

## Strength of a Hero

I must move. My forge is set up halfway between Demacia and Noxus, and now their war is becoming far too dangerous. With all my tools crammed in a thick, leather sack, I trudge my way to Demacia. I've supplied them fine weaponry, and they have won them battles. If Noxus knows that, I'm done for.

I hear a cry in the distance that makes my heart sink. I turn with wide eyes.

Noxian banners fly high from mounted warriors, bloodlust axes and spears in hand. My heart pulses. My breath quickens. I turn and force my leg forwards with staggered breath.

Then I see the most peculiar thing.

"Woah..." said a girl in front of me. She was hardly half my height. "You're *really* strong!"

Her long ears are perked up, lifting her silver hair which is held up in pigtails. Her eyes are wide, and her mouth agape in astonishment. A yordle.

"Not the time for that!" I bellow at her. "Can't you grasp the situation here?"

The yordle peers around me. Her cheeks puff up, then she lets out a laugh.

"Sorry," she says. "You really shouldn't worry about *them*, especially when we have *this!*"

I have to double take. Out of seemingly nowhere, the yordle produces a hammer almost twice her size, readying it as if it weighed no more than a tree branch. The Noxians are almost upon us, but I smile. I'm saved.

"Left hand!" yells the yordle, throwing a buckler at a Noxian horseman. It strikes him in the forehead before bouncing high into the air. The soldier topples off of his horse, which whinnies and runs from the fight.

Two more mounted Noxians approach, spears pointing at the yordle. She holds up her left hand. Out of the sky, the buckler falls into her grasp. She holds it in front of her and, with a cry, charges back at the cavalry. The buckler breaks the spear shafts, launching the soldiers backwards. They struggle to their feet, brandishing daggers from their belts.

I almost stop to help but pause. The yordle girl dashes forward and strikes them both with one swing of her hammer, sending them hurtling to the left. She does not need help. The yordle turns to me and beams.

“See? Even *I* can deal with *them*, and that’s the hammer doing all the work for me,” she says. “If the *Hero* held it, they could beat all of Noxus in one swing!”

My eyebrows narrow, staring at her in disbelief.

“In fact,” she turns to face me, neglecting more approaching cavalry. “I think you’re the Hero the hammer wants.”

I continue staring, dumbstruck. That hammer was easily beyond my capabilities.

“You can prove it, too!” she beams at me, holding the hammer out. “Take it and beat back those Noxians!”

I immediately think to wave the hammer away, but I pause. I don’t know the first thing about fighting, but the craftsmanship is remarkable, and clearly is effective in performance. It could fetch quite a price in Demacia, and so could duplicates that I forge myself. I suppress a grin. Even so, I cannot do the fighting.

“I-...” I begin. “I need some time. I’ll take it when we get closer to Castle Wrenwall!”

She smirks. “You got it, Hero!”

The yordle girl wheels around, swinging the hammer as she does, knocking a pair of soldiers off their horses.

I turn forward, focusing on painful strides. I need not worry about the Noxians and the yordle. She’s making an exceptional bodyguard.

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Castle Wrenwall is in sight. A smile spreads across my face. Behind me, the yordle girl raises her hammer high, and slams it onto the ground with incredible force. The earth shakes, and two soldiers are launched away, high into the sky.

“And don’t come back!” she calls after them. Her body relaxes as she sighs, wiping her brow. “I think that’s the last of them.”

In the distance, I see nothing but plain fields. The yordle has done it! There were twenty, no, perhaps thirty Noxian soldiers in pursuit of me, yet she dealt with them all on her own. I stare at the her hammer, and continue to as she turns around and holds it out to me.

“Here,” she says. “You’re strong. You carried all that *all* this way. You really *could* be the Hero.”

The stone maul of the Warhammer. It had smashed the Noxian foes and launched them into the air. Such power could build a reputation for my business in Demacia. I could gain riches to rival the kingdom’s nobles. The armies would from then on march with *my* swords, *my* axes, *my hammers*.

I meet the yordle’s large eyes. They are bright, gleaming at me with sincere hope and faith. How can she not see through me? I cannot imagine any Demacian knight I’ve seen, nor any soldier who has ever done trade with me, to ever wield that hammer as naturally as her. Perhaps with regret, I let out a sigh and wave the hammer away.

“I will not take the hammer,” I say. “I am a blacksmith, nothing more. The Hero to wield that hammer should be you.”

The yordle blinks. “I’m not the *Hero*... The Hero can hold the hammer as if it’s as light as a feather,” she says. She doesn’t seem to notice how light she makes it look. “The Hero can make his enemies fly right into the sky, and is brave, and strong, and...

“No, it definitely isn’t me,” she sighs. She turns away and rests the hammer on her shoulder. “See you next time I’m in Demacia! I’m off to find the Hero... Again...”

“Wait... But...” I begin. She marches away. I stare and consider what she had said. I smile, then chuckle, then guffaw with laughter, falling back onto my sack of tools. She’ll be searching for a very long time.