Wanderer 55

Chapter 55: A message from a god

Percy's past few weeks had been rough – to say the least. His last clone had been another dud, just like the five before it. He'd found himself in the body of a fish that barely survived an hour before getting eaten.

'By a fucking crab too!' the memory still made his blood boil.

At this point, he wasn't sure if he'd been lucky with his first two clones, or unlucky with the rest. Probably both.

However, that was where the bad news ended. Last night, he finished the alchemy books, and Orin generously offered to sponsor him for half a year. It really was like the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel, as he'd been trying to figure out how to fund his studies for a while now. His hunting trips had capped out at 32 kills per day since three months ago, with no further improvements in sight.

At least, he could now afford both Micky's rejuvenation potions and the ones he needed to study, but he still struggled to save up any more points past that. At this rate, he'd be stuck until he managed to use Circulation with both cores.

That said, he'd made some progress towards that. He'd already finished clearing the rest of his channels and even mastered drinking the elixirs while moving. His soul had also grown a lot stronger after sending so many clones. Right now, using his bloodline didn't cause any new tears to form – other than the large chunk he carved out deliberately of course. The only steps left were to temper the channels to their limits and figure out a suitable pattern for the soul mana to flow in. Of course, there were some issues there, but he hoped he'd solve them in due time.

Still, Orin's help was the key to delving into alchemy a lot sooner than he could have otherwise. Percy hoped his strong theoretical background would let him reach the minimum thresholds more easily than other newbies.

'I have to make Orin's funding count. I need to reach a 15% yield by the end. Losing only half the value of the materials is going to sting less.'

Percy stopped in front of a stone house, slightly larger than his own. Senior alchemists who had contributed a lot to the Guild were given an upgraded home with its own private alchemy lab. The rest had to make do with the public ones. Luckily, Percy's mentor had offered him his own. He was even going to guide him through the process! Well, only for his first few attempts, but it was still massive.

'I can't believe I'm finally doing this for real.'

Reading about alchemy for so long without being able to put the lessons to practice had been quite frustrating to say the least. It was like baking cakes without being allowed a bite.

'Or in my case, I suppose I wasn't even able to bake the cakes. Just memorizing the recipes…' he chuckled.

He was about to knock on the door, when something unexpected happened. A shockwave coursed through him, making all the buildings around him tremble slightly. A gentle but firm breeze soon followed, sending all the motes in the air flying to the south. Percy squinted as a few landed in his eyes in quick succession.

'What's going on?!'

Orin's door opened, the man walking out of his house with an equally perplexed expression. The same happened with a few of his neighbours – the ones who were at home presumably. Everyone just stood outside, trying to make sense of the event. Percy had never seen anything like this since joining the Guild, and from what he gathered, neither had these seniors.

"Is somebody dumb enough to attack us?" he asked his mentor.

It was only now that the old alchemist even registered he was there. He gave him a reassuring smile, before shrugging.

"I doubt it, but even if some House has gone crazy, there's nothing to worry about. We have 5 Violet cores stationed here, so even a Great House would struggle to do much."

Percy nodded, but he still wasn't fully convinced.

"Attention, denizens of Remior! This is a message broadcast by Hermes, one of the 12 gods of the Divine Order!" a booming voice said.

Enjoying this book? Seek out the original to ensure the author gets credit.

The young man couldn't tell where the sound was coming from. It was as if it came from everywhere and nowhere, all at once. As if each pebble on the ground and each speck of dust in the air was eager to relay the god's will.

"Today is a joyous day for our world!" Hermes continued, oblivious to Percy's thoughts. "As you all know, our Order is constantly at war with other races – A war over land, lives and resources. Usually, these conflicts do not spill over to the rest of you – the mortals of Remior – but a recent development has granted us a grand opportunity that we can share with some of you."

