

I'm moving away. My shop had thrived for twenty years, south of Castle Wrenwall, but now I must move. The war between Demacia and Noxus has become too dangerous. I cannot supply one with steel and not the other, not without dire consequences.

My last customers were two Demacian nobles. A lady sorceress and an incredible giant of a knight. Brother and sister, I believe. I armed them with a cleaving axe as dark as night, and a cap of unparalleled wisdom and magical power. If Noxus catch wind of that, I'm done for.

I carry it all on my back. My tools, my craft, all crammed into one thick, leather sack. Each step feels like a passing century, with all the agony that entails. I take a deep breath, and take a long, slow stride forward again. I hear a noise in the distance behind me that makes my heart sink. I turn.

Noxian banners, flying high from mounted warriors. Bloodlusting axes and spears are coming over the horizon. I cannot outrun them. I'm too exhausted to fight.

Then I see the most peculiar thing.

"Excuse me," pipes a little girl. "You look *really* strong! Have you ever held a hammer before?"

I turn back and now I see her. A yordle with periwinkle skin and silver hair up in pigtails. A single tooth sticks out the side of her smiling mouth. Her eyes gaze up at me, sparkling with hope.

"Are you blind, yordle?" I bellow back. "Can you not see the situation here? Run now. Run!"

The yordle leans to peer around me. She is silent for a moment, then guffaws with laughter. My cheeks turn red.

"Have you gone mad?"

"Sorry," she says. "But you can *easily* deal with *them*. Look how *strong* you are!"

I cannot take the compliment. Not now. She is entirely oblivious to the danger.

“Anyway,” she begins, pacing around casually. “You can smash ‘em *real* good if you use *this!*”

I did a double take. Out of seemingly nowhere, the yordle produces a hammer almost twice her size, yet she swings it around as if it is no heavier than a branch. She grins.

“Here, you put that stuff down, and then I’ll give you the hammer.”

A low-pitch roar came from behind. A battle cry of the Noxians.

“There’s no time!” I cry. “Here, *you* fight them and I’ll make my way to Demacia, okay yordle?”

“Oh you’re Demacian?” she beams, jumping in excitement. “Not a problem, big guy. I’ll keep you safe till you’re ready to hold your hammer!”

My hammer? I think to myself. The Noxians are too close, I turn to face them.

“Left hand!” yells the yordle, tossing a buckler at the first Noxian rider. It strikes him square in the head, then bounces high into the sky. He topples off the horse, which whinnies and gallops away.

Two more Noxians charge at the yordle, spears pointing at her. From the sky, the shield falls back into her ready hand. With a yell, she holds the buckler in front of her head and dashes at the horsemen. The spears glance off the buckler. She holds still, but the shafts of the spears snap, and the soldiers fly backwards off of their horses. She approaches them, hammer held high. They yelp, holding their hands up.

“How can you *do* that?” she asks, her eyes wide. “You’re carrying so much stuff! Someone that strong *must* be the Hero!”

I’m exhausted physically, and now my mind is dulling. I shake my head and shrug.

“Sure. Fine. Whatever. Just keep protecting me.”

“You got it!” cheered the yordle. More cries of Noxians came. Walking alone is daunting and tedious enough. Walking with this is utter agony.

Castle Wrenwall is in sight. A smile spreads across my face. Behind me, the yordle slams her hammer on the ground, the shockwave launching a good few Noxians up into the clouds, far away.

“And don’t come back!” she called. More are approaching, and yet she is so lighthearted about it. She sighs and wipes her brow. “Looks like that’s the last of them.”

I turn. In the distance is nothing but plains and fields. I smile. The yordle had done it! But, *why*, I wonder. She seemed keen to give me the hammer she wields, as if it belonged to me.

I studied it. It was flawless in design, and clearly powerful in performance. A bit simple, perhaps. A huge stone maul attached to a handle longer than the yordle’s height. It could fetch quite a profit, especially if I try to replicate it and sell more.

“Yordle,” I say to her. “Thank you very much. Now the threat is dealt with, I can take the hammer off your hands.”

She eyes me, then raises an eyebrow,

“Hold on. You’re strong... but...” she pauses with a hand on her chin, thinking. “The hammer belongs to the Hero, and no one else! The *Hero* can lift it up like it were a twig!” She flails her hands about as she talks, waving the hammer as if it were light as a feather. “The *Hero* can make their foes fly across Valoran with a single smash! The *Hero* is strong and wise and powerful and...”

She stops, frowning in thought.

I suppose I won't acquire the hammer, but I cannot help laughing. It looks like I'm not the *Hero* she claimed I was. I smile and nod. The yordle will discover her destiny, her true identity.

"You're *not* the Hero, because... Because the Hero wouldn't be such a coward! He would've beaten up those Noxians with the hammer without a second thought!"

She sighs. "Back to square one, I guess... Off I go to find that Hero... Again..."

As she turns to walk away, shoulders slumped, I stare. How could she not realise it? After a moment, I howl with laughter, falling backwards onto the sack. She'll be searching for a *very* long time.