The Fugitive

by CharliesBadPlan

Summary

What happens when a British teenager falls into a ravine and finds himself sharing a body with a gem. Follow James as he must hunt down all the shards and slowly reconstruct a shattered gems mind and personality, a personality he very quickly finds himself at odds with, it would be significantly easier if the Crystal Gems weren't hunting him down.

Notes

This chapters fairly short only because its just an introduction from the perspective of a character we won't see for a while after this.
“Team A cover the west exit, B take the east, sky team block his escape of the cliffs, Biggs, Bismuth, with me, we’ve got this bastard now!” came a voice that sounded far too booming and authoritative for the 16-year-old girl it belonged to but Jade had been this squad long enough to know that questioning Commander Maheswaran was a bad idea all round. So, without much fuss, she took the north side of the cliff face and willed her bow into existence to prevent any escape by sky. She didn’t know much about this specific human they were capturing, some thief of Gem artifacts, or something along those lines. Morals weren’t massively important to her if she’s honest: she gets respect, she gets to shoot shit in the face, her life seems pretty great to her.

“JADE, stop daydreaming, he looks like he’s coming this way!” Beryl, her commanding officer, shouted at her, snapping her out of her trance just in time to hear a loud smash, and feel the ground under her feet crumble. She quickly lost her footing as the section of cliff she was perched on came crashing down to the canyon below.

She managed to escape being shattered under the falling tonne of rock by firing an arrow with a line connecting her to it onto the cliff face, and using it as a tether to run along the wall of rock out of the way of the falling carnage and come to a safe, though by no means graceful, landing. When she looked up, she saw what had caused her fall, as the fugitive pulled himself out of the rubble, the outline of Bismuth’s hammer still visible on his torn shirt. The rubble had formed a blockade stopping the confrontation from being visible to the other gems, Jade couldn’t tell if this was just happenstance or if it was what her squad’s leadership had wanted. Commander Maheswaran stepped forward, sword pointed at the still dazed man (or boy?, all humans are so young it’s kinda a challenge to tell) and ordered:

“Put down the shard and lie down with arms outstretched and this ends without...” she was cut off as the man shouted

“AND WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE”

“JESUS, I WANT TO ESCAPE NOT DO A FUCKIN MURDER-SUICIDE”

“Oh, you just have the answer for everything don’t you”

“Well it was your idea to come to this canyon in the first place, I wanted to go to the top of the mountain but noooooo”

“Oh, I’m being immature, well then o wise one, how do you suppose we get out of here, and something that won’t kill me and everyone with 5 miles please”
“NO, you know how painful that shit is and I…” before he could finish his latest mad rambling, he felt a sword at his neck, as he had quickly been surrounded during his shouting match with thin air.

“I’m going to say this one more time, put down the shard, lay on your chest, stick your arms straight out in front of you, palms up” the Commander, well, commanded, standing over him.

“You know it’s very rude to interrupt someone in the middle of a private conversation” the fugitive responded.

“Enough of this” Bigg’s interjected, bringing down her club on the fugitives back, with barely enough time for the commander to pull back her sword to avoid skewering him. The man slammed down with a satisfying thud.

“Fine, I’ll do it, but only if you promise to be quiet for an entire hour after all this is over, can you give me that” there was a pause after the man spoke through his coughs and then continued “alright then” He produced a small red gem shard from his left pocket and, before anyone could stop him, slammed it into his right arm, splitting the skin and embedding the shard inside.

“What the” Bismuth asked, shocked at the man's actions “are you insane?!”

“Neutralise NOW” Screamed Maheswaran.

As all three crystal gems rushed forward, the fugitives arm glowed and extended rapidly, ripping his skin and causing the red glow and blood to blend together into a grotesque perversion of gem and human attributes. His arm extended into the ground with great force and launched him like a rubber ball over the horizon, shattering the rock beneath him.

It was only at this moment to Jade was able to think again, thoughts rushed through her head at a mile a minute, all centring around the thesis point of ‘What did I just watch?’ Her thoughts were interrupted by the three sets of eyes that became focused on her. All three looked stern, but, as the commander approached, her face softened.

“I feel like you may have some questions. Uh…”

“Jade, sky team, north cliff” Jade quickly stated as she stood to attention.

“As in the north cliff that criminal just escaped over” Biggs asked, sounding more frustrated than angry.

“Never mind that now, what's done is done, lets head back and plan our next move, Jade, you're with me, I’ll explain as much as I can” the commander said in a much quieter and sweeter voice than Jade had ever heard out of her, which Jade figured couldn’t be good.

As the rest of the gems were filing, Captain Beryl gave a brief look back at Jade, with a look of either disappointment or sympathy, she couldn’t quite tell, but she hoped against hope it was disappointment, because her captain showing sympathy would basically be a confirmation that this QnA with the commander was going to end very poorly for her.

About 3 kilometers from this a man lay in a pile of his own blood, with a faint red glow moving around his body.

“Not that finding out your favorite food is rice wasn’t worth one of the most painful things I’ve ever experienced, but did you get anything else?”
“Your weapon? Now that could be useful, how do I summon it?”

