

## Gods Daily 89

### Chapter 89: Loyalty Bought with Gold Coins

The powerful figures present exchanged wary glances, each one reading shock and confusion in the eyes of the others.

"We only just arrived," one of them muttered. "We've no idea what actually happened here!"

"I don't know the details either, but one thing is certain—the Manhattan Legion has been utterly destroyed."

"I can confirm that," another said grimly. "On my way here, I saw corpses everywhere. Entire streets littered with the dead."

"I recognized one of them," a third voice added. "A shareholder. An Expert Rank, level nine. I knew him well."

The weight of his words silenced the others.

"Judging from what we've seen," he continued, "the Manhattan Legion wasn't simply defeated. They were annihilated by a force of unimaginable power."

A hush fell across the gathering.

"Terrifying..." whispered someone else. "If a power capable of wiping out the Manhattan Legion so easily truly exists, then what sort of monster are we dealing with?"

"And the bodies are still warm," another pointed out, his tone edged with dread. "That means whoever did this was here only moments ago."

"Could it be..." a voice trembled, "...that the entire East will soon fall into chaos again?"

The possibility hung heavy in the air.

It was more than likely.

If a force strong enough to slay even the near-Master Rank Rosewood could emerge from the shadows, then the balance of the East would shatter. Storms would rise. Alliances would crumble. A wave greater than any before was building, ready to sweep across nations.

No, not a wave—an unrelenting tidal surge.

And at the heart of it all was one name whispered in dread and awe.

Aurek.

"It seems we old relics must make our move soon," one of the elders chuckled darkly. "Otherwise, when the feast begins, there won't even be scraps left for us."

But another quickly barked a warning.

"Count Maha, watch your tongue. This Aurek is not to be underestimated. Such careless jokes could bring ruin upon your entire House."

Count Maha sneered, waving off the warning with disdain.

"Old fool. You speak pretty words, but they're worth nothing. Let's not play games here."

He leaned forward, his gaze sharp.

"Tell me, House of Ister, do you not hunger for a share of this feast? Do not pretend otherwise. Aurek may be clever, but in the end, he's still just a boy. Do you truly believe he can hold together an empire on the verge of collapse?"

Silence answered him.

Count Maha smirked.

"Exactly. We all know the truth. The Crossbridge Empire is fracturing. Who here doesn't want a piece of it? Don't play the saint before me."

His voice rose, biting.

"If your House Ister is really so loyal, then return the Blue Lake Province to him. Go on. Give it back. Let's see if you have the courage."

His laugh was scornful, spitting contempt.

"I thought so. Hypocrites, all of you. Bah!"

...

The truth was plain: none of the families present truly feared Aurek.

Even those who outwardly professed loyalty had lined their pockets with bribes and gifts. William himself had distributed these "benefits" with his own hands.

He had no choice. Without family support, the empire would have shattered overnight. If gold and favors could hold the great Houses in place, then so be it.

But money could never buy true loyalty.

It was only a slow death, the empire bleeding out coin by coin.

...

Back in Eryndor City, no one had expected Aurek's sudden decree.

A twenty percent reduction in taxes.

It overturned every plan the nobles had quietly prepared.

The common folk were the most sensitive to such changes. Forget eloquent speeches, forget promises—gold coins in their pockets spoke louder than any words.

And Aurek had just given those coins back to them.

"Damn that fool," one lord spat, grinding his teeth. "How dare he!"

"To hand over golden coins to those filthy, ignorant peasants—it's blasphemy! Madness!"

"This is betrayal! He's breaking the unspoken pact we've all honored for years!"

Outrage spread swiftly among the powerful families. Plans were set into motion. They would not allow Aurek to build favor among the masses.

Their solution came quickly: rumors.

They whispered into the ears of the Ordon Theocracy, reminding them that less tax meant fewer tributes. Fewer tributes meant fewer offerings delivered to the Church.

And nothing struck the Church harder than an offense against their wealth.

It was unthinkable. The red-robed Cardinal Austin himself would never tolerate it.

And Aurek? He had not even once set foot in the halls of the Ordon Theocracy. He had never greeted the cardinal. He had never offered the respect expected of an emperor.

Thus, the nobles saw their chance.

They would pit Aurek against the Theocracy.

Let the boy emperor burn.

Some Houses, however, chose silence. Their decision was clear—they would stand by Aurek.

For though young, his political acumen was formidable.

He had crushed the opposition in Parliament. He had struck fear into wavering Houses. He had seized the people's hearts in a single stroke.

In weeks, he had done what many rulers never achieved in years.

And those who had seen the truth believed in him.

Still, even they hesitated, watching for the Church's response.

The board was set, the players in motion, and Eryndor City became a cauldron of schemes, each faction weaving its plot.

Few, however, spared a thought for the boy in the palace.

How was Aurek, so young, bearing such crushing weight upon his shoulders?

...

They imagined him anxious. Sleepless. Trembling beneath the burden of empire.

But the truth was otherwise.

Aurek had no time for politics. No patience for whispers.

He sat alone, eyes fixed upon the Emperor's Scepter.

[Summon today's troops.]

Light burst.

One hundred soldiers appeared before him—half Elemental Assassins, half Doomsday Warriors.

Day by day, his ranks grew. In the past few days alone, his army had swelled with three hundred more.

And with every new soldier, Aurek's confidence deepened.

The assassins slithered through the city, invisible eyes and ears. Nothing in Eryndor City escaped him now.

The nobles schemed. The Houses plotted.

But Aurek saw it all.

And when the time came, his thunder would fall upon them too.