Wanderer 77

Chapter 77: Decree

Multiple green symbols lit up underneath their feet. Together, they formed an intricate circle, woven out of the same script decorating the rest of the cube. Gazing up, Percy noticed a similar shape forming on the ceiling right above them, as a beautiful gem glistened in its centre.

It fell, flying through the air like a verdant droplet, before landing on their forehead. The liquid was cool to the touch, swiftly seeping into their skin. Percy felt an itch snaking down through their body, as cuts and scrapes closed in its wake, the pain fading a moment later. By the time its effect was exhausted, all the injuries above their chest had healed entirely, the discomfort replaced by a gentle chill. Only then did they look up again, watching a second droplet about to coalesce.

However, things didn't go so smoothly this time. As the soothing sensation lingered in their torso, latching itself to some of the many wounds marring it, something else stirred inside their body.

'Ah, there it is…' Percy grimaced.

An all too familiar vortex awakened right around their abdomen, exerting an attractive force on the mana. At first it was weak, unable to sway the substance off its path.

But it was nothing if not persistent. The pull kept intensifying, until a trickle was finally pried from the wounds. And the very moment the mana reached its new home, all hell broke loose. While the minuscule snack wasn't remotely sufficient to satiate the vortex's hunger, it was more than enough to fully whet its appetite. The force instantly quadrupled in strength, as the rest of the mana was violently snatched from its original purpose.

'What's going on?!' Gabe asked, only now registering something was wrong.

'Well, now we pray this cube of yours isn't cheap enough to skimp on your reward…' Percy said, knowing there was no stopping what was about to occur.

The third droplet barely landed on their head, before getting sucked right into their abdomen. But the inscriptions appeared too proud to accept their loss, tossing more life mana at their patient, trying to

outmatch their new competitor. Little did they know that it was only getting started. The new droplets were gone as soon as they landed.

The inscriptions were enraged!

They blinked furiously for several seconds, before rapidly expanding. They didn't stop until their diameter had doubled! More mana accumulated inside the circle on the ceiling, but it didn't fall just yet. This time, it waited, gathering more and more of the syrupy liquid, a viscous blob swelling to fill the entire shape.

'Oh boy… I suggest you take a deep breath…' Percy advised his host.

Luckily the hole in their lung was one of the few injuries the first couple of droplets had managed to reach. It wasn't completely healed, but it didn't hurt as much when Gabe inhaled. And he was just in time too. Having gathered enough fluid, the inscription finally let go of the monstrous blob, as the mother of all droplets rapidly enlarged in Percy's vision.

It was heavy, but not enough to knock a Green core off his feet. The sound was strangely muted too, as the liquid instantly wrapped around their body, hugging it tightly. It seeped through every orifice and pore, desperate to do its job before it got consumed.

But the vortex never gave it the chance. Almost as if it knew its tasty feast would end the moment the healing was complete, it stubbornly devoured every single hint of mana, much to Gabe's growing frustration. Worse still, the liquid blocked his air canals, making it impossible to breathe. Gabe didn't seem to appreciate the minty taste in his mouth either, clawing the bubble out of his face. Sadly for him, more flowed to replace it.

'Give up. It won't stop until its done.' Percy explained.

Much like the crimson fluid back in Phoebe's temple, it was far denser than anything a mortal could produce. This was clearly a god's mana! And just like back then, the liquid had been in storage for who-knew how long. The will of its original owner had long dissipated, rendering it powerless to resist the gluttonous vortex.

‘It’s a good thing. Well, assuming it leaves enough mana for you to heal afterwards.’ Percy said.

But Gabe didn’t seem convinced. He kept squirming, desperate to shake the substance off. At some point, he even tried summoning his wings, but the bubble blocked the flow of ambient mana.

This text was taken from Royal Road. Help the author by reading the original version there.

‘Conserve your breath. It’s going to be over soon.’

This was Percy’s third attempt at placating his host. Out of options, the latter finally paid attention.

‘How soon?!’ Gabe asked.

‘Hopefully before we suffocate.’ Percy shrugged.

Resigning to his fate, Gabe sat cross-legged, letting the vortex enjoy its meal. And indeed, the flow died down about a minute later. Freed at last, what remained of the liquid returned to its original job. Though only a fraction was necessary to complete their recovery. The rest, they had to expel the good old way, as the circle on the floor drained whatever mana reached it. Before they were even done spitting out the leftovers, the cube spoke once more.