“What do you mean you don’t remember?!”
"Come'on mate we're almost done now" Will called down from about 10 meters further up the slope to the, far more exhausted, James.

"Look... *pant* you know that I'm *pant* always up for whatever random idea you *pant* come up but the next time tell me if we're climbing a fucking mountain before we're at its damn base" James said, his exhaustion slowly giving way to a more dominant sense of anger.

"Trust me it'll all be worth it once you see this, also this is clearly a cliff, we're climbing the mountain next week." Will said gesturing towards the incredible view beyond the clifftop.

"You know the dramatic gesturing loses some of its impact if you don't even wait 'till I can see the bloody thing, and over my dead body we are." James replied, exasperatedly making the last few steps of the trek.

And, although he was loath to admit it, the view he was presented with was spectacular: the cliff provided the perfect vantage point to view the sprawling hills and fields in their full glory. A sea of white flowers covered the landscape, the product of thousands of strawberry plants, noticeable by the splashes of red and green barely visible in the spring sun, long forgotten structures of metal and concrete dot the landscape, the smaller structures had long since been grown over making the landscape uneven, creating the illusion of waves as gusts of wind made their way across the land. The larger structures were grown over by mighty wisteria plants which, in full bloom, created islands of soft purples and blues.

"Wow..."

"And you doubted me, come'on let's set up camp before it starts to get dark" Will said, a sense of satisfaction and smugness barely hidden in his tone.

Over the next few minutes they unpacked, setting up the hammocks on a pair of nearby trees, before setting off to forage for dry wood for the fire, a task that Will was far better at than James, given the disproportionate amount of times James checked with Will before picking up a branch, and James's general lack of understanding if a branch was big enough, dry enough, or practical for the situation.

About 30 minutes later the fire was set up, some decent logs to sit on had been found, and it was time to relax. From their bags, they produced a bottle of vodka, a bong and a pipe, more crisps, chocolate, cider and soft drinks than any two human beings could be expected to consume in a single night, and a speaker. James set about filling the bong while Will continued to nurse the fire. Once the fire could survive on its own, they both sat down on the log for a smoke. 3 or 4 hits later they started to feel the effects.

Their night went on like so many of their camping trips did, the two men progressively getting higher and drunker, watching the sunset from the cliff edge, listening to music and talking about every random thing in their lives. These trips, once a near-weekly occurrence to a local abandoned scout hut grounds, had depressingly become a special occasion once James had moved away for university. He had dropped out, of course, but his pride and a falling out with his parents prevented him from moving back. This trip to Scandinavia had come about from the two men both wanting to make a big gesture to convince themselves that their bond remained as strong as ever.
Will turned in around 3am, staggering to his hammock, and, by the sound of his footfalls, James felt nervous about the concept of Will asleep directly above him, retrieving his sleeping bag from his hammock as quietly as he could (which at 6’4”) wasn’t as subtle as, in his current state, he believed it to be. He stared at the stars for what felt like hours, which in reality was probably around 15 minutes, before standing up and making his way over the cliff, with his pipe in one hand and a bottle of scrumpy in the other. He sat on the cliff edge staring out the field washed in starlight. That was when it happened.

The was a cracking, crumbling sound beneath him and, suddenly, a bright red glow emerged from the cliff below him, shattering the rock as it did. The next moments seemed to play out in slow motion: James scrambling to escape, only to lose his footing as the ground beneath him crumbled. He fell from the cliff to the ground below, colliding with the glowing mass on his way down, pushing it down with him and, as he smashed into the ground below, a thundering ‘poof’ disturbed the quiet tranquillity of the landscape.

James Twyman. He’s supposed to be the hero of this story but oddly enough he’s dead.

But not for long. A faint red glow radiated from his chest and his heart starts to beat, his mangled body started to repair itself, all save for his right arm, which had been in the firing line for the vast majority of the rubble, and was crushed into nonexistence. The crushed bone and muscle detached as the red glow made its way to the left shoulder, settling there as the glow subsided. It was then that James regained consciousness, briefly dying seeming to act as a highly effective sobering agent. He screamed, only to find he was in very little pain, his right arm felt slightly off however, which, given it no longer existed, seems appropriate.

Then it started. The instinct. It was deafeningly loud, seeming to block out everything else, every attempt at thought felt like trying to have a conversation in a crowded club. His eyes seemed to naturally focus southwest. He tried to think things through. ‘Somehow I surviAAAAAAA’ ‘I should go see if WiAAAAAAA’ Every time he started a though the internal screaming overpowered him, he could only think of one thing ‘STOP SOUND. The sound quieted ever so slightly when he faced southwest, and so he set off. No longer able to focus on anything else but stopping the noise.

He had no idea how long he ran, but as he did, he stopped attempting to think, his brain seemed to enter autopilot as it pushed ever forward. It was at least a day before he came to face to face with what he had been heading towards: A white metallic looking building with green emanating from the cracks in the doors. This was the place. It had to be.

Chapter End Notes

Well after kinda throwing you in at the deep end last chapter I thought this was a good chance to go back to the beginning and go from there. Join us next chapter as James enters the deconstruction laboratory in search of his prize.

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