

Thalos 306

Chapter 306: Did I Just Stoke the Flames?

Thalos' speech wasn't over yet:

"The universe I envision... it should have an endless starry sky, where one can see celestial bodies billions of kilometers away—not a view drowned in churning chaos energy."

"The universe I envision... shouldn't be like this, controlled by the invisible hand of fate, forcing pantheons to war against one another."

"The universe I envision... should be a place where all kinds of races can thrive and multiply, not where we're constantly harassed by chaotic monsters."

"The universe I envision..."

He went on listing vision after vision, until finally he circled back to his point.

"My dreams are grand—perhaps even distant. But whether mortal or divine, one must have a dream. And I believe these dreams don't conflict with the very real joys of sensing the divine throne beneath you, feeling the kiss of a descending goddess, hearing the cheers of billions of believers, or reigning as the king of a world."

Finishing his thoughts, Thalos drained the wine from his goblet.

The gods were deeply shaken.

Had Thalos spoken only of himself, all of it might've been brushed off as false humility cloaked in greatness.

But when he stretched his goal to the entire chaotic universe?

That changed everything. Even a world-king became insignificant.

In this vast, corrupted cosmos, even gods had to work hard just to perceive their surroundings. Mortals couldn't see more than a hundred meters through the chaos; even most mid-tier deities struggled to sense beyond a hundred kilometers. Only with intense training and tightly condensed divine will could they stretch their awareness to distances measured in thousands of kilometers.

Even Thalos—the acknowledged strongest—needed legions of soul-shell relays to act as divine repeaters.

It was exhausting.

But what if the chaotic universe were cleansed by order?

Wouldn't the cosmos become infinitely broader?

Thalos was at the peak of divinity and yet radiated no staleness or fatigue. For gods seeking ambition, this was a blessing.

He pursued greatness, which meant they could rise higher too.

He offered peace to gods who loved serenity, battle to gods who craved war, thrones to gods who sought power.

Who else could be emperor of the gods, if not him?

The gods felt something stir in their throats—not words, not breath, but something more primal, like the molten pressure before a volcanic eruption.

Thor, the god of revelry, was the first to raise his goblet.

"To our glorious Majesty!"

Hela joined in. "To Ginnungagap's future!"

Freyr: "To a peaceful universe—!"

The gods raised their goblets as one: "To victory—!"

Endless talents, countless hours, and boundless voices converged into a tide of will—a divine resistance against the chaotic cosmos.

Blood boiled in divine veins, and excitement burst forth in radiant divine thoughts, echoing through the palace and bleeding into the mortal realm—where oracles and mad prophets dreamt of the gods' revelations.

Gods howled and danced and let loose their joy.

But in the center of it all, Thalos' heart grew calm.

His gaze pierced through time itself and glimpsed the future—

He saw the Yamatai world groaning under the Aesir's iron might.

He saw worlds scorched and reborn as part of Ginnungagap.

He saw billions of subjects marching toward victory after victory.

He saw mortals' fates rewritten, and all intelligent life finding its place in this epic divine saga.

And when all was said and done...

A true cosmos of order was born—

Thalos swirled the wine in his goblet, inhaling its fragrance before drinking it down in one smooth motion.

In his mind's eye, he could see the bearded face of Zeus.

He muttered, almost to himself, "Until the day I finally defeat you... I will remain humble."

But no matter how you looked at it—Pellen using the miniature Arcadian world to kidnap the Thousand-Island World had stirred the pot.

Unlike the conflicted and hesitant Yamatai pantheon, the neighboring other world cluster saw this incident in an entirely different light.

"What? A demon took an entire world from the other side?!"

A thunderous voice boomed from a temple built into a towering mountain.

Massive bronze doors quaked under the force of the voice. The sulfuric air leaking through the seams burned the nostrils of mortal temple attendants.

They were used to it.

Compared to their temperamental main god, they much preferred studying the stone steps carved with dancing, snake-tailed four-armed depictions of Shiva.

Inside the flickering firelight of the temple, the murals cast giant shadows of cosmic destruction upon the polished stone walls.

By a crimson divine throne, a golden-eyed white bull knelt in silence.

And upon that throne sat a god more striking than any—Shiva.

Three eyes, four arms, holding a trident, conch, water jar, and drum. Draped in beast skins and smeared in ash, the supreme deity of the Hindu pantheon sat in fury.

As his roar echoed, a cold slither passed over his ankle—a cobra coiled up his bare foot and hissed toward a nearby fire basin.

In response, the ash-filled altar burst open, spewing clouds of dust that, impossibly, reassembled midair.

The ash formed a detailed holographic scene, depicting the Thousand-Island World's encounter with the Arcadian decoy world, their three-day clash, and the entire world being dragged away.

"Damn demons!" Shiva roared, the third eye on his brow twitching violently, as though moments from unleashing its annihilating beam.

From below, a kindly figure stepped forward—Ganesha, elephant-headed god of wisdom and one of the few who could soothe Shiva's wrath.

"Calm down, Father!" he pleaded. "This is all too strange. We should wait and see how the Yamatai pantheon reacts first."

"Wait?! Those useless worms couldn't even handle a bunch of demons! What—wait until their whole realm is devoured and then let the chaos spawn come feast on ours next?!"

"At least wait for Brahma and Vishnu—"

"I won't wait! I'll lead our hosts myself! If Yamatai is destined for destruction, let it be destroyed by me!"

And just like that, Shiva led a coalition of minor worlds and launched an invasion against the Yamatai world cluster.

This left Thalos and his court absolutely stunned.

Thalos blinked in confusion.

"Wait... shouldn't they have at least sent a few scouts to check us out first? Why are they suddenly charging in like this? Did I... accidentally stir up a war between two rival pantheons?"

He frowned.

"...Did I just stoke the flames?"