

Thalos 398

Chapter 398: Hoping for Luck

Achilles' lucky victory was truly a miracle.

The truth was, for these children of gods, the divine blood in their veins was far too thin.

In all of Greek myth—at least as Thalos remembered it—there was only one mortal hero who became a god: Heracles. And that only happened after he accomplished feats almost unheard of in the mortal world, completing twelve "impossible" labors in twelve years, and even then, only after dying from poison was he elevated to the rank of the mighty god.

Achilles' win came down to his near-impenetrable body in the mortal realm, plus the many layers of protection from his mother.

The unlucky fool who lost to Achilles instantly became the laughingstock of the entire Aesir pantheon.

Even if it was only an avatar, to lose to a half-blood "mortal" was deeply humiliating.

Mortals and gods were not the same.

A god's strength lay in their domain powers, which transcended ordinary physical laws.

Put bluntly, if you've got divine hacks and still lose, you deserve the shame.

Thalos didn't bother salvaging the reputation of that disgrace whose name wasn't even worth speaking aloud. Instead, he quietly had the Valkyries deliver small gifts to those who had slain heroes like Odysseus.

That made the recipients overjoyed.

This news reached Loki, the god of mischief, who—under Hel's speechless gaze—actually asked, "Your Majesty, why reward those who killed mere Greek mortal heroes?"

"I do not condone the strong bullying the weak. But since the Starfield Law assigned them those opponents, we should respect the outcome. Moreover, even mortals represent a piece of the Greek pantheon's \\\[Fate]—however small that piece may be."

Fate.

That profound, elusive word shut Loki up instantly.

After all, their ruler held the divine office of \\\[Fate (Future)].

With vision that high, what could a subject possibly say?

He could only be thankful their emperor was boundless in might and could crush the enemy's god-king.

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The Aesir's god-sea tactic was downright shameless—regardless of the individual strength of their third-rate gods, they had two clear advantages: overwhelming force and overwhelming numbers.

Maybe they were just a bunch of unfortunates terrified of being demoted to mortals if they stepped into the Golden Palace with the wrong foot first. But with virtually unlimited divine power backing them, their avatars were somehow producing results beyond even the Ashanti gods' true bodies.

The Ashanti pantheon, along with other subordinate gods dragged into this world as disposable "line-fillers," were stunned.

It wasn't that they were holding back—it was that they genuinely couldn't win.

The Aesir avatars might not match these Greek vassal gods at their peak, but against their current, drained state, they were more than enough to dominate.

For three straight days, hundreds of large and small divine battles raged across the Ashanti world.

More than once, over a hundred Aesir gods sent avatars in at the same time.

Even if only avatars fought, it was still considered a legitimate god-war.

This scale had long surpassed anything the Ashanti gods could imagine.

Unheard of.

In the past, these small pantheons of twenty or thirty gods would surrender the moment Athena or another Greek god-king pointed and sent dozens of sub-gods at them.

They had never seen over a hundred gods clash at once.

They were dumbstruck.

And it wasn't just them—the Greek heroes were shocked too.

The number of enemy avatars was too great, and since they came through spatial chambers for duels, the Starfield Law dictated that if Greece had no gods to match them, the responsibility fell to Greek demigods.

Once the deaths of Odysseus, Diomedes, and Little Ajax, and Achilles' near-death at a god's hands, became public and spread, the Greek heroes—rarely—hesitated.

They all had the same question: Had their gods all died? Why should they, mere mortals, bear the weight of fighting the enemy's true gods?

When the sea goddess Thetis personally pulled Achilles back for protection, it triggered a wave of hero withdrawals.

It wasn't cowardice.

Every great hero was of divine descent.

If you could get a god's written leave, it wasn't running away—it was an official exemption.

In just a few hours, Achilles, Agamemnon, and others withdrew directly.

Agamemnon even left a parting threat: "Under the leadership of Lords Ares, Athena, and the others, I will return to challenge the Aesir's mortal champions."

Without Olympian core gods participating, Achilles and the others had been nothing more than a fig leaf to make it look like the Olympian gods were taking part in the war.

Once they left, the Ashanti gods became clowns.

Pure lightning rods.

Nyame ran to Athena's temple, tears and snot streaming all the way from the door to the foot of her throne steps.

"Lady Athena! Have mercy and spare the Ashanti world! We truly can't hold on! The damned Aesir are too many—Olympus' main force must come in person!" The former god-king, now like an old dog begging for scraps, whined over and over, sounding almost like he was sobbing.

Athena frowned.

As goddess of wisdom and war, reason always ruled her decisions.

Her frown wasn't from pity—it was calculation. With so little time left in the variant star zone's window, should she save the Ashanti world?

If she did, she'd have to spend no small amount of effort persuading the other god-kings.

If she didn't, she'd avoid political entanglement but risk gambling with the Ashanti world.

If the Ashanti world collapsed, it would be the third world the Aesir had destroyed.

The Olympians wouldn't care about the lives of subordinate gods, but losing the Ashanti world meant another god-king's divine income would have to be cut. That could easily trigger a chain reaction.

That was Athena's dilemma.

The memory of the last, disastrous meeting on Olympus' holy mountain made her temples throb.

"You will receive reinforcements!"

Athena kept her word—but it wasn't enough.

Her solution was to stuff nearly all combat-type gods from every subordinate pantheon into the Ashanti world to block the enemy avatars.

On paper, it wasn't wrong.

Greece had twelve subordinate worlds. Even after ruthless exploitation, they could still muster an elite force of 80 combat-type true gods.

Counting their lesser gods, they had over 200 fighting gods, easily boasting of "a thousand divinities" without exaggeration.

What Athena didn't expect was for Thalos to simply throw more than 300 gods at them.

That was both a numerical and qualitative crush.

And on the very last day before the variant star zone window closed, the Ashanti world... collapsed.