

Thalos 313

Chapter 313: Resurrection Match

Aside from Hel, Elé, and Scáthach—who were legitimate death gods—no one noticed when Thalos redeemed that first chaos demon, he discreetly released a high-quality soul into the chaotic universe.

Such was the rule of this starfield.

To redeem a soul fallen into chaos, you had to offer a stronger soul from the side of order in return.

At first glance, it looked like Thalos had suffered a loss.

But in truth, he had simply done what Shiva and Amaterasu had also done—exchanging a disobedient soul under his command for one more compliant.

After all, willpower is notoriously difficult to subdue. The stronger the soul, the more defiant the will.

Though Thalos had killed countless hostile deities and beasts, he had never used brainwashing or control magic to dominate their souls. His method was to erase their consciousness entirely. When needed, he would take direct control with divine thought; when not, he'd lace their soulless remnants with layers of passive trigger-curses, ensuring that any anomaly would immediately alert him to take over.

So, the soul he used just now had originally been one of the defeated ones imprisoned by Hel in the Underworld. Of course, it was still his—Hel was merely a warden of sorts, managing the massive spiritual prison on his behalf.

Now, with the first successful case as precedent, the tens of thousands of chaotic souls on the other side grew restless.

They whispered among themselves in languages Thalos didn't understand, exchanging broken phrases and fragmented thoughts.

Then, a different voice cut through the din.

"I used to be the god of #@!\... Set me free and grant me a divine throne. I'll slaughter all your enemies!" The speaker was a four-armed chaos demon with an insect-like head and massive pincer jaws.

Thalos projected a towering phantom image a thousand meters tall, and all the chaos demons could clearly see the cruel smile on his face.

The loudmouthed demon suddenly screamed in terror and tried to flee, shoving past fellow souls in a mad scramble.

Thalos raised a hand.

A divine breeze stirred, and the soul-wind—normally confined within the world barrier—burst outward, forming a raging spiritual storm. It swallowed the beastlike god entirely.

Next moment, tens of thousands of soul-blades erupted from the vortex, slicing the creature's spirit and essence into shreds.

Within seconds, it had become nothing more than thick soul mist—utterly annihilated from the chaotic universe.

"Let me be clear," Thalos said coldly, "My Aesir pantheon doesn't need the power of you pathetic failures to clear this starfield."

But then his voice rose, shaking the cosmos:

"However, I am the protector of order! The ruler of the sixteen realms of Ginnungagap! If anyone dares mistake my mercy for weakness... that thing's fate shall be your future!"

Thalos' phantom image spread its arms, growing even larger—now dozens of kilometers tall.

And with it, he unleashed his unrestrained divine power.

The mere soul-shockwave from his power swept the entire spirit realm like an apocalyptic storm.

"In Ginnungagap, my word is law! My will is absolute!"

As his final word echoed into silence, the illusory land conjured by his soul energy sprouted faint, illusory sprouts.

At some point, the once-chaotic mob of demons had formed into a disciplined line—a line so long it stretched beyond the horizon, like a river of stars from the perspective of the spirit realm.

If these forsaken souls had fallen into the eighteen hells of chaos, then Thalos was their sun—shedding light on a sky they had never dared to dream of.

He had wielded both the stick and the carrot. Now, it was time for the rest to take over.

Thalos clapped Anubis on the shoulder. "I leave the rest to you. As long as they're not too outrageous, let them through."

"Yes, Father," Anubis said respectfully.

By his standards, the entire chaos demon species should be purged.

Any who had survived this long—whether they still retained some reason or not—had hands soaked in blood.

And he was right.

Few of the souls he weighed on his Scales of Judgment were not overweight with sin. He had to repeatedly change his soul-counterweights just to make the approval rate look halfway decent.

Even after shamelessly lowering the bar, the pass rate was still less than ten percent.

Which was perfect.

It allowed the Aesir to recruit only those souls truly worthy, while silencing any objections from more conservative deities.

As for the bargaining chips? What a joke.

The Aesir had conquered countless pantheons and slain countless gods. As long as their souls remained, they were all imprisoned in Helheim. Especially the three Maya pantheons—whole divine families, kept together in neat little rows—still dreaming that one day Thalos would be forced to come begging for their help to repel invaders.

Well, guess what?

Now, those very souls—no matter how noble or proud they had once been—were crying and screaming as Hel tossed them out one by one in exchange.

Before long, the first redeemed god-soul stepped forward.

In the Halls of the Valorous Dead, Thalos stood before the figure kneeling on the floor.

"Daughter of Grimechiu—holder of the \\[War God] divine office—Nanai, greets her Lord..."

It took her nearly a full minute to finish her greeting—not due to language, but because her damaged soul had glitches in its speech functions.

A quick scan told Thalos she was from a now-destroyed Caucasus pantheon.

In other words, another obscure and relatively useless divine line.

She and her kin had lost their war ages ago. Though they'd arrived in this starfield long before the Indian and Yamatai gods, they couldn't even defeat the chaos demons and were annihilated outright.

Pathetic.

Thalos didn't care how "qualified" she was to be called a god of war.

These days, unless it was a deity he remembered from before his transmigration, he only bothered collecting them out of habit. If not, new gods were nothing but cannon fodder.

Still, he offered her a few words of comfort and waved her off.

Even for a full-fledged god, restoring a broken soul and remaking a divine body was a massive investment. Only a powerhouse like the Aesir could afford such extravagance.

But if he didn't claim them, Shiva or Amaterasu might—and that, Thalos would never allow.

He had calculated everything—except for one thing.

The enemy couldn't afford it.

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Yamatai, Takamagahara.

Amaterasu once again spoke with Tsukuyomi.

"What? You're saying a powerful chaos deity demands too steep a price, and we can't pay it?"

Tsukuyomi looked helpless. "He's likely a former High God... maybe even a former God-King. But the only rule in this chaotic starfield is this damned trade of guaranteed losses. We've already invested so much. If we don't redeem him, it's a huge loss."