

Thalos 369

Chapter 369: Hoping Without Asking, Breaking Without Warning

Thalos' statement brought a wave of reassurance to the gods.

Their God-Emperor was still the ever-rational one, always placing the interests of Ginnungagap and the Aesir pantheon above all else.

Arthur, Frey, and others even felt a strange sense of emotion—His Majesty still cared for his brother, but for the sake of the greater cause, he was willing to endure heartbreak and let Odin get pummeled...

Thalos had no idea these righteous gods were spinning such drama in their heads; he only found it odd that they were looking at him with such strange expressions.

On his side, Thalos began calling on the God-Kings one by one to give their thoughts.

Gilgamesh spoke first: "Father's approach is correct. With a mutated star zone acting as a barrier between the two worlds, we won't enter true decisive battle for now. Even if we rush over, we won't settle the outcome. It's better to proceed according to plan."

The other God-Kings nodded.

Most of the core gods had lived through that long, grueling war against Egypt.

The issue wasn't just its length—it was the frustrating feeling of having power but nowhere to use it, due to the starfield's restrictive conditions.

That scenario where a single opportunity to connect with the enemy came only every one or two months, and even then might not allow for divine engagement, had been maddening.

Yekaterina added, "Father, I've already issued oracles—those lazy mortals need to step up their arms production."

After fifty years without a major war, the gods—with their virtually unlimited lifespans—were fine, but many mortal nations had clearly let their military preparedness slide.

It couldn't be helped. Maintaining weapons required resources.

Whether it was bowstrings, fletching, armor, or the newer weapons Thalos had developed via his foray into technology—all needed care and maintenance.

And mortal weapons couldn't be expected to last fifty years.

Inevitably, outdated gear had to be replaced.

And every replacement cycle cost money.

More importantly, the Aesir did not encourage wars between mortal nations.

They didn't promote it—but they didn't outright forbid it either. There was a limit.

Power struggles? Fine.

Massacres after city sieges? Not okay.

Mortal faith was the main source of power for most gods. The deities who lived off belief couldn't tolerate massive declines in their follower base.

Any mortal nation that went too far would be punished with divine wrath.

In this environment—where even the war god Tyr no longer encouraged warfare—many borders hadn't changed since the nations were founded.

So yes, their military readiness had degraded. That was inevitable.

In fact, when Odin first sent his dream-message, Thalos had deliberately triggered small-scale wars among mortal realms.

Warfare drills the troops—but only in moderation.

Without that pressure, mortals wouldn't feel fear or pray urgently—meaning no increase in divine power for their gods.

Now that Odin's forces had been thrashed and he clearly wanted to drag the Aesir into it early, there was no way Thalos would play along.

He nodded at Yekaterina's suggestion. "Let's do this: issue an edict to the mortals of every world. In each small world, the least-prepared kingdom will be considered for royal erasure."

"Hiss—"

Several core gods drew sharp breaths.

Not because of the brutality of the decision, but because of the sheer strategic brilliance.

To the ruling class, if the blade isn't hanging over their own necks, most things don't matter.

But if a divine sword of judgment is shining right above your head—that changes everything.

One could easily imagine kings going berserk, laying mad pressure on generals and nobles. That would create the classic chain reaction: upper command gives a level 1 directive, middle command doubles it to level 2, and grassroots officials push it to level 4 in panic.

This top-down stress effect would be far more effective than divine proclamations from on high.

After all, there were only a few hundred deities. Even if each one could commune with 500 followers at once, managing over a billion mortals across 27 small worlds was still a logistical nightmare.

While Thalos and his people calmly continued their war preparations, Odin was suffering.

Odin was now in an awkward position: he couldn't act alone, and he couldn't fully surrender. He knew Thalos knew his situation. And Thalos knew that he knew about the Aesir's situation. And Thalos was just giving him the silent treatment.

No promises. Not even a reply.

That's what drove Odin crazy.

To the point where, if Thalos just snapped, "You stupid brother," he might actually feel happy.

Because that would prove that his brother still cared.

This total silence—this indifference—was the worst.

It confirmed the old saying: true despair isn't when someone screams at you, but when they forget you entirely.

And just as he got up, Apche and the other lackeys were already waiting outside his palace, grinning and rubbing their hands together like flies.

"Your Majesty, any word from the Aesir?"

Odin was mortified but kept a straight face: "The upcoming battles are small-scale skirmishes below god-tier. You really think the Aesir will deploy their core forces for that?"

"Of course not, Your Majesty." Apche and the others relaxed.

Events unfolded exactly as Odin expected.

With the mutated star zone acting as a barrier, the Greek pantheon couldn't send their god-tier forces across, either. So the conflict devolved into "projecting spatial cavities" to conduct lower-tier battles again.

Reports from Lyranca flooded in with strange anomalies.

A mountain had a massive gouge torn from it here. A forest got sheared clean off there.

More and more reports came in of elite warriors lying dead in the streets.

Odin finally caught one of these anomalies and forcibly channeled his divine power to peer inside—only to see:

A massive bronze shield slammed down with tremendous might, shattering the Maya warrior's jaguar-claw totem shield on impact. As the Maya fighter desperately reversed his obsidian dagger for a counter, the Greek's bronze bracer swept sideways—not only knocking away the dagger but also cracking three of his ribs in a thunderous echo across the crimson dust storm.

The Maya warrior spat blood and chanted a curse. Twelve blood mists condensed into a phantom jaguar leaping forward.

But the Greek brute stomped the ground, sending cracks everywhere, and spun his bronze spear into a scorching white arc—instantly vaporizing the jaguar illusion.

Unrelenting, the Maya hero abandoned his shield and charged with dagger and spear.

But the Greek warrior bashed away the spear with his shield, whose edge then hooked onto the Maya's wrist guard. His biceps bulged violently—CRACK—dislocating the enemy's left arm. Before the scream could even leave his throat, a lion-crushing knee strike shattered his jaw. Seven bloodied teeth flew, embedding into a nearby stone pillar.

The Maya hero staggered back and flung his spear to force a retreat, but the Greek was already airborne. A wide, short bronze short-sword gleamed as a divine illusion appeared behind it—the image of a Greek god. In the next second, the blade slipped perfectly into the gap between helmet and chest armor, driving clean through the Maya's throat.

Victory decided.

The Greek giant cut off the Maya's head, raised it high, and let out a maniacal laugh.

"Hahaha! This is the 'hero' of the New Maya pantheon? This level of trash?" He met Odin's divine gaze without flinching. "I am Ajax, son of Oileus—remember my name, false king!"