

## Thalos 420

Chapter 420: Battle Will

To be honest, if ordinary gods could open their heavenly eyes and see what Hera was doing, they would only marvel at her shrewdness.

In a world where information is underdeveloped, this kind of maneuver not only isn't wrong, it can actually unify the inside and steady morale.

The problem is that the opposing God-Emperor Thalos is a transmigrator from a modern world.

Coming from an era of hyper-transparent information, no one understands better than he does what transparency brings.

Without more authoritative outside news, whatever Mount Olympus says will be taken as truth by those ignorant vassal gods. Even if they doubt, they have no evidence.

Thalos slapping faces in one second is a massive blow to Zeus's authority.

Heh—weren't you saying Olympus was winning?

This is winning?

This is what you call "win-ology"!

On the surface, those vassal gods of the Greek world couldn't see Thanatos's fall, but they would always find a chance to verify it.

No matter a pantheon's size, any complete pantheon will always have the office of death.

Rumors stir unrest; truth is the sharp knife.

Hera's darkened face knocked two grades off her beauty.

When it comes down to it, Hera is the type who excels at internal strife and fails at external war.

Hand her Zeus's authority and send her across Greece to persecute all those children of mistresses and concubines, and she's a final-boss-level demon queen.

But send this family goddess to fight a foreign war, to match wits with the enemy God-Emperor, and she's nothing.

So when this got kicked up to Zeus, he merely glanced at his noble wife and said nothing.

Hera hasn't poked a few holes in things over the years?

It's just that Zeus's authority is so heavy that everyone ignores her nonsense.

This time, the vassal gods were still cooperating with Hera's performance, even turning a blind eye and a deaf ear to the truth.

Anyone with a brain knows this is like magma hidden deep beneath the earth; once Zeus shows signs of defeat and can't suppress the situation, the backlash will fall on Mount Olympus a thousandfold.

Back to the point.

Right now, Athena noticed that the vassal gods' morale had clearly dropped.

They would still attack under orders from Zeus and Athena, but the "just getting by" sandbagging was visible to the naked eye.

When they ran into Aesir gods, they opened by stacking shields.

Layer upon layer of divine shields, thrown on themselves like they cost nothing.

Weapons optional; shields mandatory.

Large tower shields fused with certain elements became hot items.

Don't be fooled by forged steel weapons hard-countering bronze shields—that's when there's a big difference in divine power or when defenders spread their power evenly. When these slave gods pour all their divine power into defense, they literally become "because I'm afraid of pain, I put all my points into defense."

For three days straight, you could see those slave gods in bronze armor with bronze shields coming off the field covered in saber and axe marks, looking miserable—yet all just flesh wounds. Athena was speechless.

You say they're not trying?

They are covered in wounds, at least.

And the key wounds are on the front, not the back.

In Greek culture, wounds on the front absolutely prove valor.

Even a hothead like Ares found it hard to berate them.

Yet anyone with eyes could see they were slacking.

Lots of noise in battle, very few results; marathon stalemates and draws kept popping up, forming a bizarre situation.

Then, once their weapons and gear wore out, they ran to Hephaestus for replacements, making the fire god furious.

With results like this, the up-and-coming Aesir gods were clearly dissatisfied—but there was nothing to be done.

If the other side insists on turtling, what can you do?

Being able to deploy Major Gods doesn't mean you must deploy Major Gods.

Even if the star-domain laws tend to enforce one-on-one for Major Gods, a god-king can still play dirty and send avatars to interfere.

That made the Major Gods on both sides show restraint.

In the week that followed, the only surprise was Bors, once a knight under Arthur, who, still in a mortal body, unexpectedly cut down a sea goddess—a new upset.

No other dazzling performances from the gods.

A war that could have risen to the Major God level at the top end turned, thanks to Greece's active and passive adjustments, into a fizzle.

As the spatial corridors narrowed, it became even harder to fight.

Everyone knew that turtling works for a while, not for a lifetime.

Driven by the chaotic cosmic currents, the two great world-clusters advanced in parallel, fighting through the mutated starfields as if scratching an itch through a boot. This would inevitably end. By past experience, the day of decisive battle was close.

Before long, an avatar of Ishtar brought new intel: "Big openings! Several big enough openings! No doubt about it—this round is for god-kings!"

"Hm?" Thalos was surprised, and yet not.

From the projected mind-images, it wasn't hard to tell that the new cluster of corridors was a bit like a honeycomb—once you go into one, you mostly can't cover the adjacent ones. After all, even a God-Emperor doesn't dare claim he can casually punch through a mutated starfield.

This meant multi-pronged offense and defense would severely test a pantheon's ability to fight on multiple fronts.

Thalos's divine gaze swept over Thor and over his other sons and daughters.

"Everyone, the time to test you has come. Use the enemy's souls and blood to prove you deserve the crowns on your heads!"

"Yes—" Led by Thor, the Six God-Kings and Thalos's other children rose in unison from their thrones and, each in their own way, made solemn vows.

In this moment, Thalos's enfeoffment of the Six God-Kings showed its greatest value.

He had spent half a century cultivating them for exactly this. These grown divine sons and daughters would lead their own subordinate gods and clash with the Greek god-kings.

Seeing the fervent mood in the hall, Thalos felt gratified.

As long as they crossed this threshold called "blood and fire," they would become true god-kings. Their power would no longer come solely from the God-Emperor's authority but from their own supporters.

This is also a father's dilemma.

He longs to see them achieve and prove themselves, yet fears they will die on the road to growth.

Thor seemed to catch Thalos's mix of hope and fear. He laughed heartily. "Father God, which goddess on the other side have you set your eyes on this time? I'll go snatch her for you."

Pfft!

That's such a Viking line.

No wonder the Vikings in myth worshiped Thor so much.

Thalos chuckled. "The Greek world's three great virgin goddesses—Athena, Hestia, and Artemis—each possesses the power to kill you. Just don't throw your lives away. What I want, I'll take myself."

The Six God-Kings quietly noted the three names.

The strong naturally had ambitions. The weak made up their minds to avoid them.

Being able to analyze the situation correctly and act on it—that too is a kind of wisdom.