

Thalos 205

Chapter 205: The Clash of Underworld Goddesses

There was no shortage of arrogant fools who treated their enemies like appetizers. But it was Thalos's first time seeing someone who not only offered themselves up as the dish but also brought their own seasoning.

Truly, as long as a god-king lived, there would always be fresh headlines.

At that moment, even the phrase "a fleeting springtime glimpse" was insufficient to describe Ishtar's current state.

It was more like "The Goddess's New Clothes."

Rather than modesty or shame, her disgrace only fueled her fury.

Even with her divine domain over Sexuality, this humiliation was something Ishtar could not tolerate.

Once shame hit its limit, she flipped the switch completely. To onlookers, it was as though she was flaunting every inch of her beauty, her movements bold and unreserved.

In truth, her thoughts were simple: If I kill them all, no one will remember I lost face!

Charge!

She charged forward, swinging her twig-like arms—at least, that's how they appeared to the Aesir gods—and kept bulldozing ahead with sheer hard-headedness!

At this point, even Thalos, along with the Aesir gods and giants, began to find something... almost adorable in her absurd stubbornness.

There were always fools who couldn't read the room. But to keep charging forward even after her divine powers had been stripped and her laws suppressed—well, sometimes being that reckless was, bizarrely, endearing.

Sensing her divine power rapidly draining away, many of the Aesir and giants hesitated to strike her down.

Thalos gave a subtle, amused smile. If he weren't the god-king, someone would've already cursed him as a "privileged bastard" for what he was about to do.

That's the nature of divine authority.

If you can't use your home-field advantage on your own turf, where can you use it?

"You've already stormed my palace, and I can't enjoy some terrain buffs?"

"Water," Thalos said calmly.

In the very next moment, Ishtar smashed headfirst into a spinning cylinder of conjured water, like a vortex pulled from thin air.

"Glub glub glub—Let me out—!" Now reduced to mortal size, Ishtar had no hope of escaping a water trap big enough to fit five Aesir gods.

She looked exactly like a decorative fish in a crystal aquarium.

No matter how hard she flailed or raged, her body just tumbled helplessly through the churning current, completely immobilized.

Roars of laughter erupted throughout the Palace of Silver.

"Hahaha! This is their high god?"

"She's... kind of cute, actually."

"Better than a toy, really."

Honestly, the way she bulldozed through Ullr, Balder, and Hrungrir to breach the Palace of Silver had made some of them nervous.

But now?

Clearly, they had been worried for nothing.

The God-King was still invincible as ever.

To even question Thalos's might was to disrespect his legendary record.

And with the enemy's most powerful goddess now reduced to a fish in a tank, the gods turned their attention back to the suspended mental-projection screens tracking the larger battle.

Thalos glanced down at the flailing Ishtar, finding her clumsy defiance oddly amusing.

In myth, Ishtar had once—out of boredom and greed—led the city-state of Uruk to war, slaughtering all surrounding kingdoms and throwing the Sumerian gods into chaos. Then, on a whim, she decided to invade the Underworld.

Seriously, she just woke up one day and thought, "Let's go conquer hell."

She brought her seven divine treasures as proof of divine right and stepped into the Underworld—Kur.

But each time she passed through a gate, one treasure was stripped away.

Any reasonable god would've stopped at the first gate and turned back. But not Ishtar. She kept going, knowing that passing all the gates would leave her stripped of all her powers.

Sure enough, when she finally reached her "dear sister," the Queen of the Underworld Ereshkigal, she was powerless to resist the domain's authority. She was killed, stripped bare, hung upside down by hooks through her ankles, and left as a beautiful corpse.

Had her death not threatened the balance between life and death—thus halting human reproduction—she might never have been revived.

In this life, Ishtar probably hadn't yet attempted her mythical descent into the Underworld. But now she was experiencing something just as humiliating, not at the hands of her sister—but at the hands of Thalos.

In a way, it was her destiny.

Thalos realized for the first time that even foreign myths could be repurposed and grafted into his own narratives.

And honestly? Compared to becoming a gorgeous corpse in hell, this was worse.

She floated helplessly in the water vortex, her golden hair swirling gracefully, her petite frame glowing with an alabaster hue—like a porcelain doll bouncing in a washing machine.

The image was so absurdly picturesque that it was mesmerizing.

"Glub glub—"

The more she thrashed her tiny fists, the more amusing Thalos found her.

The only "flaw" was that she was a classic blonde with waves, not one of those accidentally-disrobed black-haired tsundere anime girls.

Eh, no big deal.

Thalos was almost ready to keep her as a living decoration next to his throne when Gullveig stepped forward and bowed.

"Your Majesty! The Palace of Silver is a sanctified hall where you rule the gods. It seems inappropriate to place her here. Why not entrust her to me? I'll teach her proper manners."

As a textbook example of a zealous convert, Gullveig's loyalty to Thalos was absolute.

She always got extra enthusiastic when new prisoners were involved.

Thalos smiled slyly. "Then she's yours."

Gullveig cheerfully took away the struggling Ishtar while Thalos resumed watching the battle.

As long as Enlil didn't intervene personally, Thalos had no reason to step in either.

It was a matter of status.

Meanwhile, Marduk vs. Thor and Nanna vs. Freyr were locked in dazzling duels, beams of light and divine power streaking across the skies—epic battles of evenly matched foes.

Victory wouldn't come easily for either side.

But Thalos was more interested in Helheim.

There, two elegant figures stood apart on the blackened ground, staring at each other.

Hel's usual coldness and arrogance seemed perfectly natural in Ereshkigal's eyes.

But it was Ereshkigal's own demeanor that surprised Hel.

Long straight golden hair, bone-shaped hair ornaments, even a necklace made of miniature skulls and vertebrae—yet this goddess was shockingly not aggressive.

With quiet grace, she gave a courteous bow: "I am Ereshkigal, Queen of Kur, the Sumerian Underworld. If my name is a bit long, you may call me Eresh."

"Eresh?" Hel was taken aback by her peer's tone. "I am Hel, Goddess of Death."

"Pleased to meet you, Lady Hel," Eresh said with another bow.

Hel's mouth twitched slightly. Eresh's demeanor was more polite than any goddess in the Hall of Merriment. She even began to wonder if there had been a mistake.

"We're supposed to be enemies, right?"

"For now," said Eresh.

"For now? What about later?"