

The Golden Fool #Chapter 113 113: The Door's Demand (2) - Read The Golden Fool Chapter 113 113: The Door's Demand (2)

Symbols formed in the suspended water, intricate designs that hovered at waist height, glowing with that same blue radiance that pulsed through the channels. They swirled around Cale in a loose circle, then, to Apollo's alarm, began forming around him as well.

The patterns were identical, twin currents that flowed in perfect symmetry, connecting Cale and Apollo with shimmering strands of living water. Where they intersected, the light pulsed brighter, like two harmonious notes combining to create a more powerful chord.

"It's beautiful," Mira whispered, her face illuminated by the glowing symbols. "Look how they mirror each other." Her eyes widened with sudden understanding. "The temple wants you both. It wants you to act together."

Thorin backed away from the water shapes, his axe raised defensively. "More tricks," he growled, though uncertainty had crept into his voice. "More manipulation."

Apollo felt the bow's vibration reach a fever pitch, no longer merely insistent but commanding. The gold in his veins burned in response, urging him toward the door, toward Cale, toward the completion of whatever ancient purpose had drawn them to this impossible place.

Cale looked across the shimmering water symbols to Apollo, his expression a mixture of hesitation and determination. Slowly, deliberately, he extended his arm toward Apollo.

"I think she's right," he said, his voice steadier than it had been moments before. "I think we both need to touch the door. Together."

Apollo found himself rooted in place, the bow pulling him forward while caution held him back. 'This is dangerous,' he thought, feeling the gold in his veins surge toward Cale like a lodestone finding true north. 'This connection, it could reveal too much.'

But the bow would not be denied. It thrashed against his back with such force that Apollo felt himself staggering forward, drawn by its insistence more than his own will. The water symbols swirled faster around them both, their light intensifying as the distance between them closed.

Cale's outstretched hand remained steady, waiting. Apollo resisted for one moment more, then surrendered to the bow's demand. He moved forward, allowing Cale to grasp his arm.

Together, they approached the massive trident door. The water channels at their feet pulsed with anticipation, their rhythm quickening as Apollo and Cale stood side by side before the ancient barrier.

"Now," Cale said, raising his hand toward the carved trident.

Apollo hesitated only briefly before placing his palm beside Cale's on the glowing symbol. The effect was immediate and overwhelming.

The carving blazed with blue-gold light, no longer merely glowing but burning with radiance that forced the others to shield their eyes. The sea roared around them, water surging upward from ankle-depth to waist-high in seconds.

But unlike before, this rising tide didn't threaten. It embraced them, swirling around their bodies with deliberate gentleness, caressing rather than drowning.

The bow across Apollo's back sang with such violent joy that he feared it might shatter with the force of its own vibration.

The arrows in his quiver began to glow, visible from the corner of his eye as they blazed with the same blue-gold light that now suffused the entire chamber. Their radiance matched the trident's fire, creating a harmony of light that pulsed in perfect counterpoint.

A deafening crack split the air as the trident sigil began to separate down its center. The carved lines fractured, not with the jagged edges of breaking stone but with the precision of a door designed to open in exactly this manner.

Water flooded into the widening seam, not dripping but rushing with deliberate purpose, lubricating ancient mechanisms that had waited centuries for this moment.

The pressure of the bow against Apollo's back reached painful intensity as the door continued to split. The gold in his veins burned hot enough that he half-expected his skin to glow with its radiance.

Beside him, Cale stood transfixed, his face illuminated by the blinding light that poured from the widening gap.

With a final, thunderous groan, the ancient stone door swung open completely. Water blasted outward from the seam, not in a destructive torrent but in a celebratory surge that swept around the chamber before receding to gentle ankle-depth once more.

Light poured from the opening, not the blue glow of water channels or the gold of Apollo's arrows, but something purer, more primal.

It flooded the hall like sunrise seen from beneath the ocean's surface, dappled and fractured yet undeniably radiant.

Apollo stood frozen beside Cale, their hands still pressed against the now-separated door, as the light washed over them in waves of impossible brilliance.

Beyond the threshold, visible only as a silhouette against that dazzling backdrop, something waited, something ancient and patient that had called them across forest and impossible ocean to this moment of revelation.

The bow fell silent against Apollo's back, its frantic song replaced by expectant stillness. The gold in his veins cooled to a steady pulse that matched the rhythm of the waves still lapping gently around his ankles.

Before them, the doorway yawned open, revealing only that blinding, beckoning light, and the, and the promise of answers that had eluded them since they'd first entered the twisted forest.

Apollo drew a deep breath, tasting salt on his tongue despite their impossible distance from any true ocean. The bow across his back had fallen eerily silent, its previous frenzy replaced by an expectant stillness that somehow felt more demanding than its earlier vibration.

'It wants me to step through,' he realized, feeling the subtle weight shift as the weapon leaned almost imperceptibly toward the blinding doorway. 'It's been guiding me here all along.'

"What is that?" Mira whispered, her voice small against the vastness of what lay before them. The light played across her face, casting her features in gold and shadow as she stared into the brilliance.

"Power," Thorin answered, his usual gruffness softened by what might have been awe. "Ancient power."

Cale turned to Apollo, his hand still pressed against the stone door, their connection unbroken since the moment it had parted. "I can feel it calling," he said, his voice distant, as if part of him had already crossed the threshold. "Like a song I've always known but never heard before."

Apollo nodded, unable to find words that wouldn't reveal too much. The gold in his veins pulsed in rhythm with that distant song, recognizing its cadence as intimately as his own heartbeat. This was his uncle's domain, Poseidon's power preserved somehow across centuries, waiting.