Wanderer 32

Chapter 32: Two solutions

The young man looked at his grandpa expectantly, prompting him to speak.

“The first option is to spill the beans on some of your secrets. Naturally, not Circulation. That one could destroy our House if it leaks. But if we let the others know about your second core and Micky, they will understand.”

“Do you think it’s a good idea?” Percy asked.

“Not really, no.” baldy said before elaborating. “I advise you not to do this. Even though others can’t immediately benefit from your second core, it will still make our family a target. However, these are ultimately your secrets. If you want to go through with it, I won’t stop you. It wouldn’t be fair to hinder your growth like that.”

Percy nodded. He didn’t much like the idea of bringing trouble to his House either, but he’d consider it if it was the only way.

“What about the second option?”

“This one actually circles back to our earlier discussion.”

The young man perked up.

“I can think of a place where you’ll find plenty of beasts for Micky to eat. At the same time, you can earn as many elixirs as you need. But I must warn you that it’s neither guaranteed, nor easy.”

“Where?”

“The Alchemists’ Guild.”

Percy frowned.

“Isn’t that where they make the elixirs? You want me to become an alchemist?”

“Yes. That place works with a system based on contribution points. You earn them by performing various tasks and you can spend them on elixirs, ingredients or alchemy lessons.”

The young man creased his brow, considering his grandpa’s words. Becoming an alchemist wasn’t something he’d ever imagined doing, but if baldy thought it was a good idea, he wasn’t necessarily against it.

“Do they let anyone join?”

“Not anyone. The Alchemists’ Guild is one of the most important places on all of Remior. Everyone needs the elixirs – even the Divine Order. Consequently, the Guild is completely neutral, and nobody is allowed to stir trouble there. They only accept people recommended by a noble House.”

Ok, perhaps this was an even bigger deal than Percy thought.

“Won’t the others be against it? They’re already unhappy I get elixirs. Now I’m going to be brewing them?”

Baldy shrugged.

“It’s not the same thing. It won’t really affect our family either way. We still have to buy the elixirs at full price. It’s not like there’s any discount for having a relative there. As for anything you earn on your own, that’s between you and the Guild.”

“So, is it common to send Red-borns?”

“It’s not. Not that there’s any rule against Red-borns, but your lower grade will make it difficult to get points. Also, your shorter lifespan means people will generally view it as a waste of time for you to learn the art.”

Percy would be lying if he said he wasn’t bothered. It seemed there wasn’t anywhere on Remior he could go where he wouldn’t be looked down upon.

“What about my affinities? Are they suitable for alchemy?”

“They don’t really matter. Water and fire help with some parts of the brewing process, though that’s only a minor convenience. Life mana is good for growing herbs faster, but you can just buy those.”

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“That only leaves Micky then. How will I explain him?”

This was by far the most important thing. He wouldn’t leave him behind. After all, his friend was one of the main reasons why he’d even bother going in the first place.

“You won’t. The Guild is right next to where you’ll be hunting the beasts. It’s where the main ingredient for the elixirs comes from. Micky will live there by himself and you’ll join him whenever you can to hunt together. That way, you’ll help him get his meals and he’ll help you earn contribution points.”

“But is it going to be safe? What if someone attacks him?”

Baldy shook his head.

“The hunting grounds are separated into various levels. Most of the people there are at a higher grade than you. Nobody ever goes to the bottom level as the beasts there are weaker than Micky, and not worth killing. Even if somebody meets him by accident, they won’t have any reason to bother him.”

Percy didn't immediately reply. He was still tired, and this was a big decision. He'd rather sleep on it and give his grandpa his answer later. The two met up with Micky, before continuing to the forest. However, they didn't stop upon reaching the Whistling Woods. Instead, they kept walking for another hour.

"Ok, I think this is far enough." baldy said.

Percy began setting camp, as Micky flew down, landing in front of Archibald. Baldy took a deep breath. Soon, the young man felt a terrifying amount of ambient mana flow towards his grandpa. It wasn't until a few seconds later that numerous green lines lit up under the man's skin. Their pattern looked very different from Percy's. Rather than simple curved lines, the ones on baldy's skin swirled and branched out, making them resemble vines.

Then, Archibald placed his hand on Micky's head, before a suffocating torrent of green gushed out of his body, flowing down to the familiar's abdomen. This was the main reason why baldy had arranged to spend a week with them in the forest.

Ever since he mastered Circulation, Percy's grandpa volunteered to help the bird repair its second core. He wanted to thank Micky for giving them the technique. Plus, the increased capacity and regeneration made the process much faster than it had been the first time around.

Of course, they still had no idea where to get the mind mana. Percy couldn't exactly bring Micky to the temple. The mist outside was much thinner too, so they'd have to lurk there for months – assuming the Order even let them. Finally, finding a friendly Violet core with a mind affinity willing to dedicate several weeks to help wasn't realistic either.

Consequently, they hadn't rushed, only spending a couple of hours each day whenever Percy and Micky returned home. Assuming the bird's core needed the same amount of mana as Percy's, they estimated they were already about two thirds done. And Archibald planned to complete the project by the end of the week.

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Percy watched his grandpa fill up Micky's core. They'd already been in the forest for six days, yet the process wasn't done. He sure hoped they hadn't miscalculated as he'd rather not have to look for a different source of life mana as well, for the final stretch.

In any case, he'd worry about that later. Right now, baldy's words still echoed in his mind. Going to the Alchemists' Guild would be a huge commitment. He didn't know anything about alchemy! Maybe he'd hate it! Or he'd suck at it!

Even if he enjoyed it, who knew if he'd ever amass enough contribution points to cover his needs. His grandpa had emphasized he'd be at a massive disadvantage. Perhaps, he wouldn't even have enough elixirs for one of his cores, putting him at a worse position than before.

Then, there was the issue with Micky. Despite baldy's reassurances, Percy knew it would still be risky. This was Remior after all. There were plenty of unreasonable people out there, who would harm a beast for sport. Hell, it would be hypocritical of him to even criticize them. He'd killed plenty of goblins himself just to get stronger. He knew he wouldn't care much about a random bird either if it wasn't his reincarnated friend.

At the end of the day, everything boiled down to one simple fact. Despite the discrimination he'd faced growing up, Percy had spent his whole life under his grandpa's protection. The closest he'd ever come to losing his life had been due to his own recklessness when creating his familiar. But this would be different. There would be no certainties. Everything would depend entirely on his own ability. And his luck.

Then, he looked at baldy. Perhaps his grandpa had been lucky enough to be born at Yellow, but he'd still made himself into the man he was today. He wasn't dependent on others. Others depended on him.

'I want that… To be my own person.'

The young man nodded. He finally had his answer. He was about to tell baldy, when he saw him stop pouring mana into the bird. It was done. Smiling, he opened Micky's Status to check it one last time, before heading to the Alchemists' Guild.

Mictlantecuhtli (Percival's familiar)

Mana cores:

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