“Healing complete. Calculating excess value…”

“Excess value: -2432. Deducting credits. New balance: 26131.”

‘The hell?! Care to explain what the actual fuck just happened?! Why did it take credits instead of adding them?! What have you done?!’ Gabe snapped.

‘Geez, calm down! It’s because you used up way more life mana than you were meant to. But I promise you, you got your money’s worth.’

Percy felt their brow crease.

‘How so?’

‘It’s easier to show you.’ Percy said, pulling up his Status. Though he got interrupted before even reading half-way through.

Gabriel (Percival's clone)

Mana cores:

‘Wow! You never mentioned you’re a Moirai!’ Gabe exclaimed.

‘Oh? You’ve heard of them?’ Percy asked back.

‘Who hasn’t?!’

Well, Micky hadn’t. Then again, the gladiator hadn’t been privy to much gossip from inside his damp cell. The rest of the places Percy had visited hadn’t been much better. However, this world seemed even more developed than Remior, so it wasn’t that surprising Gabe was better informed.

‘I’m not a Moirai. I just snatched their thing. Much like how I passed it over to you.’ he said.

‘You’re kidding right?!’ his host asked.

‘Why is it so hard to believe?’ Percy shrugged.

‘You’re telling me you managed to steal the Moirais’ Decree from under their noses?!’

Percy raised an eyebrow.

‘Decree? What’s that?’

A wave of shock reached him through their connection.

‘You don’t even know THAT?! It’s only the highest tier of spells in the entire universe! The holy grail of magic!’ Gabe explained enthusiastically.

He remained silent for a couple seconds, before adding, ‘learning to cast one marks the difference between a regular god and a titan!’

Percy’s eyes widened. He’d never come across this tidbit of information in his studies. It seemed the Divine Order didn’t publicize everything. Then, was that the secret behind the mysterious section in his Status? Did it list all the Decrees affecting him? One of them was what granted him the ability to view his Status in the first place. Was that a Decree in and of itself? Plus, Phoebe was a titaness. And she clearly had a connection to the Status and the affinity tests. Was it her Decree? Then what about the one granting him a bloodline? Who did that come from?

All those were things he’d have to investigate when he returned to Remior. For now, his best course of action was to learn as much as possible from his host.

‘What’s so special about them anyway?’ he couldn’t help but ask.

Gabe gasped, seemingly taken aback by his question. Almost offended, even.

‘Decrees differ from the lower tiers of magic in two major ways.’ he said. ‘First, they are self-sustaining, meaning their effect persists without any conscious effort from their caster. Even if the titan in question dies, the Decree remains active.’

Percy was already shocked but didn’t interrupt.

‘The most important characteristic, however, is that a Decree is powerful enough to affect an entire world, changing it forever.’

For the next few minutes, Percy pondered the implications. Indeed, all the Decrees he had come across fit the criteria. Every person on Remior had access to a Status and the chance to inherit a bloodline. And the same was true for the Moirai, all of them born with a second core. Decrees were truly world-altering!

'I understand.' he eventually replied.

But his host shook his head.

'You really don't!' Gabe said before elaborating. 'Every time a new titan emerges, they grant their world a permanent advantage. Naturally, all Decrees are impressive. That said, not all of them are created equal.'

'What do you mean?' Percy frowned.

'Some aren't as rare or powerful as others. For example, we have one granting us a bloodline in this world. It basically lets us inherit some unique ability from our parents. That's a common type. Many worlds have something similar, though the exact details may vary slightly.'

Percy nodded. He had already suspected Gabe's wings to be a bloodline. Unaware of his thoughts, the latter continued.

'The one which lets you view information about yourself is relatively widespread too – though we don't have that here.'

'Then, I take it the Moirais' Decree is on the more valuable end of the spectrum?' Percy asked.

'That's quite the understatement! You can't even fathom how many different gods have tried to recreate it! But the circumstances under which it came to be are almost impossible to replicate. From what I've heard, only one faction has ever come close, yet even their version is but a pale imitation – ridden with drawbacks.'

Once again, Percy came to appreciate just how lucky that first clone of his had been. Of all the places in the universe, it had ended up in quite the spot!

He grinned, before turning to his host again.

‘Congratulations are in order then! I thought you’d be happier with your new toy!’