

Thalos 293

Chapter 293: Another Free-for-All?

"Finally... is it here at last? I've been waiting so damn long!" Thalos actually let out a sigh of relief.

Though he didn't think a mere Fusang world could pose a real threat to the now-mighty Aesir pantheon, that rusting, stagnating feeling had been unpleasant.

Whether it was a pantheon or an organization, a clearly defined external enemy was necessary.

Once everyone acknowledged the presence of a major threat, they were more likely to endure personal losses for the sake of a united effort to eliminate that foe.

Compared to the now hyper-strengthened Aesir pantheon, the Fusang world alone couldn't even qualify as a proper opponent. Thalos knew this—though the rest of the gods might not.

With the exception of carefree Thor, most gods still maintained a healthy level of wariness.

And that... was ideal.

On the other hand, Thalos had long noticed the shifts beyond the Ginnungagap world.

Even if no enemy realm had yet appeared, the increasingly chaotic energy currents in the void were enough to give the old Ginnungagap—protected only by basic atmospheric shields—an existential crisis.

If the cosmic current speed used to be a 1, it was now at least a 5.

Yellow-brown chaotic energy shockwaves exploded through the deep purple void, condensing into countless clumps of chaotic energy, some blunt, some razor-sharp. Mixed among them were chunks of shattered stars, all slamming into the outer shield of the Ginnungagap world.

Some were even semi-solid, semi-liquid blobs of chaos energy.

With the added speed, even the simplest droplet could now deliver damage on the level of a siege ballista.

These droplets struck the outermost barriers of the world, sending ripples of light like rings across the surface. Within those soft blue pulses, one could faintly see shimmering runes—vague outlines of runic sigils that resembled thousands of half-lidded, divine eyes opening across the void.

In that instant, the outer guardian legions were fully alerted.

Numerous formation arrays flared with power, lifting solid stone fortifications upward to brace the barrier.

Sure enough, when the next wave of solidified chaotic material mixed with star debris struck, it detonated against the rocky shield, releasing a sound eerily like shattering glass.

But that wasn't the end.

Thick miasmas of chaotic energy attempted to seep inward through the crevices in the Luludanitum rock layers—but were scorched by raging fire elements before reaching the next wind-element layer.

Within the sky of flowing flame, a translucent mesh of dragon-scale defenses shimmered faintly, and one could almost glimpse a titanic figure—Surtr, the fire giant progenitor—swinging his sword of annihilation with berserk fury.

This was the second layer of the barrier, connected directly to the Muspelheim world.

The flames spun constantly, forming intricate concentric circles—like gear cogs grinding chaotic filth into nothingness.

After enduring both physical obstruction and searing incineration, some chaos energy still pressed forward, condensing into charred spheres that plummeted under gravity toward Ginnungagap's core, dragging comet-like trails of black smoke behind them.

What awaited them was the third layer: tens of thousands of lightning bolts forming a mobile defense array. The combined might of wind and lightning shredded the solidified chaos into fine black dust.

Only then were these particles gently absorbed by a thin layer of water, and carried via specially directed ocean currents to the World Tree's core.

Once filtered through barriers of earth, water, fire, and wind, this chaos energy could be absorbed by the World Tree at a rate a hundred times faster than before, and transformed into internal world energy.

On ordinary days, this entire defense and purification process was managed by a host of demigod-level divine attendants.

If something massive—like comet-scale chaos masses—hit, then alerts would escalate all the way to the subordinate gods, or even to major deities.

Thanks to this strict hierarchy and rotating shifts, the past ten years had seen a dramatic reduction in resource strain.

And when Thalos ran the numbers, he was astonished to realize that this whole situation was actually profitable for the world.

After all, not every God-King was a Thalos.

Few would ever construct four layers of world-scale shielding for the sake of their mortals.

From what he knew, most God-Kings didn't care if their mortals lived or died—let alone waste divine power protecting them. In the old days, unless chaos storms hit the divine realm directly, the gods would simply shrug and let mortals suffer.

Thalos didn't know what would happen to other worlds if they entered this faster-moving "deep-water zone" of the void and suffered similar impacts—but he did know that with his fourfold defenses, Ginnungagap was safe.

And this was just basic defense.

If needed, there were still the World Tree's root defenses and Thalos himself—the God of the Sky.

At present, the biggest vulnerability in the defense system remained the spatial cavities—those bizarre things that completely ignored elemental shielding.

Just as Thalos was listening to Brynhildr's report, he was interrupted—Anubis and Enki arrived together, requesting an audience.

"Your Majesty, I—"

Brynhildr started to step aside, but Thalos waved her off. "I have a feeling you're both here about the same thing."

Sure enough, moments later Anubis strode into the Palace of Silver, bowed, and spoke.

"Father, I've encountered a unique demon. Its soul resonance is markedly different from the usual Fusang yokai. I suspect it came through a spatial cavity from another world."

"Oh? Now that's interesting." Thalos replied with great amusement.

Anubis projected a mental image of the event.

It was a trial.

On the golden scales of judgment rested a soul steeped in sin.

Visually, this thing didn't look much different from Fusang-style yokai. But as Thalos viewed the creature through Anubis' divine extraction, the details were clear:

Under blood-red moonlight, black fog seeped from fissures in scorched earth, swirling around dead branches and leaves along a relatively normal rural path.

The demon—twisted in appearance—hovered in midair. Its brows jutted up like poisoned steel blades. Crimson mane curled around bone-carved trinkets at its neck. Its bulging eyes blazed with greedy malice that could pierce through darkness.

Even its look could send mortal souls into a panic.

Once it fixed on its prey, it dove in a flash—raking a farmer's chest with razor claws. Blood beaded and splattered into its grotesque mouth, which stretched from ear to ear.

Then came the familiar sequence of slaughter... and cannibalism.

There was no shortage of monsters that preyed on mortals. That wasn't the problem.

The key was this: when Anubis weighed the soul, the text that appeared wasn't Fusangese, but a language that even Enki, god of the sea of wisdom, couldn't decipher.

Enki bowed. "Your Majesty, it's likely this creature came from another world."

That possibility carried serious weight.

It implied they might be looking at another multi-world conflict—a fresh set of cosmic powers.

Last time, Thalos had dragged things out, using Gilgamesh to stoke the feud between Horus and Set, allowing Ginnungagap to neutralize the three Maya realms ahead of schedule.

Would he be lucky enough to pull that off again... this time?

Only time would tell.