

Thalos 355

Chapter 355

Over here, Thalos had no idea that before he could even complete the "Seven Captures and Releases" achievement, Odin had already shifted his mindset.

Truth be told, he no longer cared whether Odin lived or died.

To Thalos, that foolish little brother was just a discarded pawn. If he happened to come in handy someday, great. If not, Thalos wouldn't lose any sleep over it.

Take this instance: sure, Odin had led a team to "steal some chickens" and managed to escape into the independent micro-world of Liranka.

Back when Ginnungagap still had only nine realms, Thalos might have felt a slight twinge of regret—after all, that was still a potentially useful little realm to use as cannon fodder.

But now? Let him go!

Odin couldn't stir up any real trouble anymore.

As long as Thalos successfully consolidated internal control, fortified the status of those Aesir gods and giants from the Nine Realms era, and created a healthy competitive atmosphere among the gods who had surrendered, there would be nothing to fear.

With Ginnungagap's world expanding further, the World Tree thickening, and various minor worlds stabilizing into fixed layers—

A new agenda had landed on Thalos's desk.

Recently, more than one quasi-god had urged him to ascend further.

"Your Majesty, the territory you control is too vast. There are too many decrees and documents—Asgard alone can no longer handle the load. Why not let the princes share the administrative burden?" Freyja had made this proposal.

Freyja's position was uniquely delicate.

Though she too was one of Thalos's consorts, she had borne him no children. Since he had yet to declare a Queen Goddess, none of his other consorts who had given him heirs were fit to raise such a suggestion. Only Freyja—his earliest companion, childless—could say it without causing conflict.

"Delegation? Enfeoffment?" Thalos didn't reject her outright.

She had a point.

Even if a god's stamina was near-infinite, the number of matters any single god could handle at once remained limited.

With divine awareness growing in tandem with world size, even Thalos could only process a hundred simultaneous affairs, or hear the prayers of a thousand core fanatics. Anything beyond that got the divine equivalent of "read, not replied."

Back when the Midgard Kingdom only had a population of a few tens of thousands, he could micromanage down to the village level.

But now, with Ginnungagap encompassing 26 worlds of varying size, totaling over tens of millions of square kilometers and a population exceeding one billion, how could he possibly oversee everything by himself?

Regardless, with productivity advancing and administrative complexity increasing exponentially, partial decentralization of power had become inevitable.

Thalos knew full well that Freyja had likely been pushed forward as a trial balloon—but he nodded anyway. "You're right. But this isn't something that can be decided lightly. The last time I granted kingship, I experienced betrayal and total failure."

Freyja didn't dare press further. She lowered her head and quietly massaged his arms and legs.

"Freyja."

"Yes?"

"Your suggestion was good. But don't let yourself be used for this kind of task again. And one more thing—whoever encouraged you to do this will never become Queen Goddess."

Freyja shrank her neck and said nothing.

The next day, in a rare move, Thalos summoned both the God of Light, Baldur, and the God of Wealth, Gilgamesh, to the Golden Palace.

This stirred whispered speculation among the gods.

After all, attempts to lobby Thalos for elevation had been going on behind the scenes for a while now.

The interesting part was, regardless of their original pantheon, most gods agreed this move made sense.

Why? Simple.

Even petty lords of minor worlds dared to self-style themselves as god-kings in private. Yet Thalos—the being who had overthrown countless such god-kings and conquered who-knows-how-many worlds—still only bore the title "God-King"? That just felt... too modest.

Even putting modesty aside, what was the logic in him sleeping every night with a former goddess-queen like Amaterasu, and still not declaring himself a god-emperor?

From every angle, it was clear: Thalos must ascend.

The joint audience granted to Baldur and Gilgamesh gave the gods hope.

In the grand hall of the Golden Palace, the two princes respectfully bowed before Thalos.

"Greetings, Father."

"Rise." Thalos got straight to the point. "Lately, many gods have urged me to take the title of God-Emperor..."

At this, he swept his eyes sharply over both sons.

Gilgamesh met his gaze boldly, completely unafraid.

Baldur, however, looked a bit guilty. "Father, I tried to dissuade them."

"This isn't your fault." Thalos tactfully avoided mentioning Baldur's mother. "Ginnungagap is too vast now. We need a new level of governance."

Baldur looked visibly surprised.

Gilgamesh, however, wore a knowing smile. So it's not about ego or vanity, but sheer administrative necessity? Father really is different.

Thalos continued, "Your older brothers—some are all brawn and no brains, and some have no knack for statecraft. That's why you two will be the first to be crowned kings."

"Thank you, Your Majesty!" The same words, but coming from two very different princes, felt completely different.

Baldur remained humble as always. Gilgamesh was practically brimming with excitement, viewing this as a new challenge.

"But," Thalos added, "you will not rule within your own bloodlines' realms. If everything depends on blood, in centuries to come it will only deepen racial divides. So..."

He pivoted. "Baldur, your domain will be the Sumerian continent. And Gilgamesh, you will go to the South American continent."

Both princes were stunned into silence for a moment.

It was a reasonable decision.

The mortals of Sumer had long since been beaten into submission. In fact, Thalos had perhaps gone a bit too far there, and a gentle figure like Baldur was just what was needed to restore balance.

As for the former Maya lands—those mortals were steeped in blood sacrifice and foul customs. A stronger hand was needed there, someone who could shift seamlessly between benevolent and tyrannical ruler. Gilgamesh was the perfect fit.

After a moment of stunned silence, both accepted their appointments with joy.

When word spread, the gods were in an uproar.

The good news? His Majesty had accepted the urging and ascended to the title of God-Emperor.

The bad news? All the localist factions with hidden agendas were now left scrambling.

Different origins led to instinctive tribal loyalties. Many gods wanted to elevate princes who shared their bloodline—especially the pureblood Aesir, who tended to look down on lowly mortals and their gods. But since Thalos refused to disinherit the eldest, Baldur—son of Frigg—there had been nothing they could do.

No one expected Thalos to make such a masterful move, assigning his sons to foreign realms.

And no one could complain.

With Thor's status as crown prince unshakable, having another prince elevated to king, even in foreign lands, was a promotion however you sliced it.

They had no grounds to protest.

But the boldest part came last: Thalos broke up all the pantheons from the Southeast Asian micro-worlds and distributed their gods evenly between the two new kings.

Now, every god finally understood what was happening.