

Gods Daily 66

Chapter 66: Dragging Out All the Rats

The moment the tragedy came to light, the students present almost immediately turned all of their suspicion toward Aurek.

In their eyes, there was no one else who could possibly use such blood-drenched, merciless methods to kill. The corpses that had been displayed within the palace halls all bore horrendous, unspeakably gruesome death scars.

Because of this, the students were almost certain in an instant—everything that had happened had to be Aurek's doing.

Of course, there were still a few who suspected something else was at play.

For example, Jike, the president of the Hyrule War Academy Student Council, felt that this entire affair was dripping with strangeness.

If Aurek truly wished to target the students, why would he only kill a few of them? With his reputation for brutality and cruelty, he could have slaughtered every last student in a single sweep.

If he had done so, he would have actually saved himself a great deal of trouble afterward.

These, however, were nothing more than Jake's private speculations. He voiced no explanation and offered no defense on Aurek's behalf.

The reality was simple: students of Hyrule War Academy were dead, and nearly everyone now believed Aurek was responsible.

Because of this, the entire Imperial Capital soon swelled with insults, curses, and venomous slanders directed against his name.

The palace, however, had its own story.

During the past half-month, Aurek had been constantly amassing troops.

Each passing day his strength grew greater, and now, within his grasp, he already commanded a formidable and terrifying army.

In particular, the units bound to destructive attributes filled Aurek with keen anticipation. Their potential was limitless, their power immense.

Just then, an Elemental Assassin suddenly appeared before Aurek and delivered his report.

From his subordinate's words, Aurek learned the truth of the matter.

The massacred students had not been his victims at all.

It had been the work of soldiers from the Manhattan Legion—they had committed the killings and then pinned the blame squarely upon Aurek's shoulders.

The report also revealed how Yule had gone to negotiate with the Black Pearl Hotel, only to return empty-handed, failing to achieve the results he had hoped for.

Yet none of this truly surprised Aurek.

In fact, everything had already been within the scope of his expectations.

Once he had swept aside the idle rabble, Aurek knew full well he would face pressure from every direction.

The forces that had lurked in the shadows were beginning to stir. They were no longer able to sit still. They now sought to tear apart the Empire by any means necessary.

And Aurek was no fool. Quite the opposite—he was sharp, calculating, and exceptionally shrewd. He knew that this entire farce was not the work of Hyrule War Academy alone.

This storm of chaos was the combined hand of many hidden factions, striking together.

After a moment of thought, Aurek gave his order.

"Since so many rats have been hiding in the sewers, I see no reason to drag them out one by one. Better to be done with it in a single stroke."

As his words fell, a figure appeared silently before him.

The Gold Assassin stepped forth, bowing low, his voice steady.

"My Lord, shall I erase the Manhattan Legion entirely?"

For the Gold Assassin, Aurek was everything. His will was absolute.

All who defied Aurek's intentions deserved only death.

And yet, the Gold Assassin also knew his place. Unless Aurek himself issued the command, he would never act without permission.

Aurek slowly rose from his seat.

He lifted his gaze toward the distant city walls and spoke lightly, almost casually.

"The Manhattan Legion's few soldiers mean nothing. Killing them accomplishes little."

"What I want is the entire Manhattan Legion."

"They have already reached out with their filthy claws—then let them serve as guides."

"Oh, and send Violet Thunder. Let them strike directly. The rest of you will provide support from the flanks."

Aurek's plan was simple.

He wished to see, with his own eyes, the true measure of Violet Thunder's power.

In the eyes of others, the Manhattan Legion might appear an enormous and formidable beast.

But to Aurek, it was nothing of the sort.

At most, the Legion was merely one rat—larger than the rest perhaps, but still only a rat.

What Aurek truly cared about were all the other vermin scurrying throughout the Imperial Capital.

The Manhattan Legion was just one piece on the board.

Later, when matters were settled, another report reached Aurek.

"Your Majesty, all follow-up matters have been dealt with. The Imperial Knights have once again secured control over the situation. Several nearby castles now fly the banners of the royal family."

"All confiscated treasures have already been stored safely within the treasury."

Inside the Royal Council Hall, Aurek listened calmly as his ministers gave their accounts.

Around him, familiar faces filled the chamber, but also many new ones—men who had sworn complete and unwavering loyalty to Aurek alone.

At that moment, Secretary-General Winston spoke up.

"Your Majesty, now that order has been restored, do you wish to have the Imperial Knights return to their original garrisons?"

The suggestion was reasonable.

Indeed, many ministers present thought the same: that the Imperial Knights had fulfilled their mission, and should now withdraw back to their old stations.

But Aurek shook his head. His response was direct.

"Let them remain here. There is no need to return."

Confusion spread across the faces of the ministers.

They could not understand his reasoning.

After a pause, Heimerdinger finally spoke, his voice hesitant.

"Your Majesty, perhaps this matter requires further deliberation. The presence of the Imperial Knights has always served as a deterrent force against our external enemies. If they were to leave their original garrisons, that deterrence might weaken, giving our enemies a chance to exploit the situation."

Aurek nodded slightly.

Of course he had already considered all of this.

But the situation at present was far more complex than appearances suggested.

He cleared his throat lightly, and then his voice rang out, calm and even.

"You are all well aware of the state of the Empire. There is no need for ornamental rhetoric."

"The truth is clear: the enemies lurking in the shadows are far more dangerous than the enemies in plain sight."

"It is sabotage from the dark that destroys empires from the root."

"That is why I must ensure that every rat hiding in the sewers is forced out into the sunlight."

"Only when all the vermin have emerged can our cats feast upon them as they should. Is that not so?"

His words struck the ministers like thunder, forcing them into deep thought.

Indeed, they knew the Empire's condition.

They had long been aware of the fractures beneath the surface, but until now they had clung to maintaining a fragile veneer of peace.

Never had they considered directly solving the underlying problems.

But Aurek was different.

The young Emperor intended to face the rot head-on, to drag it all into the open and cut it away.

The truth was that the castles still loyal to the royal family were few.

If Aurek wished to reverse this imbalance, he had no choice but to seize control of more castles.

From this perspective, keeping the Imperial Knights stationed here became not only reasonable, but crucial.

When the hidden rats were flushed from the dark, Aurek could strike decisively and seize the initiative once more.

And above all, his ministers knew their Emperor commanded a secret force—one so mysterious and so terrifying that none could guess its true limits.

The realization filled them with awe.

Though Aurek was still so young, his thoughts ran deep, his strategies sharp, his resolve unshakable.

And as they gazed upon him, one after another, admiration blossomed in their hearts.

They were compelled to acknowledge it.

Their Emperor was not simply strong—he was profound, far-sighted, and worthy of reverence.