

Thalos 380

Chapter 380: Truly Improved

That day, the Aegean Sea of the Greek world collapsed.

It broke open with a massive rupture.

From the summit of Mount Olympus, one could clearly see a giant bowl-shaped gap.

A missing expanse of sea stretching over tens of thousands of square kilometers.

As if an invisible, intangible god of space had scooped the entire sea basin away with an enormous ladle.

The eerie part was that the sea hadn't simply "drained away." If that had been the case, surrounding seawater would've flowed in to "fill" the gap. Instead, it had formed a vast bowl-shaped waterfall more than two hundred kilometers in diameter.

At the edge, the water plunged straight down for several hundred meters.

Forget ships—even fish falling into that abyss, even if water still existed below, would be pulverized into paste.

Fun fact: a free fall from fifty meters into water is no different than hitting concrete. Even assuming perfect form—feet together, toes pointed—you'd still likely break your legs.

Now imagine a drop of 200 or 300 meters.

And the most critical detail: among the missing heroes was his son, Theseus.

This outcome sent the sea god Poseidon into a furious rage.

"Who? Who did this?!"

Poseidon was notoriously protective—if someone even killed one of his sea monster offspring, he'd seek vengeance without hesitation. Let alone something this blatant—a direct violation of his divine authority.

Then came the report.

"What? The Aesir launched a surprise attack on the fifty Argonauts?!"

The Greek gods weren't unfamiliar with these interdimensional space-duel wagers.

But what left Poseidon—and the other Greek deities who heard the news—utterly speechless was the sheer scale of the Aesir's hero deployment.

Don't be fooled into thinking the Argonauts were a bunch of nobodies dismissed by the gods.

Heroes weren't something you picked up off the street. Nor were they just glorified slave-soldiers scooped up from some camp. Those who earned the title "hero" had often performed great feats and were acknowledged by the world.

To lose fifty heroes in a single blow—along with the accompanying loss of four major elemental domains—was enough to make even Poseidon feel the sting.

At that moment, Athena's divine thought reached him: "It seems my concerns were valid. The Ginnungagap world ruled by the Aesir is undoubtedly a formidable rival to the Greek world!"

Poseidon: "..."

On the other side, in the Hall of Heroes in Asgard, a grand celebration was underway.

The Aesir heroes had successfully destroyed the Argo, slain a large number of Greek heroes, and—through spatial duels—won vast tracts of dimensional territory.

For mortal-level heroes, this was undoubtedly a historic feat!

Not only had those who took part in the raid come to the celebration, but many others who had recently returned victorious from the Hittite world also gathered for the awards ceremony.

All eyes eagerly watched to see whether their God-Emperor would fulfill his promise.

The Aesir heroes each presented their trophies—most of them severed heads. Only a few captives were saved for last.

To these offerings, Thalos responded with casual nods, leaving it to Brynhildr to bestow mortal-level rewards on his behalf.

Everyone understood that only a very select few truly stood a chance today.

Egyptian-born mortal king Ramses II stepped forward, respectfully kneeling before Thalos, as his attendants presented a fearsome head—one that still faintly radiated the divine aura of the sea god even after death.

"Great God-Emperor, this is the head of the Athenian hero Theseus..." Ramses II began explaining the hero's accomplishments, based on what they'd extracted from prisoners, hoping to curry favor.

Even without his explanation, Thalos knew who Theseus was—an Athenian king of legend. His deeds included: eliminating many famous bandits, solving Minos's labyrinth and defeating the Minotaur,

marrying the Amazon queen Hippolyta, abducting Helen, and even attempting to kidnap Persephone from the underworld—which got him imprisoned in Hades until Hercules rescued him.

More importantly, Theseus's legend was vast—after losing his throne, he supposedly traveled through centuries and later led Athenians in their brave, unrelenting resistance against the Persian invasion. The Athenians even built a temple in his honor.

Now, the Aesir heroes turned to Thalos, waiting for a response—hoping for something different from his previous dismissive reactions.

And they got it.

The God-Emperor's deep, resonant voice echoed through the Hall of Heroes.

[Well done, Ramses.]

"I live to serve, Your Majesty," Ramses replied joyfully, bowing once again. Never mind that he was once a high and mighty king among mortals—before the God-Emperor standing atop the world, he was nothing.

[The enemy's heroes are our enemies. The competition between worlds is this brutal.] Thalos paused, then added: [I saw the mark of fate within Theseus's soul. This is indeed a tremendous achievement. From this moment forward, report to Baldr.]

Brynhildr stepped forward with a radiant smile. "Congratulations, God Ramses."

Ramses's dark face twitched—he didn't register the words at first. A second later, realization dawned.

He had ascended. Right here and now.

Even if it was merely as a subordinate deity under Baldr, the god of light—it was a legitimate divine station.

"God-Emperor, I am eternally grateful!" Ramses bowed again.

In that moment, the entire Hall of Heroes erupted.

The God-Emperor had kept his word.

As long as mortal heroes performed well and earned sufficient merit, he truly would not be stingy with godhood.

"Praise the God-Emperor!"

With this precedent set, everyone grew eager for what would follow.

One by one, heads of Greek heroes were offered up. Thalos remained silent—until Beowulf and Siegfried brought forth a female huntress who still struggled violently, dressed in a green-and-black-trimmed hunting skirt.

"Supreme God-Emperor, this is the very swift-footed heroine, Atalanta."

In Greek mythology, Atalanta was the daughter of Iasus—a princess and heroine born in Arcadia. Her father had hoped for a son, so when she was born, he abandoned her on a mountainside.

Legend says a she-bear nursed her until a band of hunters took her in and raised her. She learned to hunt and fight like a bear and grew into a stunning beauty—who deeply resented men. Aside from her father, she avoided all male attention. Eventually, she reunited with him.

After participating in the Calydonian boar hunt, Atalanta's father discovered her again and demanded she marry. Disinterested in men and marriage, she agreed only to wed any suitor who could outrun her in a footrace—those who lost would be put to death.

Hippomenes prayed to the goddess of love Aphrodite, who gave him three golden apples. As Atalanta overtook him during the race, he rolled each apple ahead of her to distract her, slowing her down. She couldn't resist chasing the apples—and so Hippomenes won the race.

In this life, however, Hippomenes's head now sat on a platter.

Oh—well then. Never mind.

Thalos glanced at Atalanta's long legs, then said to Beowulf and Siegfried:

[Well done!]