

Thalos 314

Chapter 314

Managing a vast pantheon is actually a lot like running a large company.

If the company is in a stable growth phase or operating normally, there's no need for sweeping changes. Usually, just plugging in a few specialists in specific areas is enough.

Generally speaking, unless a company is either expanding frantically or on the brink of collapse—or has a completely delusional CEO—it won't do something as disruptive as parachuting in a new executive. Like poaching some high-level manager from a big-name corporation and slapping them straight into a major department.

Pantheons suffer from the same problems.

When a massive pantheon comes under immense pressure and is forced to change, it's exceedingly rare that they'll find some chosen one destined to turn the tide.

Save the world?

Doesn't exist.

When misfortune stacks up, bad decisions follow. Usually, they end up hiring a disaster of a "hero" who leads everyone straight into hell.

Throw in a parachuted "big shot" who yanks the steering wheel in the opposite direction overnight, and you're practically guaranteed to crash.

Thalos, however, had all the cards.

One, the Ginnungagap world hadn't officially entered the fray yet. Two, the Aesir Pantheon was harmonious and stable. With Pelenn's recent promotion as a benchmark, now was the perfect moment to inspire lower-tier gods. And three, their world was massive.

Thalos had no reason to panic.

Let's not forget, he once had the chance to force the surrender of the three great Maya pantheons—but refused, purging them entirely despite the backlash. If he wouldn't compromise then, he certainly wouldn't gamble now by importing some resurrected ex-God-King from chaos.

Even when letting Anubis "go easy," it was strictly controlled.

Don't forget—before they fell to chaos, these demons were all once mighty beings, even True Gods. That kind of creature has pride.

Now Thalos refuses to honor them, cherry-picks his candidates, and shows no deference.

To them, that's an insult. A rejection. A slap in the face.

Any who still had their pride intact simply defected—ran straight to the rival camps.

Thalos maintained his ironclad standards: better none than bad.

Meanwhile, Amaterasu was desperate.

Some of these "volunteers" might be dragging their own baggage, but she didn't care. Whether man or monster, anyone bringing their own rations and offering to serve was welcome.

And right now, both Yamatai and India's pantheons were shamelessly grinding each other. There was no such thing as fair "king vs. king" or "general vs. general" combat. It was mostly True Gods directly targeting the opposing side's subordinate deities.

They rarely fought solo. The Yamatai gods favored concentrating forces to eliminate enemy vassals in groups.

At first, this "mutual soul-farming" tactic didn't raise red flags.

But the longer it continued, Amaterasu and Tsukuyomi realized something:

Their world wasn't big enough.

India and its vassal realms were physically larger, richer in elemental forces, and home to far more mortals. Which meant that even under balanced attrition, Yamatai would never win.

A bitter, unavoidable truth.

In modern warfare, maybe they could've compensated by climbing the tech tree—winning with superior weapons.

But in this universe, divine power came from world-elements and mortal belief.

You can't outmaneuver mass.

And after Shiva's coalition wiped out two of Yamatai's vassal pantheons, Yamatai grew even more dependent on this risky resurrection match.

Amaterasu's face was grim. "We have no choice."

"Indeed," Tsukuyomi sighed helplessly.

"What about our younger brother?"

"You mean Susano'o?" Tsukuyomi shook his head. Despite being one of the Three Noble Children, Susano'o was utterly unreliable.

"And that man's name, did you ask?"

"He claimed to be Ahura Mazda, the Supreme Good God of Mesopotamia," Tsukuyomi hesitated. "But I don't think that's who he is."

"He lied? In what way?" Amaterasu frowned, her elegant brows knitting together.

Honestly, once you'd become a chaos demon...

Even if you were once a god of order, after staying in that cursed place for so long—whose hands weren't stained with blood?

Amaterasu had already interrogated the new-born "Momotaros" and "Momomizukis." Some refused to speak of their pasts, as if haunted by deep shame. Others confessed everything, unburdening themselves in endless, remorseful ramblings.

Transforming into monsters, preying on innocents across worlds—that was child's play.

Some had even become chaos demons willingly, seeking revenge by slaughtering their own comrades.

Fortunately, Yamatai had a tradition of commanding evil spirits. Amaterasu could use her divine power and authority to suppress these creatures and hurl them into the meat grinder against India's cannon fodder.

But resurrecting a powerful God-King? That should've been done with utmost caution.

Tsukuyomi exhaled heavily. "I'm afraid... he's not a god of good at all."

Amaterasu's divine soul quivered. "An evil god?"

"I can't rule it out."

"Then your recommendation...?"

"We have no other option. Without help, we'll end up as India's slave gods."

"...Fine. Let's hope we made the right call."

But they couldn't even perform the ritual in Yomi—Amaterasu and Tsukuyomi had no control there, and there wasn't even a safe isolation zone.

So, the summoning ceremony had to be held on a plain near Takamagahara.

It was dusk.

Night was about to fall—the only moment when Amaterasu and Tsukuyomi could act together.

Yet from the very start, something was wrong with the ritual conducted by the circle of priestesses.

From deep underground came the shriek of breaking iron shackles. The altar cracked, leaking dark red viscous fluid.

Not blood.

Worse than blood.

The fluid slithered across the surface, forming strange cuneiform symbols Amaterasu had never seen before.

One priestess felt sick just looking at them—her throat filled with a metallic taste.

"Amaterasu-Ōmikami," she cried out, trying to halt the ceremony that had clearly gone awry.

But the skies remained silent.

Amaterasu could only watch as the red "blood" consumed every sealing rune.

Above, the celestial map twisted violently. Twenty-eight golden spikes—symbols of the solar corona—slammed into the altar, scattering indigo sparks across the lapis lazuli tiles.

The head priestess pricked her finger, letting a drop of blood fall into the altar's center. Instantly, every torch turned ghostly green.

A burning heat seared the priestesses' skin—beads of blood seeped from behind their ears. The air was thick with sulfur and rotting flesh.

The ritual relic began to swell, its surface glowing like molten lava beneath cracked keratin. Ancient runes slithered across it like living snakes.

Then the image carved into the makeshift idol began to weep blood tears.

The plaster crumbled away, revealing a horrific moan and a boiling pressure.

The Persian script twisted violently.

This was no Ahura Mazda.

The name inscribed upon it transformed, its letters bleeding crimson as they reassembled into a nightmarish word of ultimate evil—

Angra Mainyu.