Wanderer 65

Chapter 65: Aftermath

Beasts tended to heal fast. Between drinking half the healing potion and consuming a fresh Yellow core, Micky was alright by morning. Percy on the other hand… Not so much.

'I suppose I'm in better shape than the other guy…' he consoled himself, looking at the half-eaten corpse of his enemy.

At least, he wasn't dead or in chains. Percy had never been more grateful for the desolation on the lower levels than he was in that moment. His wounds had stopped bleeding too, so he wasn't in any immediate danger.

Gritting his teeth, he grabbed against the tree to stand up, before walking to the nearest stone javelin. He only activated Circulation with his weaker core, as he wasn't in the mood to start tearing his soul again. His channels still burned, but he needed the extra boost to crush the constructs to dust. And there were plenty of them.

'Micky, you must eat the rest of the body. Do whatever you have to, but it needs to be gone by the afternoon.'

CAW

The crow wasn't pleased, as the remains were already devoid of mana. But it accepted the assignment without complaint.

Percy stomped the first spear to powder, before moving to the next one. There were hundreds in the area where they had fought, plus he'd have to retrace the guy's steps from when he was chasing Micky. The bastard had paced himself well, launching the projectiles about as fast as he recovered his mana. Even without Circulation, he'd unleashed a lot of attacks without tapping out.

It was already dark again by the time Percy was done. He'd destroyed most of the evidence of the battle and Micky had eaten the last traces of the corpse. They'd even looked for any lingering bloodstains, burying them underground. If somebody passed through the area in the next couple of days, the freshly

dug dirt might look suspicious, but they couldn't do much about that, other than letting time take care of it.

Another problem was the tree the earth mage had pierced through at the beginning of the scuffle. Percy couldn't make the whole thing disappear, so his next best move had been to cut it in half and trim the trunk. At least, that way it wouldn't be so obvious what had damaged it. It was probably overkill, but he didn't know if somebody was familiar with the guy's magic.

'I wonder what Orin is thinking.'

This was his first time missing an alchemy session in the past five months. He'd have to make up a story by tomorrow, but he doubted his mentor would suspect he'd spent the day covering up a murder.

Then, there was the issue with his current appearance. Between his battered body and tattered clothes, he needed a believable excuse before returning to the settlement. Fortunately, the bandage wrapped around his abdomen still seemed to work, despite a few holes here and there. At least, Micky couldn't detect the second core through Mana Sense.

CAW!

Next, the bird led him to a pile of Starry Drones. He'd hunted them on his own while Percy was busy clearing the evidence. Not for the contribution points of course. They'd already decided to take it easy for the next few days. No, they needed the dead wasps for something else.

'This is going to suck so fucking much.'

Ripping a strip of fabric from his robes, Percy rolled it up before placing it in his mouth. He bit down, holding a carcass over a wound on his arm. Next, he squeezed its abdomen, causing a drop of purple liquid to drip down from the stinger, splashing along the cut.

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A sharp pain instantly assaulted him as he watched his own flesh sizzle and blacken. Intentionally pouring acid into his injuries wasn't something he'd ever imagined doing, but he had to make them look like they'd been inflicted by the bugs. Percy's body had gone through a lot of torture over the past day, but his mind wasn't faring much better. Even now, he couldn't help but second guess his decisions.

'Was this really the best course of action?'

The guy he'd killed wasn't a bandit like Rick. Just a fellow member of the Guild, hunting on the Fungal Spire. An innocent person. Percy had attacked without even trying to communicate first. He'd done that to maintain the element of surprise, but the sneak attack had failed anyway.

He didn't regret doing his best to save his familiar, but he couldn't help but wonder what would've happened had he given that person a chance. Even if negotiations had led nowhere, the fight would have pretty much developed in the same way. But what if he'd agreed to let Micky go?

Sure, Percy would have still ended up in a difficult situation, with another person knowing at least one of his secrets. That said, it wasn't necessarily worse than worrying about his crime being discovered.

'I guess I'll never know…'

It was past midnight by the time he finished mutilating his wounds. Percy was glad he didn't have a mirror on him, as he was too scared to look at his body. At least, there wouldn't be too many people awake in the settlement right now. Hopefully, he wouldn't meet anybody besides the guards.

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"Gods! What happened to you?!" one of the men asked.

Percy scratched his head.

"I was an idiot. I heard of a place with Starry Soldiers on the second level and I was dumb enough to try fighting them."

The two gave him incredulous expressions.

“Hunting Yellow beasts with an Orange core?! What madness possessed you to do that?!”

“Kid, you’re lucky to be alive!!”

Percy chuckled bitterly.

He then tried walking through the gate but one of them stepped in his way, blocking his path. Outwardly Percy gave him a questioning look, but internally he was sweating buckets, afraid he’d overlooked something. The guy didn’t seem to notice, however. Instead, he searched his pocket before handing Percy a vial.

“Use this. I’ve had this for ages, but I doubt it will do me much good. It might work better on you. It’s a healing potion.”

Percy was moved. He was already planning to buy a few tomorrow to fix his body, but the sooner he began recovering, the less unwanted attention he’d draw to himself. He looked for some change in his pouch, when the guard stopped him.

“It’s on me kid. Just try to be more careful out there.”

“Thanks.” Percy nodded in appreciation before downing the green liquid on the spot. He felt his wounds itch for a few seconds, already looking a bit better by the time the effect wore off.

Luckily, he saw nobody else on the way home. All the stands had already closed for the night. Not that he didn’t crave his daily Honey Roll – Percy was practically starving – but he’d rather not give Freddy a heart attack.

Reaching his house, he first stopped by his preservation box, stuffing his face with anything edible he found. Only then did he enter the shower, still chewing on a slice of cheese. Peeling what remained of

his robes was painful, the fabric already stuck to his wounds in several spots. Many scabs fell out, making him wince. Washing the acid off his injuries wasn't much better.

'The good news is I have another set of robes.'

It had cost him 200 points – a hefty sum – most likely due to the self-cleaning enchantments inscribed on the garments. Still, given his secrets, he'd decided it was worth investing in some spare clothes in case of an emergency. Thank Phoebe too. He wouldn't have to walk around naked tomorrow.

'If I wake up at sunrise, I can get to the official shop as soon as it opens.'

He'd give the clerk the same excuse as the guards – if she asked – and patch his body up with another potion or two. By then, he'd look as good as new. That way nobody else would see his wounds. He'd only have to repeat his story twice more – to Orin and maybe Freddy, before returning to his routine.

Overall, he was happy with his odds of getting away with it. Murder was a serious crime in the Guild, but only if he got caught. Nobody ever bothered checking up on people. The chances anyone would notice the Yellow core was missing were abysmal. Not to mention somebody going out looking for him – and on the first floor, of all places.

Beyond that, it would all come down to Percy's luck.