Wanderer 51

Chapter 51: Potions

“Of course!” the clerk replied, before scratching her head. “Although, I’m forced by Guild regulations to inform potential customers that the potions’ potency is rather limited.”

“So I’ve been told. But how limited are we talking about exactly?”

“Well, they work as advertised, but don’t expect any miracles on par with the elixirs.” she elaborated, before furrowing her brow. “Although I suppose they’ll be somewhat effective for you. No offense.”

Percy nodded.

“None taken. I’d like to have a look if it’s not too difficult.”

The clerk shrugged, before leading him to an adjacent room. She pressed her badge against a symbol on the wall, causing a different rune to light up on the ceiling, illuminating the place. It wasn’t a large room and – if the dust on the shelves was any indication – it was rarely used.

‘I guess nobody cares enough to inscribe self-cleaning runes in the potion room.’

“As you can imagine, not many of our alchemists bother brewing potions, and even fewer customers ever buy them. Still, we currently have four different varieties of sufficient quality to be approved for sale by the Guild.”

Seeing Percy remain silent, she continued.

“The most popular ones – relatively speaking – are the healing potions. They can help mend injuries for people below Yellow. Just minor stuff though. No raising the dead or regrowing limbs.”

‘It might be worth having one or two of these on me, for an emergency.’

So far, Percy had survived his first month on the Spire without getting stabbed by the wasps, so he doubted he'd get in much trouble anytime soon. Still, it wouldn't hurt to have something to fall back to in case of an accident.

"How much?"

The clerk smiled.

"Just 10 points per dose. If we went solely by the price of the ingredients and the expertise required to brew them, they'd be a lot more expensive. However, the supply far exceeds their demand. Our senior alchemists only bother with them whenever they want a break from elixirs. The same is true for the other potions."

'Lucky me.'

"I'll take three of these then." Percy said.

He didn't have much money to splurge on them, but if it was a one-time thing he could afford it. He doubted he'd need them replaced anytime soon.

The clerk handed him three glass vials. Apparently, the gemstones were too precious to be used for cheap potions. Percy could see a glowing green liquid swirling inside. Probably some life mana somehow processed into this form. In any case, this wasn't what he was here for. Tossing the potions into his pockets, he paid the clerk three orange coins, before asking her about the rest.

"Next we have magic potions." she gestured to a row of vials, their contents shimmering in a light blue colour. "Their main ingredient is a flower with pure mana properties, and they can refill your core once consumed. However, they only contain enough for an Orange core, and the conversion rate to other affinities is abysmal."

Percy made an odd expression. On paper, it sounded like these potions were tailor made for him. He had a Red core with a pure affinity, which meant there was nobody else on Remior who could benefit more from these potions than him.

A single dose could refill his core thrice over!

Still, Circulation boosted his mana regeneration the most, so he couldn't recall ever getting in a situation that couldn't be resolved through his Refined spell. In the end he shook his head, prompting the clerk to continue.

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"These are called enlightenment potions. Please pardon us for the tacky name – it is a bit on the nose considering their subpar effect – but they do help you focus for a couple hours after consuming them. They are best used before studying." she said, pointing to a shelf of bright red potions that looked a bit like glowing blood.

Percy's eyes widened. They might be handy for him if he decided to read up on alchemy, but that wasn't what surprised him.

"Do they contain mind mana by any chance?" he asked, trying to mask his inner turmoil.

He probably did a poor job at it, as the clerk chuckled upon seeing his expression.

"Yeah. I'm sure you see the pattern by now. Our alchemists have drawn inspiration from elixirs, trying to brew other affinities into potions, although their results leave much to be desired. None of them exceed what an Orange core is capable of."

Percy quickly ran some calculations in his head. Baldy had needed around 1800 refills to germinate his second core. If these enlightenment potions contained as much mana as an Orange core, he'd need somewhere around 110,000 doses for Micky. He smiled wryly at that conclusion.

'That's over a million contribution points. Do they even have that many in stock?'

Even if he somehow managed to amass the outlandish sum, he'd have to find a way to buy the potions without arousing suspicion. Still, this was his first lead, so it was something to keep in mind for the future.

"Do you want to buy some?" the clerk asked, breaking him out of his thoughts.

"Not right now."

Micky aside, he definitely wanted to hit the library in the next couple of days. Perhaps the enlightenment potions would be handy at that time, but they weren't a priority at the moment.

Shrugging, the clerk moved to the final shelf filled with brown potions. This time, she had to brush some cobwebs aside, speaking volumes as to the last time anybody bought any of these.

"This is the final item – and the least popular I'm afraid. They are called rejuvenation potions and you're meant to drink them before going to bed. Supposedly, they help you rest more overnight, but the difference isn't huge and it's not like sleep deprivation is a serious issue in the Guild."

"You don't seem very keen on promoting your merchandise." Percy noted.

The clerk hadn't really painted any of the potions in a positive light since he got here. It was his first time experiencing something like this in a shop.

She chuckled.

"Well, it's not like I get a commission based on sales. Besides, all the prices in this shop are fixed according to Guild rules. Also, the profits from the potions are peanuts compared to the elixirs and the demand for those is set in stone, regardless of my conduct. Thank Phoebe for it too. People only volunteer for these posts to relax. Nobody would bother if it was a hassle. So yeah… I might as well be honest with the customers."

This arrangement suited Percy just fine.

“So, what mana do these contain?” he asked.

“Don’t quote me on this, but I believe it’s a mixture of life and mind mana. However, they are designed to have a more delayed effect compared to the other potions. They basically work by augmenting your body’s natural recovery over a longer period of time. So don’t try relying on them in a pinch, but they’ll probably give you more value for your points overnight.”

“Ok, I’ll take one of these for now.” Percy said.

Truth be told, none of the potions seemed revolutionary, but the brown ones sounded like the most suitable to his situation. He’d try one tonight to see if it helped. A single dose was worth less points than a Starry Worker, so if it let him get an extra kill tomorrow it would pay for itself.

He left after thanking the clerk. Returning home was a pain in the ass, as the shop was in the other side of the settlement.

‘Shit, I have to wake up in five hours. And I still haven’t taken today’s elixirs.’ he grimaced.

Picking up the pace, he made it to his house in a rush, only lamenting the fact that he couldn’t activate Circulation in the middle of the Guild. Not many people were out and about this late, but it wasn’t worth the risk just to sleep a few minutes longer.

As soon as he entered his room, he downed the expensive elixir before getting into the shower. To save time, he circulated his pure mana between his stomach and abdomen while the warm water splashed on his shoulders, washing the grime off him.

The mana burned wherever it passed, as he had overused his channels again. On top of that, his body’s soreness made it a struggle to even stand, but he gritted his teeth to see this through. Half an hour later, he was in his bed, drinking a dose of the diluted elixir.

‘Micky, can you eat the bug now?’

For the next couple of weeks, Percy would need some help generating enough soul mana for the elixirs. They'd arranged for Micky to keep a half-dead Starry Drone by his side, with its stinger broken and its wings clipped, to be eaten on demand.

'CAW…'

The familiar appeared half-asleep, but a modest trickle of mana still flowed through the connection a few moments later. Percy took deep breaths to reinforce it, as he circulated it between his stomach and sternum.

By the time he finished, there were less than four hours left before sunrise. Picking up the rejuvenation potion, he gave it a swirl, gazing at the brown liquid as if it was the most precious treasure.

POP

He uncorked the vial with his mouth, carelessly spitting the lid on the floor, before gulping the potion down. It wasn't bitter like the elixirs. It was sweet, reminding him of thinned syrup.

'I really hope it does something, or tomorrow is going to suck so fucking much.'