

Thalos 228

Chapter 228: Whose World Is This?

A pain-in-the-neck son. An unreliable mother.

That perfectly summed up the bizarre mother-son duo of Ishtar and Gilgamesh, two beings whose destinies had been rewritten.

The moment Ishtar realized she had personally launched her own son into an enemy world using divine power, she was wracked with regret. And when she found out Gilgamesh had carelessly poured over half his soul into this infiltration mission, she broke down on the spot, sobbing uncontrollably, then bolted straight to Thalos.

"Darling, thirsty?"

"Darling, want me to give you a massage?"

"Darling, how about..."

Even after all these years together, Thalos still struggled to understand this periodically brain-fried goddess.

Unlike her older sister, who fawned and flattered him with elegance and tact, Ishtar had no interest in subtlety. She'd willingly offer herself to him in every possible way—but when her brain decided to short-circuit, it absolutely would short-circuit. That was the only part of her he could truly rely on.

At the moment, their vast difference in body size meant Ishtar couldn't even give him a proper shoulder rub unless he shrank his divine form. So, like a buzzing bee circling a flower, she flew endless loops around him, desperate for attention.

Eventually, Thalos gave in, resizing himself to a human adult's proportions.

Ishtar immediately squealed in delight and clung to him like glue.

Her clumsy tactics were painfully transparent—Thalos could hardly stand to look at her.

She was undeniably beautiful, but her goofball of a soul held her back. Sometimes Thalos seriously wondered if he'd made a mistake somewhere along the way.

"Don't worry, Ishtar. Gilgamesh may have leapt into danger, but he wasn't alone. He had Cú Chulainn and Gawain with him."

"...What?" Ishtar's eyes widened.

She obviously knew who those two were.

Cú Chulainn was a subordinate god under Freyr—a proper deity in his own right. And he had gone along too?

"Cú Chulainn didn't have any problems with Freyr," Thalos explained. "He just felt his solitary nature didn't suit being anyone's shadow. He's the kind of guy who thrives on walking his own path, pushing himself to the edge. So I promised him—if he returned with major merit, I'd make him the God of the Spear."

The spear might not sound particularly special, but in the divine hierarchy, it was a formal domain under warfare—a sub-godhead that could shelter all spear-wielders in the mortal realm.

From peasant conscripts with pitchforks to elite heavy cavalry lancers, anyone who fought with a spear would fall under this god's blessing.

It wasn't some niche role—it was a major title.

As for Gawain, he was Arthur's chosen champion, given a chance to rise through this operation.

Which meant: for a simple recon mission, Ginnungagap had thrown in two fully-ranked gods, one heroic spirit, and a slew of soul-agents.

Ishtar looked up nervously, her voice barely a whisper: "Promise me... if there's even the slightest chance, you'll bring Gilgamesh back."

"Of course."

But everyone knew it wouldn't be easy.

That flute-shaped spatial tunnel between worlds had very limited points of contact. The next window would be in at least a month—assuming the other world didn't detect anything or start locking down access.

All Ishtar could do was stew in helpless anxiety.

But what could she say? Her darling boy had always been too independent.

Thalos consoled her: "The kid has his own mind. He's not some puppet. He's a full-fledged True God now. If you expect a child to be submissive in every situation, don't be surprised when they panic at the first crisis."

"Uuuuugh, but he's too independent." Ishtar whimpered.

Thalos didn't say the rest: Gilgamesh and Cú Chulainn were both fiercely self-reliant by nature. One could manage an entire city-state like Uruk with poise and authority; the other was a phantom-like lone wolf. If the opposing pantheon didn't have a centralized divine detection system, they might not even notice those two infiltrating.

That whole "gods are omnipotent" thing? That was a lie fed to mortals.

As a God-King, Thalos knew all too well how limited even divine awareness truly was.

Sure, in theory, he could stretch his divine sense across every corner of his world. But in practice? He simply didn't have the bandwidth to track everything simultaneously.

Forget "everything"—if a god could monitor even a thousand key events at once, that would already be incredible.

Most of the time, gods needed triggers: keywords, symbols, or power signatures to alert them to a disturbance. For example, if a powerful non-divine being uttered a forbidden phrase within a god's domain, then that god might take notice.

As far as Thalos recalled, Gilgamesh's close-combat skills were solid but not top-tier. What made him terrifying was his absurd luck and overpowered artifacts.

In a way, this kind of "blessed-by-fate" war god could be more effective than the sneakiest assassin.

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At the same time, in the unknown world—

Gilgamesh slowly regained consciousness.

Honestly, he knew what he'd done was risky.

If he had played it safe—just managed Uruk, kept his head down—he'd have done nothing wrong. But he also wouldn't have accomplished anything remarkable.

He was proud, damn it.

He never once believed he was lesser than any of his brothers.

Sure, he wasn't blessed with Thor's freakish divine physique. But he refused to lose.

There was nothing more glorious than being the first to set foot in enemy territory—securing firsthand intel with his own hands.

At eighteen, young gods weren't exactly known for caution.

And for a powerful, up-and-coming deity like him, arrogance was fuel. It pushed him.

He'd been afraid when he first pierced the world's boundary.

He had sensed what happened to Cú Chulainn, who landed just moments before him—the sheer violence of the other world's defensive barrier was overwhelming. Gilgamesh figured that even if Cú didn't die, he'd be wrecked.

When it was his turn to land, he'd already prepared for the worst—perhaps even total annihilation of his soul fragment.

And yet, something strange happened.

The world let him in, almost effortlessly.

It was as if... as if...

As if he were already one of its gods.

Then came the most bizarre part.

When he tried to extend his divine sense to help Cú Chulainn—who was still stuck outside, unable to breach the barrier—he felt something.

This world's consciousness... asked him a question.

[Is this your servant?]

"Huh? Yeah, he's with me," Gilgamesh replied instinctively.

He hadn't planned it. Hadn't even considered trying to lie or manipulate.

It was just a reflex.

But that single impulse... opened the gates.

Not only was Cú Chulainn allowed in, even those near-disintegrated soul-agents—mere fragments caught at the barrier's edge—were all welcomed.

Gilgamesh was stunned.

Is this really enemy territory?

Why does it feel like... I never left Ginnungagap?