist-ifying!'

If they *had* to eliminate, they were under strict instructions to only neutralise the SpectaMorph when it was in its spectral form. No one wanted the logistical nightmare of removing three tons of flesh, hair and hog snot from a Terran subway tunnel.

Rowan could see the two agents standing behind the faded mistified shape of the SpectaMorph. What were they *doing*?

'I'll do it, you hold the camera.' Hansel thrust the operator's camera into Agent Marvit's hand and took out his HekTek blaster.

Marvit stared blankly at the camera. 'I don't know how to. I know how to . . .' He waved his big knife.

'It's this button.' Hansel showed him. 'Just point and shoot.'

'So, *I'll* shoot it?' Marvit screwed up his nose. 'But what about . . .?' He waved his sword again.

'No, *I'll* shoot the monster, you shoot *me*.'

'Er, Captain Pine . . .' Rowan tried to speak, while taking in as little air as possible.

'Yes, one moment, Agent.' Hansel turned back to Marvit. 'A close-up and *then* a wide shot. You can adjust using—'

'CAPTAIN PINE!'

The SpectaMorph was reforming, this time on the other side of the bars. Their time was up. Rowan ran towards the stairs that led up to the Terran streets. Turning back, she saw clouds of green mist floating between the bars. If they didn't do something soon then that SpectaMorph was going to re-form completely, and if it got up those stairs then CSI would have more than just one body to deal with.

'NOW!' she yelled. 'You've got to shoot it NOW!' Green mist licked at Rowan's legs as she hurtled up the stairs. Her boots, still covered in that something-sticky, slipped on the step and Rowan found herself flat on her stomach. 'Ooft!'

And *this* is why you should never run on the stairs, Rowan thought as she rolled sideways just in time to avoid the crash of a trotter and about twenty-seven crushed bones. There was a flash of laser light and the definitely-not-mist-any-more creature roared. Rowan closed her eyes as snot and saliva sprayed across her face.

She really should not have opened them as, just then, the definitely-not-mist-any-more SpectaMorph's skull . . . exploded.



ROWAN

**Location: Station Platform, Penn Station, Manhattan,
New York, USA**

Rowan edged cautiously around the SpectaMorph carcass that lay slumped on the steps of Penn Station. With its wild, bloodshot eyes closed, it would have looked like it was sleeping had it not been for the massive hole in its head. Rowan shuddered. She had never been very good with blood.

The creature, however, was not the only one who was bleeding. Blood the colour of cornflowers gushed down the side of the poor camera operator's head. Pushing down her squeamishness, Rowan jogged forward and knelt down to examine the wound. 'What's your name?' she said as she handed the camera operator a NumbGum.

'S-Simon,' the sprite whimpered.

'Simon? As in *Sibyll*'s PA Simon?' Rowan knew they were short-staffed. Most CSI agents were out searching for Hekate and her

Cosmic accomplice Dionysus, but still Simon was hardly a field-certified agent, was he? Why had they given him *this* job?

‘Owww!’ the sprite howled in response.

‘Hmm.’ The SpectaMorph’s trotters must have scraped Simon’s temple as it jumped over him. The cut looked superficial, but it could easily get infected. ‘All right, Simon. We are going to have to MediVac you.’

Hansel, who had been staring intently into the glassy eyes of the deceased beast, snapped to attention. ‘I will do this.’

‘Er.’ Rowan paused. ‘Two of us should really stay here, to deal with – ’ she gestured to the large, hairy SpectaMorph corpse currently blocking the stairway – ‘this.’

Simon was already fitting himself into an inflatable MediVac-Pac. ‘I want Hansel,’ he said, tucking his wings neatly behind him. All whimper had gone from his voice.

Rowan narrowed her eyes. ‘Captain Pine, as the senior officer, perhaps it should be *you* that—’

Without looking at Rowan, Hansel bent down so his quads bulged out from his golden suit and lifted the MediVac-Pac onto his back. Simon let out a little ‘*aaah*’ sound, then closed his eyes. Hansel turned to Agent Marvit, who had given up filming and was instead advancing on the dead SpectaMorph, his tongue stuck between his teeth, blade drawn. ‘I will meet you at the rendezvous point.’

Marvit just licked his lips in response.

‘Onwards, brother!’ Hansel called, his voice echoing off the walls of the subway as he leaped up the stairs, Simon happily bouncing on his back.

Their footsteps faded, Rowan turned back to the creature. ‘Right, then, so how should we . . .?’

Marvit grinned and threw Rowan a blaster. ‘Heads or tails?’