Wanderer 93

Chapter 93: Aurora Dew

‘How the hell did he manage this less than three years after joining the Guild?’ Nesha couldn’t help but wonder.

Countless experienced alchemists had failed to improve the elixirs after tens of millennia, yet here Percy came – one lone Red-born boy – revolutionizing the field in no time. Obviously, there was some secret behind his success, though Nesha knew better than to ask. It wasn’t her job to snoop around Percy’s business. She had her own end of the deal to worry about. Entering her house, she made her way to her bed, before lying down.

‘This is going to be such a pain.’ she sighed.

While she hadn’t lied to Percy, getting this to work was a lot more complicated than she had let on. It was true the Great Houses were scrutinized a lot less by the Guild’s officials, but the Oblivious Agent would still have to regularly smuggle goods in and out of the settlement.

Naturally, they’d have to bribe lots of guards to turn a blind eye, though that would only leave more trails leading back to her and Percy. The only solution would be for the Agent to place the bribes himself, ensuring all knowledge pertaining to the operation would be forgotten.

At least, they wouldn’t be the first people hiring an agent inside the Alchemists’ Guild – lots of noble Houses did that, to keep their dealings secret from one another. As long as Nesha was careful, nobody would link the appearance of the new elixirs to her movements, even if something went wrong down the line.

‘But there’s another problem.’

This was going to be a recurring transaction, not a one-time deal. Naturally, the request might raise a few eyebrows in the Asclepius House’s management. Fortunately, the higher-ups also erased their memories after sending out their subordinates, but Nesha would still have to be cautious not to reveal anything too sensitive in her correspondence. After all, even a Great House could crumble under the pressure of the Divine Order, should the secret eventually leak.

“And Percy isn’t making things easy for me either…” she grumbled.

Before sealing the deal with her, he’d asked her to help him procure over 110,000 doses of enlightenment potion!

Naturally, the request had truly left Nesha flabbergasted! She hadn’t the slightest clue what that madman needed all those potions for, but getting them was no trivial thing. First, they didn’t even know if the Guild had so many in stock. Even if they did, they couldn’t exactly explain how there was suddenly such a great demand for a previously dead product.

But Percy had insisted, telling her this was one of the main reasons why he’d even wanted to sell the new elixirs in the first place. Begrudgingly, Nesha had agreed to help, though not before making it clear they’d have to do it very carefully. They couldn’t buy all the potions at once, nor could they purchase them directly within the Guild.

‘I suppose we can have the Oblivious Agent handle that too.’

Over a period of about six months, the agent would slowly buy the potions a few at a time, transporting them outside the settlement. In fact, they could make that the agent’s official reason for being there. The unusual request might raise a few eyebrows, but ultimately the Guild’s higher-ups would assume some noble House had found a purpose for the potion.

Meanwhile, the agent would unofficially sneak them back into the settlement whenever he returned, delivering them to Percy. Obviously, going through these extra hoops would add to the cost, but it was a small price to pay to sleep at night. Besides, Nesha estimated the gains from the new elixirs would more than cover the expense.

‘Now, let’s see who we’re going to sell them to.’

Grabbing a quill and a few pieces of parchment, Nesha started writing down the names of all the noble Houses she knew of. It took quite a lot of head scratching, as it had been years since she’d last dealt with people outside the Alchemists’ Guild. Still, she’d studied Remior’s geography, politics and economics extensively in her youth, so a lot of it had stuck.

‘Only about 700…’ she frowned.

Stolen novel; please report.

She couldn’t remember all the noble Houses, nor was she up to date with recent developments. Some of the ones she’d written down might have been destroyed by now.

‘I’m sure the bigger ones are still around.’ she shrugged.

The oldest Houses were also the richer ones, and the ones most likely to have survived. Their client would probably come from those. Plus, she could cross-check the House’s details to make sure everything was in order before following through. Happy with the list, she started adding a few details next to each name – whatever she remembered about their leaders. After all, the Violet cores in charge would be the ones buying the elixirs.

