Wanderer 71

Chapter 71: Crystallization

A vein throbbed on Percy's forehead, his skin already a deep crimson colour. His eyes were shut, to shield them from the annoying streams of sweat pouring down his face.

His body shook, his muscles having already been locked in their current position for over an hour. A palm was placed on top of the other, both squeezing hard on a glowing sphere with all their strength. Two sets of bright lines pulsed underneath his flesh. The cyan ones were static, drawing orderly curves on his body, while the silver ones constantly shuffled, outlining a violent maelstrom swirling around his sternum.

'Just a little more!' Percy gritted his teeth.

He couldn't estimate how close he was exactly, but he felt he'd been on the verge of compressing the pure mana into a crystal for the past few days. Today, he'd resolved himself to doing whatever it took to finally cross the threshold.

And just like that, the young man felt something snap in place, as the cyan marble stopped fighting back a few minutes later. But Percy wasn't in a hurry to quit, unwilling to risk wasting his efforts. Luckily, he received some additional confirmation of his success not long after.

[Congratulations! You have mastered a new spell: Crystallization – Crude!]

'Wow, it's been a long time since my Status registered something new.'

Finally free to deactivate Circulation, Percy let go of the orb, plopping back on the cold stone weakly. His chest heaved up and down, as he watched the crystal roll away on his room's floor. Perhaps it would have been more comfortable to do this on his bed, but he didn't want to get his mattress all sweaty.

In any case, he was done!

His lips curled upwards as the last motes of mana seeped out of his pores. It had taken him over a year, but the new spell was finally ready. Opening his Status, he spent the next couple of minutes gawking at it in silent appreciation.

Percival Avalon

Mana cores:

Bloodline:

Spells:

???:

‘Six spells!’

Percy was pretty sure nobody else on Remior had this many at his age. If it hadn’t been for the various opportunities granted by his bloodline, he knew he would have only mastered a single one by now.

The Status never bothered registering variants of the same spell if they weren’t sufficiently different from one another. This was why there was only a single mention of Circulation. Also, why his Parting Gift was only listed once, despite all the slight permutations he could cast.

In fact, the two most similar spells listed separately were his Quarterstaff and his Glove. Strictly speaking, both were just regular constructs of pure mana, although their purpose was very different to one another, as were the principles of their design.

He still wasn’t sure what the Status was for. He guessed it was meant to encourage mages to branch out, developing distinct lines of magic. As for the spells’ classification, it was probably there to push people to delve deeper into each one.

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‘So, whoever created it wants us to develop multiple, powerful spells. But what for?’

In the end, he shrugged. This wasn’t something he could figure out right now. Nor did it matter too much to him at the moment.

Pushing himself up, he walked to the marble before grabbing it. It was warm to the touch, but he guessed that was just an artifact of his lingering body heat – from holding it for so long. It was a little sticky too – drenched in sweat – prompting him to wipe it on his robes a few times. Only then did he lift it in front of his eyes, examining it more closely. It was about the size of a cherry, its smooth surface shimmering with a pale cyan light. Percy was tempted to keep the first one as a memento, but his anticipation won out in the end. He’d already looked forward to testing its effects for so long!

Making his way to the kitchen table, he sifted through his alchemy equipment for a pestle and mortar. Tossing the marble inside, he gave it one final glance, before sealing its fate. Without his willpower and his hands pressing on the sphere uniformly, it shattered rather easily, the brittle material quickly giving way under the weight of the bronze tool. Less than a minute later, Percy was looking at a small pile of powder, reminding him of his short time in the primitive village.

‘I wonder how those people are doing.’

Had their cores succumbed to the poison once more? They must have. The brown fog was both abundant and fast-acting. Shaking the distracting thoughts out of his mind, Percy walked to the tap, opening it slightly to let a few drops of water into the pestle. Recalling Hemarakah’s actions, he mixed the contents with his fingers, before gulping down the cyan paste.

Next, he pulled some soul mana from his sternum, letting it swirl inside his stomach for a couple minutes, before moving it back. Originally, his core still burned a little. It had only been a few hours since he consumed today’s elixirs. However, as soon as he pushed the enriched mana inside it, the ethereal organ itched, the discomfort easing slightly.

‘Holy shit! It works!’

Percy hadn’t been certain it would, as his circumstances were somewhat different from the natives of that world. Still, he had persisted in his madness, recognizing the underlying principles behind the two

situations were similar. The villagers Percy had encountered had relied on the cyan paste to mend their cores, letting them survive the poison longer – despite lacking the means of purging it entirely.

Strictly speaking, the damage caused by the brown mist wasn't that different from what the elixirs did. Of course, the effect of the elixirs was more surgical, designed to target the impurities. Still, the process always left the organ injured, forcing people to wait 24 hours for it to recover after each dose. But if the powder could speed things up…

'I can accelerate my advancement!'

The question was how much more frequently he could drink the elixirs.

'I'm gonna have to test a couple things.'

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A few days later, Percy already had some answers. The cyan paste seemed to merely provide the nutrients his core needed. A single marble was more than enough for his recovery, so consuming more than one didn't do anything.

In other words, he couldn't spam the process to mend the core instantly. No matter what, he was limited to one dose of powder after each dose of elixir. As for the exact recovery period, it seemed to fluctuate depending on when he used the paste. The sooner he did, the fresher the wounds in his core were, making the powder more effective. When he consumed the paste right after the elixir, his core recovered twice as fast as normal!

'I can advance both my cores in half the time!' his heart skipped a beat.

Of course, it would also be twice as expensive. Not just that, but he'd also need about six hours to condense enough crystals. That would only leave him about twelve hours to spend on brewing. With his income dropping sharply and his costs doubling, he estimated he would barely keep up with his needs. Suddenly, he felt a little envious of the old lady.

‘She only needed about an hour for each marble…’ Percy groaned.

Granted, her core had been at Orange, giving her an edge when it came to controlling pure mana. She was a lot more experienced than him too. Still, he had his own advantages, so he figured he’d catch up soon enough.

‘Actually, this is all temporary anyway.’

Calculating the time he’d already spent on his second core; Percy was over two thirds into his next promotion. If he began consuming four elixirs per day, he would get there in under a year! At that point, condensing the crystals would become much easier too. And there was another thing that gave him pause…

‘There should be a way to drink the elixirs and the paste at the same time.’

Since the effects of the powder improved depending on how soon it was used, Percy had naturally tried consuming both substances simultaneously. The elixir and the paste had mixed in his stomach without issue, but the moment he added his own mana, it all reacted violently, eliminating the potency of both materials before he even had the chance to draw them back to his core. That said, Percy wasn’t too discouraged. He already had an idea as to how he could fix this – he’d just need some time to work on it. If he succeeded, he could speed up his advancement even further!

‘I guess I can delegate all my excess income into modifying the recipe over the next few months.’