

Thalos 255

Chapter 255: Strategic Blackmail

Life and death—

They are, inherently, a cycle.

Where there is life, there will be death.

Where there is creation, there will be destruction.

Such is the truth of reincarnation.

All life has "weight." So does death.

The Maya God of Suicide could, through the death curse embedded in the Slavic gods' souls, extract a portion of divine essence as compensation for their broken oaths. But ultimately, this had limits.

Yes, a god would perish if their soul was drained dry.

But what if it was drained while being replenished?

First came unimaginable agony.

It was like bleeding out while being transfused at the same time—hellish, yes, but not unfamiliar. The Slavic gods had endured worse. Pain has a threshold, and once surpassed, numbness follows.

The key is, no matter how powerful a death curse, it cannot be infinite.

Otherwise, it wouldn't be a curse—it would be a black hole.

Within mere breaths, the emotions of the Slavic gods swung wildly.

They watched their own divine souls shrivel like withered eggplants—yet at the same time felt the constant infusion of the World Tree's life-giving water, replacing the "fated death" meant for them.

It was as if they had journeyed from hell to paradise.

Yes, they understood it perfectly well—Thalos was using the roots of the World Tree to absorb the Aztec world's essence, and by leveraging his supreme mastery over the element of Water in the realm of Ginnungagap, he redirected that energy to the Slavic gods.

That he could do this was one thing.

That he would do it—was another.

And clearly, he would.

At that moment, the Slavic gods realized this new master was more generous than they had ever imagined.

In a brutal universe like this, generosity never comes without a price.

They might not be able to repay the debt in this lifetime.

But that no longer mattered.

A supremely powerful God-King had revealed his generosity—there was no room left for doubt or hesitation. All that was left was unwavering loyalty.

As they raised their heads and looked up at the towering divine projection, over a thousand meters tall, fervor filled their eyes.

Projected above the heavens were the images of the eleven continents of Ginnungagap. These small worlds were the very foundation stones of Thalos's mighty throne.

He wore golden armor, shoulder plates embossed with the emblem of the World Tree. His form shimmered faintly, the dark golden hue flowing like molten dusk. Countless runes swirled around him in elegant patterns, interweaving with divine lights of Wind, Sky, and Water—creating a composition that defied comprehension.

Most striking of all were the eleven Swords of Worlds that hovered over his shoulders—some like ancient frost, others as heavy as solid earth, some ablaze like the flames of apocalypse, others chilling as death incarnate.

Each sword represented a God-King's absolute dominion over a small world.

With a mere appearance, Thalos had inspired utter devotion among his new gods—and sheer terror in their enemies.

The Slavic gods all waited for one signal—the command to fully advance.

And then, another projection materialized.

It was Kumú *Camempus, leader of the three major South American pantheons.

His manifestation took the form of a crystal skull, larger than a pyramid.

This mysterious, transparent skull looked as though it had been chiseled by divine hands from pure ice crystal. Its edges shimmered with silver light. Frost flowers clustered around its jawbone, and each tremor in the air seemed to trigger distant, haunted howls.

Inside the skull swirled seven indigo currents, converging at the temples into whirlpools of light—akin to ultra-dimensional glyphs.

Most unsettling of all was the bioluminescent fluid oozing from a fracture on the top of the skull. It slithered through the fissures like a living being, and all its mysterious power finally pooled within the hollow eye sockets.

Thousands of spirit threads extended from behind the skull—formed from soulstuff, woven with flesh, marked with thousands of inscriptions—fusing seamlessly with the eerie atmosphere.

Though the sockets were empty, they glowed with an eerie blue, as if gazing through all life and death from a higher dimension. The skull stared at Thalos's divine avatar with supreme disdain—like a superior being judging the primitive.

In terms of appearance alone, Kumú's theatrics were maxed out.

Truly worthy of standing atop the three great pantheons of the Americas.

Then the jawbone of the crystal skull opened, and Kumú spoke.

His deep voice reverberated across the battlefield:

"I am Kumú *Camempus—recognized leader of the Three Indian Pantheons! Supreme sovereign of this world!"

Thalos replied calmly:

"I am Thalos *Borson—God-King of the Eleven Realms of Ginnungagap!"

Kumú observed Thalos's divine image in silence for a long while before slowly speaking: "There's no need for our worlds to continue fighting."

Thalos responded with a cold smile: "Any power has the right to declare war. Declaring war is easy. Ending it—that's the hard part. Since you've started it, you no longer get to decide how it ends."

"Heh!" Kumú's crystal skull avatar sneered. "And what if I told you that my skull can not only predict the location of any world in the Chaos... but can forcefully prophesy the destruction of a world?"

The moment the words left his mouth, hearts across the Aesir army skipped a beat.

Prophecy—

A power mysterious beyond comprehension.

Unaffected by all laws.

Impossible to define, impossible to guard against.

The instant he said it, many Aesir gods—despite their recklessness—believed it.

Aesir weren't known for their brains. But they were smart enough to look at the expressions of their smarter kin—Thor, Freyr, Enki—and know Kumú wasn't bluffing.

Indeed, the damn Maya had ignored all Chaos interference and struck straight at Ginnungagap. That kind of maneuver was bug-level broken.

If Thalos hadn't deployed scouting gods far and wide ahead of time, Ginnungagap would've fallen into the trap too.

But this Doom Prophecy—capable of cursing an entire world into ruin?

Even just hearing it made their blood run cold.

Wait—could the Maya really destroy a world by prophecy?

Their eyes turned toward Thalos, filled with equal parts hope and dread.

Thalos just smiled.

Kumú scowled. "You don't believe me?"

"Oh, I believe you. But I also know—your so-called 'Doom Prophecy' can only target small worlds. It can't touch Ginnungagap's core. And I've got a hundred ways to swallow your prophecy whole."

"Wha—?!" This time, not only the Aesir gasped. Even among the Maya's own Nine Linked Gods, several wore shocked expressions.

Wait, what?

How did he know that?

Even they only half-understood the deepest secrets of Maya prophecy.

Impossible.

Absolutely impossible.

Kumú was stunned.

Now, with the momentum clearly lost, he knew brute force wouldn't win the day. One more push, and his pantheons would face utter annihilation.

His only hope had been strategic blackmail.

But Thalos—somehow—knew even that was a bluff.