

I AM THALOS, ODIN'S OLDER BROTHER

Chapter 14: Target—Surtur

That battle... was too brutal.

From the valley echoed wave after wave of thunderous, earth-shaking "battle cries" from the giantesses. Countless trees snapped like twigs, the sound of cracking wood never ceased.

Bor could only sigh.

Such was the reality of the Aesir in this era.

They were called a divine race, sure. But at this stage, it was far more accurate to call them divine barbarians.

Still, in Bor's eyes—and most of the tribe's—only one thing truly mattered now:

Grandchildren.

The sooner, the better.

Might as well start educating the kid early.

Eventually—after what seemed like ages—Thalos emerged.

He glanced at his two foolishly curious little brothers, then looked toward his parents, who were clearly gossiping, and gave a dry, exasperated explanation.

"Give it some time. We'll see if any of them get pregnant. Either way, as long as the children inherit both Aesir and giant blood, you have no objections, right?"

Bor nodded dumbly.

But Bestla wasn't having it.

"What if they don't get pregnant?"

"Then... I'll meet with them a few more times." Thalos sighed, giving in reluctantly.

He'd been born into this world as Bor's son. It was only natural he carry the weight of the Aesir's destiny. If he alienated his own people, this world might well collapse into destruction even faster.

As for producing divine offspring? Thalos was confident.

Unlike others, he had a powerful awareness of the world's changes. The others didn't realize it yet, but the very fabric of the world was already shifting.

With the death of Ymir—the anchor of the old order—the world had silently expanded, preparing to house more gods.

First, Thalos felt it.

Then Odin.

Then Vili.

All three slowly turned their heads, eyes falling on Ymir's bloated, otherworldly corpse.

No, it wasn't bloated from water.

It was pulsing. Expanding and contracting with a rhythmic energy, like waves gently brushing a reef.

They could all feel it. That strange pulse—it was touching the core of their being.

"Big Brother," Odin murmured, "I feel like the world is calling to me... through Ymir's bloodline. It wants me to do something with his body."

Vili, ever the simple one, nodded in agreement.

Thalos slowly lifted his gaze toward the snowy, frigid night sky.

"...You're right," he said. "The world yearns for change."

He knew.

He knew exactly what the world wanted.

In the Edda, Odin and his brothers responded to this call by disassembling Ymir's body and reshaping the world.

This time?

Thalos stopped them.

"...But Ymir alone isn't enough."

"Not enough? But I heard the voice of the world..." Odin challenged, for once daring to speak up.

"Oh, my foolish little brother... reacting step by step won't make you a great king. You must lift your eyes to a higher plane of thought."

"Higher... plane?"

Their eyes followed the direction of Thalos' finger.

Beyond the frostbitten landscape where floodwaters had barely receded, where ice began to freeze again under the returning cold, they gazed upon the Ginnungagap.

The chasm of creation—the line dividing the worlds.

There, elemental forces of fire and ice met and clashed in eternal turbulence.

They had defeated Ymir, ruler of the frost. But beyond that chasm—across that 3,000-meter-wide void—a titanic figure loomed, holding a flaming sword.

Even from afar, they could see him raise his weapon and stir up tsunamis of fire, flinging them across the void toward the frost world.

That blazing red figure—vague and massive—could only be one being.

Bor's expression twisted between excitement and shock.

"You mean to say...?"

Thalos' face turned grim and resolute.

"Yes.

We must slay the Primordial Fire Giant—Surtur.

Only by claiming the powers of both fire and ice can we reshape this world from the ground up.

Only then can we lay new laws, fill the empty void, and usher in the birth of new elements—of new life!"

Shock?

Oh, they weren't done being shocked.

Bor had once rallied the Aesir against Ymir because there was no choice—the fate of the tribe was on the line.

But this?

This was aggressive. Grand.

A vision that would shake the world.

Had Thalos suggested this before Ymir's fall, Bor would've refused without hesitation.

But now?

He couldn't say no.

Thalos had slain Ymir.

He was a hero.

And more importantly—he was King.

Bor had no reason to hold back his son. In fact, he was secretly relieved he'd passed on the crown early—because now, he might've only slowed the Aesir down.

Bor straightened. "Then give the order, Your Majesty. We are ready."

That was his way of saying—don't think of me as your father now. Think of me as a soldier of the Aesir.

Thalos looked around.

So many eyes. So many hearts.

He adjusted his goals.

Under normal circumstances, he might have considered these people dead weight. But this group?

Bor—the former strongest warrior of the Aesir.

The frost giants loyal to them—tough, powerful, and innately resistant to fire.

Yes. It was time for them to step up.

On the other side...

The Fire Giant Surtur was growing increasingly restless.

He couldn't explain it, but the world had changed. Something huge had happened—something he hadn't seen.

The cruel frostwinds that once bit at him had ceased. The great cold had melted into a flood that poured into the Ginnungagap.

The abyss echoed with Surtur's furious roars—but this time, no wind answered.

No icy wrath from his eternal rival.

No response from Ymir.

More than that...

He felt the world rejecting him.

Once, Ymir and Surtur were the two pillars of balance—ice and fire.

They drew strength from the world, but also blocked its growth. Prevented new laws. Held chaos at bay.

But now?

Ymir was gone.

And the world... was starting to turn against him.

Something new was coming.

Something from the other side of the chasm.

And with every breath, every heartbeat...

Surtur could feel it—

The pulse of fate.

The march of destiny.

And the end of his reign.