

Thalos 301

Chapter 301

In ancient times, students of the Celestial Empire had to agonize over math problems involving a tank filling and draining at the same time—how long would it take to empty?

Modern-day Yamatai students? They solve problems like: if a world keeps slicing off pieces while regenerating just as fast, how long until it's completely eaten?

When it comes to bizarre logic, leave it to Little Yamatai.

"If it really comes down to it, I suppose I wouldn't mind watching Yamatai perform one of their traditional arts—seppuku," Thalos muttered to himself with an amused sneer.

"Your Majesty, what did you say?" Freyja asked, standing beside him.

"Nothing. I just find that world... ridiculous."

Ridiculous?

Yes. Very.

But it wasn't funny when you realized that if they hadn't reinforced their own world barrier, they might have ended up just like that.

Back when Thalos proposed transforming Ginnungagap's outer shell into a solid crust of near-Luludanitum-grade compressed earth, many gods had objected.

They argued that such a vast quantity of earth element was being wasted. Why not use it to form two more continents, raise more mortals, and further empower the gods?

At the time, that argument had some traction.

Thalos, using his authority, squashed the debate completely.

He remembered how much Geb, the Egyptian god of the earth, had suffered to build it. The poor deity worked 24/7 without pause, nearly puking up his divine essence in the process. It had been pure hell.

But now? He was thrilled.

Battlefield results proved it: those rock-hard layers of compressed earth were outstanding at repelling chaos demon assaults.

For that alone, Geb had been promoted to Ginnungagap's acting god of the earth.

Thalos kept the title "acting" on purpose—he wasn't about to hand over such a core elemental domain to a subordinate so easily.

Even so, Geb now held the highest real authority among the Egyptian pantheon.

...Anyway, back to the topic.

Discovering a world cluster led by Yamatai was already a major revelation.

But not long after, another shock hit—another cluster had been found deeper in the chaos beyond Yamatai.

Unlike Yamatai's "prayer-bead" arrangement, this one looked like a giant pile of...

Cow dung.

At its center, the world's barrier was oozing massive amounts of earth element, and the cluster looked like a heap of poop shoved into a toilet—disgustingly tight and somehow still "clean and hygienic."

Even crazier, the filthy, muddy waters around it had formed a dynamic barrier, capable of drowning chaos demons that got too close.

This cluster wasn't shedding "meat" like Yamatai, but the worlds inside were constantly tearing at each other.

Thalos had Venus Angels observe it up close for days, and confirmed it: this wasn't speculation—it was fact. The worlds were so tightly packed that their barriers were under extreme stress. When chaos energy surged, it leaked heavily into adjacent worlds, severely damaging sky-element domains in the process.

The situation reminded Thalos of a certain political system: confederation.

Unlike federations, where there's at least a nominal leader, confederations had none. In theory, everyone shared power—but in practice, it meant you had to pay tolls just to enter another province, and everything from language to religion changed the moment you crossed a border. Internal skirmishes were a regular occurrence.

After hearing Thalos's analogy, even the Aesir gods were baffled.

Thor scratched his head. "Different beliefs jammed together, and they're still cooperating? Everything needs a vote?"

Frey looked bewildered. "Even when facing external threats?"

Only Horus, still relatively new to the Aesir, could imagine it. "If I had to collaborate with that bastard Set to fight off an invader, I'd probably vomit."

With Horus's misery as a reference, the gods finally got it.

It was the classic stalemate: evenly matched powers, unable to conquer each other, left with no choice but to define borders and tolerate each other's existence.

Externally united, but internally a mess.

Thalos saw the puzzled looks and had to laugh. This Aesir pantheon had changed completely—none of them could even imagine what a fragmented divine system was anymore.

In Norse myth, had Odin failed to conquer the Vanir, and instead had to marry into their ranks and negotiate with gods like Ægir to maintain a fragile merger, the result would have been an ever-growing patchwork pantheon—a scattered, fractious alliance with no center, ripe to be crushed by a more cohesive divine system.

Sarcasm aside, everyone still looked to Thalos to make the call.

"Probing them is still necessary," he said after a moment's thought. "Don't be fooled by how damaged they look. With their world mass, they could stalemate each other for a century and still not collapse."

Ginnungagap could certainly hide outside their detection range and wait them out.

But holding position in reverse currents consumed serious energy. Better to give things a push now.

With a wave of Thalos's hand, two disposable mini-worlds were pushed forward.

No matter what, their presence stirred the pot.

Fragments cut from larger worlds drifted toward the bait-realms in the form of spatial cavities.

These cavities couldn't be seen from normal dimensions, but the constant battle reports from Little Egypt and Little Akkad confirmed it: fighting had begun.

For three straight days, the frequency of battles and volume of captured elemental energy rose sharply.

It was insane. A ten-thousand-square-kilometer realm had doubled in size in just days.

If you ignored the abandoned torii gates and Yamatai-style wooden houses popping up in the desert, this was a huge win. Overall element quantity was increasing, after all.

Now, Pellen and Horus's avatars were requesting further instructions.

"Your Majesty," came the report, "after absorbing the four elemental forces from those cavities, this small world requires corresponding gods to manage the free-floating elements. Otherwise, they'll behave like chaos energy."

"Oh, that's fine," Thalos replied casually.

After conquering so many pantheons, what kind of basic elemental gods did they not have?

There were no divine domains left vacant—only too many gods fighting for positions.

And the more core the domain, the more gods were eyeing it.

At this point, not only were they willing to work hard—they'd work for free just to get noticed.

Everyone knew: do well, and even being promoted to a minor god of some field meant climbing the ladder.

And honestly, who in the Aesir wasn't one of Thalos's subordinate gods?

Thalos turned his head—and sure enough, a crowd of newly ascended gods had already stepped forward, silently kneeling in perfect rows.