

## **The Golden Fool #Chapter 115 115: The Kraken's Wrath - Read The Golden Fool Chapter 115 115: The Kraken's Wrath**

Tentacles converged on Cale like the closing jaws of a trap. Massive, writhing limbs blotted out the dappled light as they descended from all directions, their slick surfaces gleaming with unnatural purpose.

Apollo's heart hammered against his ribs. The gold in his veins surged hot and urgent as he leaped from his perch atop the broken column, bow already drawn. 'Too many,' he thought, loosing three arrows in rapid succession. 'He'll be crushed.'

The arrows struck true, embedding deep in the monster's flesh, but the kraken barely seemed to notice. Its massive eye remained fixed on Cale, pupil contracting with ancient, patient malice as its tentacles continued their inexorable approach.

"Apollo!" Lyra's voice cut through the chaos, sharp with frustration. "Stop holding back! We all know you're stronger than this!"

He gritted his teeth, nocking another ordinary arrow. 'I can't reveal everything. Not yet.' The bow thrummed against his palm, almost burning with its eagerness to unleash its true power.

Below him, Cale stood with arms outstretched, his face contorted with effort as he commanded the churning water. A wall of sea rose before him, intercepting the nearest tentacle with surprising force. For a heartbeat, Apollo thought it might be enough, then the kraken's limb pushed through, barely slowed by Cale's defense.

Cale pivoted, drawing more water to his aid. The second tentacle he managed to deflect, sending it crashing into a nearby column instead of his skull. The impact shook the entire chamber, ancient stone groaning under the assault.

"Apollo!" Lyra shouted again, her green eyes flashing with anger as she ducked beneath a sweeping tentacle. "The bow wants blood, give it what it wants!"

The third tentacle struck before Cale could recover, not directly at him but at the floor beneath his feet. Stone cracked with a sound like thunder, fracturing in a spider-web pattern that spread outward from the impact. Cale staggered, his concentration broken as the ground shifted beneath him.

Water surged through the newly formed cracks, erupting upward with explosive force. The chamber floor buckled, sections rising while others sank into the depths below. Apollo leapt to a higher vantage point as his previous perch disappeared beneath the churning waves.

"Everyone to higher ground!" he called, watching in horror as the companions were separated by the rapidly transforming terrain.

Thorin had vanished beneath a pile of rubble when the nearest column collapsed. For a terrible moment, Apollo thought the dwarf lost, then a bloodied hand thrust upward through the debris. Thorin emerged, his face a mask of blood and fury, axe still clutched in one massive fist.

"Cursed beast!" the dwarf roared, staggering to his feet despite what must have been agonizing injuries. His left arm hung at an unnatural angle, yet he raised his axe in defiance, searching for stable footing in the chaos.

Across the chamber, Mira knelt beside Nik, her hands moving in complex patterns that commanded the water around them.

Unlike her previous efforts, this was no mere barrier, the sea condensed around them, hardening into a crystalline dome that shielded them from falling debris. Through its translucent surface, Apollo could see Mira's body trembling with the effort, her face drawn tight with strain.

Renna had found her way to what remained of a massive column, now tilted at a precarious angle but offering height above the churning water. Her bow sang as she loosed arrow after arrow, each shot precisely aimed at the kraken's massive eye.

The beast swiveled its head away from her attacks, tentacles lashing out to destroy her perch. She danced between the strikes with a hunter's grace, each near miss drawing the monster's attention away from the others.

Apollo scanned the chaos for Cale, finally spotting him in what had become the eye of the storm. The young man stood on a small island of intact floor at the chamber's center, completely surrounded by violently churning water. His hands were raised, face lifted toward the kraken, his entire body rigid with concentration.

For a breathtaking moment, it seemed to work. The water around Cale rose in a perfect spiral, wrapping around one of the kraken's tentacles and forcing it back. The beast's eye widened, its pupil contracting to a pinpoint as it regarded this challenge to its dominion.

Then it struck back.

The tentacle Cale had momentarily controlled suddenly twisted free, plunging downward with devastating force. It struck not Cale directly but the water before him, creating a shockwave that lifted the young man off his feet and hurled him backward. He slammed into the water with bone-jarring impact, disappearing beneath the surface.

Apollo's heart lurched as he watched red bloom in the water where Cale had vanished. The gold in his veins burned cold with warning. 'He's dying,' Apollo realized, already moving toward the spot. 'The kraken is testing his bloodline, and he's failing.'

