

Thalos 442

Chapter 442: So Who Was Really Wrong?

The Amazon women were never a secluded people. With the Hunting Festival fast approaching and, by their customs, the annual season for choosing men nearly upon them, they made no effort to hide their flirtatious glances at the sturdy men they passed on the road.

This immediately stirred a wave of excitement across Asgard.

Interestingly, the Valkyries had clearly received orders—not only did they not intervene, they allowed it to unfold freely.

The grand army continued forward, eventually arriving at the Hall of Heroes—Valhalla.

There, the Amazon warriors finally saw the goddess of the hunt, Artemis, whom they had yearned for day and night. They erupted into wild cheers.

"Praise the goddess of the hunt!"

"Peace be upon the goddess!"

"This is our offering to the goddess—!"

Time was tight. The Amazons hadn't brought any powerful beasts or divine prey to win the goddess's favor.

But that wasn't the point.

What mattered was that with this unique tribe numbering over fifty thousand, Artemis could now formally declare her full integration into the *Æsir* pantheon.

Hunting itself is an act—one that requires intelligent life to perform, to sustain.

A fanatical army of loyal believers was now Artemis's greatest source of confidence.

Especially since Thalos had permitted her to recruit followers among the Indian and Mayan remnants—an enormous show of support in itself.

This scene alone made her beam with joy.

Hearing the frenzied cries of her devotees, seeing their smiling faces, Artemis realized she was already starting to forget everything about Greece.

It was, without a doubt, her happiest day since arriving in Asgard.

Standing on a broad terrace of Valhalla, she waved her hunting bow with a smile to the crowds below, provoking another wave of deafening cheers.

"Let us shoot the arrows of vengeance at the treacherous Athenians!"

That single line struck right at the hearts of the Amazon warriors, triggering a roar so loud it reached the heavens.

What followed was simple.

First came the re-equipping. A massive batch of forged steel gear was delivered to Valhalla's plaza by cart.

The Amazons, with their keen eye for quality, knew exactly what they were looking at.

They had already heard how armies from countless city-states had been crushed under the Ginnungagap warriors' superior gear.

If iron arms were already this powerful, then refined steel arms—one tier higher—were clearly in a league of their own.

"What trash were we even using before?" Penthesilea asked as she examined a brand-new steel armor set, lovingly stroking the gleaming plates.

It was a suit of armor built on fine beast hide, likely from some high-level predator. The middle layer was reinforced with internal hexagonal iron plates for shock absorption, and the outer shell was made from 5mm of steel plating. Compared to the heavy and flimsy bronze armor they'd used before, this was a revolution. To top it all off, two powerful runes inscribed by real gods adorned the chest.

The bows were equally incredible: made from tender branches of the World Tree, strung with tendons from Fenrir's offspring, and paired with arrows boasting World Tree shafts and forged steel heads.

Penthesilea saw all this and—well, she was moved again.

Next came the sparring bouts between the einherjar and elite Ginnungagap warriors and the Amazonian fighters inside Valhalla's great hall.

The matches attracted plenty of spectators, including the ever-curious Thor.

It had to be said—on equal footing in terms of gear, the average combat skill of the Amazons was very high.

Of course, they were still mortal troops, and only twenty thousand strong—not a force that could turn the tide of war on its own.

After all, the Ginnungagap mortal army numbered in the tens of millions.

Thalos, however, was quite pleased. He even quietly allowed Penthesilea to "sneak in" after the feast, where he... accidentally inserted something in the wrong place.

Setting aside this minor incident with the power-hungry Amazon queen, the incorporation of the Amazons was a classic open-handed stratagem that Zeus could do nothing to stop.

Sure enough, once the news reached Mount Olympus, Hera seized the opportunity to make a scene.

"Zeus, did you see it? She's completely betrayed Olympus now!" Hera didn't spew venom or insults—she considered herself above that. But her cold, cutting words were even more devastating.

And, for once, Zeus had no rebuttal.

In the past, whenever Hera acted out of jealousy and struck cruelly, Zeus would usually be displeased—but he wouldn't publicly reprimand her. He'd just quietly compensate the victims he cared about.

Back when Hera, unable to bear the idea of another goddess giving birth to Zeus's firstborn, forbade the Earth itself from offering Leto a place to give birth, the desperate Leto wandered endlessly—until her sister Asteria, transformed into the drifting "Nameless Island" Delos, gave her refuge.

Even then, Zeus didn't go confront Hera directly or restrain her in any way. Instead, he raised four diamond pillars from the sea to anchor Delos in place.

There, Leto gave birth first to Artemis, goddess of the hunt, and then, nine days later—with Artemis's help—to Apollo, god of prophecy and light.

The mother and her children lived peacefully on the island for a time—until Hera found them and sent the giant serpent Python to kill them. Zeus didn't directly intervene then either—he merely asked Poseidon to stir up massive waves to block the serpent.

It was only after Apollo killed Python and the dust settled that Zeus elevated the siblings to become two of the Twelve Olympians.

Hatred like that is not easily undone.

Zeus valued the siblings' power but couldn't bring himself to remove Hera from her place as queen of the gods. This bizarre "keep every landmine in your own pants and hope none of them go off" mentality—only Zeus could operate like that.

After the siblings were appointed to their posts and rose from Olympians to God-Kings, they remained dutiful, and Hera held her tongue.

But now that Hera had found her opening, how could she not explode?

Artemis may have been your daughter, Zeus—but look how well you treated her! And still she defected! She even brought her people with her!

See? See?!

I told you from the beginning she wasn't worth it! And you didn't believe me!

Hera's laser-focused ire put Zeus in a bind.

He likely understood well that Artemis had only fully submitted to Thalos and joined the *Æsir* after he himself cut off her divine power foundation in that small world—breaking her final hope.

Was Artemis wrong?

From her perspective, she fought until the very end—even endured capture and humiliation without betraying Olympus. Even now, when she called her Amazonian followers to her side, it was, in truth, for survival.

Then was Zeus wrong?

When a God-King under his command was captured, could he really just let that divine power sit idle? Reallocating it to nurture a new battle-type God-King was the rational move.

So, he wasn't wrong either.

And Hera, criticizing Artemis for her betrayal from the standpoint of the Greek pantheon—wasn't wrong either.

So the question is: who was wrong?

Exactly—only the *Æsir* could be wrong!

In a flash of divine wrath, Zeus exploded with fury atop Mount Olympus.

"Thalos Borson! You defiled my daughter! I swear I will return the favor a hundredfold!"

A poisonous oath—but conveniently vague.