

I AM THALOS, ODIN'S OLDER BROTHER

Chapter 9: Face Me, You Bastard!

A cold wind blew across the land. Thalos's long hair whipped about like wild grass in a storm, yet he barely noticed. What caught his attention was far more startling: the frost elements, once so intimately responsive to him, now rebounded off his skin in invisible ripples, pushed away completely.

Thalos froze for a second.

The truth was clear—after absorbing Ymir's blood and strengthening his divine body, his elemental affinity had drastically diminished.

That was the cost of becoming stronger.

And Thalos had no regrets.

The Aesir gods who had descended into the world of Ginnungagap were little more than clumsy, oversized deities at this early stage—capable only of resizing their bodies and wielding divine strength. Nothing about them truly embodied divinity.

His elemental attunement had been a "foreign specialty," a gift he carried with him from beyond this world. Sadly, the long and grueling journey through chaos had consumed most of his original power. Otherwise, his mastery of the elements would've reached far greater heights than the half-baked level it was now.

But if he had to choose, Thalos would always prefer one overwhelming talent to two weak ones.

Ymir was a textbook case of wasted potential. Despite being born with terrifying power, the frost giant progenitor had no idea how to use it. Instead of mastering his gifts, he squandered them—endlessly spawning more giants through bizarre means like underarm reproduction, dumping his surplus strength into offspring instead of wielding it himself.

"Ymir," Thalos muttered, "if you won't use that power... then I will."

He began to chase down every single pool of blood Ymir had spilled, absorbing each one with increasing speed and ease. With every drop he claimed, his understanding of this primal force deepened.

Meanwhile, Odin and Vili had fallen into a rhythm, slowly but steadily pressuring Ymir.

One would bait, the other would strike.

Time and again, Odin landed devastating blows—ten-meter gashes or craters a meter wide—across Ymir's massive body.

When Thalos arrived to see this, he couldn't help but chuckle in surprise.

Odin truly lives up to his myth.

In the Poetic Edda, it was Odin—alongside his two dopey brothers, Vili and Vé—who eventually wore Ymir down and killed him. In this life, Thalos's presence overshadowed Odin, but the younger brother's potential still shone through.

Just as Odin scored another successful hit and was about to shrink and vanish into the forest again, a massive wooden spear—forty meters long and thicker than four men could wrap their arms around—shot through the air from nowhere.

It had been expertly shaved, sharpened, and stripped of branches, resembling a colossal javelin.

What was truly frightening: Odin hadn't sensed anything until it was already flying past him.

It zipped through a narrow gap between giant trees, streaking twenty meters past his left flank before slamming directly into Ymir's left calf.

CRACK!

It pierced clean through!

The colossal javelin remained embedded, tilted diagonally and pinning Ymir's foot to the earth.

"AAAAARRRGH!"

Ymir's scream tore the heavens—louder even than when Thalos had sliced open his gut.

The pain was real.

Though not fatal, the blow devastated his mobility.

Before Ymir could react, another spear screamed through the sky.

This time, Odin caught the source: perched on a slope a full kilometer away stood a giant—fifty meters tall. Thalos.

Wait—Thalos?!

Odin froze.

How could Big Brother grow so large?

This far exceeded the limits of normal Aesir transformation.

Even Father Bor had never reached such size.

How had Thalos become so strong?

Before he could dwell on it, another javelin nailed Ymir's right leg. Even wounded, the progenitor of giants wouldn't go down without a fight. With a furious bellow, he tore up a mountain and hurled it straight at Thalos.

Thalos shrank midair, vanishing beneath the tree canopy.

Ymir, growling, smashed through the spears pinning his legs, hoping to free himself.

Taking advantage of the chaos, Thalos regrouped with Odin and Vili.

"Listen. I'll draw Ymir away. While he's distracted, you two—go absorb his blood! It's valuable."

Odin blinked, still stunned by his brother's size and power. "Big Brother... you mean we can absorb Ymir's blood too?"

"Don't forget—our mother is a giant!"

Just imagining the benefits made Odin's blood race.

A stronger body!

Greater power!

What god could resist?

He grabbed Vili and rushed off.

Meanwhile, Thalos launched another boulder.

Ymir, predictably, gave chase.

Despite the bleeding craters in both legs, he refused to abandon his pursuit. His rage had peaked. Even his dulled mind recognized that this tiny foe had inflicted the most damage.

And something else enraged him even more—he could smell himself on Thalos.

That sickening familiarity...

He chased Thalos for miles, until they reached a U-shaped canyon—its narrow, two-hundred-meter mouth flanked by smooth ice cliffs five hundred meters tall.

There was no way out.

Thalos stopped. Turned. Faced him.

Finally cornered, Ymir's excitement surged.

"No more running... you little bastard! FACE ME!"

His roar shattered the air. Whole groves of snow pines cracked and toppled. Avalanches thundered down the cliff walls, nearly burying Thalos alive.

Thalos had to enlarge himself to thirty meters just to leap free of the snow.

"Hahahaha! Got nowhere to run now, huh?! You little bastard!" Ymir howled with glee, drunk on long-awaited revenge.

But Thalos... was laughing too.

"Ymir," he said, voice cold and calm,

"You may not have heard this saying:

The best hunters often look like prey."

"...Huh?" Ymir blinked. That... didn't compute.

Before he could process it, Thalos charged.

"DIE!!" Ymir roared.

The giant club, stirred by hurricane-force winds, came down like divine judgment.

But just as it struck—Thalos shrank again.

Ymir snarled and adjusted, his weapon slamming sideways to chase Thalos.

He never expected what happened next.

Thalos slipped—into the gaping wound on Ymir's right leg.

"NO—"

But it was too late.

Ymir's club, following through on its swing, came crashing down—

Directly onto his own left leg.

CRACK!

The sound of bone shattering echoed through the canyon like a thunderclap.

"AAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHH!"