Cale broke the surface moments later, gasping and choking, blood streaming from his nose and mouth. The water around him churned with unnatural violence, no longer responding to his commands but actively fighting against him. The kraken's eye loomed closer, its blue glow intensifying as it examined Poseidon's descendant with ancient, merciless scrutiny.

"Apollo!" The cry came from multiple voices now, Thorin, Renna, even Nik from within his watery shield. They all saw what he refused to acknowledge: that ordinary arrows would never be enough against a guardian of Poseidon's realm.

A scream tore through the chamber, primal and filled with rage. Mira had abandoned her protective dome around Nik, leaving it self-sustaining as she staggered to her feet.

Her hands twisted in patterns Apollo had never seen her use, her entire body vibrating with power that seemed to draw from the chamber itself.

The water responded, not with gentle movement but with explosive force. Liquid spears formed around her, dozens of them crystallizing from the churning sea before launching toward the kraken. They struck with the force of javelins, their impacts sending shudders through the beast's massive form.

For the first time since it had emerged, the kraken recoiled. Its eye twitched away from Cale, focusing instead on this new threat.

The chamber itself seemed to respond to Mira's attack, columns cracking further, corals breaking free from ancient stone, the very temple shuddering as if it recognized her challenge to its guardian.

The effort cost her dearly. Even as the last of her water spears struck home, Mira collapsed to her knees. Blood trickled from her nose, then her eyes, her body not built to channel such raw power.

She pitched forward, hands barely breaking her fall as she retched, dark blood spattering the water beneath her.

"Apollo!" Lyra's voice cut through everything else, her words sharp enough to draw blood. "Stop pretending. We all see it. The bow wants blood, give it!"

The kraken had recovered from Mira's assault, its tentacles already converging on her vulnerable form. Cale lay half-submerged, struggling weakly to rise as water filled his lungs. Thorin couldn't reach either of them in time, and Renna's arrows merely bounced off the beast's thick hide.

There was no choice left.

Apollo drew back his bowstring, but this time he didn't reach for the ordinary arrows in his quiver. Instead, he allowed the gold in his veins to flow into his fingertips, coalescing between them into a shaft of pure divine energy. The bow sang in his hands, finally granted what it had demanded since they'd entered the temple.

The arrow blazed with blue-gold light, illuminating the chamber like a captured sun. Apollo felt the familiar burn of divinity as he aimed, the bow an extension of his will rather than merely a weapon in his hands.

He released.

The arrow streaked across the chamber, trailing radiance that reflected off the churning water. It struck the nearest tentacle with a sound like thunder, piercing through the massive limb as if it were nothing but shadow.

The divine light continued beyond, tearing a perfect, cauterized hole through flesh that should have been impenetrable.

The kraken's roar shook the very foundations of the temple. Stone tore from the walls, ancient carvings shattering as they crashed into the water below. The wounded tentacle thrashed in agony, spraying ichor that hissed and steamed where it touched the temple floor.

Apollo already had another arrow of light nocked, the gold in his veins singing with the joy of power unleashed after so long restrained.

The kraken's massive eye swiveled toward him, recognition dawning in its ancient depths, not of a mortal archer, but of divine blood that rivaled its own master's lineage.

Before Apollo could loose his second shot, the kraken plunged downward, disappearing into the depths from which it had emerged. The water continued to churn violently, waves crashing against the remnants of columns, the entire chamber trembling in the aftermath of divine power.

They gathered slowly on what stable ground remained, Thorin dragging himself up despite his broken arm, Renna helping Mira who could barely stand, Nik limping from the shelter of his collapsed dome. Lyra reached Cale first, helping him to his knees as he coughed seawater and blood onto the fractured stone.

"It's not over," Cale gasped, his voice raw and barely audible over the still-churning water. "That was just the first test. It'll return stronger now that it knows what we can do." He looked up, meeting Apollo's gaze across the ruined chamber. "That it knows what you can do."

Apollo felt the weight of their stares, Thorin's suspicious glare, Mira's wide-eyed wonder, Renna's calculating assessment, and most piercing of all, Lyra's knowing gaze. The bow cooled in his hand, satisfied for the moment but still humming with anticipation.

The water rippled in concentric circles, spreading outward from the central pool where the kraken had vanished. The true trial, Apollo realized, had barely begun.