

Gods Daily 106

Chapter 106: Coveting the Empire's Earthvein Core

"Tsk, this Imperial Capital truly has its own peculiar brand of liveliness."

A young man in black robes embroidered with intricate astral patterns walked leisurely down the main boulevard, his gaze drifting from the grand buildings to the bustling crowds. His tone carried the air of a detached connoisseur, commenting as though surveying curiosities beneath him.

Behind him followed two figures.

One was a gaunt, elderly man carrying an oversized travel pack. His plain clothes, unkempt graying hair, and dust-caked old leather shoes made him look more like a wandering beggar than anything else.

The other wore a plain white hooded cloak, the brim pulled low. Beneath it was none other than Adrian, a mentor of the Hyrule War Academy!

Since the Academy's catastrophic downfall, Adrian had vanished into the shadows, concealing his presence. Few knew that many of the forces behind that upheaval had his fingerprints on them.

And the handsome young man in black? He was Lister, the prodigy from the Skyeeye Guild.

Adrian murmured with layered meaning:

"This capital will soon become even more... lively."

Lister's lips curved into an elegant smile.

"Now that is the kind of talk I enjoy."

He ascended a long bridge that spanned a wide canal. From here, one could catch a glimpse of a corner of Valoria Palace's gilded domes rising in the distance.

He halted, leaning lightly against the balustrade, eyes fixed on the golden horizon.

"The Empire's situation is ever-changing—one moment it is one thing, the next moment entirely another. I once thought Aurek would bow to the Ordon Theocracy, but instead, he tore the mask away, pushing the Empire to the very brink."

Adrian warned quietly:

"Aurek holds two unknown cards. First, those phantoms whose true forms no one has seen. Second, the Domsday Warriors—their exact number remains unclear. But since he dares to openly defy the Theocracy, it stands to reason their numbers cannot be few."

Lister chuckled, his smile laced with irony.

"It should be so'—how many bright stars have those words buried? How many grand schemes unraveled because of such careless assumptions?"

Adrian's eyes flickered as he glanced at him anew. Within Lister's gaze was not only deep arrogance, but also disdain.

"If a matter is uncertain, one should not touch it lightly. And if one must touch it, then it must first be verified—ensuring no surprises, no unforeseen accidents."

His light smile deepened, taking on a more inscrutable air.

"Since I've come here, I'll see to it that everything hidden is dragged into the sunlight. Using this much-lauded emperor as a stepping stone... it might even be entertaining."

Adrian nodded slightly. This genius from the Skyeeye Guild might appear lofty, as though floating above the clouds, but his words revealed a mind that was meticulous and discerning. No wonder the Guild dared to send him abroad with confidence—besides that unfathomable protector shadowing him, his ability to handle affairs was itself reassurance enough.

"Let's find somewhere to stay. The accommodations in Paris City are said to be quite pleasant," Adrian suggested.

The Hyrule War Academy lay in ruins, and he dared not expose his presence too carelessly.

Lister inclined his head, casting one last glance toward the imperial palace before stepping off the bridge.

Valoria Palace

Within the palace, Aurek held the Sacrospring Sword, his gaze locked on the immense magical topographic map spread before him.

His eyes lingered on the provinces of Dorine, Katpiler, Dahlby, and Landor.

These four regions sprawled vast and wide; to completely sweep away every faction within them would not be done in a short time. Fortunately, most of those forces lacked deep foundations. With the absolute might of the Doomsday Warriors and Elemental Assassins, bolstered by eighty thousand Imperial Knights and the assistance of provincial governors, clearing them out should not prove overly troublesome.

The real obstacles were the Unicorn Guild, the Blackcrow Count's family, the Chaos Apostles, and the Sky-reaching Tower!

Landor Province lay seven or eight provinces distant from the capital, but the legions under Gold-Armor and Black Lightning would soon march upon it.

"Your Majesty."

From the very air, an Elemental Assassin coalesced out of the play of light and shadow, kneeling on one knee.

"We have identified Adrian, the Hyrule War Academy remnant, within the capital. He travels with two others, their energy signatures consistent with origins from the northern realms."

Adrian could never have imagined that from the moment he stepped into the capital, his every move had already been under the unyielding surveillance of the Assassins embedded in every corner of Eryndor City.

"The north..."

Aurek's eyes slid across the map, landing upon the territories of Duke Frostborne and the Skyeye Guild.

In that instant, the hidden hand behind the Academy's calamity became clear.

"Continue monitoring their every move. Record every word they speak. Perhaps through them... we may uncover something interesting."

His command was given with unshaken calm.

"As you command!"

The Elemental Assassin's figure faded back into nothingness.

Moments later, Angie's voice came from outside the hall.

"Your Majesty, envoys from the Far West Snowfield, Frostchill Ravine, request audience."

"Frostchill Ravine..." Aurek's face remained unreadable.

"Let them in."

Angie bowed and withdrew.

Before long, she led three women into the hall.

They were Isabella, stewardess Julia, and Cheryl—each tall and graceful, clad in pure white gowns stitched with exquisite snowflake motifs. Their skin was fairer than snow, their presence so cold it seemed to freeze the very air around them—goddesses of winter stepped from myth.

"Far West Snowfield, Frostchill Ravine," Aurek intoned, hands clasped behind his back, his gaze piercing the map as though through it he stared into the frozen wastelands beyond.

Isabella bent slightly at the knee, her voice like icy springwater.

"I, Isabella, have come without properly paying respects to Your Majesty. For this offense, I beg forgiveness."

"Speak directly. What is it you seek?"

Aurek did not turn, but his voice, flat yet carrying invisible pressure, weighed down upon them.

Isabella answered:

"This time, by order of the High Priestess, I come to discuss a matter with Your Majesty."

Her icy-blue eyes lifted to the emperor's back. At her side, Julia and Cheryl held their breaths, tense and silent.

An indescribable pressure pressed down upon them, unbidden.

Though they were Hero Rank powerhouses, they found themselves involuntarily affected by his presence—breathing carefully, as if a wrong word might incur ruin.

This emperor of the Crossbridge Empire was indeed extraordinary!

In but a single moment, he left an indelible brand upon their hearts. No wonder he could stir the empire into a storm.

Isabella's gemstone-like eyes flickered faintly before she steadied herself once more. She continued:

"The current turmoil within the Empire has not gone unnoticed by Frostchill Ravine. With the Ordon Theocracy withdrawing its support, wolves encircle, coveting the Empire's foundations. The weight upon Your Majesty's shoulders—we feel it keenly.

"Once, Frostchill Ravine was graced with the benevolence of the first Emperor. Thus, we wish to offer what strength we can, to help the Empire through this peril."

"Assistance?"

Aurek's lips curved into a cold arc.

"Tell me your conditions."

"..."

Isabella had not expected him to be so direct. After a pause, she said:

"Frostchill Ravine is willing to send forth all of our strong, to assist Your Majesty in quelling the turmoil. With our strength combined with Yours, at least sixty percent of the Empire's territory could be secured.

"We shall not meddle in the Empire's internal affairs as the Ordon Theocracy did, nor demand tribute or taxes. We ask but one thing—that Your Majesty entrust to us the Earthvein Core, west of the Dragonspine Mountains, to be... 'safeguarded' by Frostchill Ravine."

Clang—!

Aurek's blade flashed in an instant.

The cold tip of the Sacrospring Sword halted a hair's breadth from Isabella's upturned nose.