

## **Gods Daily 68**

### Chapter 68: Aurek's Plan

The moment Aurek saw William Winston and the others step forward, he already knew their intentions.

If it were possible, Aurek actually did not want to continue killing.

Even though his anger still burned, he understood that the Empire's circumstances had to be considered above his personal wrath.

Yet under the present conditions, he had no space left to choose.

He had to strike immediately. He had to cut off the claws the Manhattan Legion had thrust into the Imperial Capital.

At the same time, he needed to deliver a stern warning to Hyrule War Academy.

If the academy understood what was good for them, matters could still be resolved peacefully. But if they insisted on resisting, then only one road remained for them—death.

Aurek's approach was clear in his mind.

While punishing those rebellious students, he would also provide the common people with sufficient explanations and tangible benefits.

The stick and the carrot must always appear together.

He knew very well that as long as the commoners remained calm, as long as they did not rise in riot, then the Empire would not collapse into its worst state of ruin.

"This matter is already decided," Aurek said, his voice like iron. "You need not persuade me further. I am not a man who kills for pleasure. But there are some who must die. Only by killing them can the Empire's future be secured."

"Have you already forgotten how strong the Empire once was?"

His words resounded through the chamber.

Winston fell into deep silence.

He had only glimpsed fragments of the Empire's former glory in old family records and dusty history texts.

But even those scraps were enough to show how vast, how magnificent, how utterly dominant the Crossbridge Empire had once been.

If that glory could be restored, then what did it matter if some students had to die?

No—more than that. If even the entire Hyrule War Academy had to be destroyed to achieve such a rebirth, it would still be a bargain well worth making.

In truth, no one could fully fathom the thoughts within Aurek's heart.

The burden pressing upon his shoulders was far too heavy.

And all of that weight, all of that suffocating responsibility, could only be borne by him alone.

The ministers, too, knew that speaking further was premature.

Yet still, they longed to see the Empire restored to its ancient splendor.

As for the Ordon Theocracy... Aurek's eyes sharpened as he made his decision.

"Besides hanging the traitors," Aurek ordered, "you must also discuss the matter of reducing taxes. The Empire is riddled with wounds. The common people can hardly survive. Therefore, tax reduction is imperative. As for the attitude of the Ordon Theocracy, you need not concern yourselves."

Hearing this, Heimerdinger could not remain silent.

"Your Majesty, do we truly intend to cut taxes? Would this not be too sudden?"

His concern was not unfounded.

Taxation touched every corner of the Empire.

Everyone present knew well that the Ordon Theocracy siphoned off the largest share. It was their relentless draining that had reduced the Empire to its current miserable state.

Under the present system, revenues barely sufficed to cover what was seized by the Theocracy.

If taxes were reduced further, how would the Theocracy react?

For the common people, of course, such a move would be unprecedentedly good news.

And there was another factor: in recent days, immense wealth had been seized from the estates of fallen noble houses.

With those treasures now stored within the imperial treasury, the Empire could operate for decades without financial crisis.

From that perspective, reducing taxes was indeed a sound decision.

But still, the Ordon Theocracy's reaction could not be ignored.

Once they smelled profit slipping from their grasp, they would never remain indifferent.

Yet Aurek had spoken. His will was law.

If the Emperor said the tax burden must be lessened, then the ministers would obey.

And as for executing a few rebellious students? The common people would hardly care.

After all, once their taxes were cut, what need would they have to worry about dead students from a privileged academy?

For the first time in the Empire's history, taxes would fall.

After these matters were arranged, Aurek turned his gaze to the man newly chosen as acting Grand Marshal.

This officer had been recommended by Winston.

His name was Justin, a legion commander reputed to be highly gifted in warfare.

"Justin," Aurek said, "Winston claims you are a man of capability. I now entrust you with a task."

"The Black Pearl Hotel, and all the petty gangs that infest this capital—you will deal with them. How you choose to deal with them is your concern."

The ministers' expressions shifted in unison.

Whether it was the Black Pearl Hotel or the other factions Aurek had named, all of them were backed by powerful forces.

And now, just after purging the officials, the Emperor meant to move against the capital's underworld powers?

Justin's face tightened. It was not defiance, but hesitation.

The military, for all its numbers and discipline, lacked the small, elite units required for such operations.

Against a place like the Black Pearl Hotel, ordinary soldiers were clumsy and ineffective.

Aurek, reading his thoughts at a glance, gave a faint smile.

"Do not worry. I will assign others to aid you. You need only carry out your duties. Leave the rest to me."

After Winston and the others finally departed, Aurek's gaze turned toward the distant city walls.

He nodded once, and the Gold Assassin appeared before him in silence.

"My Lord, the members of the Manhattan Legion have all been located and marked."

Aurek inclined his head.

"Good. Dispatch watchers to shadow them. See if more remain hidden. As for the rest, leave them to Violet Thunder."

"Our time is short. The operation must be swift."

There were reasons Aurek had fixed his attention on the Manhattan Legion.

They had indeed intruded into the capital. But beyond that, they also represented opportunity.

For every enemy destroyed, Emperor Points would be gained. And with those points, stronger and stronger troops could be unlocked.

Aurek understood one truth with piercing clarity: the stronger his forces grew, the safer he would be.

And thus, gaining Emperor Points and summoning ever more fearsome units had become his highest priority.