

Thalos 430

Chapter 430: The Real Win-ology

Artemis was about to go mad!

She would never have imagined that one day she'd end up as the female lead in a time-stop series.

No—she had clearly surrendered already, so why were they still tormenting her like this? Boo-hoo!

The key was that the two of them were "on stage" putting on a contest of time-stop divine arts, while the goddesses below were forcefully acting as spectators, pointing and commenting without end.

That ultimate shame made every inch of her divine body feel as if it were being seared by fire.

If not for Atalanta constantly comforting her, Artemis felt she would have fallen apart!

Who was she?

She was the supremely noble daughter of Zeus, one of Olympus's legitimate god-kings, so favored by Zeus that she didn't even need to watch Hera's face.

She not only had a host of nymph goddesses to attend her and traveled with a grand entourage; she also had a vast vassal world from which she could draw divine power at will.

Now she had nothing.

Once a conqueror high above, now she could only become the leading lady of a time-stop series, desperately giving a "performance as herself."

The extreme contrast left her completely lost.

And Thalos, undulating amid wheat-colored waves, couldn't help maliciously speculating about the "grand spectacle" over on Olympus.

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Mount Olympus, Greece.

"What? Her Majesty Artemis hasn't returned?!" The news sprouted wings and swiftly spread throughout the pantheon.

By rare grace of the mutated star-zone opening a path, the Olympians could "truly" display their absolute might. Pent up for so long, the gods' expectations for the god-kings' expedition had already maxed out.

Hera, delighted at heart, had believed that after today she could stop playing at fake win-ology and truly celebrate a grand victory.

And the result?

The earliest to roll back, Ares, lost her all face.

Because in this lifetime Ares hadn't directly crossed swords with Athena, Hera did not know that Ares's actual strength couldn't match the "War God" title that ought to represent the strongest beneath the God-Emperor. She naturally placed high hopes on her eldest son.

At the news that Ares had been driven back—and by some "Gil"-something god of wealth—Hera instantly felt her face had been utterly lost.

If she could, she truly wouldn't want to recognize this weakling son.

What could she do? In the engagements that ended one after another, Olympus had basically been winning; the only difference was by how much.

The old-line third-generation gods Hades and Poseidon needed no elaboration; they'd forced the enemy to use a World-Sword to save their lives. Athena and Apollo, too, were pressing their opposing god-kings.

When the five god-kings who went out returned one after another, tallying things up, even if there were no concrete results, on the face of it the score should have been 4–1.

Ares was the one who most disgraced the Olympians.

And now?

You're telling me Artemis is gone?

Glancing at Zeus on the God-Emperor's throne, face dark enough to drip water and yet saying not a word, Hera secretly rejoiced at Artemis's disappearance. She'd long since despised the children borne by those wild goddesses, but she couldn't show it.

On the surface, Hera couldn't help sternly questioning Hermes: "What's going on? Tell it in detail! And mind you—don't talk nonsense. Whatever else she is, Artemis is still an Olympian god-king!"

Hermes wore a bitter face. "Artemis encountered a very powerful enemy god! An extremely massive world-force destroyed most of the spatial corridor serving as the dueling ground, turning it almost into a chaotic graveyard. As for Her Majesty and the nymph goddesses under her, I found neither their traces nor any... remains of belongings!"

At that, Zeus finally lost his composure.

His thunderous voice boomed and clanged across the peak of the sacred mountain: "What does that mean?!"

Realizing his lapse, Zeus hurriedly lowered his voice. "Are you trying to say my good daughter was seized by the enemy?"

Zeus truly didn't believe it.

It was too absurd.

No one knew his daughter's strength better than he did. Artemis had the power to solo those small-world god-kings. Such a mighty goddess, humming a tune, going out with her bow and her retinue to "hunt," and you're telling me the enemy threw a sack over her and carried her off?

How could Zeus accept that?!

The muscles exposed to the air all tightened and swelled; he didn't even notice that his expression now wasn't far off from the fiercest of ancient monsters, Typhon.

A goddess-king captured—no one knew better than Zeus what that meant.

Moreover, Zeus was the type with an extreme possessive streak. Sleeping with mortal kings' queens was nothing; even if his daughter's daughter was still his daughter, that was whatever.

But foreign gods laying hands on his divine garden—and snatching the virgin goddess he had expressly decreed no one was allowed to touch—was intolerable.

In an instant, the peak of Olympus was filled with writhing, twisting thunder-serpents roaring and bursting.

Gods of slightly lower rank were already prostrated on the ground in terror, trembling, not daring to raise their heads for fear Zeus would vent his anger on them and strike them with a bolt that would damage their divine souls.

Even core deities like Athena, equal to Artemis as god-kings, stood expressionless and wooden.

Artemis's younger brother Apollo, grief-stricken, clenched his fists and trembled constantly.

To be frank, among all present, perhaps only Queen Hera was secretly rejoicing.

Ever since Zeus established his rule over the Greek world, Hera had been busy catching infidelities—scheming to kill mistresses and to get rid of the children Zeus had with his lovers. She would have loved for Artemis to fall.

If the Aesir on the other side didn't look so ferocious as to seriously threaten Olympian rule over the cosmos, Hera would probably have thrown a ten-day feast for this.

It could only be said that on fundamental interests, she and Zeus were highly aligned.

Her divine authority came from Zeus; without him, she was nothing.

The god-kings stood there woodenly, waiting for Zeus to finish raging.

A god-king lost—this blame was too great, so great that no single god-king could shoulder it.

Zeus ground his teeth till they creaked, his sharp divine eyes sweeping back and forth across the great hall. Finally, he cast his gaze to the seats in the very back.

His voice was cold and cruel. "Who was responsible for receiving Artemis?"

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Compared to the blame-fest atop Mount Olympus, Asgard's Hall of Revelry was a great deal livelier.

Yes, that's right—many of today's Aesir god-kings actually lost their bouts.

Among the Aesir there is no fake win-ology.

A win is a win; a loss is a loss.

There's nothing to argue.

A soot-stained Baldr, Anubis, Brigid, Ekaterina, and Enkidu all calmly admitted they had lost to the other side's old, powerful foes. By dueling terms, it should have been 5–1.

The iron fact that Thalos captured the goddess-king Artemis swept away the gloom that would otherwise have settled over the Aesir.

The real win-ology?

Just actually win—doesn't that settle it?