

Thalos 268

Chapter 268: "N-No, Stay Away!"

The revelry in the Hall of Joy lasted seven full days and nights, mirrored by grand celebrations across the mortal realms.

Amid such indulgent festivities, things got out of hand—Thor, of all people, led a group to swim in a pool of mead.

Afterward, Thalos gave Thor a warning.

The most dangerous thing in any society was the trickle-down effect: when decadence flowed from the top down, it became impossible to contain the ensuing corruption.

The wastefulness during the celebration could be overlooked, but once the festivities ended, both gods and mortals alike were surprised to see their God-King return to a state of calm self-discipline.

Humble in victory and free of arrogance—a rare and admirable trait for a God-King who had conquered multiple worlds with unmatched power.

Enki, Arthur, and other clever deities were deeply impressed.

After the integration of the Slavic gods into the Aesir pantheon, Thalos enacted a modest yet impactful reform.

He observed that with the expansion of the Aesir, internal cliques were becoming more apparent. Giants, Vanir remnants, and Jotun-sized goddesses naturally banded together as what new gods referred to as the "Titanic Faction." Meanwhile, gods with human-sized forms had begun to organize along cultural lines—Sumerians with Akkadians, Celts in their own bloc, and the Slavs forming another.

In terms of numbers, the human-sized gods already outnumbered the giant-sized faction.

If left unchecked, this imbalance could evolve into a form of systemic oppression and rebellion—something Thalos was determined to avoid.

Thus, he issued the "Law of Worship."

The central premise was that all mortal worship would now be categorized by function. Temples would follow suit.

In the early days of the Aesir, when there were only twenty to thirty gods, it was feasible to cram their statues into one temple. But now, with close to two hundred deities, no mortal town could afford the resources or space for such all-encompassing shrines.

Thalos ordered a complete overhaul of mortal worship practices, beginning with functional classification.

Every temple must first honor the God-King, followed by relevant functional deities and their subordinate gods.

For example, if a farmer wanted a bountiful harvest, he would worship Thalos first, then Freyr, the god of fertility, and Enki, the god of irrigation, followed by any local minor god.

With just two or three offerings, the farmer's needs would be fully covered.

At the same time, gods would receive divine power (faith) according to their function, linking giant-sized Freyr and human-sized Enki together in a shared stream of worship energy.

This structure blurred old boundaries between Vanir and Sumerian gods.

Through this method of redistributing divine power, Thalos dissolved and reassembled the power dynamics of old and new gods alike.

No, a god's origin couldn't be changed—but divine interests could realign them.

And most importantly—the cake had grown bigger.

Every new god entering Ginnungagap now gained several times more divine energy than they had in their previous worlds, even if they were relegated to third-tier domains.

And let's not forget—there were still three more worlds waiting to be consumed. The upper limit of divine energy was visibly expanding.

Whether old gods or new, no one had a reason to refuse.

Moreover, by refusing to integrate the Maya, Inca, and Aztec pantheons, Thalos had created a vast vacuum of divine positions.

Devouring four worlds was bound to be a long process.

First came the smallest: the Akkadian world. It took Ginnungagap about three months to absorb it.

Because the unlucky Akkadian world had been struck by a "mini-sun" attack, Thalos ultimately decided to dismantle it. The "well-done" terrain was transferred to reinforce Ginnungagap's barrier, specifically its shattered rocky defense layer. The remaining lands, about a third of the original, were deemed usable.

The surviving Akkadian gods knew they were lucky. Their treatment matched that of their Sumerian kin, and their continent was physically joined with the Sumerian one.

Anticipating the upcoming integration of three massive continents, Thalos raised the Sumerian landmass into Ginnungagap's middle tier, placing it adjacent to the southern edge of Midgard.

Thus, the middle realm now had:

The Celtic tri-isles to the north

The frozen giant world Jotunheim to the east

The Sumerian lands to the south

The ocean world of Vanaheim to the west

The lower tier retained Muspelheim (Fire), Niflheim (Mist), and Helheim (Underworld), while reserving vast space for the incoming trio of conquered worlds.

This was destined to be a long process.

First, Thalos communicated with the World Will, convincing it to dramatically expand the world's firmament and stretch its spatial capacity.

The larger the world, the greater the area of its world-barrier. That meant more surface to resist entropy from the Chaos Universe. Without the promise of future "feasts," Ginnungagap wouldn't have agreed to such expansion.

In the process of devouring other worlds, the scene resembled an apocalyptic disaster film from the victim's perspective.

"N-No, stay away from me!" cried the Incan world.

Unfortunately, Thalos' response was:

"Go ahead and scream. Scream all you want. No one's coming to save you."

The forcible merging of hostile worlds mirrored the horrors of an extinction-level catastrophe.

Since all Incan gods had been slain and most mortals relocated, the remaining few hiding deep in jungles had three months to come forward. When they didn't, Thalos simply ignored them.

The first to fall was the Incan world-barrier.

From a third-party perspective, the merging of barriers resembled a gale-force vacuum collapsing a bowl of gelatin.

With no more sky, the sun vanished. Darkness swallowed the entire world.

Next to be extracted was the element of water. The rapid depletion of oceans caused massive waves to engulf everything—ships, islands, even coastlines—all torn apart by the sucking vortex.

As the tide receded, the wind howled across the exposed seabeds, scraping the cliffs and rocks with eerie wails.

On a global scale, water vanished rapidly. Locally, monstrous whirlpools devoured everything, drowning the last flickers of mortal hope in shadow.

The Incan world struggled, but it had long since been entangled by thousands of massive roots from the World Tree.

Unless those roots were severed, freedom was impossible.

On the opposite side from Ginnungagap's invading roots, the Incan skies turned pitch black, covered in endless storm clouds—an embodiment of its hatred and grief.

Lightning slashed the sky. Thunder raged like wails from the abyss.

This was the world's final protest against being consumed.

But it was far too late.