

Hammer God 283

Chapter 283 Enemies

Kyle watched with a smile as the Alpha Team discussed the mission.

Naturally, they didn't want to kill a bunch of Earth Elementals.

The issue with Earth Elementals was not just the way they fought, but also their power and numbers.

The deeper one dug, the more Earth Elementals there would be.

Usually, Earth Elementals were not aggressive. In fact, they didn't even eat meat.

They just absorbed the Ether from the ground to become stronger.

However, if anything came too close to their territory...

'They're kinda like boars,' Kyle thought.

Kyle had learned quite a bit about Earth Elementals within the past couple of minutes.

'Didn't know these things were such an issue for upper-class ore merchants,' Kyle thought.

Having a small mine was pretty easy.

Cheap mines were small, didn't need a lot of personnel to operate, and they didn't have ore that was strong enough to make ore fiends.

Having a medium mine meant dealing with the occasional Ore Fiend, but that could be solved by having a couple of guards present.

Yet, when a mine was about to transition into a big one, things became very difficult.

Earth Elementals.

The weakest Earth Elementals were already in the Mid Second Realm, and those were rare.

Most of them were in the Late or Peak Second Realm.

In fact, Earth Elementals in the Third Realm were also relatively common.

Getting a big mine was extremely difficult, and it was the one thing that differentiated normal miners from actual miner overlords.

Dealing with Earth Elementals meant having at least one Third Realm person in employ who could kill them.

But these powerful people were beyond expensive, and how could a medium mine support such an expense?

Naturally, for a big miner family like the Forthings, the appearance of an Earth Elemental was a daily occurrence.

The family simply employed a couple of experienced teams, which would travel from mine to mine to deal with them.

"Your part of the mission is done," Martin told Kyle.

"Alright, cool," Kyle answered. "See you later!"

Team Sandstorm left the mine behind and went back to the Stark Brotherhood.

On their way back, Michael and Falk asked Kyle and "Sven" about the mine.

"Dude, we were super lucky," Kyle said. "I found its heart before it even found us. If it had found us first, this would've turned horrible."

Selene, still disguised, acted like she wasn't listening.

Since they were not the ones who had accepted the mission, they didn't need to report to the guild.

So, as soon as they came back, they split up again to return to what they had been doing before.

Lily went back to working on her golems, while Michael practiced Spellcasting.

Kyle wasn't sure what Falk was doing, but that also didn't really matter.

That left Selene and Kyle.

"So, I've got a barren room in here with a nice stonewall view," Kyle said, moving closer to Selene. "You wanna come over?"

Selene just wordlessly moved towards Kyle's room.

Naturally, this was not a date, despite Kyle's wording.

The two of them entered Kyle's room, and Selene assumed her normal appearance again.

"You want something to drink?" Kyle asked. "I got... nothing. You want some nothing?"

"What's your plan?" Selene asked neutrally.

"Same as always," Kyle said as he sat down near one of the walls. "No plan whatsoever."

"Things can't continue like they have been," Selene said. "We both know about the other's secrets."

"Kill her!" Theodor shouted in Kyle's mind.

"Why not?" Kyle answered, ignoring Theodor.

"We are on opposing sides," Selene said. "We are both aiming for the same thing. Both of us want to become Transcendents, but there is only so much space at the top."

"Sounds like a conspiracy theory," Kyle answered.

"What?" Selene asked, not sure about what Kyle meant.

"Sure, there can only be one person at the absolute top," Kyle said, "but are we aiming for the absolute top? You said that we aim to become Transcendents, right? That's not the absolute top."

"It might as well be," Selene answered.

"How many Transcendents are there? Eight, right?" Kyle asked.

"Yes," Selene confirmed.

"Why can't there be nine?" Kyle asked.

"Because you need to consume an Ether Essence," Selene answered.

"Wait, what?" Kyle asked. "First time I heard about that."

"For the breakthrough, you need to consume an Ether Essence," Selene explained. "The Skysand Kingdom has full control of two Ether Essences. Two more are under our control but are in danger of falling into enemy hands. Two more are the center of the war with nobody controlling them."

"Every Transcendent represents one Ether Essence. If a new Transcendent is created, the Ether Essence they consumed will not regrow until they die. Creating one new Transcendent means spending 25% of the kingdom's wealth."

"Just becoming a Transcendent on your own is already almost impossible. At most, there's one spot."

"This means we are enemies," Selene said. "Okay," Kyle commented as he scratched the back of his head. "Why do we need Ether Essences to become Transcendents?"

"Ether density," Selene said. "Reaching the Third Realm already requires you to surround yourself with almost a hundred Ether Gems due to the low density of Ether in the atmosphere. Becoming a Transcendent is much more difficult. Theoretically, you could become a Transcendent with the help of Ether Crystals, but you would need all the Ether Crystals in the entire kingdom."

"Ether Crystals don't get produced very often, and they are often consumed by people when they advance inside the Third Realm."

Kyle scratched his chin. "Interesting. Didn't know about that."

Then, he casually leaned against the wall. "Then, that means we are not enemies."

Selene narrowed her eyes. "Didn't you listen to anything I've just said?"

"I did," Kyle said. "I'm surprised you didn't make the connection yet. You essentially just made my point for me."

Selene seemed to grow more annoyed.

"Hello?" Kyle asked as he pointed at himself. "Dwarf here."

Selene's eyes widened in shock.

Right!

Humans needed the Ether Essences to become Transcendents because they needed neutral Ether.

However, Kyle was a dwarf!

He could probably gain the necessary Ether by eating a Nature God or a bunch of Peak Monsters!