

Thalos 297

Chapter 297: Onward to the Next Battlefield

Clearing an entire stretch of undefined space was clearly a thankless, exhausting task.

Since the Yamatai world had already set a precedent, why not follow their example?

Sure enough, Hela raised the question: "...I mean no disrespect to Your Majesty's decision. I'm simply curious. Please, indulge my curiosity."

Thalos nodded. "Your thought may reflect the doubts of others among us. If there's a shortcut, why take the hard way?"

At that, more than a few gods gave subtle nods.

Thalos raised one finger. "First—what works for other worlds might not work for us. Different world sizes, different numbers of gods, different barrier structures."

Many gods showed a flash of realization.

If everyone's trying to sneak through, then obviously a nimble little guy and a giant heavy one will face completely different levels of difficulty.

He raised a second finger. "Who dares assume the other two worlds' strategy was truly correct? Maybe they thought they'd broken through—but just outside our perception, they were swarmed by even more chaos demons and collapsed."

It's like infiltrating a heavily guarded fortress. Either go undetected, or kill everyone.

"Infiltration" is simple, crude, and brutally honest.

But if you're discovered, you better have the strength to take out every enemy.

Otherwise, entrusting the fate of thousands of divine beings and tens of millions of mortals to a little bait tactic? That's just laughable.

Imagine trying to steal a chicken and ending up dragging an entire trainload of chaos demons straight into your face—suicidal.

Then came the third finger: "Based on my estimation, there aren't many worlds left capable of facing us head-on."

If the pantheons present in this chaotic universe are all based on those once popular or still extant on Earth, there are only a handful that can threaten the current supercharged Aesir.

It's either the Chinese pantheon, or the Greek.

And deep down, Thalos felt the odds of meeting the Chinese pantheon were slim.

They were simply too powerful—high-magic, high-martial. They had a supply of "three thousand worlds," as their mythology often claimed. Not even in the same league as the Aesir.

If the Chinese gods truly existed here, they'd probably already carved through the entire chaotic universe.

So unless it's them, Thalos reasoned, as long as they advanced steadily, winning this global pantheon-scale battle royale was only a matter of time.

Why take unnecessary risks when playing it safe almost guarantees victory?

After hearing Thalos's three points, Hela was convinced.

As always, it's only those with nothing to lose who throw everything into a desperate gamble. Those with great wealth and power—can't afford to lose.

The deeper your foundation, the less you can afford to go all-in on a whim.

And besides, steady doesn't mean weak.

For a small world, dealing with this many chaos demons this frequently would cost an obscene amount of order energy—a catastrophic loss.

But not for Ginnungagap.

Yggdrasil, the World Tree, was naturally capable of absorbing and breaking down chaotic energy into order energy.

That's the core trait of a tree-world.

Unless the influx of chaos energy exceeded its processing limit, Ginnungagap wouldn't suffer a net loss.

And don't forget—Yggdrasil had grown four times larger since the days it only held nine worlds!

Its chaos-absorption capacity had likewise grown fourfold.

What other small worlds couldn't do, Yggdrasil could.

For it, devouring chaos demons merely meant a drop in the usual order-energy gain—not a drain.

Especially with Thalos's multi-stage decomposition strategy, which eased the World Tree's workload substantially.

The only thing he had to watch was the balance in using the four elemental energies.

Despite their agricultural self-sufficiency, the Aesir were still warriors at heart. A divine faction born through conquest would never truly forget its battle-hardened nature.

Old gods might scoff at the chaos demons in public, but in private, they were eager to deploy avatars to the bait-worlds.

Even Pellen and Horus's once "tragic" mission was quickly "rotated" by the eager Sumerian and Celtic gods.

To keep the fishing game going, Thalos spared no effort. He selected a second abandoned world in nearby space—roughly 10,000 square kilometers—and remodeled it.

After three months, it was outfitted with a standard atmosphere and basic water and fire elements.

Now, there were two bait-worlds.

One casts the lure, the other reels it in.

Countless chaos demons were tricked in and crushed to pulp by Yggdrasil's massive roots. Easily digestible parts were absorbed; the rest was dumped as trash into the endless cosmic void as Ginnungagap pushed forward.

After six months of constant, large-scale cosmic fishing—the results finally came.

In the Silver Palace that day...

Brynhildr stepped forward with a thick stack of reports.

"Reporting to Your Majesty—chaos demon density has shown a significant decline compared to last month. Each 'fishing run' yields 20% fewer captured enemies, cycle over cycle. Our scouts can now safely explore within a 100,000-kilometer radius, and chaos demon density has clearly decreased."

She flipped to the next page. "On the other hand, spatial cavities from Yamatai and unknown worlds have spiked—up 310% year over year!"

"Oh?" Thalos let out an amused hum.

He exchanged glances with Enki, Hela, and the other core gods—all of whom nodded in agreement.

Fewer chaos demons also meant fewer were intercepting incoming spatial cavities.

But Thalos was more interested in another number—the total number of Yamatai spatial cavities had exceeded 10,000.

Thalos couldn't help but speculate maliciously: Did Yamatai tear itself to pieces trying to avoid chaos demons? Did they offer up so many parts of themselves they've become crippled?

The gods didn't know—and Thalos only vaguely recalled that Yamatai had four main islands, plus thousands of smaller ones.

Even if each one could be dismantled into a spatial cavity in this universe, surely after this long they'd be nearing the core four?

Of course, that was just Thalos being petty.

He would never underestimate an enemy—or waste time playing chess with air.

At his signal, Hathor swiftly presented a glass of red wine.

"Everyone," Thalos said with a smile, "our long preparation is finally over. It's time to reap the harvest. Let's break through this fog—and see what new battlefield awaits us ahead."

Thor, eyes blazing, couldn't hold back: "Father, I've been waiting for this moment!"