

Thalos 316

Chapter 316: A Deal?

"Gratitude? I'll show it." Angra gave a gentle smile.

Aside from Amaterasu, Tsukuyomi, and Angra Mainyu himself, no other being knew what kind of secret pact had been made that night.

The people of Yamatai only knew that, after that night, none of the shrine maidens who had presided over the summoning ritual were ever seen again.

Whenever their friends or family inquired, all they received were vague and heavily taboo-laden responses.

The next day, on the main battlefield against the Indian pantheon, a bizarre figure—scarlet wrapped in deep, abyssal darkness—easily drew Shiva's gaze.

Completely ignoring the presence of other deities, Shiva crossed the skies with a fluid, dance-like stride. Holding his trident and divine bow, he moved with unnatural swiftness straight toward the strange, demonic figure.

"Demon god! State your name! I, Shiva, do not strike down the nameless—" The third eye in the center of his brow, the one that had once annihilated three demonic cities and destroyed two Yamatai worlds, seemed ready to open once again.

But then he paused.

Because he suddenly realized: this being radiating world-ending malevolence wasn't even a true body—it was merely a projection!

"I am Angra Mainyu! Calm down, Shiva. Perhaps we can make a deal..."

Angra's offer was answered with the blinding brilliance of Shiva's trident, a weapon capable of obliterating an entire city with ease.

Elsewhere, outside the battlefield, Angra stroked his thick beard and let out a cold chuckle. "Are all Indian high gods this hot-headed? No matter. There are three of the Trinity, after all."

Divided power meant divided decisions.

To Angra, pantheons governed by a committee of gods were easy to manipulate.

Sure, some chief gods were utterly righteous and inflexible—like Shiva. But in contrast, there would always be others with looser morals.

Some gods might behave piously within their own ranks, playing the saint and aligning with hardliners like Shiva. But when it came to external dealings... well, flexibility abounded.

Angra Mainyu wasn't in a hurry.

With a world this vast, he would eventually find the perfect entry point.

He wore such a warm, pleasant smile—it was hard to believe this man had anything to do with the most evil of gods.

Yet at that moment, a wind picked up around him.

A howling storm.

The skies across worlds darkened.

Shiva appeared again.

No—this wasn't Shiva himself. It was a wind incarnation of inconceivable power.

It looked like Shiva, but his divine body was now made of wind elements.

A terrifying wind-arrow, capable of lifting entire mountains, shot forth. It pierced the sky, shredded clouds, and slammed directly into Angra Mainyu's face.

"...Huh?"

Staring at the arrow that had pierced his opponent's divine skull, Shiva felt no joy.

The feedback from the strike was all wrong.

He had no way of knowing that, over in Yamatai's Tsukushi Island (modern-day Kyushu), a massive crater had silently collapsed into the earth, large enough to fit an entire city.

"Oh dear, my bad. Don't be fooled by my appearance—I am technically fighting for Yamatai right now," Angra said in a mocking tone.

As his head seemed reduced to just a jawbone, translucent divine blood bubbling around it, with only a twitching tongue making strange noises, even Shiva—who had faced countless demons and monsters—felt a deep sense of revulsion.

Sure, gods always bound their divine bodies to certain domains to maintain their power.

But to tie yourself up this completely, and so shamelessly deflect incoming damage...

Was this freak really fighting for Yamatai?

Shiva couldn't help but feel deep suspicion.

And just as he was summoning a second incarnation of fire, intending to burn away this portion of Angra's divine soul—

Angra fled.

Without hesitation, he sacrificed that clone's soul, severing any chance for Shiva to track him further.

Shiva's third eye visibly twitched. He wanted nothing more than to hunt this aberration down and utterly destroy him.

But the bastard had vanished!

Left with no choice, Shiva unleashed three powerful incarnations—Sky, Sun, and Moon—across three different battlefields, launching ruthless assaults against Angra's clones, Yamatai gods, and even their yokai.

Clones were being slain all over, but Angra remained unbothered. He kept toying with the ascetic Indian god.

He was too experienced with enemies like this—rigid, uncompromising types.

On the surface, it looked like Angra was taking losses. But in truth, he had seized control of the battle's rhythm.

Amaterasu and Tsukuyomi were left speechless watching the whole thing.

You could argue that Angra hadn't fought according to divine oaths, but he had gone into battle. He just didn't fight Shiva head-on. Instead, he baited out multiple powerful incarnations from Shiva.

As the ruler of the "Three Thousand Worlds," Shiva was undeniably powerful. In fact, Amaterasu herself had no confidence in facing him directly. From this angle, Angra had, in his own twisted way, stalled Shiva's advance.

After all, there's no rule that says an evil god has to be good at dueling.

And it's not like the Yamatai siblings expected a half-redeemed evil god to risk his life for them right off the bat.

At first glance, the plan to pull a ringer from the resurrection ritual seemed to have worked.

What they didn't know was that somewhere beyond their sight, one of Angra's clones had approached a completely unexpected target.

Yamatai, Izumo Province.

Kushinada-hime blinked in surprise at the return of her husband. "Dear... why have you come back again?"

For some reason, when she looked at the faintly demonic aura radiating from the man before her, Kushinada-hime couldn't stop herself from shivering...

—

Meanwhile, the world of Ginnungagap continued its expansion.

In the Palace of Silver, Thalos listened to war reports and intelligence delivered by agents embedded in the Einherjar legions.

"Oh? So the Yamatai world is falling behind after all?"

"Yes," Brunhild replied, holding a thick stack of dragon-hide documents. "Overall, the Indian pantheon holds overwhelming superiority in both land and sky combat. Only in naval engagements are they showing signs of struggle."

At this, Thalos chuckled.

The Indian navy, while not quite as comically ineffective as the Mongol navy—whose ambitions were literally "reach for the stars"—was still a complete mess.

Throughout history, it had always been the same with them.

You teach them—they don't listen.

They listen—they don't understand.

They understand—they can't apply it.

They try to apply it—they mess it up.

It was like a natural cap on development.

Of the Trinity gods, only Vishnu had an incarnation as the Fish Avatar, Matsya, who saved humanity's progenitor Manu by dragging a great ark through the flood.

The other two gods? Had nothing to do with the sea.

In fact, the entire Indian pantheon had never really cared about the ocean.

So when they ran into Yamatai—a thousand-island civilization—it was like a rat trying to drag a turtle: no grip, no angle of attack.

The enemy's natural maritime defense left the Trinity gods scratching their heads.