Wanderer 70

Chapter 70: Second year in the Guild

More time passed as Percy worked hard on all fronts, improving both his hunting efficiency and his brewing yield. A month after his first fight against a Starry Soldier, he could already reliably kill around 10 of them per day. The difference was rather modest, but he welcomed the opportunity to hone his combat skills once more.

Before, his efficiency had plateaued as he could already slay the workers near instantly, and his profits had been capped by his travelling speed. Now, he finally had the chance to work on both his stamina – extending Circulation to last all day – and the potency of his magic – learning how to better slaughter the bugs. He also grew better at alchemy, raising his yield to 18%. Between earning 630 drops of nectar per trip and converting most of that into elixir, he could finally fully support one of his cores while still getting a lot of brewing practice.

But he didn't stop there.

Five months later – or about half a year since the end of his funding – Percy was able to hunt 14 soldiers per trip, while his yield had increased to a whopping 23%. He estimated he could have crossed the 25% threshold if he had continued spending four hours on alchemy per day, but sadly he only had enough nectar for about two. Still, he was on the verge of supporting both of his cores when another interesting development occurred.

Micky finally mastered Circulation!

As Percy had come to learn through the numerous beasts his clones had possessed, a beast affinity was very uniquely suited for the technique. In fact, that was an understatement. Apparently, blood was the best medium for beast mana to flow in, making one's blood vessels synonymous with their channels!

Even more importantly, since beasts didn't use conventional spells, they didn't fall into the trap of only clearing the channels branching out from their cores to their extremities. Instead, they passively cleared and tempered all their pathways, their mana constantly flowing through their whole body, always empowering it. Percy had been shocked by that discovery, realizing beasts already used Circulation – albeit a weaker version of it. It had essentially been the truth behind their strength all along!

It didn’t take a genius to find the correct pattern for the mana to flow in either. It was identical to one’s circulatory system. However, that didn’t mean Micky couldn’t learn to use the full scope of the technique. It only meant Circulation for a beast was equivalent to supercharging their blood flow, a bit like a steroid, drawing even more strength out of their bodies than usual.

Beasts also couldn’t exactly replenish their mana by breathing like mages did, because ambient mana didn’t contain the beast affinity. They could still slowly draw some mana of other affinities from the air, converting it to beast mana, but it was much less efficient than it was for Percy.

In Micky’s case, Circulation drew its power from the crow’s flesh and blood. It broke down the body, converting matter to strength. At first, Percy had worried this would have an adverse effect on his familiar. After a few tests, however, he concluded it wouldn’t.

Perhaps it might be an issue for a beast living in an environment where food was scarce. For Micky who had more wasp meat than he knew what to do with, it wouldn’t be a problem. It only meant he had to eat some more of his preys’ bodies per day, and he’d wake up fresh the following morning.

The only reason it had even taken the bird so long to master the technique was due to its reluctance. It had needed a lot of convincing from Percy before it was willing to endure the strain of the spell. It wasn’t a pleasant experience, but the familiar quickly came around after enjoying the benefits of the technique.

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And naturally, that was a game-changer for them. Micky had already been able to easily find the workers before – he just hadn’t been great at killing them. However, his efficiency soared after his upgrade. The crow could now hunt the Orange variants way faster by itself, as Percy only slowed the bird down. On his first day roaming the second level alone, Micky took down over forty wasps, brutally shattering their previous record!

At that point they split up, with Micky spending all day hunting the workers by himself, while Percy was free to focus on Crystallization as he travelled to the soldiers. They also gathered over 1200 contribution points per day, not only giving Percy enough for both cores, but even letting him save some. Four months later, their hunting trips hadn’t improved much, with Micky capping at around 43 kills per day, and Percy unable to get past 15.

Still, his brewing yield finally reached 26%, making him a fully-fledged alchemist. According to Orin, he could even take a test if he wanted, to be officially acknowledged by the Guild. It would raise his status if he left one day. It still wouldn't be on par with a Yellow-born, but he'd receive better treatment than Orange-borns who had never dabbled in alchemy.

It wasn't a huge deal, and Percy didn't see a reason to bother just yet, but perhaps he could consider it when it was time to leave. More importantly, he could now brew elixirs at a profit, and he even had a lot stashed in his house. He had enough to last as a buffer for two months once he stopped hunting.

It was finally time to make the transition to full-time alchemy!

At first, it would be less profitable than his current hunting trips, but that would be temporary. By brewing 18 hours per day, he would improve rapidly, meaning he'd continue increasing his yield several times faster. And sure enough, another two months later – or one year after Orin's funding stopped – Percy reached a 30% yield!

That was when the improvements truly slowed down, but it was enough. Each brewing session only took him about 40 minutes now, and with such a yield it meant he could now earn 2160 points per day! That was without even including the 645 points Micky got!

'Finally…'

His two original goals in coming to the Guild had already been met. He could now fund both of his cores, and Micky had a perfect environment to keep hunting Orange beasts to his heart's content. Even better, Percy was making over three times as much money as he needed, so in theory he could fall back and relax for a while.

He chuckled.

'As if…'

Percy might have met his initial targets, but there were still many projects he had to worry about. He had continued sending his clones out about once a month, although they'd all returned empty-handed. A couple of them had ended up possessing sentient creatures again, but neither of them had access to

anything that couldn't be found on Remior. Not that it was a bad thing, as he had yet to fully process his gains from the primitive village.

By now, he could compress the cyan constructs by about 40%. It was still a little short of what he needed, and his improvements had slowed down as he hadn't had much time outside alchemy to invest in the technique over the past couple of months. Still, now that he was free, he decided to only brew as much elixir as he needed for the next few weeks, spending the rest of his time on Crystallization. He had a hunch it would let him take an important step forward once mastered.

His other long-term projects included the creation of a Starry Wasp familiar and repairing Micky's second core. The former still stumped him, as there were way too many impossible problems he had to overcome. Having two ethereal cords at once was already difficult, so he couldn't even consider creating another familiar without losing the ability to send out clones. Not to mention the issue with stealing a wasp egg from the depths of the Fungal Spire under the noses of Blue and Violet beasts.

As for repairing Micky's core, that was more doable. The 1 million contribution points he needed were a lot, but given his current income, they were no longer impossible to amass. Even without any further improvements, he'd get there in less than two years if he saved up all his excess money. Though he still hoped his gamble with Crystallization would pay off beforehand.

'Let's do it then. I need to compress the damn crystal by the end of the month.'