

Thalos 298

Chapter 298: A Duel of Wagers?

A massive, elliptical world cut through the center of the chaotic vortex. Whether it was the peanut-shaped rocky outer shell ahead, or the writhing roots of the World Tree stretching out and lashing at the void, this behemoth—measured in tens of thousands of kilometers—looked every bit like the most terrifying meat grinder in existence.

Countless chaos demons hurled themselves at it, only to be swiftly torn to shreds by the ever-shifting shell, their remains scattered once again into the swirling chaos of the universe.

At the same time, hundreds of thousands of divine "Eyes of Power" pulsed with a deep blue glow across the shell, tirelessly scanning the void.

In theory, divine energy is limitless—but even gods grow weary from prolonged watch duty.

Thalos's solution had been to recruit vast numbers of mortals to serve as divine attendants, allowing them into the newly constructed Asgard Monitoring Center, which divided the outer shell of Ginnungagap into 108 sectors. Each sector had its own command group, monitoring activities in shifts, reporting any threats to higher officers. The Valkyries served as supervisors and had the authority to directly intervene at any level.

These mortal operators worked in three shifts, coordinating closely with the corresponding divine defense teams to ensure that every single chaos demon was turned into floating debris the instant it appeared.

Ginnungagap no longer sat still. As it continued forward along the cosmic current and pushed through the chaotic ambush zone, the space ahead suddenly opened up.

The chaotic energy, once wildly turbulent, now slowed and weakened. Though it still tugged at the world's barrier, the frequency and destructive force had noticeably dropped.

The sheer scale of Ginnungagap made it look like it was plowing through chaos, leaving behind a massive tail like a comet's. It was so immense that even at its calmest, it carved a trail through the universe—like forging a new Milky Way in a realm that had none.

Just then, a report came from the forward-deployed Akkadian outpost.

Pellen's avatar: "Reporting, Your Majesty. I've detected a change in the laws."

"A change in the laws?" Thalos frowned slightly.

"There are fewer chaos demons now, but far more spatial cavities have linked to our outpost. We were handling things as usual—until one of our heroic spirits was defeated by an invading wraith..."

Pellen transmitted a divine projection of the incident, and Thalos's frown deepened.

It looked like a simple sand pit.

Upon closer inspection, one could see that the sand was wind-blown, covering something underneath. When Pellen used divine power to sweep away the top layer, a glassy fusion boundary was revealed—almost as if the sand had once been burned into glass.

But that wasn't what happened.

When sand blew over the pit, it seemed to be pulled into a vortex. Countless grains swirled unnaturally in midair, their trajectories twisted and bizarre.

Scathach stared at the image and muttered, "Space."

Exactly—space.

It was as if some new law had emerged and carved out an entire sphere of ground, sand, and air from this world—removing it completely.

Time. Space. Fate.

The three most mysterious forces in all of godhood.

Faced with such strange laws, Pellen could do nothing.

After all, even gods weren't omnipotent. Pellen had been a god of thunder and war—now he'd been temporarily labeled a "god of exploration." But this kind of phenomenon was far beyond his field.

Thalos's gaze swept over the steps beneath the divine throne. "Speak, all of you."

Surprisingly, Loki was the first to respond: "Your Majesty, could it be that we've never experienced this before simply because we've never lost a battle against the Yamatai demons?"

Thalos's mouth twitched slightly.

So that's the loneliness of being undefeated.

Because they had never lost, they never knew what would happen if they did.

Victory had become expected—and when defeat finally came, even once, the price could be unbearable.

Enki interjected: "Did this rule exist from the beginning—where the victor always carved away part of the world as a new cavity—or is this something new, unique to this region of space?"

His question had no answer.

What happened with Pellen's unit served as a dire warning for the entire Aesir pantheon.

And it didn't take long before the other bait-world, the Egyptian outpost, experienced something similar.

Horus's avatar sent back a message, tone filled with regret: "Apologies, Your Majesty. Despite repeated warnings, a divine attendant appears to have been defeated after a brief fight... and this is what happened."

This time, the divine projection was even clearer.

It was a pyramid.

Roughly ten meters above the ground, a thirty-meter-wide void had appeared—as if a giant had scooped out a piece of ice cream.

It was surreal.

Don't underestimate a pyramid—each stone weighed over ten tons.

They were so massive and closely fitted that not even a root of Yggdrasil, similar in size, could shatter them with one blow.

The stones were interlocked so tightly you couldn't slide a blade between them.

And this pyramid was under divine guard. Even if not fully infused with divine power, the god's divine sense permeated the structure. It couldn't be stolen so easily.

Seeing this, Thalos narrowed his eyes. "It really is a law."

That's when Gilgamesh stepped forward. "Father, I sensed the presence of a law of exchange."

"Exchange?"

"Yes—a wager."

As the god of wealth and treasures, Gilgamesh was also the de facto god of commerce. His insight carried weight.

Thalos asked, "What kind of wager?"

"A duel wager."

"Gambling...?"

A duel in which both sides fought with everything, staking their honor, wealth, or other assets.

That would indeed fall under Gilgamesh's domain.

Thalos began analyzing.

Ginnungagap had stopped advancing again, and it was always the bait-worlds that suffered.

So far, only they had been affected. But if the main world were suddenly gouged out in a critical area—like the core region where Yggdrasil processed chaotic energy—the consequences would be disastrous.

At that moment, King Arthur stepped forward. After a respectful bow, he suggested, "Your Majesty, since it seems only mortals or demigods have been targeted so far—and the gods themselves have not been disturbed—perhaps we could send a number of mortal heroes to the forward bases. See what happens."

"Approved."

Divine status was precious. Even demigod slots were becoming harder to come by.

For mortals to transcend birth, aging, sickness, and death and become immortal was growing ever more difficult.

You could become a heroic spirit, but then your growth potential was capped.

Arthur's knights had long passed their prime as warriors. Though many had been elevated to demigod status, it had become a burden.

Now, his mission was to push as many of them as possible onto the path of godhood—even if only as minor gods.