

## Thalos 421

Chapter 421: Gilgamesh vs. Ares

Closer!

The two great world-clusters were drawing nearer in spatial terms; the shock waves from their approach alone were enough to sweep aside the meager chaotic energy in this starfield.

In addition, under the pull of a strange gravity from the starfield, that previous full "face" spatial corridor reappeared.

Roughly speaking, in the six directions—up, down, left, right, front, and back—there were God-King-level spatial corridors linking the two world-clusters.

Together with several corridors of slightly lower energy, this once again made it impossible for the great worlds to hide behind small worlds and fight by sending only cannon-fodder worlds to the front.

This was an upgraded group brawl.

It was practically designed on purpose to prevent the two pantheons from speedrunning a single lane.

Seeing this, Thalos pondered briefly: "The six main corridors go to the Six God-Kings. Then for these big corridors... Thor, Arthur, Freyr, Tyr—each of you pick one to hold."

"Yes—" the God-Kings and core deities answered in unison.

Orders rippled outward like shock waves.

As soon as the various God-Kings stepped out of the temple, a chain of divine thoughts went out.

"Summon the gods. Corridor No. 1 is ours. I want someone to lead the charge." Gilgamesh's brows danced; he arched a golden eyebrow, one hand on his hip, sweeping the waiting sub-gods outside with a world-conquering gaze.

Unsurprisingly, Siegfried and Bedivere stepped forward in unison and bowed. "We are willing to share our lord's burdens!"

Gilgamesh gave a glance at several South Asian deities who had hesitated a beat, looked a little disappointed, and ignored those fainthearted ones. He took out a gold coin exclusive to the Aesir.

It was a fine coin—on one side Thalos's profile, on the other the World Tree symbolizing the Ginnungagap world.

With a flourish, he tossed the coin into the air. "Siegfried, you're the portrait; Bedivere, you're the 'Tree'!"

The coin arced high and, without any divine interference, fell to the steps, bounced a few times, and finally came up "World Tree."

Bedivere's sword-straight brows lifted; a smile touched his lips. "Looks like I'm the vanguard this time."

Siegfried wasn't annoyed. He drew his sword, flicked a beautiful flower of steel, then sheathed it again. "I wish you the first kill."

"Thanks!"

Things unfolded just as Thalos expected: most vanguard slots were seized by the mortal heroes.

Those who had ascended as gods while still in mortal bodies were the catfish in this divine war, stirring the tides of fate. Their presence had brought a spirit of upward striving to the Aesir, a pantheon whose classes had long since ossified.

The original South Asian gods, who had been beaten for half a century and grown a bit complacent, were now trying to keep their stations by following the Aesir's ancient rule—prove yourself with battle merit. Some succeeded; more failed and became timid.

But willing or not, unless they turned into domestic-policy goddesses, they were destined to be pushed onto the battlefield by Thalos to prove with blood and fire that they deserved their current rank.

The Six God-Kings, with their own divine attendants and hosts of angels, began their advance on the Greek world.

This news genuinely startled Queen Hera.

She had recently been papering over the cracks, feigning strength. Whether or not it truly fooled the slave-gods of the vassal worlds, at least she had contributed something to keeping things stable.

She hadn't expected that once the spatial corridors opened, those damned Aesir would really launch a grand offensive.

If the Twelve Olympian God-Kings took losses this time, even their last bit of face would be torn away.

Hera looked at Ares, who fancied himself invincible, and let out a long sigh.

She certainly knew Ares's strength. To be honest, she didn't expect him to achieve any earth-shaking feats. In her view, the more reliable ones among the Twelve were Poseidon, Athena, and Artemis. The rest either weren't combat-types, or, like her, were hamstrung by status from charging onto the field.

In the old days, Zeus was counted among the Twelve principal gods; at the energy levels of these corridors, a God-Emperor certainly couldn't deploy.

Also, Hermes the herald, Hestia the hearth goddess, Aphrodite the goddess of beauty, and Demeter the agriculture goddess—barring surprises—wouldn't be taking the field either.

In fact, getting six full routes covered was no easy task. With Hephaestus, the fire and forge god, busy researching steelmaking, they would have to send Hades, who technically wasn't one of the Twelve God-Kings, or else one corridor would be left empty.

Originally, the six armies should have gone out together.

But Mount Olympus had a peculiar exception.

Ares loved battle. At the sound of war drums he danced for joy, drunk on the scent of blood. Slaughter was his daily bread. Wherever there was a melee, he would rush in, hacking without asking the reason why.

In armor he was splendid, helm plumed, leather vambraces on his arms, bronze spear thrusting forth with menace.

As soon as a corridor opened, he leapt onto his war chariot and charged into the nearest portal.

Behind him, his consort—Enyo, goddess of war and bloodshed—hurried to follow with a crowd of attendants and heroic spirits.

In the spatial corridor—five kilometers wide and one kilometer high—the atmosphere felt strange.

Dark red blood-mist swallowed the setting sun. Gilgamesh advanced over scorched earth with his sub-gods; his golden armor reflected molten light in the smoke of war, ringing with a soul-shaking clangor as the chariot sped forward.

A vast golden divine radiance drove back the surrounding chaotic miasma that came on like volleys of arrows.

The steed beneath him was a celestial horse from the breeding of a certain trickster god...

This enormous warhorse originally issued to the Aesir for riding stood over four meters at the shoulder.

The divine gale kicked up by its charge easily flipped the foremost Spartan heroic spirits; even the mounts beneath those spirits broke apart screaming, their souls shattered.

"This is the mighty Greek army? What a sorry sight!"

At last given a chance to fight, Gilgamesh had no concept of "bullying the small."

Thousands upon thousands of forged-steel weapons surfaced in the space around him and launched like a swarm of locusts toward the enemy.

The front ranks of the Spartan heroic spirits began to crumble; the soldiers in front suddenly burst apart, their soul-fragments rolling back like a rainstorm and dispersing into the corridor.

Bedivere's expression turned odd. "Wait, Your Majesty—wasn't I supposed to be the vanguard?"

"Ahahaha! Sorry, sorry! It's been too long since I fought—I got a bit excited." Gilgamesh was actually quite good-tempered toward those he valued.

Bedivere had just moved to advance when he thought better of it. "Sigh, looks like the one on the other side likes to charge too..."

That's right!

Ares, that brute, was bull-rushing straight in without a care.