

Hammer God 26

Chapter 26: The Four Aspects of Power

Samson and Kyle returned home.

Kyle learned more about Sandspeak, the language of this area, and went to bed.

The next day, he was sent to accompany Tarren, the older hunter.

Tarren had been working for Samson for over ten years, and he was the longest-standing employee at the company.

"Samson actually also recruited me from the prison," Tarren explained as he went through a bush.

"You were... in prison?" Kyle asked, trying to get the grammar right.

"Yep," Tarren answered. "Banditry. In case you don't know the word, I essentially stole from merchants on the road. I even had a group under me."

"Sadly, or luckily, we ran into a guard squad, which quickly suppressed us."

"I spent a couple of weeks in prison. At that time, Samson was searching for new hunters for his business. He had been working alone until then, and well, I joined. I've been working for him ever since," Tarren explained.

Kyle got most of what Tarren said.

"Back then, I was just an Early Squire. Well, technically, I can't count as a Squire since I didn't have the luxury to undertake the ritual."

'There's that weird word again. Early Squire. Still don't know what the fuck that's supposed to mean,' Kyle thought.

"What's a Early Squire?"

"An Early Squire," Tarren corrected before turning to Kyle. "Wait, you don't know what a Squire is? How can you not know that?"

Kyle shrugged. "Never heard."

Tarren frowned. He wanted to know how it was possible that someone didn't know what a Squire was, but trying to get something out of Kyle was too frustrating due to the language barrier.

"It's how we determine someone's power," Tarren explained. "There are different Realms. You could call them levels of strength."

"Every Realm has five levels, and reaching a new one increases your power substantially."

"In the beginning, you are a normal human and are not part of the First Realm yet."

"If you train hard enough and get your hands on a bit of Ether, you can become an Initial Squire. You will be quite a bit more powerful than a normal human, and you essentially took your first step towards the path of power."

"Did you get all that?" Tarren asked.

"Eh, normal person trains. Normal person needs Ether. If true, then more power, right?" Kyle asked.

"More or less," Tarren said with a nod as he jumped onto a branch to look at the surroundings.

"The stronger you get, the more Ether you need to become even stronger. You can partially generate your own Ether by training, but it's much faster and easier to just buy it," Tarren explained.

"Question: Where Ether come from?" Kyle asked.

"Everywhere," Tarren answered, gesturing to the air around him. "It's in the air, in the earth, in stone, in water, in the trees, in animals, and so on. It's everywhere. The difficult part is getting it into your body."

"How to get into body?" Kyle asked.

"There are multiple ways," Tarren said as he landed in front of a tree with unripe fruit.

He took out one of his satchels and emptied the contents onto the tree's roots.

"Some Ether is toxic to humans. Some Ether is beneficial to humans. Some Ether is just useless to humans."

"A good example of toxic Ether is the Ether inside beasts. Beasts don't want to be eaten, which is why they evolved a trait that makes their Ether toxic to humans. Other beasts don't have that issue since they evolved traits that deal with that toxicity but humans... well..."

"We are not very good at evolving as fast as nature. Probably because most weaker humans don't just die."

"Oh, right," Tarren said as he stopped advancing before looking at Kyle. "You're half-dwarf, right?"

Kyle shrugged. "Don't know."

Tarren furrowed his brows again.

He had so many questions, but getting information out of Kyle was frustrating beyond belief.

"Dwarfs are a subcategory of humans. They live in big tribes in the middle of the wilderness. Their technology is atrocious, and their weapons are primitive. That's because they evolved a trait that focuses all the Ether into their bodies. Their Ether doesn't go into the Center, mind, or Soul."

"I don't follow," Kyle asked. "Center? Soul?"

"The word Soul is a misnomer," Tarren answered. "It's not your actual soul. Do you know about the four Aspects of Power?"

Kyle just shook his head, and Tarren sighed.

"When you absorb Ether, where does it go?" Tarren asked.

'How the fuck am I supposed to know?' Kyle thought. 'I don't know shit about shit!'

"Body?" Kyle guessed.

"Partially," Tarren answered. "When a human absorbs Ether, it enters their four Aspects of Power equally."

"Each aspect increases your abilities in a different way."

"If you have a lot of Ether in your body, you will become stronger and more agile."

"If you have a lot of Ether in your mind, you will learn faster and become more intelligent."

"If you have a lot of Ether in your Center, you-"

"Center?" Kyle asked, interrupting Tarren.

Tarren roughly shoved a finger into the spot just barely above where both of Kyle's collarbones met.

'Ouch!' Kyle thought as he felt quite a bit of pain radiating from that spot.

Kyle subconsciously touched that part, and he noticed something.

'Wait, was that bead always there?'

Slightly above the middle of Kyle's chest was a hard and round object.

'Feels a bit like a big marble. I didn't swallow a fucking stone, right?'

"That's your Center. It's an organ that stores raw Ether. With your Center, you can transform Ether into different things, assuming you know how. You've seen how Fennek made fire, right?"

Kyle nodded.

"Fennek has a natural fire affinity, which means that transforming his Ether into fire comes naturally to him. Other humans need years of training to learn what he can learn within just a couple of weeks."

"Fennek channels the Ether from his Center into his arms, uses a technique that transforms it into fire, and funnels it into his rapiers."

"To summarize, body makes you stronger, mind makes you more intelligent, Center gives you the ability to manipulate your own Ether."

"Soul?" Kyle asked.

"Right, the Soul is the last aspect."

"The Soul..."