

Thalos 407

Chapter 407: Spiral Escalation

Don't be fooled by how European countries on Earth love to sing the praises of ancient Greece.

It's precisely because ancient Greece is gone that they feel safe glorifying it.

In truth, ancient Greece was bound by far too many limitations of its time. Take, for example, the much-hyped Greek road system—what people rarely mention is that those "roads" were just relatively even stone paths meant to make chariot travel marginally easier.

In the world of Ginnungagap, where rail tracks for horse-drawn carriages were already commonplace, such primitive infrastructure actually slowed down the advance of Ginnungagap's mortal armies.

Forget a year—under conditions where divine powers couldn't interfere, just give Ginnungagap three months and they'd have the Greeks living like cave dwellers.

Unfortunately, a mere month was only enough to overrun the city-states near the spatial portals.

Thalos didn't particularly care about mortal wars.

At first, many Aesir gods felt the same—until they realized that the devastated city-state of Sparta was almost entirely made up of Ares's worshippers.

That changed everything. Even normally silent gods who avoided offering opinions—like Tyr—perked up.

As is widely known, a deity's divine power generally comes from two sources: one, the world itself (as with elemental gods), and two, the faith apotheosis system.

Ares, being one of the Twelve Olympian God-Kings and among the more combat-capable ones, naturally drew most of his power from the concept of war itself.

Though Ginnungagap's mortal forces had recently invaded Greece and plunged the region into chaos, Ares was paradoxically gaining massive divine power—because warfare itself was flourishing.

But war doesn't last forever.

Even if Ares constantly schemed to spark conflicts during peacetime, in daily life he still had to rely heavily on the prayers of vast numbers of followers to maintain his baseline divine expenses.

Sparta was his core faith stronghold.

He could ignore them in peacetime, but once Sparta collapsed and the act of war drastically diminished, Ares would be the one suffering.

Destroying a god's income base—that's what true divine war is all about.

"Mycenae: 70,000. Sparta: 80,000..." As the valkyrie delivered her report, Thalos's lips very rarely curled into a faint smile.

This version of the Greek world differed slightly from the ancient Greece Thalos knew.

Through extracting resources from their twelve subsidiary worlds, the Greeks had accumulated a vast number of slaves—on average, each Greek citizen owned twenty.

High overall productivity meant a corresponding rise in total population.

But the self-proclaimed noble Greeks would never intermarry with slaves. The pyramid structure meant the true ruling elite were always few in number. As a result, even in a large city-state, pureblooded Greeks were a minority.

Ancient Greece's total population consisted of three classes: citizens and their families, slaves, and foreigners.

And the valkyrie's reported figures referred specifically to Greek citizens.

These were the ones that mattered most—the core believers needed for the Olympians' faith-based apotheosis system.

By having his mortal armies abduct this population, Thalos was striking at the very roots of Olympus's gods.

As for the slaves and subsidiary world populations? Ares and the others never even counted them as real people.

Sure enough, the god-kings of Mount Olympus were in an uproar again.

"Bastard! Bastard! Bastard! Damn these laws of the star domain! Why won't they let me intervene? If I could descend, I'd crush those bugs beneath my feet instantly!" Ares continued to rage uselessly.

Only Zeus's eyes flickered continuously, deep in thought. No one knew whether he was already planning to seize control of this chaotic universe—and possibly alter its laws entirely.

At that moment, Hermes, the "Divine Messenger," spoke up: "Good news—we've discovered a massive breach ahead of us. One that can accommodate Major God-level power!"

"Excellent!" Ares clapped his fists together, showing off his explosive muscles with gusto.

Even if the others weren't exactly thrilled, the god-kings' expressions became visibly more optimistic.

Whether mortal or divine—

Everyone is subject to habitual thinking.

They still vividly remembered how they destroyed the Neo-Mayan pantheon and captured the god-king Odin.

In their minds, this was simply a replay of that victory.

Among the group, only Athena remained silent, keeping a polite smile on her lips to blend in.

But inwardly, she wondered: Is it really that simple?

Indeed, based on the current full-front war, the Olympians had mostly confirmed that the Ginnungagap world was smaller in scale than Greater Greece. The opposing side only had three subsidiary worlds (India, Fuso, and Lyranka), while they still held nine.

But Athena couldn't shake the feeling that the other side had more people—and more advanced weapons.

After much contemplation, she finally spoke up: "We still need to be cautious. The number of gods on their side doesn't seem small."

It wasn't an empty worry.

Judging by the number of divine avatars and mortal heroes deployed recently, one could reasonably estimate their divine headcount.

"What are you afraid of? I'll drown all their cities with the sea!" boasted Poseidon.

This made Athena uneasy.

In times of resource scarcity, she wouldn't hesitate to clash hard with her uncle. Don't forget—she had taken the title of patron deity of Athens from Poseidon.

But internal squabbles over Greek world resources were still "family matters." All the meat stayed in the pot.

External wars were another matter.

Poseidon's increased aggression after the loss of his children wasn't necessarily a good thing.

And unfortunately, Athena couldn't stop them.

Ares was already a short-tempered fool, and now Poseidon had joined him in anger, not to mention Artemis, who was still fuming over the abduction of her Chosen. Over half of Olympus's war-favoring god-kings were now acting irrationally. This deeply worried Athena.

She realized she could only take things one step at a time.

This kind of situation—where outcomes couldn't be logically predicted—was completely different from previous divine wars.

Of course, she hoped the war would remain controllable, and that they could win while minimizing losses.

But sadly, war has never bent to the will of individuals.

Its intensity usually spirals upward in a corkscrew escalation.

The worst-case scenario was if the weapons they considered terrifying, capable of spreading carnage across the land, turned out to be little more than forgotten junk in the eyes of their opponent.

That kind of dimensional-gap crushing superiority—was the most terrifying kind of defeat.

"Surely the enemy's God-Emperor Thalos *Borson doesn't have anything too outrageous...?"

What Athena didn't know was that at that very moment, deep beneath the Golden Palace, in the divine armory, Thalos was standing before a pile of metallic tubes shaped like missiles, instructing his core deities.

"The war is escalating. If possible, have the gods begin hurling these 'artifacts' into the Greek world."