

# SUMMONING MILLIONS OF GODS DAILY, MY STRENGTH EQUALS THEIRS COMBINED

## *Chapter 45: Chapter45-The Death of Matthews*

The stabbing pain was so overwhelming that Lord Matthews instantly lost the ability to move.

His eyes, wide with disbelief, fixed on the space before him. Blood surged violently from the wound in his back, spilling across his robes and dripping onto the floor.

He had been so close.

Just one step more, just a fraction further, and he would have broken free into the night.

He had almost escaped with his life.

But it was in that single instant of relaxation, that one breath of relief, that the deadliest strike found him.

A paralyzing numbness spread rapidly through his body. Within moments, Matthews could no longer feel his limbs, could no longer summon the strength to resist. He could not move a single muscle.

That could only mean one thing—the dagger in his back had been poisoned.

The realization made his heart sink. Assassins' tricks, always the same—poison on the blade. A standard ploy, but one against which even a Hero Rank could falter.

A look of despair twisted across Matthews' face.

He had never imagined that with all his power, with all his rank and training, he would meet his death here, in the Crossbridge Empire of all places.

And these enemies—these shadows that had struck him down—where had they come from?

Could it be the work of the Ordon Theocracy?

Yes... if anyone had the means, perhaps only the Holy See possessed strength of this magnitude.

His voice was ragged, trembling as blood filled his lungs.

"You... who are you?"

"Why... why do you know our hiding place?"

The next moment, figures materialized from the shadows. The Gold Assassin stepped forward, flanked by his Elemental Assassins.

When Matthews' fading eyes fell on them, his face contorted with disbelief.

Puppets.

These were puppets.

How could this be possible?

The art of puppet creation... how could it have developed to this stage?

No, it was wrong. Absolutely wrong. Even the Puppet Guild—those lunatics obsessed with their craft—could never achieve such terrifying perfection.

A sudden spark of clarity lit up in Matthews' mind.

"You... you were sent by Aurek, weren't you?"

The Gold Assassin looked at him indifferently, eyes as cold and lifeless as ice. It was the look one gave a dead animal.

That gaze alone made Matthews understand. His life had already ended.

These were no ordinary constructs. These puppets could merge with the very elements themselves, vanishing into wind, shadow, and flame. It was beyond imagination.

And the golden puppet that stood before him—its aura eclipsed even his own. Stronger than him, faster than him, deadlier than him.

There was no chance of escape. Perhaps, if he had been uninjured, at his full strength, he might have had a slim hope. But now, broken and bleeding, he was finished.

The Gold Assassin said nothing. He raised his dagger, seized Matthews by the hair, and with a single stroke severed his head from his body.

The Hero Rank assassin, once feared across the empire, died without ceremony.

Once the chamber was cleared, the Gold Assassin ensured that not a single survivor remained. Then, with his Elemental Assassins, he melted back into the shadows and left the tavern.

In the main hall above, countless patrons still drank their wine and sang their songs. None of them knew that the tavern's owner and his hidden guests had all been slaughtered below, their blood soaking into the stone floor.

Half an hour passed.

Two figures cloaked in black slipped silently into the tavern.

They had scarcely stepped inside when the stench of blood struck them like a wall.

The two members of the Dark Order exchanged grim looks.

Moving cautiously, blades drawn, they advanced toward the back of the tavern.

But when they pushed deeper, what they saw froze their blood.

Bodies.

The floor was littered with headless corpses, too many to count. Blood pooled and congealed across the stone, carrying with it a suffocating stench of iron.

And in the center of the carnage, a grotesque sight—a hill of severed heads, stacked one upon another.

The two assassins nearly fainted from the horror. Their stomachs lurched, bile rose in their throats, and their minds screamed to flee.

For a long moment, they stood paralyzed. Then, forcing themselves to calm, they hurried toward the secret chamber.

Yes—the chamber. There, Matthews waited. Lord Matthews, Hero Rank level 9, the pillar of their order. As long as he lived, as long as he still stood, the Dark Order could not be broken.

But when they reached the chamber door and looked inside, all hope shattered.

Their scalps prickled with cold. Their hearts stopped.

Matthews was dead.

His head had been cast carelessly onto the ground, eyes wide open in death, unwilling to close even in the afterlife.

It was unthinkable. Impossible.

Who could have done this?

Had the Cardinal, Austin, gone mad?

To openly oppose the Dark Order—even for the Ordon Theocracy—that would come at a staggering cost.

And it was not as though the Dark Order had any ambitions to replace the Theocracy, no plots against their holy power. Why then? Why strike with such ruthless finality?

The two assassins stood frozen, minds blank with fear.

"So... our base in Eryndor is gone?" one of them whispered.

Moments ago, they had promised Jacoff that the Dark Order would soon sever Aurek's head. They had sworn it with pride.

But before they could even act, before they could even lift their blades, the Dark Order's entire power in the city had been obliterated.

"Go," the other hissed suddenly. "We have to leave. We must find a way to send word. The others need to know what happened here!"

Like beaten dogs, the two fled the tavern, desperate and broken.

Neither of them noticed that in a shadowed corner, eyes were watching. Every move, every word, every ragged breath was seen and recorded by the Gold Assassin.

"Chief," one of the Elemental Assassins whispered, "should we kill them too?"

The Gold Assassin thought for a moment, then shook his head.

"According to the intel we gathered, there should still be another high-ranking member of the Dark Order coming to Eryndor. Likely the deputy commander himself."

"Let them live. Through them, we might trace our way straight to him."

A Master Rank enemy deserved special attention.

"As for those two," he added coldly, "send men to watch them. Nothing more."

Meanwhile, the two surviving Dark Order operatives staggered through the city, their nerves stretched to breaking. They reached another of their hidden strongholds—a secondary base.

By habit, the Dark Order always constructed their outposts in a one-main-three-sub arrangement. If one fell, others would remain.

But when they entered, their hearts collapsed anew.

The floor was the same—strewn with headless corpses, the smell of blood suffocating.

They checked the second auxiliary base. The same.

The third. Again the same.

Not a single survivor remained.

By the time they finished, the two men were on the verge of madness.

How had this happened?

They had only been gone a short while, meeting with Jacoff, discussing future plans. And in that brief span, their entire network had been destroyed.

What now?

The two assassins stared at one another, eyes wild with panic. Then, wordlessly, they changed their clothes, altered their appearances, and slipped into a hidden corner of the city.

One of them finally broke the silence.

"It seems... aside from the two of us, everyone else is gone."

"But who? Who could have done this? Our presence in Eryndor was nearly a quarter of the Dark Order's total strength. Who could wipe us out so swiftly?"

Their thoughts turned immediately to the same name.

Austin, the Cardinal.

Within the entire Crossbridge Empire, only the Cardinal could have killed Matthews.

But why?

Why would he do such a thing?

What reason did the Holy See have for this massacre?