

Thalos 195

Chapter 195: Flames of War Everywhere

Not all deaths are equal.

For the Aesir gods, death felt more like a game.

Thanks to Ginnungagap's internal cycle of life and death, and the strong relationship between God-King Thalos and the death goddess Hela, for most gods and giants, death was merely a nap before they were sent back to the land of the living.

It wasn't that resurrection came without cost—but in most cases, those costs could be "negotiated."

When negotiations failed, Thalos would even communicate directly with the will of the world to ask it to cut some slack for a repeatedly reckless giant.

Thus, when the Aesir and giants boasted of their "immortality," it wasn't an empty claim.

So long as they remained within the bounds of Ginnungagap, they could throw themselves into battle without fear.

For the Sumerian gods, however, things were entirely different.

"What's going on? Is this the enemy's underworld?"

"Be careful! If you die here, your divine soul may be trapped permanently."

Their concerns were meaningless.

It wasn't a matter of whether they wanted to die or not.

The moment they stepped into Jotunheim, the entire underworld seemed to transform into a relentless tsunami of souls.

From every cold and shadowy corner of this realm, evil spirits lunged forward, shrieking as they assaulted the foreign gods.

On the surface, these soul wraiths posed no threat—but when their numbers reached a certain threshold, quantity became quality. Several Sumerian gods, along with their lesser deities and attendants, were caught off guard.

The Sumerian elemental powers they deployed—already weakened due to incompatibility with Ginnungagap's laws—struggled even further. Unable to stem the tide of dead souls, they were quickly overwhelmed and scattered.

Against the divine powers of the Sumerian gods, waves of the dead were temporarily vaporized—like a tide pulling back after a crash. But as one god's power ran dry, the soul tsunami surged in through the breach, pouring down an unending flood of spirits.

Even at that point, the Sumerian gods could have held the line—if someone had stepped up in time to plug the gap.

Unfortunately, at that critical juncture, the Aesir sent in their soul-based demigods.

Leading the charge was none other than the divine spear Gungnir, which had already claimed many lives in Niflheim.

The mist obstructed sight and senses, so these Sumerian gods—fleeing blindly—had no idea they were walking into the reach of a divine weapon once wielded by a God-King.

When the glow of Gungnir appeared, the shepherd god Dumuzi foolishly raised his blade to intercept it. The idiot likely thought, "If I can just block the first strike, my comrades can locate the enemy and we'll swarm them."

That's not how it works.

Those who haven't experienced the brutal chaos of an inter-pantheon war can't begin to imagine the nature of divine combat.

Being overwhelmed is the norm.

Holding the line is the exception.

And on the battlefield, miracles don't happen by accident—otherwise, they wouldn't be called miracles.

Dumuzi had never been a battle-hardened god. Like most of the newer generation, he'd simply been shoved into the war by Enlil, a pathetic pawn.

Maybe at first, he'd hoped to earn merit, gain rank, and return to his lavish palace to enjoy music and dancing attendants. But after the crushing defeat in Niflheim, those dreams had faded.

"I'll just kill a demigod and call it a day," Dumuzi had told himself.

Even that low bar was too high.

In his mind, his divine longsword had clanged against the enemy's spear.

In reality, he saw two spears.

He blocked one—but the other passed through space itself. Though the spear's tail still remained in the hand of a woman dozens of steps away, its head had already pierced his chest.

It looked just like a skewer piercing meat on a grill—only the entry and exit were visible.

Dumuzi's eyes went wide. The scene had long surpassed his understanding of reality.

Unfortunately, he had no time to process it.

In the next moment, divine energy exploded from his chest wound, and even his soul was utterly sealed within the frigid underworld, stripped of any chance to return to Sumer.

He was not alone.

Thanks to the ferocity of Scáthach, Cú Chulainn, Siegfried, Beowulf, and the failsafe of Hela herself, seven Sumerian deities fell in Hela's realm.

Meanwhile, some Sumerian gods who escaped Niflheim managed to avoid Hela's trap—only to stumble directly into Svarfheim.

This dwarven realm had long lacked a powerful ruler. But with the arrival of Arthur, the God of Knights, and the Tuatha Dé Danann, the realm's military power was massively enhanced.

Arthur's sword, Excalibur, was a counterpart to Freyr's Sword of Victory. Its power depended on the wielder's conviction and will, and it enhanced itself according to the user's righteous belief.

In this lifetime, Excalibur had received blessings from both the Lady of the Lake and Thalos himself, including some Runas spell circuits. Its power was now on a forbidden level—on par with the most elite divine artifacts.

Sumerian war god Ninurta, originally a local god of the city-state Lagash and a symbol of Saturn, held part of the War domain. In theory, he should have been strong.

Unfortunately, before he even entered Ginnungagap, a World Tree root had smacked him. Then, upon arrival, Jörmungandr's tail gave him another punishing blow.

Battlefields are chaotic.

There's no order, no fairness.

No one cares if you're injured or not at full strength.

See the enemy? If they don't surrender, kill them. That's the fundamental law.

So when Ninurta encountered Arthur, who greeted him with sword flourishes and a formal challenge, he was irritated. He curtly gave his name, believing his strength alone would crush this golden-armored, pompous Aesir god.

He was dead wrong.

One strike—and his scythe-sword snapped in two.

The next moment, unbearable pain tore through his body and soul.

He fell into darkness.

He longed to return to Sumer, to plead for rebirth from the underworld goddess Ereshkigal.

But his dream shattered like glass.

Another nearby Sumerian god watched in horror as Arthur's divine sword revealed its true nature.

The golden blade radiated brilliance, and a highly condensed divine will flowed through the entire weapon. Even Ninurta's bisected corpse glowed faintly with a sacred golden hue.

There was no doubt—this was a power they didn't understand.

Unless one possessed a stronger conviction for victory than Arthur, anyone who faced that sword would suffer a devastating debuff.