

Thalos 309

Chapter 309: Let's Have a Blazing Three-Way War

"Ah?" Several core deities gasped in surprise.

But the moment they thought it through, they realized His Majesty was absolutely right—think back to the Ragnarök of old: the worlds were invaded by chaos, the World Tree's core nearly half-corrupted, and all manner of colossal monsters were born from it—like the Kraken, like Nidhogg.

Now, the two great world clusters were indeed at war, yet the chaos demons continued invading as usual. Under normal circumstances, so many gods being slain would weaken their respective worlds' order and cause a gradual descent into chaos.

But now, the chaos demons were invading... without the worlds themselves showing signs of corruption.

That in itself proved a terrifying truth: a large number of chaos demons were clearly under control.

As realization dawned, the assembled gods were struck not just with clarity—but with shame.

Each and every one of them—except for Thor—had always considered themselves masters of wisdom. That's why the God-King had appointed them as his advisors.

And yet none of them had noticed something was wrong!

Enki took the lead, bowing with sincerity. "Your Majesty, we failed to consider this. We apologize."

The other core gods followed suit.

That's how it was: it was one thing to praise the God-King's unmatched brilliance on a normal day. But when everything was left to him to think through—what use were the advisors then? Just freeloaders?

And who respects a freeloader?

Gilgamesh frowned. "But... that still doesn't explain the fall of their subsidiary worlds."

Newly elevated to the core god circle, Perun responded solemnly, "Prince, don't assume every god pantheon treats conquered deities with respect."

Gilgamesh's handsome face flushed. But he instantly understood. Yes, he was arrogant—but only toward fools. When it came to genuine wisdom and worthy individuals, he had nothing but respect. He bowed to Perun. "I was thoughtless."

"It's just that Your Highness lacks firsthand experience," Perun said graciously.

He was right. If you'd never been a slave god, you simply couldn't understand what it meant to live like a dog—even while being technically divine.

Perun's words opened a new path of thought for the gathered gods.

Thor grimaced. "So you're saying this Shiva fellow might've used enemy gods and their worlds as sacrificial offerings to gain the loyalty of chaos demons? That sounds awfully like something Odin would do."

All these years later, Thor still refused to call Odin "uncle."

Tyr quipped, "Maybe Odin is this so-called Shiva."

Honestly... that really would explain a lot.

Even Thalos couldn't help but chuckle. "Pfft."

"Father..." Thor muttered helplessly.

"No, I just... I imagined that idiot brother of mine with three eyes, four arms, and knowledge of 108 traditional dances—and I couldn't help it."

For once, with the God-King leading the laughter, the hall broke into hearty chuckles.

It really was hilarious—Odin, that one-eyed, two-handed brute, who once had a cluster of chaotic eyes crammed into his socket during his darkest time—transformed into some singing, dancing destruction god? The image was just too absurd.

Besides, being able to sing and dance was practically the signature skill of goddesses who surrendered. Ancient Gullveig had had the worst rhythm imaginable and still ended up nailing her routines...

But enough of that.

Everyone expected Odin to pull some kind of madness. It's just... no one could connect him with choreography. It was too much of a stretch.

Still, there was one thing that gave Thalos pause—Odin had escaped using the identity of Camazotz, a rage god from the Maya pantheon. He and his South American cohort had clear Indigenous American traits. They had nothing in common with Indian or Yamatai gods.

If Odin were acting alone, that'd be one thing. But he had an entire retinue of subordinate gods.

And knowing Odin, there was no way he'd be content licking the boots of the Indian Trimurti or the Yamatai Three Noble Children.

Those six divine figures, after all, had no canonical deaths in mythology—no moments of divine vulnerability. Without those, Odin couldn't possess them.

Too far-fetched.

Thalos shook off the thought and refocused. "Let's set Odin aside for now. What matters is this—if the victor between India and Yamatai ends up controlling legions of chaos demons, how are we going to respond?"

The gods finally sobered up, serious expressions overtaking their earlier levity.

As usual, it was Enki who stepped up as the voice of speculation. "Have you noticed? Ever since we entered this star domain, its laws have been... different. Unless we deliberately modify world-laws to resist, this domain seems to emphasize duels... and wagering."

He was absolutely right.

The gods hadn't forgotten how, during that prior spatial cavity invasion, the invading demons challenged sub-divine guardians to single combat. The victor took space; the loser left behind a spatial cavity.

A bet, essentially.

They had thought it an isolated incident.

Now it seemed... it wasn't.

Hela supported her chin with one hand, elbow propped in the other. "Could it be that... sacrificing enemy lives and souls grants the loyalty of equivalent chaos demons?"

Horus, steeped in knowledge of death and the afterlife, finally spoke: "Your Majesty, everyone—do you remember the Grave of Worlds we passed earlier? If life and death can cycle, and our World Tree can convert chaos into order, then... isn't it possible that chaos-corrupted entities could be converted back into beings of order?"

The gods all shivered.

In a divine reality, nothing was impossible.

Remember how terrifying chaos-corrupted Odin had been during Ragnarok? His soul, even after escaping to the Celtic world, managed to reconstitute itself.

If the Grave of Worlds housed chaos gods under Indian or Yamatai control... even the mighty Aesir had reason to fear.

The balance of power had shifted.

Perun, ever the voice of brutal experience, stepped forward again. "Your Majesty, if I were the Maya god-king... I'd gladly sacrifice any of my disobedient slave gods. Trade them away for a batch of loyal chaos-warriors. Far more effective."

This time, everyone's minds truly opened.

It all made sense now.

Perun's earlier defeat? That was just against a ragtag band of non-primate gods.

Everyone knew: when a conquering pantheon failed to fully integrate the conquered gods—failed to give them proper status—what resulted was a bunch of superficially obedient but deeply disloyal time bombs.

Look at Yamatai.

All those tribute pantheons who claimed loyalty? When the moment came, they were useless.

If chaos gods could be cleansed and turned obedient—wasn't that way more valuable than a bunch of duplicitous "vassals" like Batara?

After a round of discussion, most agreed this was likely the true nature of this star domain's law.

But no one dared claim absolute certainty.

If the Aesir ran a parliamentary system, now would come the voting session.

And frankly, parliamentary systems were the worst—everyone shared responsibility, so no one could be blamed. It was always the will of the group.

By contrast, absolute monarchies put all the responsibility on one ruler—but also bestowed the highest glory and authority.

Facing the eyes of his core gods, Thalos smiled faintly.

"Very well," he declared. "Then let us ignite a blazing three-way war."