

## Thalos 389

### Chapter 389: The Terrifying Meat Grinder

Before entering the spatial cavities, every mortal hero wrote a will.

Succeed, or die trying!

Some departed alone, others in groups of three or five.

No one knew what awaited them—perhaps a radiant future, perhaps eternal darkness.

Gawain felt lucky—yet not so lucky.

The moment he arrived in the opposing world, he encountered a peculiar opponent.

The man wore no armor, bare-chested, and clad only in a strange grass skirt around his waist.

His dark skin gleamed with a metallic sheen under the blazing sun. Muscles bulged across his jaguar-tailed right arm, and his obsidian spear was stained with dried blood that, though seemingly hardened, pulsed with surging divine power.

Beneath a lion's mane crown woven with golden thread, two thick black brows framed deep eye sockets, where ancestral flame danced in his pupils. His indigo cloth-wrapped waist was adorned with bells and bird feathers, while his feet—decorated with seven copper rings—had cracked the rocky ground beneath him under their sheer weight.

He stood atop the tallest stone cliff in a wild ravine, a crocodile-hide shield marked with fire runes across his chest. The amber eyes of the jaguar-head carving on the shield seemed to stare directly at Gawain.

The man shouted something unintelligible.

Gawain simply shook his head in silence.

Couldn't understand a word.

But that didn't matter.

Knowing they were enemies was enough.

Gawain, indifferent to whether his foe understood, twirled his longsword in a flourish and declared his name.

His opponent struck his shield with the shaft of his spear and responded with another round of indecipherable words.

The fight began!

Gawain raised his steel kite shield, bearing the holy sigil of Camelot, to cover half his body and pressed forward in short, measured steps.

The dark-skinned warrior smacked his shield again, and it instantly radiated a blinding light like a solar flare.

Both combatants used light to disrupt the other's vision, only to realize—neither relied solely on sight.

Hearing, sixth sense, divine perception—they combined every sense available. Neither's movements were hindered.

The bronze spear tip traced an arc like a shooting star. Gawain's Camelot shield erupted with searing brilliance, scattering gravel and heating the sand beneath his feet to blistering levels.

The native warrior stepped barefoot onto the scorched ground. Totems inked across his face pulsed with ghostly violet light, and nine mystical tribal runes ignited along his spearhead.

Clash of shield and spear!

More than just a metallic clang!

In that moment burst forth two divine forces colliding—a near-elemental explosion of power.

One of the tribal runes grazed Gawain's shield and struck the armor on his right arm, instantly corroding the surface and releasing a serpentine green vapor.

But Gawain countered the curse with overwhelming might, slicing through the black mist trying to ensnare him and smashing down on the enemy's crocodile-hide shield.

It shattered clean in half.

Unexpected—but not entirely.

The native warrior had anticipated this. As his shield broke apart, the two fragments spun like guillotine blades—one arcing toward Gawain's neck, the other aiming to cut him in half.

At the last second, Gawain dropped into a crouch, narrowly dodging the lethal strike. But he paid a price—the plume atop his helmet was sliced clean off.

The fight was far from over.

The native warrior let out a furious roar and stepped forward. Gawain was startled to see the ground before him shimmer—an illusion of a colossal African rhinoceros charged upward from beneath, dragging tons of sand in a brutal uppercut.

Gawain refused to take the hit head-on. With a deft T-step maneuver, he halted abruptly, then sprang backward three paces and braced—perfectly evading the earth-shattering blow.

Then, without hesitation, he lunged forward once more, pressing the attack.

CLANG!

His forged steel shield finally slammed into the enemy's spear.

Spear versus shield.

Divine force against divine force.

The resulting collision nearly tore apart the entire spatial cavity, easily over 20,000 square meters in size.

Above them, the sky fractured—the Greek god overseeing this warrior tried to intervene and rescue his champion, but the disturbance only twisted the sky into a chaotic vortex.

Too bad!

His projection was intercepted by none other than Arthur, the knight-god.

This was the law of this star domain.

Dueling within spatial cavities was strictly confined to non-divine combatants.

Gods could only interfere via low-tier deific projections or high-tier divine avatars.

With his backup blocked, the native hero had nowhere left to run.

He snapped, lunging with his left hand to tear away Gawain's shield.

Gawain seized the moment and struck.

A dark arm flew skyward.

A moment later, Gawain's longsword traced a gleaming arc through the air—cutting both sides of his enemy's neck.

"Kh... guh..." The dark-skinned warrior tried to speak.

His spinning, severed head held a look of fury and unwillingness—perhaps cursing Gawain for winning thanks to superior equipment.

But this was the fate of countless conquered heroes, driven into this slaughterhouse by the Greek pantheon and Athena herself.

Perhaps before arriving, he dreamed of glory.

Perhaps his god had promised divine protection.

But now, as life and soul ebbed away, all dreams vanished.

His blood seeped into the earth.

And by the laws of the star domain, large portions of Hittite world's space were ceded as spoils to the victor—absorbed into the forward-deployed realm of Liranca.

This wasn't an isolated case.

It was one of countless such encounters.

Back in Asgard's Silver Palace, Thalos gazed upon a phantom golden scale—its trays piled high with chips of victory. Fragments of the Hittite world, like crumbled cookies, were being funneled into the Aesir-held Liranca realm.

Once upon a time, the Aesir might've celebrated such spoils during the conquest of their first world. Now, it barely stirred interest.

The real turning point came days later—

A wave of psychic projections arrived from heroic spirit infiltrators.

Athens, Greece.

Not just the city itself, but nearby districts—Halandri, Plaka, Kolonaki, and Kokaki—were met with a sudden influx of galloping couriers.

When the familiar messenger who usually delivered news arrived with a grim face and no words, the crowd gathering around him immediately sensed dread.

The messenger dashed into the magistrate's office. Moments later, an aide emerged and posted the list.

It was the Heroic Spirit Roster—a polite term for the list of the dead.

When the people saw the list's overwhelming length, countless Greek women fainted on the spot.

"By the oracle of the goddess Athena! All able-bodied Greek warriors are summoned to resist the invading Aesir demons..."

The Greek people fell into stunned silence.

Yet more and more men quietly returned home to dig out old armor and weapons.

And this same scene unfolded across the pantheon's subordinate realms—met only with weeping and numb acceptance.