

Thalos 388

Chapter 388: Good, Full of Spirit!

Thalos's words silenced the core deities—mostly the divine children.

"When the Aesir pantheon first took root, what nobility did we have? Ask your grandparents. Back then, we were nothing more than a group of wild savages who ate raw meat and drank blood. We had nothing but our bodies and our wits. Even your grandmother—your grandfather snatched her with his own hands."

A wave of warm laughter rippled through the assembly of gods.

"Grandfather built a simple wooden hut, and then came me, then Odin, then Vili..."

Thalos spoke the name Odin—a name that should have been taboo—with a frankness that briefly stilled the atmosphere. In the entire Aesir pantheon, only he and a few elders had the right to do so.

"The rest of the story, you can read from the murals. I've already done my best to restrain the priests below from overly glorifying our clan's history."

At these words, many veteran gods nodded in agreement.

From the moment the Aesir set foot in Ginnungagap, to their rise, to now approaching dominion over the chaotic universe itself—they had been through too much. Even if they stripped away their divine identity, their story was nothing short of epic. No amount of embellishment would do it injustice.

Their rise wasn't just due to strength. Behind the victories in battle stood a long line of powerful reforms—Thalos, as the God-Emperor, had masterfully reconciled countless divine bloodlines.

In truth, neither civil achievements nor martial glory could be done without.

Ironically, the father of this pantheon wasn't particularly clever, and their mother—a giantess—was famous for her dimwittedness. And yet their half-blood child had, with unmatched intellect and strength, brought the Aesir to a height they should never have been able to reach.

A miracle indeed.

"The power brought by the four elements is limited. If a pantheon relies solely on the elemental forces and their derivatives, twenty gods is about the cap. Any more, and you're just carving up the same pie into thinner slices. What truly raises a world's upper limit is the very thing many gods look down upon: mortals. It's the power of faith that lets a pantheon support hundreds of specialized, non-overlapping deities."

"The world nourishes mortals. Mortals nourish the gods. Gods expand the world, which nurtures more mortals. That's how the cake grows!"

"Now tell me—do you understand?"

With those words, a deeper understanding dawned upon the divine children. They all bowed deeply.

"We are enlightened, Father God!"

They had no choice but to take it seriously.

On paper, they were already God-Kings. There was no higher rank to climb, so they should have had little incentive to work. But in truth, every God-King represented the interests of a whole faction of gods. This was internal power struggle—pure and simple.

Loyalty didn't factor in. It was all about voice and influence within the Aesir pantheon.

Odin had already proven with his downfall: even kings could be stripped to nothing.

The current God-Emperor, Thalos Borson, was an emperor among emperors—a supreme sovereign of the ages.

No God-King's seat was truly secure.

Everything was a test—not just of the God-Kings themselves, but of their demigods and mortal heroes.

If it was a competition, then there was no room to retreat.

The six God-Kings responded to Thalos's lesson with blazing eyes.

"Good. Full of spirit!"

Time passed swiftly. Before anyone realized, it was already time for the next contact war.

That day, the drums of Asgard thundered across the heavens in a grand spectacle.

Though only divine projections could be deployed, this was still a true god-war.

And since he wasn't sending his true body, Thalos didn't appear in person.

But as a militant pantheon, the Aesir showed the world exactly what "We love war!" looked like.

Giants, demigods, and mortal heroes—all busily checked their gear with the help of attendants. The beat of war drums thundered without pause.

The great gates of Valhalla's Hall of Heroes swung open—over a hundred massive entrances flung wide. Thousands of heroic spirits poured forth in order.

On both sides of the main gate, two enormous phantoms appeared.

They were the newly ascended guardians of the Hall of Heroes: Beowulf and Siegfried.

Together, they cast a grand divine spell. Two massive radiant symbols appeared in the clouds above. Then, intricate grids of interwoven divine law formed a 3D array above the heads of the spirits. This matrix corresponded to Thalos's dominion over [Sky], [Wind], [Water], and [Death], spinning like the gears of a hyper-precise machine, channeling divinely diluted power into the heroes.

Beams of light shot down from the array's center, bathing every spirit in its glow.

The heroes raised their hands high—and immediately, columns of death-tinged light formed in their grip, coalescing into weapons suited perfectly to their combat styles.

And not just weapons. Intricately designed armor of soul-forged steel clothed their spiritual bodies.

"In the name of the Supreme God-Emperor Thalos Borson—destroy the enemies of the Aesir!" the two guardian gods shouted in unison.

"Oooooooooohhh!!" The frenzied battle cry of the spirits shook the very heavens.

Meanwhile, on a large platform over 100 square meters wide atop the Silver Palace, a prayer ceremony took place—one whose serene tone felt strangely at odds with the fever-pitch of the battlefield.

A graceful black-haired goddess danced, her long white sleeves and trailing haori flowing as she moved to foreign, otherworldly music.

Kagura, the sacred dance.

Once a ritual performed by Fusang mortals to pray to Amaterasu—now, it was Amaterasu herself dancing to bless mortal warriors.

A divine inversion like no other.

Atalanta watched the performance with visible discomfort. She still couldn't understand what was going through Amaterasu's mind—how a God-King could become such a fanatic convert under duress.

What frightened her even more was the thought that she might become the same—and worse, one day betray her beloved goddess, Artemis.

Even knowing Artemis, as a virgin goddess, would never take back one who'd been defiled—it didn't stop Atalanta from holding to her devotion, steadfastly refusing to cooperate with Thalos.

No resistance. No submission.

That was her stance.

But how long could it last?

One way or another, the war that would shape the fate of two pantheons—and perhaps the entire chaotic universe—had begun again.

That day, any being with sufficiently advanced perception would have felt it: a vast network of interlaced spatial cavities. Through small "windows" in the blood-red mutated star zone, they shot rapidly toward the opposing realm.

If these thousands-of-square-meter microspaces could be called arrows, then the sheer density of these volleys, fired from both sides, was enough to produce a terrifying symphony of midair collision.