

Thalos 265

Chapter 265: The Triumphal Anthem (Part 1)

At the convergence of the two great worlds, most of the terrain consisted of flat plains or beaches, with a few scattered hilly regions. But after the cataclysmic bombardment of the gods, even forests had been thinned into sparse clearings, and jagged piles of boulders had become part of an overall flattened field of rubble.

As the sun set in the west, the entire sky seemed tainted with the battlefield's thick, omnipresent scent of blood.

It couldn't be helped. Corpses numbering in the millions were heaped layer upon layer along a battlefield over 300 kilometers wide. Such a horrifying spectacle—unless a god of fire personally came to cleanse the land—would take anyone weeks to clear. And even more time—months, perhaps years—would be required to hunt down and eliminate the remaining faithful of the three defeated pantheons.

But that no longer mattered.

On the battlefield, the mortal soldiers had already begun to cheer in thunderous unison.

"Victory!"

"Long live Ginnungagap!"

"Praise the Aesir!"

"Glory to the Supreme God-King Thalos Paulson!"

The deafening cheers, like crashing waves and quaking mountains, marked the most perfect conclusion to this unparalleled world war.

It was hard to even imagine how the priests and bards would use the most elaborate and dramatic prose to exalt the glory of the God-King and their own pantheon.

In the skies, Freyr bowed slightly to Thalos. "Your Majesty, all divine enemies above the god-level have been eradicated. How should we deal with the mortal captives? Also... should we erase the Mayan script?"

Thalos gave a rough divine scan. Within his range of perception, the total number of Aztec, Maya, and Inca mortals exceeded ten million. While he could have them all slaughtered, it wasn't necessary—particularly since the Slavic gods and their mortal followers would have gladly acted as the executioners.

After all, everything had a cause and consequence.

Thalos would not forget that.

He was confident that even if he annihilated every ruling god in the Mayan world, it would not damage the world's cycle or balance. That was because his pantheon had the full array of divine functions, making seamless integration and world operation possible.

But slaughtering ten million captives would overwhelm even the underworld. It would undoubtedly disrupt the ecological balance of the entire world.

More importantly, Thalos himself would suffer severe karmic retribution.

With a thought, Thalos spoke calmly—a single decree that would determine the fate of an entire people. "Slaughtering them all would harm the world's balance. However, the Aztecs' crimes—slaughtering a hundred tribes and sacrificing the hearts of millions—cannot simply be erased. Here's what we'll do: all three peoples will be enslaved. They shall serve Ginnungagap for nine generations before earning their freedom. During this time, they are forbidden from using their native languages or writing systems. Runes shall become their official script, and integration shall begin at once."

Upon hearing this, Freyr was deeply relieved. "Your will shall be done."

The Aztecs, from top to bottom, had been utterly vile. Wiping out their gods and ruling classes was without question. But slaughtering ten million mortals... that was another matter. Looking at it from another angle—what if the Aesir were ever seen as just as brutal? Would other vassal gods start to worry they'd be next?

By comparison, Thalos' approach—integrating mortals and gods—was clearly the best solution.

As for erasing their writing, and even all memory of the Mayan world—rewriting history from the Aesir's perspective?

That was not a problem.

The war was over.

And across the two joined worlds, only the Aesir's victory hymn rang out!

The bold Aesir gods and giants sang in unison, using the clash of their blades and armor to echo the trumpet of triumph.

Meanwhile, word of the Aesir's complete annihilation of the Maya, Inca, and Aztec pantheons was spreading instantly to all eleven minor worlds of Ginnungagap via every major temple.

The entire Ginnungagap realm erupted in celebration!

Each major kingdom in every realm sent requests, begging the returning victorious army to march past their royal cities.

Thalos, gracious and generous, agreed to every one of them.

Though he, a god of the elements, had little need for mortal worship himself, the emergence of the Greater Aesir Pantheon brought in countless new gods and descendants. These new and lesser gods would inevitably take on domains closely tied to mortal life—and they did need to show themselves before the people.

Thus, the triumphant parade would follow one main route with twelve branching paths, ensuring that every major mortal city with a population of over ten thousand would witness the passage of the army.

The first stop on the main route was the city of Burgundy, located on the continent of Midgard.

Not that it had anything to do with France, but because, through "historical inertia," the great hero Siegfried had been born in a kingdom named Burgundy.

Delicate snowflakes danced in the cold sky, and the land was blanketed in white. In this silver-draped world, the triumphant trumpet sounded. Riding an enormous divine steed, God-King Thalos appeared before mortal eyes in the form of a golden-armored giant.

His majestic form, glowing with divine light that was both dazzling and gentle, caused the gathered masses on both sides of the road to bow with reverence and devotion.

Even though the people knew this was but one of the God-King's divine avatars...

Even so, an avatar of the God-King was still an object of mortal worship and awe.

Behind him, Valkyries in silver winged helmets rode their shimmering silver pegasi in proud formation.

Behind them, the armored Aesir gods—fresh from the divine battlefield—each sent a divine avatar to march in the procession.

Had this been a simple military parade, it would only have conveyed the gods' majesty and nobility.

But the key detail was this: the heads of enemy gods, tied to their waists or saddles, were all real.

Even though the wounds on their necks had long dried, the evil divine light that radiated from them kept mortals from daring to look too long. Most glanced only briefly before hurriedly averting their eyes.

That didn't stop the public from whispering excitedly.

"Did you hear? Those Aztec evil gods forced slaves to fight each other and then tore out the hearts of the losers to sacrifice to some evil sun god."

"I heard. My brother joined the expedition. He saw mass graves filled with sacrifice victims."

"The Aesir are so much better!"

"Yes! And there are so many new gods now!"

Every mortal's eyes were filled with fanaticism and reverence. Even after the parade had passed, they ran forward excitedly to touch the giant footprints left behind, as if following in the footsteps of their glorious gods and warriors.

There was no doubt—the Aesir's triumphant return had brought new hope and strength to this city.