

## Thalos 395

### Chapter 395: Stability Above All

It was normal for a main race's gods to be stronger.

Athena told herself: If the other side's vassals are stronger than ours, it's not just a matter of losing face—perhaps, maybe, possibly, they really are stronger than us.

She hated to admit that, yet her wisdom told her it was likely true.

Aesir true gods were easy to spot—they too were "Titan-kind."

In battle, the Aesir would even enlarge their divine bodies as needed, never shrink them.

So giant-sized Aesir gods were usually the core race; man-sized enemy gods were mostly from vassal pantheons.

Having fought a true Aesir god before, Athena remembered Odin vividly.

A true Titan—massive, master of multiple divine domains, weaving them together in smooth, composite combat.

Olympus had needed three god-kings to subdue Odin.

Understandable, since Odin was the younger brother of the current Aesir God-Emperor, Thalos. It was like how Hades, though powerful, had not been among the Twelve Olympians before Greece expanded; even later, being crowned a god-king didn't truly count him among them.

Odin, in the Aesir pantheon, was probably a similar outlier.

But that even the Aesir's slave gods fought this well—that was unexpected.

Athena's beautiful, composed face furrowed ever so slightly.

Soon after, she summoned Nyame for questioning.

"Tell me about the enemy's divine avatars."

"Strong. Very strong. Every true Aesir god's avatar is as strong as a main-world god with tens of millions of believers. Their weapons are far better than ours. Their faith power is ten times ours. We simply can't win."

Athena raised an eyebrow. "Can you describe the gap?"

Nyame glanced at her, hesitating.

"Speak. I will not punish you. You know I keep my word."

Yes—unlike your unreliable father.

Nyame muttered this in his heart, but outwardly kept a fearful respect. Meeting Athena's probing gaze again, he finally stammered, "It's like... when the Olympian high gods punished us. The gap is exactly like that."

—

Athena's heart chilled, though her voice remained calm: "Oh? I understand. Anything else to add?"

"N-no, nothing." Nyame bowed and nodded.

"You may go."

Nyame prostrated himself and backed out of the temple.

When the great doors shut, Athena's slender hand suddenly clenched the armrest of her throne.

"Giving slave gods main-world domains? How dare Thalos do that? Isn't he afraid those damned slave gods will rebel?"

She couldn't fathom it.

But in truth, after the first round of fighting, every god who had merged into the Aesir system had realized something.

"Hey, you notice? Their vassal pantheons have it rough—no rights to any domains in the Greek main world."

"Yeah. When I beat that guy, he cried on the spot. Said, 'Why is it, when we're both slave gods, you get to live so well?'"

"Hahaha!"

"Yeah, poor bastards over there."

Once again—comparison breeds resentment.

The rumors were just surface ripples; the truth was the blade.

The Aesir and Olympus had fundamentally different systems, creating a gulf in treatment for conquered gods.

Zeus was deeply insecure—three generations of god-kings in his line had all overthrown their fathers, textbook "fatherly affection, only rebellion."

His insecurity about power meant he trusted only his siblings and children—not because he truly relied on them, but because he couldn't cover all domains himself and had to.

In a pantheon rife with patricide and infighting, even his own blood wasn't fully trusted—let alone conquered gods.

Power?

No.

Stay a slave.

This trickled down to the mortal world: Greece's slavery system was brutally strict.

In Thalos's eyes, a goddess like Aphrodite should never have been made a queen-god—

—but Zeus still did it, funding the Twelve Olympians' god-king status by draining conquered worlds of divine power.

In such a system, where only the upper-middle tier could thrive and the lower tiers lived worse than mortals, the conquered gods would never have much fight in them. They were often weaker than demigod "second-generation" heroes like Achilles.

By contrast, in Ginnungagap, all integrated pantheons received formal main-world domains. In the past, Hel had ruled the underworld alone; later, Ereshkigal and Scáthach split the underworld's authority with her.

With the cake grown dozens of times larger, the old gods still had bigger shares than ever before.

Only with the recent Indian and Japanese pantheons joining had Ginnungagap created a "local god" tier.

Even these local gods, under a god-king, commanded more population and land than their old mini-worlds ever had.

This meant that even demi-gods or locals had several times the divine power of Greek slave gods.

In short, the Aesir side was all about raw stats—they didn't need "technique."

When the first day's battle reports reached the Silver Palace, Thalos, for once, let out a chuckle.

Freya, seeing his good mood, asked, "Your Majesty, is it all good news?"

"Not all—let's call it 'steady and improving.'"

Thalos always preferred stability—the bigger the empire, the less he liked risks.

When both sides were equally vast, any "quick victory" talk was fantasy; you had to chew through worlds one by one, slowly eroding the enemy's foundations. This was exactly when the saying proved true—stability overrides all else.

Not just Freya—he saw the hunger in all the god-kings' eyes.

He smiled. "What's the rush? You'll have all the war you want. As rulers, the last thing we should do is steal our subordinates' glory. If we don't hurry, the other side will get anxious."

And indeed, while the Aesir were unhurried, on Olympus a dispute had erupted.

Athena opened with a proposal that made the god-kings roar.

"Even if the Ashanti world is vast and barren, at this rate, by the end of this spatial passage's open period, the Ashanti will be finished. We must cut divine power supplies by one god-king's share."

A cut doesn't hurt until it's yours.

When other vassal worlds were destroyed, the god-kings hadn't cared. Now, with their own "stipends" on the line? Unthinkable.