Awed exclamations followed from the alchemists surrounding Percy. Everyone knew the Order often came across unique treasures with miraculous powers. However, they tended to monopolize them among themselves. Some people weren't happy with that arrangement but, honestly, Percy understood where the gods were coming from. After all, they were the ones who fought tooth and nail to protect them all. Plus, they were their spoils of war, so they did deserve to keep them.

"You may be wondering why we're being so generous all of a sudden, but that will become clear once I describe the properties of this bizarre item we have recently procured. It's called the Lotus of a Myriad Rivers. Although, strictly speaking it's not the lotus itself we're in possession of, but the seed of one.

In any case, as you may imagine, this object is not native to Remior. It's something we've competed against rival races to obtain from a recently vanquished world. And its effect is something you've all dreamt of at some point in your lives. No, scratch that. This is something that WE'VE all dreamt about – including many of our gods. After all, once the lotus fully blossoms, it can change one's affinity!"

It was Percy's turn to draw a sharp breath at that revelation. This was something that had truly bothered him ever since he discovered his second core's affinity. He'd long hypothesised he might be able to find

a solution out there in his travels. But he couldn't have predicted the solution would present itself to him back at home, in such a manner!

'I have to get this at all costs!'

"Now here's the catch. As the name of the plant implies, you can't exactly get whatever affinity piques your fancy. Once consumed, a petal of the lotus will add a water affinity to one's core. According to our current understanding, it won't do anything if you already possess the water affinity. Neither will it work with the rare or composite ones. However, it does work with other elemental affinities, merging with them. In other words, if you have a fire or earth affinity, you will end up with steam or mud respectively, and so on."

Percy grimaced at that. Those who lacked an affinity like him were already 20% of the population, but now he'd also have to compete with those with fire, earth, air or lightning. It meant about 84% of the people on Remior would want a petal…

"Yes, as you have probably realized, almost everyone you know can use it. As fate would have it, there's plenty of it to go around, however!

Once again, the name of the treasure might have already clued you in, but the lotus will generate a total of 10,000 petals when it blooms. And – lucky you – we currently only have about 7,000 members in the Order who can benefit from it.

In theory, we could delay planting the seed until we have more people, but nobody knows how long that would take, as we can't exactly control the rate by which talented individuals are born. Plus, we are firmly of the philosophy that the treasure won't do us any good if we keep it in storage forever.

So, we have already planted it – and the petals will be available for us all in five short years. A blink of an eye for us gods, and even the more competent of you mortals. Still a long time for the Red-born runts though."

The god chuckled.

Percy didn't appreciate somehow being the butt of a joke even during a divine transmission, but he was excited enough to let it slide.

"Ah, and just in case you smartasses think we haven't considered storing the excess petals for later – surprise! We are not as dumb as you think!

Sadly, they will wither away into nothing exactly 23 days, 7 hours, 12 minutes and 45.2 seconds after the plant blooms, no matter what we do. There is no preservation array that can change that. Even time dilation won't work.

It's actually the first time we – Remior specifically – got our hands on this bad boy, but other races have documented trying to cheat the system, only to end up crying over the wasted petals."

This time, the crowd around Percy erupted into cheers. Of course, everyone understood they probably wouldn't be among the lucky few to get a petal, but there was still plenty to be excited about. The news that the Divine Order had achieved another important victory gave them all some peace of mind. And, after this, their world would grow stronger still!

"Yes! We are amazing and all that!" Hermes said after a couple of minutes. "In any case, I'm running out of juice for the spell, so let me wrap this up real quick. To summarize, we have this neat thing in the oven that will give anyone with a pure or elemental affinity an upgrade five years from now. There are about 3,000 spots we are willing to share and around 1,000 noble Houses on Remior.

We could have tried to come up with a more elaborate system to decide who gets them but, frankly, we don't give a shit. So, we'll just hand three petals to each House and they can do whatever with them. Even if you're a commoner it doesn't necessarily mean you are screwed. You can still try buttering up one of the Houses if you've got anything of value to give them, but that's your problem, not mine.

Ba-bye!"