

Thalos 344

Chapter 344: Let's Go Kill a Billion Ghosts

Father... God...

Amaterasu had thought that watching her father's death would send her into madness, or at least some emotional frenzy.

It didn't.

What she felt instead was a strange tightness in her chest.

She wasn't a child in the traditional sense. In some ways, she was merely a piece of "filth" that Izanagi had brought back from Yomi-no-Kuni, fused with some unknown soul and divine essence.

And Izanagi had never fulfilled the duties of a father. After dumping Takamagahara on her and her two brothers, he retired and withdrew from all affairs.

Now that the moment had come, Amaterasu found herself disturbingly cold.

She did feel gratitude, guilt, certainly. But that unbearable, brutal, soul-tearing grief of losing a loved one?

No. It wasn't there.

What she felt most was despair—for her pantheon, for her world.

She had no one left to rely on.

The burden of her entire divine race now fell on her delicate shoulders.

"Can I bear this burden?" she asked herself.

The answer came immediately: No.

Sorrow, hopelessness, helplessness—all kinds of complex emotions danced across her delicate face.

What surprised her was that the giant god of light opposite her—whose divine form towered twice her height—actually stopped his assault.

He clearly had the upper hand.

"Goddess Amaterasu," said Freyr, bathed in radiant golden divine light, "if you wish to take your own life, I can grant you the dignity of disappearing from this world with honor."

His tone was solemn, his words sincere, and Amaterasu didn't doubt them for a second.

A true sun god—righteous and noble—had no need for lies.

She was momentarily stunned, then after nearly half a minute of silence, slowly asked, "If I surrender, what will become of me?"

"You are wanted by His Majesty," Freyr said, his voice heavy. "Given that the Fusang pantheon has utterly enraged His Majesty and violated our principles of trust, your fate will likely be grim. At the very least, you will suffer severe humiliation. For the next hundred years, you may live as a slave god. As a fellow sun deity, I strongly advise against that choice."

Sun gods had their pride and their code.

Freyr's feelings were complicated—no one understood the Aesir way better than he did. His ideals wished for every enemy to meet their end with dignity. Yet his loyalty prevented him from disobeying King Thalos. And a small part of him worried: If Amaterasu won favor with the King, would she claim a portion of his divine rights?

He didn't have to think about it for long.

It seemed the Fusang pantheon had no backbone at all.

After a few of the bolder ones were cut down during a suicidal counterattack, not only the goddesses, but even the male gods began wailing and begging for surrender.

Across from him, Amaterasu knelt with a sorrowful expression. She placed her hands to the ground, pressed her forehead to the back of her hands, and bowed deeply.

"Failing to uphold my oath is Amaterasu's fault. I shall bear the consequences. I surrender."

"Oh."

Freyr cast his gaze into the distance.

The grand war was ending—not with a bang, but a pathetic whimper.

The millions of Fusang spirits had collapsed entirely, slaughtered mercilessly by the Aesir.

Absurdly, many female yokai—despite being nameless, insignificant monsters—declared themselves goddesses and attempted to surrender. When their pleas were rejected, they went mad and tried to drag Aesir warriors down with them.

They failed—cut down alongside their kin, swept into the trash heap of history by the might of the Aesir gods.

Countless corpses littered the desert. The multicolored blood of twisted monsters soaked the dry sands like a spilled palette of vile paints.

So vast was the bloodshed that many dunes overflowed, becoming marshes of poisonous sludge.

Thalos waved his hand.

Ereshkigal and Scáthach stepped forward.

"Clean this up. Even if this is just a bait-world, we can't afford to ruin it. We'll need it again."

"Yes." The two goddesses of death and slumber answered with a trace of bitterness. But what could they do? One was a goddess of eternal sleep, the other the Reaper.

Fortunately, countless underworld wardens would help them purify the lingering wrathful souls and vengeful ghosts born from the Fusang yokai.

"Report," said Brynhildr suddenly.

"Speak."

"Several of the minor realms that once belonged to Fusang have sent letters of surrender. They seek integration into the Aesir pantheon."

Thalos raised his eyebrows. "Oh? Good. Send them to clean up the corpses of Fusang's so-called 'eight million gods.'"

He rubbed his chin, visibly amused. "Yes. Have them chop off those 'gods' heads and stack them into a Jingguan."

"Jingguan?" Brynhildr was unfamiliar with the term.

"It's a pyramid of skulls. Ten thousand heads per mound," Thalos said casually, his voice light even as he gave a horrifyingly cruel order.

Amaterasu and the other surrendered goddesses trembled uncontrollably, every muscle in their body shaking with sheer terror.

This was a God-King.

One who decided the fate of worlds with a single word.

The decree made Freyr, Arthur, and other gods of justice deeply frown.

But none of them spoke.

It was the Fusang pantheon who had broken their word. They were the ones who launched a sneak attack, unprovoked, upon the Aesir.

Don't blame it all on Izanagi. Don't try to pawn off the betrayal with terms like "tyrant" or "coward." None of them could wash themselves clean of this stain.

Every single Fusang god who set foot in the world of Ginnungagap had blood on their hands.

All Thalos had done was respond with the maximum possible retaliation.

But for the minor gods from the smaller Southeast Asian pantheons—those who had hidden away and refused to aid the war effort—this decree was nothing short of psychological torture.

As they approached the towering mountains of corpses, many of them began to shake uncontrollably at the sight of the broken bodies within.

"Is that... the Heavenly Lord of the Center?"

"Look—over there! That's Kamimusubi-no-Mikoto, right?"

"Yes. That's them. Truly."

Even their ornate robes and gilded armor couldn't give them the faintest sense of safety.

The Fusang gods, who had once ruled them through divine power, now lay silent and broken before them.

Miserably slain. Utterly defeated.

This was the overwhelming result of the Aesir's absolute superiority.

These South Asian gods had long since lost the will to resist.

Forget sending a high god—even if the Aesir dispatched a minor divine attendant, these so-called "kings of the gods" would prostrate themselves in terror, afraid one wrong word might lead to their world's annihilation.

Thankfully, the God-King's personal envoy, Hermod, soon arrived to deliver this message:

"His Majesty, in his boundless mercy, will accept your surrender. Merge your realms into Ginnungagap, and the Aesir will take you in. Of course, you must begin as servant gods. Prove yourselves on the battlefield—earn merit, show your loyalty—and you will be promoted to full deity."

"Do not worry. Every new god who has joined the Aesir has followed this path."

"...Except the Fusang gods."