

Hammer God 45

Chapter 45 15 Gates

Kyle walked through the open door towards the fourth trial.

'Done pretty well so far. The first three trials were not as difficult as I expected,' he thought as he scratched the back of his head with a smile.

'Wonder what the fourth trial's gonna be like.'

After a while, Kyle reached another big hall, but this time, it was different.

There were 15 closed gates in front of him, and there was basically nothing to do in the hall besides walking through one of the gates.

"Welcome to the preparation for the fourth trial, entrant number 69," the golem spoke.

'Preparation?' Kyle thought.

"You have the option to receive a one-time enhancement to strengthen you for your future trials. Behind each gate is a ritual that will enhance parts of your Aspects of power. You may choose which one you want to enhance," the golem explained.

'Is that why only people who didn't undergo any rituals were allowed to enter?' Kyle thought. 'Sulfur said something about that.'

"The first four gates from the left enhance one Aspect of Power. The leftmost door will focus on your body, and it will redirect 75% of all the Ether you gather in the future into strengthening your body. Your body will almost be as powerful as the body of a beast."

'Hohooo! Quite nice,' Kyle thought.

"The second door focuses on your Center. It will increase your Ether storage by almost four times."

'That's gotta be important! I mean, everything's about Ether, right?'

"The third door focuses on your mind, raising your speed of thought by several times and increasing your intelligence."

'Shit, that's also amazing!'

"The fourth door will strengthen your Soul, allowing you to interact with tools and your surroundings with much more clarity and efficiency."

'If I didn't need to use my Soul that much in the third trial, I would think that sounds unimportant. But damn, this would make things much easier,' Kyle thought.

"The next six gates focus on two Aspects of Power each. The rituals will have half of the effects of the singular upgrades. In order, they are body and Center, body and mind, body and Soul, Center and mind, Center and Soul, and mind and Soul."

'Those are all the jobs I heard about. Knight, Fighter, Paladin, Sorcerer, Conjurer, and Artificer,' Kyle thought as he remembered Tarren's explanations.

"The next four doors focus on three Aspects of Power each. You should know how that works by now," the golem said.

'Wait, that's also possible?' Kyle thought. 'I guess that means I would essentially become a cripple in one aspect while being great at the other three.'

"The last door gives you a small boost to all Aspects of Power. Now, choose your door," the golem finished.

Kyle scratched the back of his head as he looked at the different doors.

'So, it's basically a free upgrade. I guess Theodor wants me to choose my future.'

He looked at the first door.

'It enhances my body. I guess I could go unga bunga and just destroy everything with my hammer.'

'But what if I fight some kind of frost mage or whatever? I wouldn't even get close to them. Also, there are many smart people out there. I mean, I do act like an ape sometimes, but there's a reason why apes are in the zoo and not in society.'

'The Center thing is also interesting. I could just outlast my opponents and brute-force everything.'

'But what if I go big brain? I could outsmart everyone.'

Kyle blinked a couple of times.

'Brah, you ain't outsmarting anyone, no matter how intelligent you are. You had a C-average in high school!'

Then, he focused on the Soul door as he rubbed the back of his head.

'I mean, it's cool, but... I don't know. Doesn't really feel that overwhelming. I kinda don't want to be some funky tinkerer. Also, how will I even make shit if I am not smart enough to make or understand blueprints?'

No matter what door he was looking at, Kyle wasn't happy.

He would be losing something important.

'What about the more classical jobs? Knight? Nah, I don't wanna go to war.'

'Fighter? Sounds cool, but that would make this entire ore business I had going on for the past two weeks meaningless. Why would I learn about ore just to lose access to a big part of my Soul? I need my Soul if I want to make use of that.'

'Paladin? What, no!'

'Sorcerer? Pfffft!'

'Conjurer or Beast Tamer? Forget it!'

'Artificer?'

Kyle hesitated.

Theodor had been a Master Artificer.

Becoming an Artificer sounded like the only correct choice.

But then, Kyle remembered something.

'Wait a second! Didn't Sulfur say something about Artificers? I think I asked him if I had to become an Artificer, and he said something like that the heir should specifically NOT be an Artificer.'

'He didn't say that they should not YET be one. He said they just shouldn't be one.'

Kyle's brows furrowed.

'Is this a trap? In the third trial, Theodor already demonstrated how sneaky he could be.'

'What if this is not a preparation for the fourth trial but the actual fourth trial?'

"Hey, buddy?" Kyle asked.

The golem didn't answer.

"How many people survived the fourth trial?"

"14 people have reached the fourth trial. Two passed," it answered.

Kyle took a deep breath.

'That's a failure rate of over 80%!'

This answer increased Kyle's suspicion.

'Something must be going on.'

Kyle looked at the four doors representing the enhancement of three Aspects of Power.

'They are all bullshit. I need all of my Aspects for something.'

'But if I focus on all of them, I will be useless.'

'Someone focusing on their body will be so fast that I can't even hit them.'

'Someone focusing on their Center will have such a high defense that they will outlast me.'

'Someone focusing on their mind will just never get hit since they will know what I will do beforehand.'

'And someone focusing on their Soul will just let everything else fight for them.'

Kyle ruffled his hair in frustration.

'I hate this!'

'Everything sucks!'

'Fuck this and fuck you!'

Kyle walked to the last door.

'I'm keeping my fucking shit!'