

Gods Daily 171

Chapter 171: Declaration of Nations

Aurek gazed at the warrior before him — a figure far larger than any Mountain Shieldbearer.

The man wore a half-horned helm, his crimson armor gleaming darkly under the light.

A massive shield rested in one hand, a battle axe in the other.

His face was carved in stern determination, commanding respect without a word.

He grew stronger at an astonishing pace.

Unlike the Mountain Shieldbearers, his greatest distinction lay in his terrifying offensive power.

His level surpassed them by one whole tier, his strength eclipsing even the 7th-rank Doomsday Warriors.

"Greetings, my lord!" The Berserker struck his chest with his fist, the sound echoing like distant thunder.

Aurek studied him for a moment before speaking.

"I grant you the name War Bear. You shall guard the Gate of Jade and command all Mountain Shieldbearers."

"As you command!"

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Crimson Hills.

Two elderly men sat in a pavilion surrounded by blooming peach trees, their gaze drifting leisurely over the valley below.

A general clad in dark red armor stood before them.

"Haite, Laiwood, and Disapiel have already arrived in Eryndor City," the general reported.

"With less than a month before the Firstfall Festival, everything in Crimson Hills is ready. We await only their signal."

The plump old man chuckled softly. "Those youngsters aren't just there to spectate — they're after the Glamer Holy Sword, no doubt."

"The Glamer Holy Sword?" Ricky's eyes flickered.

The old man smiled. "When Emperor Aurek was only at the grandmaster rank, he wielded that sword to fight against a Stellar rank being and carved out this vast empire. The blade is a rare SSS

-grade relic of the ancient gods — imbued with divine slaughter itself. They say it's been stained by the blood of more than one saint."

"The Veynar ancestor ventured into the Land of Fallen Gods, and the sword was lost there. Who would've thought that the girl from the Sigeits Parliament would nearly die bringing it back?"

That was precisely why they had sent their juniors to Eryndor — even the elders themselves were tempted by the blade, though they dared not move openly against the Parliament's envoy.

But if their younger generation seized it instead, that would be another matter entirely.

If Sacco were to slay Aurek in Eryndor City, the ownership of the sword would become anyone's claim.

Only a fool would pass up such an opportunity.

The plump elder glanced at the tall, thin one beside him, then turned back to Ricky.

"Ricky, once Crimson Hills is founded as a nation, don't bother us with trifles. The Firstfall Festival isn't the signal — it's merely a turning point."

Ricky pondered for a moment, then nodded.

"I understand. But they say Aurek commands over ten thousand master-rank soldiers. Even Saintess Sainette of Skypeak Tower suffered defeat against him in the Ankidor Mountains. Where did he find such a vast army? Who's backing him?"

"Indeed," the plump elder frowned, "not even Sigeits Parliament could muster so many. Curious indeed."

"You can't divine it either?" Ricky asked in surprise.

The old man blinked, then exchanged a glance with his thin companion. Both burst out laughing.

"If we could foresee everything, would we still be wasting away here in Crimson Hills?"

"Go, do what you must. The founding will happen in due time. With us watching over Crimson Hills, Aurek will have to wade through seas of peach blossoms before reaching us."

The tall elder's tone was solemn, his assurance steady.

Ricky bowed deeply, reassured. With less than a month until the Firstfall Festival, he could afford to wait.

The two old men turned their eyes skyward, their gazes seeming to pierce the clouds toward faraway Eryndor City. Faint smiles of satisfaction crossed their faces.

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Icebound Fortress.

The place teemed with life — soldiers marching, messengers running, entire battalions on the move.

A sense of tense preparation filled the air.

At the center of the city stood a majestic palace.

Officials from over a hundred city-states across the province were reorganizing their troops, awaiting a single command from Duke Frostborne Bruce — the order that would officially sever their lands from the Empire.

Inside the ducal hall, Bruce sat across from Claude, president of the Skyeeye Guild.

"When does Your Grace plan to make the announcement?" Claude asked.

Bruce set down his goblet, his expression grave.

"Though the outcome is decided, we must bide our time — we still owe the Saint of Ordon Holy Mountain a little courtesy. All is ready now. We'll declare it on the day of the Firstfall Festival. The Crossbridge Empire that's endured ten millennia will end exactly where it began — on the same day."

"A fitting choice," Claude nodded.

Ten thousand years ago, Aurek's ancestor had swept across the Faxio Plains and Bimat Highlands, uniting the world and founding the Empire on the day of the Firstfall Festival.

