

Thalos 390

Chapter 390: The Collapse of the Hittite World

"Hmm?" Gilgamesh straightened from his idle, chin-in-hand pose, sitting up with a grave expression.

The wildly different responses from mortals across Greek territories and their subordinate worlds left the six Aesir God-Kings and other deities genuinely surprised.

Even gods—beings sung in mortal songs night and day—struggled to comprehend situations that defied their own experiences.

After all, across all pantheons now under the Aesir—whether the "mainline" Aesir gods and giants, or absorbed pantheons like Sumerian, Egyptian, or even the formerly enslaved Maya and Indian gods—their mortal nations competed for a chance to fight on the front lines of Liranca.

It had become so natural that many of the now-alloof Aesir God-Kings considered it the norm.

Forget the Sumerians and Egyptians who had "come ashore"—even the Maya and Indian pantheons, who didn't even have true gods left, still scrambled for a place on the battlefield.

Among the Maya, a saying had spread: "We are willing to die to the last Maya for His Majesty the God-Emperor."

No contrast, no pain.

Now, seeing the people of the Greek pantheon's subordinate worlds begin resisting conscription, the Aesir gods couldn't help but feel... were they fighting a fake enemy?

Gilgamesh blinked in disbelief. He looked to Enki—only to find the wise god staring at the floor, seemingly fascinated by a swarm of imaginary ants.

All the "wise" core deities avoided the God-Kings' eyes.

Thalos clapped his hands gently. "Everyone has worked hard today. You're dismissed for now. Thor and the God-Kings, stay."

"Yes, Father."

Soon, the massive throne hall of the Silver Palace was empty—save for Thalos and his inner circle. Even the Valkyries withdrew.

Thalos dropped all pretense and went straight to the point.

"To put it simply, the Greek gods have completely choked off all promotion paths. Fundamentally, their emperor Zeus is like me—he only gives divine authority to his children. But the difference is—when I eat meat, I at least let my subordinate pantheons have some scraps."

That blunt metaphor made everything click for Thor and the God-Kings.

It was about meat.

More meat.

And making sure others got some too.

You couldn't be too greedy—eating everything and leaving the little brothers with nothing but bones.

Otherwise, even if the underlings didn't rebel, they'd lose all enthusiasm and collapse into complete apathy. To squeeze out their full war potential, you'd be left with only two options: bribe them with fresh rewards... or threaten them.

No matter which path the Greeks chose next, they'd trigger a crisis of trust among their subordinate pantheons.

It was simple. If you don't feed us normally but give us a bit of meat only when war breaks out, of course we'll suspect we're just being sent to die. "This is our last meal, isn't it?"

As long as the Greek gods maintained their undefeated image, their subordinates dared not voice dissent.

But the moment that invincibility cracked, everything changed.

Especially with the recent Argo incident—news had leaked. It had shaken faith in Olympus again.

"You, Zeus, can't even protect your own sons. And you expect us to believe you'll protect us?"

The complete annihilation of the Hittite and Polynesian pantheons—entire worlds turned into battlefields—was a shock to all the Greek sub-gods.

And here, after Thalos's lesson, the "children" immediately began applying what they'd learned.

Thor asked, "What if, in the future... there's only so much meat to go around?"

Thalos's eyes lit up. Who said Thor was dumb?

He was plenty smart. He'd just relied too much on brute force in his youth—using his divine body to crush his way through everything.

See? My genes aren't bad at all.

Thalos smiled slightly. "The universe is vast. And don't forget—Ginnungagap's expansion came from the World Tree converting chaotic energy, and from purifying and absorbing floating meteorites."

Same old truth: as long as you make the cake bigger, internal strife shrinks.

And if it ever does reach the point where there's no growth, only redistribution—well, Thalos still had one last resort: the Anti-Dragon Slaying Doctrine...

Of course, he wasn't about to deploy that yet.

Such methods, while useful to cement authoritarian rule, also stalled all progress. A double-edged sword.

For now, all he needed was to maintain his inscrutable air.

And soon, his "prophecy" began to unfold.

As expected, the quality of Greek heroes being sent to the Hittite front declined rapidly.

And with repeated battles, the real strength of each hero—on both sides—was becoming increasingly clear.

It was like watching regional qualifiers advance to the finals: as the number of spatial cavities dwindled, strong mortals from both sides inevitably began to clash directly.

A month later, Athena frowned deeply.

"Report from the Ashanti gods—they no longer have any mortals that qualify as heroes."

"Same with Marseilles and Kunkuru."

The news made Athena clench her fists—an extremely rare sight.

She had invoked the authority of Zeus himself to demand troops from the subordinate realms.

They complied—and every last one died.

She couldn't even blame them.

It wasn't about loyalty or attitude anymore—it was simply a matter of capability.

Truthfully, if these subordinate mortals had been strong, they wouldn't have been conquered in the first place—wouldn't have had their gods enslaved by Olympus.

But these endless mortal-scale skirmishes were bleeding the Greek pantheon dry.

At first, the casualty ratio was 1 to 9—with the Aesir being the 1.

Even ignoring combat skill or divine blessings, equipment alone caused massive Greek losses.

Only after Achilles and other elite heroes killed enough enemies and looted some forged steel armor did they begin to even out the battlefield disadvantage.

"Even out" was generous—most of the truly powerful armor was enchanted with divine sigils, unusable by Greek heroes.

Only second-tier equipment, whose sigils could be stripped away, were usable.

Even so, Hephaestus, the Greek god of fire and forge, was in utter despair.

To his eternal embarrassment, he'd admitted that he couldn't replicate the impossibly hard forged steel armor.

If forced to try, he'd have to scour the world for the right ores and spend decades developing new divine domains.

It made Athena want to curse—but she had no one to yell at.

Crushed in equipment, drained of qualified heroes—the situation was now critical.

"Forget it. Use regular elite troops for now," she muttered coldly. Athena had never cared much for the lives of mortals from subordinate realms.

But then—

A stunning message shook the Greek pantheon: the Hittite world had collapsed.

Too many spatial duels. Too dense.

The Greeks lost too often. Too badly.

And as a result, the Hittite world's four primary elements were siphoned away at a rapid pace.

Eventually, the world's very spatial barrier and continental plates began to unravel—crumbling simultaneously.