

Thalos 267

Chapter 267: The Triumphal Anthem (Conclusion)

"Oh?" Thalos raised an eyebrow in mild surprise before quickly understanding Hel's request.

Nominally, Hel was his distant relative, but in truth, she understood well that even as a mere kinswoman, the authority she wielded was enormous.

With the rapid expansion of Ginnungagap's domains, now encompassing sixteen worlds, being the ruler of all the dead across them meant she held so much power that it could even pose a threat to the God-King himself.

Whether it was Loki, Hel, or Jörmungandr, their status was indeed a bit awkward. Their relation to Thalos wasn't exactly close, nor distant enough to be irrelevant.

If Ginnungagap grew even larger, the power of the underworld Hel controlled would become so vast that even she herself would fear holding onto it.

Rather than invite suspicion from the God-King, it was wiser to voluntarily delegate her power and play the role of a loyal vassal.

She intended to hand over the domains of Death and Eternal Rest to Elé and Scathach—both members of Thalos' inner court.

Surely the God-King wouldn't feel uneasy about that? Besides, he himself held part of the Death (Heroic Spirits) domain.

Thalos chuckled. "You're overthinking it, Hel."

Hel bowed her head silently.

"Very well. I'll take Quetzalcoatl. As for the soul-shells of Pachacamac and Skell, you may keep them for your use."

"Thank you, Your Majesty—" Hel's reply carried a saccharine tone, the trailing syllables cloyingly sweet. Her crescent-moon-shaped eyes gleamed with mirth—clearly, the goddess of death was in an excellent mood.

Collecting prestigious souls was Hel's greatest delight.

Of course, she wouldn't get the core souls—those of slain God-Kings would be used by Thalos to forge new World Swords.

But even without their cores, their shells would do just fine.

Imagine it: the gates of Helheim guarded by the shells of fallen God-Kings. Surely Thalos wouldn't assign such a role to them himself—but she, Hel, could.

Was that not a most glorious display of authority for a goddess of the underworld?

Understanding Hel's peculiar hobby, Thalos was left slightly speechless.

Still, quirks like these among his subordinates were not necessarily a bad thing.

After rewarding Hel, the next was Jörmungandr.

The World Serpent had no specific requests—only that it be allowed to roam freely in the new realms.

This was no small matter. A wandering World Serpent could trigger landslides and earthquakes across the mortal world. Usually, to avoid disturbing mortal life and the faith-driven gods, it remained deep underwater near Midgard or Vanaheim, either resting or feeding.

But if it now wished to explore, so be it. Let it serve as an instrument of awe to the defeated Aztec populations.

Thalos approved.

Next came Arthur's reward.

"Arthur, step forward!"

"Yes!" Arthur responded crisply, standing tall and saluting.

"Based on your merits, I hereby grant you the divine domain of Sword."

Everyone knew that godly domains such as Sky, Sun, Moon, and the elemental forces of Earth, Water, Fire, and Wind were eternal and the most potent sources of divine power.

The second tier included vast domains like War, Battle, and Light.

Domains like Sword and Spear belonged to the third tier—not the most coveted, but still valuable.

The real significance lay in Thalos' next words: "You are also permitted to appoint two subordinate gods."

That was the key.

Only major gods required subordinate deities.

This clearly meant Thalos intended to cultivate Arthur as a major deity.

Like Freyr and Enki before him, Arthur was a flagship example of a non-Aesir god being elevated to high status.

How could Arthur not be ecstatic?

"Thank you, Your Majesty!" His gratitude was utterly genuine.

The remaining honors were more perfunctory. Those with lesser merit received minor titles or artifacts.

After all, the bill was being footed by the Maya.

Once the rewards were distributed, the Hall of Joy naturally followed with celebration.

The dwarven musicians were well-versed in such occasions. At a snap of the conductor's fingers, the entire palace was filled with jubilant and lively music.

Tradition dictated that descended gods perform the celebratory dances.

But since Thalos had issued an annihilation order, not a single deity of the Maya, Inca, or Aztec pantheons survived. Even their god-servants were deemed beneath notice.

It wasn't that Thalos was deliberately prejudiced—but when Aztec women danced, it often resembled shamanic rituals more than graceful art.

How could that compare to the elegant dancing of the blonde, blue-eyed Slavic goddesses?

Unlike past times when surrendered goddesses danced with carefully crafted subservience, the dance troupe led by Siwa, goddess of love and beauty, exuded open admiration and delight. Their gazes sparkled with charm and sincerity, unhidden and unashamed.

Their style was more fiery and exuberant than the slower, more refined Celtic dance. Amid joyful melodies, Siwa and her companions sang and danced with vibrant grace.

In time with the rhythm, Siwa twirled her graceful form like a butterfly flitting between blossoms. She leapt lithely around Thalos, whose divine body was three times her height. At one moment, she slid beneath his giant arm like a snake; the next, she spiraled around his muscular thigh.

On the surface, she seemed a bold heroine challenging a titan.

In truth, she was a maiden openly courting a heroic God-King.

As Thalos shrank down to mortal size, the revelry in the Hall of Joy reached its peak.

"Ohhh! Go, Dad! Give me a little brother!" shouted Thor, leading the cheers.

The boisterous Thor truly didn't care.

Every time Thalos assimilated a new pantheon, he often favored a goddess from that realm. Whether it resulted in new gods depended on whether Ginnungagap gave its blessing.

And by all appearances—it would!

Perun and the other Slavic gods, watching Thalos hoist Siwa, all breathed a sigh of relief. It seemed the rumors were true—those who served the Aesir with dedication really could rise to prominence.

With the Maya triad destroyed, wasn't the Egyptian pantheon next?

The thought alone thrilled the Slavic gods. Some even whistled and clapped as they watched the bashful Siwa.

Thalos didn't hesitate—left arm holding Siwa, right arm clutching the huntress goddess Devana, he strode directly into the rear chambers.

This was the victor's privilege!

This was the reward of the Supreme God!

Kneeling before him with respectful, coquettish eyes, the two goddesses looked up in reverence, and Thalos felt utterly content.

To be honest, annihilating entire pantheons, razing temples, and severing worship lines incurred enormous karmic consequences.

And this wasn't just one world—but three entire divine systems.

Even with Ginnungagap supporting him, such actions would normally be avoided.

But since the Slavic gods—once slaves themselves—had willingly borne this immense karmic burden on his behalf, the consequences of consuming those worlds would fall largely on them.

That changed everything.

And so, Thalos had no qualms giving them a taste of true reward.