

Thalos 440

Chapter 440: The Surrender of the Amazons

No one would give Apollo an answer.

To those who had always targeted him and his sister—such as Hera and Ares—regardless of the truth, Artemis was the great traitor of Olympus. In fact, from the very beginning, their existence was viewed as original sins that should have been erased from the world entirely.

For Zeus, who admired Artemis's personality and valued her abilities, this was undoubtedly a tremendous loss.

Perhaps even until the moment Zeus severed Artemis's divine power source, she hadn't truly considered completely defecting to Thalos. It was Zeus's ruthless decision that cut off her last shred of attachment to Olympus.

Or perhaps she was exactly what Hera had called her—a bastard born to betray, filled with treacherous blood from the very beginning.

Zeus didn't know, and he didn't want to know. He only knew one thing: with one less God-King on his side, defeating the *Æsir* gods would become even harder.

Besides, without divine power, could Thalos on the opposing side really trust Artemis so much as to grant her a God-King-level divine source?

Say what you will about Zeus being a lustful monster—going anywhere and sticking it in anything—but when it came to crucial matters, his decisiveness was nothing to scoff at.

Zeus made his decision, and he didn't care about Apollo's feelings. He neither comforted him nor intentionally showed him indifference.

This plunged Apollo into extreme inner turmoil.

Even under such circumstances, Apollo still mobilized only minimal force to protect the believers who worshipped him.

That already made him one of the more conscientious ones.

Look at Ares—this guy only cared whether war existed on a global scale. As long as there was war, he could harvest divine power. As for who suffered in the war, or whether his own followers were among the harmed—he couldn't care less.

This attitude of sowing chaos and standing aloof caused enormous trouble for the other God-Kings.

War is cruel and ugly, completely at odds with the ideals of love and beauty. Ares amassed divine power through war, while Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty, suffered for it.

In times of war, who the hell cared about love and beauty? Oh wait—maybe they did, but only enough for the Ginnungagap warriors to immediately seize any beautiful Greek woman they saw.

You want a choice? A dirty slave woman who did heavy labor every day, or a pampered, fair-skinned, beautiful Greek noblewoman?

There really wasn't a choice, was there?

While the flames of war were temporarily contained on the Greek mainland, they rapidly spread across the Aegean islands, the Ionian archipelago, and the western coastal regions of Asia Minor.

This was not a war on equal terms.

Even though these new Ginnungagap warriors were considered third-rate troops by the major empires and kingdoms of Ginnungagap—and only wielded second-tier iron weapons—they still inflicted devastating damage on the Greek city-states, which were still using bronze weaponry.

Compared to iron weapons, bronze swords were just too soft and too short.

Because of bronze's lack of hardness and durability, bronze swords could only be forged into flat and wide shapes.

And in combat, every inch of length mattered.

Iron swords, which were generally much longer than bronze ones, could do whatever they wanted on the battlefield.

You might ask, didn't the Greeks also have bronze spears?

The problem was, those pitiful bronze spears could still poke through leather armor, but against iron armor? They were useless. Even if the invaders—former Indians or pre-Columbian South Americans—wore leather armor embedded with iron plates, unless a strike landed exactly between the gaps, it was nearly impossible to break through their defenses.

This meant that whether it was large-scale warfare or small-scale skirmishes, the Greeks were always at a severe disadvantage.

These mortals had no idea that in the void above their heads, Hades, Poseidon, and Heracles—three Olympian God-Kings—were locked in deadly battle with three Æsir God-Kings. They also didn't know that on the divine battlefield, the Olympians were already beginning to show signs of defeat. All they knew was that they had most likely been abandoned by the gods they worshipped.

No matter how many sacrifices or prayers they offered, the Greek gods gave them no response.

In Asia Minor, another Amazon queen, Penthesilea, had gathered a large and formidable army.

They were none other than the legendary Amazon warrior legion.

Standing on a stone platform, the valiant Penthesilea raised her short sword and shouted to the thousands of Amazon warriors below, their eyes already burning with the fire of vengeance:

"The gods are locked in a stalemate with the army of false gods in the divine realm. They cannot answer our prayers. But we must never forget who kidnapped our queen, Hippolyta! And who caused our goddess of the hunt, Artemis, to fall into darkness! We will take our revenge in our own way—"

Her bold and magnetic voice echoed across the square.

Such a rousing declaration should have elicited frenzied cheers from the thousands of Amazon warriors. But instead, Penthesilea saw shock and confusion on the familiar faces below her.

At first, she thought she might have said something wrong—until her senses picked up a presence that should not have been there. Someone she knew deeply and yet felt slightly estranged from—her dear sister, Hippolyta!

She turned sharply, and upon seeing that excited yet slightly awkward face, Penthesilea was briefly stunned before throwing caution to the wind. She opened her arms and rushed forward to embrace her sister.

"By the goddess of the hunt, I thought you were... dead. No—you were kidnapped. How did you come back?"

"Of course... Her Majesty Artemis, the goddess of the hunt, sent me back."

Penthesilea's body stiffened abruptly. She released her embrace and looked closely into her sister's eyes at close range. "Wait! You mean..."

Hippolyta didn't hide anything. "Sorry! Zeus stripped Her Majesty Artemis of her title as a God-King. I chose to follow Her Majesty Artemis and pledge allegiance to the *Æsir* God-Emperor Thalos Borson. I hope you and the others will join His Majesty and become part of the *Æsir* pantheon."

A shocking announcement!

The Amazons had two queens—these two sisters co-ruled the Amazons.

Amazonian religious beliefs were a bit eclectic.

Since the Hippolyta sisters were daughters of Ares, some Amazons worshipped the god of war. But most chose to follow the goddess of the hunt, Artemis.

As the most devoted followers of Artemis, they had, in the original mythology, participated in many wars against Athens. Whether it was the grudge between Hippolyta and Theseus, or Penthesilea's appearance in the Trojan War—where she died at the hands of Achilles—they often played roles opposed to Greece.

When Artemis was captured, they had lost their faith—if only briefly.

Now, with Queen Hippolyta returning from captivity and attempting to persuade them to switch sides, things became extremely awkward.

Despite the two queens having inherited a warrior's bloodline, everyone knew that Ares was notoriously cold and indifferent. Since the founding of the Amazons, it was Artemis who had always protected them!

The Amazon warriors exploded in commotion.

Yet it only took half a day, after a round of fierce debate, for the Amazon warriors—who had always held deep grudges against Athens—to make a collective decision.

They wouldn't call it betrayal.

They called it loyalty.

They would follow the radiant and mighty His Majesty Borson—joining the ranks of the *Æsir* gods!