

## Thalos 391

### Chapter 391: The Scapegoat

A thousand-mile levee can collapse from an ant's nest.

That saying perfectly described what was happening now—there were simply too many "ant holes," and under enough pressure, even the largest dam could break.

Athena only needed a single glance before giving up on saving the Hittite world.

In the hero duels, Greek champions had lost far too many times. Under the rules of the star domain, the Hittite world had been gouged with countless holes, pitted and hollowed out within. At this moment, it was nothing more than a colossal ant nest.

By star-domain law, every time an Aesir hero won, the elements extracted from the Hittite world were taken according to proximity—randomly carved away from nearby space.

Even if each Aesir hero's spatial cavity was no more than a few tens of thousands of square meters, sheer numbers were overwhelming. The Aesir simply had more mortal heroes.

Thalos had once objectively ranked mortal heroes from one to five stars.

For example, Arjuna and Cú Chulainn—demigods without formal divinity but brimming with divine nature—were absolute five-star heroes.

At the bottom were mortals with no divine blood at all, yet even a one-star hero had to be capable of killing a full-grown lion barehanded.

Now, even though Greek elites like Achilles kept racking up victories, the sheer volume on the Aesir side was impossible to match.

If Achilles gained ten thousand square meters in one win, other Greek heroes collectively lost nine hundred ninety thousand.

That "win the skirmish, lose the war" reality left even the most famous heroes frustrated beyond belief.

It was too late to change anything.

Through Athena's divine sight, the entire Hittite world looked like a sheet of paper riddled with holes, crumpling in upon itself under an invisible force.

For the Aesir heroes still in the collapsing spatial cavities, the law of the star domain safely returned them to their home world.

The Greek heroes, however, were scattered all across the Hittite realm—when the collapse came, their only hope was the god they worshipped.

If that god was responsible, they might be pulled out in time.

Unfortunately... many were Spartans.

And Spartans mostly worshipped Ares.

The problem? Ares was notoriously unreliable.

What? Mortal prayers? Cries for help?

What did that have to do with him?

If the god of war had free time, he'd rather spend it tumbling in bed with Aphrodite than saving his believers. After all, the goddess of love and beauty was "very busy" and could only meet him when her husband, Hephaestus, wasn't around.

By the time Athena noticed, several prominent Spartan heroes had already been swallowed by the imploding world.

It made her furious.

From Zeus the god-emperor down to Ares the god-king, her own pantheon was full of incompetents—few among the former Twelve Olympians elevated to kingship were truly capable of both ruling and fighting.

"Hmph." Athena's gaze fixed on one Spartan hero—on solid ground one moment, swept into a rushing underground river the next, pulled by the collapse of caverns beneath.

She could no longer stand by.

From the void, an olive branch manifested and plucked the unlucky warrior into the air.

"Lady Athena...? Th-thank you..." The man couldn't understand why Ares had ignored his pleas while Athena came to his rescue—but he knew his life was spared.

Athena wasn't the only one; Apollo, Artemis, Helios, and Selene were also reaching in to snatch mortals from the ruin.

A vast world was annihilated in the void.

The impact was enormous.

When the two world-clusters had first clashed, Liranca's forces had crushed two Greek subordinate realms. It had taken the undefeated Greek god-kings stepping in—and "inevitably" capturing Odin—to steady the situation.

Paraded in chains through Athens, Odin's defiant glare puzzled many Greek sub-gods—he seemed far too unbowed for a defeated enemy.

Now? Everything was different.

The Greeks had once smashed Liranca's heroes with massed charges, but the moment the Aesir main force arrived, they returned the favor.

And not because the Greeks hadn't fielded champions—they had. They just couldn't win.

The Aesir had outright stolen so much from the Hittite realm that the entire world collapsed.

The Olympians' humiliation was total.

Greek sub-gods who had long resented Olympus now began quietly reaching out to one another.

They would not yet rebel outright—this was still only the probing stage of the war between the two clusters.

For now, the Greek loss could be rationalized: perhaps the Aesir's world was simply larger, its population deeper, its champions stronger.

Only when true gods entered the battlefield would the other side's real mettle be revealed.

Still, the shadow of defeat from the Hittite collapse wouldn't lift easily.

Perhaps only when Zeus himself crushed Thalos would the danger of rebellion truly fade.

Athena glanced at the gaping rift between the mutated star zones. She knew a decision had to be made.

That breach needed plugging with a world—otherwise, the enemy could project vast numbers of spatial cavities into Greek territory.

If that happened, as Zeus's regent, she would take the blame.

And Hera—ever eager to see her fall—would not miss the chance.

Frowning deeply, Athena finally gave the order: "Ashanti World—advance! Rest assured, all of Olympus will support you."

When her divine projection appeared above the Ashanti realm and delivered that decree, the current Ashanti high god—formerly king—Nyame, could have chewed her heart out.

Why weren't they plugging the gap?

Why should the Greek core pantheon's battle be fought with their bodies?

He didn't want to be buried alongside Olympus!

But such was the fate of a weak world and pantheon.

Unable to resist the invasion of a greater realm, they had fallen into slavery.

No matter how much hate or bitterness burned in their hearts, they couldn't break the divine curse branded into their very souls.

Grinding his teeth until they clicked, Nyame's projection still appeared above his own temple, kneeling in utmost humility before Athena's image.

"Your servant Nyame obeys. I shall lead my divine host at once to destroy the false gods of Asgard!"

"Good." Athena's eyes swept over him once before her projection vanished into nothingness.