Now, after millennia, the massive construct that had been forcibly held together was once again coming apart.

The Firstfall Festival would serve as the Empire's final vestige of dignity.

Bruce raised his hands solemnly.

"When chaos breaks loose, we'll need Skyeeye Guild's support more than ever."

Claude smiled faintly.

"The Eye of the Sky has chosen its side — we are ready."

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Truva Province.

The massive military reform was in full swing.

Within just two weeks, the Bloodwolf Legion, the Ankidor Legion, and the Blacksteel Cavalry had all been formed — powerful, elite armies, their equipment and discipline unmatched. Everyone knew the Marchin family had been preparing for this day for years.

In the midsection of the Ankidor Mountains, atop a high peak, Marquis Marchin stood against the wind, gazing westward. Behind him stood several figures radiating immense power.

"Patriarch," a general clad in heavy knight's armor reported, "the Ankidor and Bloodwolf Legions have been deployed across the mountains. We can strike nearby factions or resist pressure from the Faxio Plains at a moment's notice."

Marquis Marchin's reply was unexpected.

"All legions are to hold position. No one is to attack any faction."

The knight frowned in confusion, but a young man in linen beside him chuckled.

"Haite, those mountain factions are our best shields. The Ankidor range stretches from east to west — it's the Highlands' natural wall."

Haite looked down at the endless mountain ridges below, realization dawning.

He quickly saluted once more.

The Ankidor Mountains were one of the continent's greatest ranges, a natural divide between the Faxio Plains and the Bimat Highlands.

Energy there gathered thickly, awakeners abounded, and countless factions made their dens within.

If the Empire were to fall, those mountain forces would become a living buffer between east and west.

Keeping them alive was far wiser than wiping them out.

With the mountains' sheer height and terrain, as long as the passes were held, the Highlands would remain secure.

The land itself favored them.

And with Oracle Mountain standing sentinel, the Marchin family held the perfect strategic position — one no rival could easily breach.

"The giant beast finally falls..." murmured the young man, eyes gleaming as he looked westward.

Marquis Marchin clasped his hands behind his back, the wind whipping his cloak. His voice was filled with fierce ambition.

"The ten-thousand-year cycle turns again. The so-called glory of the Crossbridge Empire is but a fleeting ripple in the river of fate. The Ankidor Mountains have witnessed countless legends rise and fall — now it is time for the Marchin family to take up the pen and write our own Chapter!"

The blood of Haite and the strategists behind him surged hot with excitement. Even the howling mountain winds felt like a warm spring breeze.

Every gaze fixed upon Marquis Marchin brimmed with reverence — almost fanatic in its intensity.

"From this day forth," Marquis Marchin proclaimed, his voice echoing through the peaks,

"the Truva Province shall stand as a sovereign nation — in the name of the Oracle!"

"The radiance of the Firstfall Festival may shine bright, but it will soon be devoured by the endless Winter Veil!"

"These Ankidor Mountains, eternal and unyielding, have outlasted ages — they shall remain, unmoved by time or history!"

"The Firstfall Festival will be remembered only as a day of mourning!"

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In the southeast, Grand Duke Walton stood at his riverside manor along the Kahwa River, his gaze piercing the void toward distant Eryndor City.

In the west, Grand Duke Furt stood upon a dune, his scepter striking the sand as invisible borders carved themselves into being.

At Goldenflow Bay, in the ancient port of Yanska, Grand Duke Onassis swept his arm — and in an instant, the map of over a hundred city-states shifted, his ambition toward Eryndor laid bare for all to see.

In Blue Lake Province, House Ister tore off its mask at last, declaring itself a new duchy, greedily devouring the Empire's frontier lands.

Everywhere, unseen currents surged.

All awaited the Firstfall Festival — the day the Empire's dam would shatter, releasing a flood that would drown eighteen hundred city-states and the two great fertile plains and highlands alike.

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"So many fools dreaming, only to be crushed by reality. An emperor blind to fate's pattern will drown in the very dream he wove within Eryndor City."

"His ridiculous imperial dream will perish along with him — swept away by the unstoppable torrent of history."

"The first sunlight on snow is but the pale afterglow before the descent of winter!"

"Ha ha ha..."

Upon the Kahwa River, Rhys stood on the deck of his ship, the cold wind tugging at his long beard.

His laughter — mocking, echoing, endless — rolled over the water and lingered far into the distance.