

Thalos 418

Chapter 418: A Confidant Within the Seas, Six to Nil to the Horizon

Hades! He wasn't one of those cases where, after the Greek world had conquered many realms, Zeus handed out "god-king" titles like splitting fruit among the original Twelve Olympians. From the day Zeus defeated Cronus and firmly took the throne of god-king of the Greek world, Hades was already lord of the underworld.

Unlike his two unreliable brothers who sowed their seed across the world, Hades had the temperament of a decent man. He acted calmly and steadily, the ballast stone, the stabilizing needle among the third-generation gods. Some even said that without Zeus and Poseidon, two-thirds of the world's trouble would vanish. Among the third generation, Hades's presence did more than anyone's to keep the world stable.

And yet even Hades lost his composure today. A powerful shudder ran through the divine soul; Hades suddenly felt a stab to the heart. Not just him—Thanatos's brother, Hypnos, felt it too. Hypnos stumbled into Hades's palace; master and servant met each other's eyes and asked the same question: "Thanatos has fallen?" Sometimes, the question itself is the answer. The two fell into a long silence.

Hades asked slowly, "Why did he go there to kill?" "I don't know." Even twins cannot always fathom each other. Hades said in a low voice, "Hypnos, I don't care what you have in mind, but if you want revenge, think carefully about the timing."

To press it down was impossible! The murder of a brother—no matter how chaotic and backstabbing Zeus's family was—was something that could not be forgiven. That was how the Greek pantheon worked: ties within the same generation were, most of the time, closer than those with elders. After all, they'd taken the blades together and suffered together. The same applied to Zeus: tell him a son died and he might not care; tell him a sibling died and he would explode.

At Hades's instruction, Hypnos answered with a long silence. He could already imagine how enraged their mother, the Night Goddess Nyx, would be. Nyx was among the oldest deities of the Greek world, daughter of the primordial Chaos, and mother to a great brood of gods—almost all of them despised or ill-omened. Without a doubt, Thanatos's fall would set the Night Goddess directly at odds with the Aesir.

On the other side, when Skaha returned to the Silver Palace holding Thanatos's divine soul crystal, one of the Six God-Kings, Brigid, was a bit stunned. "Mother, you shouldn't have taken the field yourself." Looking at a daughter whose temperament was nothing like her own, Skaha sighed. "Winning is what matters. I even thought about losing. Unfortunately, after all these years, the only one who can truly defeat me is your Father God." "Uh." Brigid had nothing to say. Her mother had a strange self-destructive tendency, yet Father God kept her completely in line.

Skaha, spear in hand, walked into the rear hall and found Thalos hadn't even looked up. "Even our daughter worries about me, and you're this calm?" Thalos smiled. "I handed you the former god-king Odin's spear, Gungnir. If you can't win with that, who's to blame?" Skaha arched a purple eyebrow and blinked. "Fair enough."

The recorded number of Aesir deities had already passed a thousand. Among them, those qualified to lay hands on a god-king-tier artifact were one in a hundred, if that. Never mind those little subordinate gods who could only stand in the corner at Golden Palace assemblies—even the Six God-Kings didn't necessarily each have a god-king-class doomsday weapon. There were plenty of spear-wielding deities in the world; Thalos giving Gungnir to Skaha specifically was not without favoritism. The way the two of them got along had a peculiar calm and quiet rapport.

Brigid scampered in, ready to speak with her mother, when the Valkyries began to close the palace doors. She could only leave, sulking.

The first round of True God-level pitched battles lasted a week. In fact, both sides had wins and losses. On the first day, aside from Arjuna and Ramses II killing two sea goddesses and Skaha taking down Thanatos, it seemed the Aesir had picked a fight with the Night Goddess.

The next significant kills were all children of Nyx, including: Beowulf slaying the god of mockery Momus; the ever-restless Ishtar slaying the death-spirit Keres; the "Purest Knight" Galahad slaying the sex goddess Philotes. One could say the Aesir had given Olympus a six-to-zero drubbing.

Bear in mind, none of the gods Thalos sent out belonged to the old-school Aesir. In the eyes of veteran Aesir, this was their lower-tier stock beating the other side's mid-tier stock. Of course this called for celebration. Thor had already taken the lead and headed to the Hall of Joy to party.

When this war report reached Mount Olympus, Athena's face could not possibly have looked good. Six gods! A naked six to nil! No matter how unimpressive, they were still orthodox Olympian gods—names preserved in myth—not at all on the same level as those slave-gods who weren't worth grieving over. The result left Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades black-faced.

Unexpectedly, Hera came to Athena. "Great Queen of Heaven, what do you need of me?" "Is this truly the state of our frontline?" The beautiful queen's brows knit. "With this report card, how are we supposed to pacify the vassal gods?"

Pacify? Oppress, more like. Athena saw through it but said nothing. She had never advocated brutal oppression of conquered pantheons' deities; back in the day, none of the Major Gods would listen. Or perhaps they heard but were unwilling to contradict loudmouths like Ares. That overexploitation directly led to a vassal pantheon full of gods who not only lacked loyalty but were, objectively, too drained of divine power to fight.

Athena had gathered plenty of intelligence on the Aesir; she knew that, just like her own side, they were centered on "Titan gods." After all this time, not a single Titan god had appeared on the other side. That meant they were sending out their main force against the other side's vassals and still managed to lose a relatively important secondary deity like Thanatos. Truly humiliating!

Yet Hera's order still had to be handled by Athena. The big brutes couldn't manage such delicate work. Athena returned to her temple, summoned the Goddess of Victory, and relayed Hera's command. "This..." The Goddess of Victory was stumped. Anyone with eyes could see what this was, yet she had to play ostrich, bury her head in the sand, pretend the enemy didn't exist, and proclaim a great victory?

Seeing her discomfort, Athena let out a long sigh. "Fine. The other side has plenty of vassal gods killed by our forces as well. Use that as the talking point." And so Athena ordered her subordinates to drag in ten cheap divine cores of South Asian gods, after which Mount Olympus issued a divine proclamation—To celebrate victory in the god-war, Mount Olympus would hold a ten-day festival.