Once she was done, she began crossing out some of them. The ones with younger leaders were definitely out. A recently promoted Violet core still thousands of years from reaching White wouldn’t be desperate enough to buy the elixirs at a premium. The same was true for the poorest Houses who lacked the funds. Upon narrowing the list to just under a hundred candidates, she started paying attention to more details.

‘The son of House Pallas’s leader is on the cusp of reaching Violet…’

‘Not her. She’s known to be really stingy…’

‘Oh! Houses Antaeus and Talos have been in a conflict for centuries. I’m sure one of them might be interested in gaining an edge over their rival…’

‘That guy is still far from White, but he’s known to splurge…’

Nesha didn’t even notice when the sun rose. She couldn’t recall the last time she’d been immersed in her work enough to pull an all-nighter. Ever since her House’s downfall, she hadn’t been that motivated to do much. At some point, she put down the quill, though it wasn’t because she’d grown tired.

Nesha had just run out of ink!

‘Oh well… I suppose I’ve narrowed them down enough for now…’

There were only ten Houses left on the parchment. Nesha was certain all of them would be interested in the elixirs. The only question was how much each of them would be willing to spend.

In any case, she figured it was best not to delve any further before getting some recent information on them. She’d ask around to bring herself up to speed over the next couple of days before finalizing her choice.

Leaving her house, Nesha walked to one of the official shops to buy some ink before returning. Her next order of business would be to write the letter to House Asclepius, requesting the services of the Oblivious Agent.

‘Not going to enjoy this part…’ she wrinkled her nose in disgust.

There was a reason why Nesha felt confident she could contact the Great House. It was because House Veritas used to have strong ties to them. In fact, Nesha’s ancestors were rumoured to have derived their own Truthseeker bloodline from a branch of the Great House.

After all, House Asclepius was one of the wealthiest even among the Great Houses, specializing in commerce and information trading. They had multiple related bloodlines to aid them in those ventures. The Memory Bank bloodline the Oblivious Agents possessed was only one of them.

Nesha had no idea why the Great House hadn’t lifted a finger when her family got butchered and, frankly, she didn’t much care about House Asclepius’s internal politics either. That said, the thought of doing business with them again made her stomach churn.

‘I guess I’ll have to make some sacrifices if I ever want to take revenge on those bastards.’

So far, she'd taken things slow – well, at least according to her. From an outsider's perspective, establishing such a popular gambling den within three years of joining the Guild was rather impressive. Still, Nesha knew she could have done much more in that time had she put her mind to it. However, she hadn't been too motivated to rush things, as she hadn't expected it would be easy to get back at her enemies with money alone.

But things were different now.

This new opportunity Percy had given her could change everything. Not only would it be far more profitable than her gambling den, it could also help her grow her personal strength. Before, Nesha had completely ignored her own magic, assuming she wouldn't get very far as an Orange-born. Now, even reaching Violet wasn't out of the question.

'Let's do it then…' she decided, her eyes glinting with resolve.

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KNOCK, KNOCK

The door opened a few seconds later, Percy soon greeting her. He was drenched in sweat, his eyes looking tired.

'Did he also pull an all-nighter, or is brewing actually so taxing?' she raised an eyebrow.

"What's up? Do we have news already?" he asked after she remained silent for too long.

Hearing him, Nesha scowled.

"It hasn't even been a day since we made the deal! I haven't sent the letters yet, nor have I settled on a candidate!"

Percy shrugged.

“Alright, no need to get angry. What do you want then?”

Nesha took a deep breath to calm down before speaking.

“Well, I was thinking… We can’t keep calling these ‘the new elixirs’. Coming up with a catchy name is half the battle.”

Percy’s jaw slackened upon hearing her.

“What are you looking at me like that for?!” she asked in irritation.

“Are you the same Nesha who patches her signs up? Since when do you care about optics? Or marketability?”

Nesha felt some heat gather in her cheeks.

“Look... What I’ve done in the Guild so far hasn’t been a huge deal. It would have succeeded regardless. But this is a high-profile business we’re trying to build here. Every little bit helps if you want some extra money from our clients.”

Percy smiled.

“Well, you’re the one in charge of the sales. Any good suggestions?” he asked.

Nesha nodded.

“Aurora Dew.”