

Hammer God 35

Chapter 35: Four Requirements

"Whatever do you mean, Sir Kyle?" Sulfur asked with a surprised voice. "Haven't you been digging into the hill above us specifically to find us? I can't see any other reason why someone would dig into a hill in the middle of the wilderness."

Kyle had difficulties answering that question.

Sulfur was right.

Why would anyone want to dig in the middle of the wilderness?

"Eh, I don't really know what this place is," Kyle said.

"Well, that is certainly surprising," Sulfur answered. "Why were you digging into the hill, then?"

"Money," Kyle answered.

Silence.

"I saw a corpse with a drill on top of the hill. So, I thought that there might be valuables here," Kyle explained, lying through his teeth.

'I swear if this weird fantasy creature can read minds...' he thought.

"Why, so you don't know where you are?" Sulfur asked.

"Nope," Kyle answered. "No idea."

"This is the inheritance crypt of the esteemed Lord Theodor. Have you heard of Lord Theodor?" Sulfur asked.

"His name is in the local town. It's called Theodor's Rest. I'm kinda new to this place, which is why I have no real knowledge about history or the surroundings. I learned about the name of the Skysand Kingdom barely a couple of days ago," Kyle explained.

"How very curious, Sir Kyle. Are you saying that you do not know anything about the land in which you thrive?" Sulfur asked.

"Barely anything," Kyle answered with a shake of his head. "I didn't even know the language well until you stabbed my brain with this weird mind spike that shoved Sandspeak into me."

The gigantic hand of Sulfur went to his stony head and scratched his chin in a very human manner.

"Mind my wording, but you seem to be quite an unusual person. You don't really know where you are, and you seem to be talking in a very casual but not uneducated manner," Sulfur mused.

Kyle just shrugged in a bored manner.

"Nevertheless, you are now here, and you can consider yourself quite lucky. You stumbled upon quite a fortune by just digging in the middle of the wilderness without a goal," Sulfur said.

"This here is the inheritance crypt of Lord Theodor. Do you know what an inheritance crypt is?"

"Nope," Kyle answered.

"Compared to the common folk, nobles and people walking the path to power differentiate between two kinds of death," Sulfur explained.

"One is the death of the flesh and soul, which is symbolized by the mausoleum, the place in which the body rests. The town Theodor's Rest didn't exist back when the inheritance crypt was created, but I would assume that it is most likely near the Lord's mausoleum."

"The other death represents the end of your impact on the world. It happens when your name has been spoken for the last time."

"An inheritance crypt does not contain any bodily remains of its owner. It contains their work, their history, and their knowledge. It is the culmination of their existence."

"The locations of mausoleums are public, but the location of inheritance crypts is kept strictly secret. While the defenses of inheritance crypts are substantial, lords of similar power of the owner can still break through them and steal all the valuables, Spells, and techniques."

"This inheritance crypt belongs to Lord Theodor, a Master Artificer specializing in Golemancy at the peak of his Realm."

'Master Artificer?' Kyle thought. 'Probably means he was stronger than a normal Artificer, and he was even at the peak of his Realm! That means he was outstanding even amongst other Master Artificers!'

Kyle did his best not to frown.

'This is an inheritance, right? So, this Theodor guy probably wants to give me his life teachings and teach me how to make golems and shit.'

'I don't wanna learn how to make fucking Golems! That probably involves so much reading and learning! Also, I don't want my body to become super weak or something! I mean, Artificers focus all their Ether on their Mind and Soul. That means they are super weak in direct conflict and have to hide behind their creations and tools.'

'That sucks! I didn't go to fantasy land to look at shitty-ass textbooks while tinkering away in my basement!'

'Fuck that!'

Kyle looked at Sulfur.

'But I also don't wanna become a red stain beneath his stony feet. Speaking of, why are his feet so insanely detailed? Who does that?' Kyle thought as he looked at the immaculate, stony human feet.

"Okay," Kyle said. "So, to summarize: You want me to learn how to become a Master Artificer. More specifically, a Golemancer. Did I get that right?"

Sulfur hesitated for a bit.

He looked like he was evaluating something.

"Not precisely," he said after a bit. "While it is true that you will inherit Lord Theodor's teachings and valuables, the Lord has given explicit orders not to choose an Artificer as an heir."

Kyle blinked a couple of times in pleasant surprise.

"Huh, how come?" he asked.

"There are reasons for this decision, but the Lord has given orders not to divulge too much information to his heir. Knowing things can be very dangerous. Especially if it involves the most powerful people in the world."

"I can only tell you about the requirements, of which there are four."

"One: The heir must not have undergone any kind of ritual that limits or enhances their Aspects of Power."

'So, like 99% of all humans. Gotcha,' Kyle thought. 'Not much of a requirement. Shit, you gotta be like super talented and wealthy to get any kind of ritual.'

"Two: The heir must be within the First Realm. The level does not matter. Be it Initial, Early, Mid, Late, or Peak. As long as the heir is within the First Realm, it is okay."

'Okay, that limits things a bit, but not by much. Any kind of guard or hunter would still qualify,' Nick thought.

"Three: The heir must be willing to carry on Lord Theodor's legacy. The heir must be willing to dedicate their entire life to fulfilling the Lord's last requests."

'Dude, fucking everyone would be willing to do that if you dangled a shit-ton of wealth in front of their face. Not much of a requirement there,' Kyle thought.

"Four: The heir must be able to pass the inheritance exam."

Kyle frowned.

"There's a test?" he asked.

"Well, the Lord can't just hand his inheritance to anyone. Otherwise, his name will be disgraced," Sulfur explained.

Kyle became a bit nervous.

"What if I fail?" Kyle asked.

"What a troublesome topic you've brought up," Sulfur said. "You see, we can't just let anyone go, or the other Lords might find the inheritance crypt."

Next, Sulfur's finger extended, and he pointed at a random spot on the ground.

Kyle looked over and saw a large and dark spot on the ground.

'Is that... dried blood?' he thought as his heart rate increased.

Kyle imagined Sulfur just stepping on a potential heir and leaving behind a red stain, which faded into black over the years.

"Can I just leave?" Kyle asked nervously.

"I'm sorry, Sir Kyle, but I can't let you do that," Sulfur said.

Kyle gulped nervously.