

Thalos 120

Chapter 120: Rumors

Odin's plans were doomed to fail.

After Thalos ordered Heimdall—guardian of the Bifröst—to ignore the other minor realms and even assigned bow-god Ullr to take over some monitoring duties, Heimdall focused exclusively on Jötunheimr.

With so many giants, it was impossible for them not to hunt or forage. The moment they left their icy dens, Heimdall would spot them.

And once discovered, they were eliminated.

Odin could only seethe in rage as he watched the Bifröst's rainbow light streak diagonally into Jötunheimr again and again—each beam a signal that Thor and his crew had just eliminated another band of rebel frost giants.

Thor was having the time of his life.

A 15-meter giant charged him with a roar. Thor matched the giant's height in an instant.

With a graceful sidestep, he dodged the stone battle axe and then brought Mjolnir sideways into the edge of the blade.

Crack!

The sound was crisp, almost like shattering an eggshell.

Thor's immense strength didn't stop there—Mjolnir crushed the shattered axe pieces into the giant's hideous face, causing a splash of vivid blood before slamming the massive creature into the ground and pulverizing its head.

The Three Warriors of Asgard fought with remarkable synergy: Volstagg shattered a giant's leg; Hogun drew its attention; and Fandral leapt onto its knee for the killing blow to the neck.

Meanwhile, the Valkyries, mounted on their flying steeds, dove from the sky in precision attacks, distracting giants to open them up for lethal strikes.

The entire battle was a visual feast.

But not to Odin.

When his raven Muninn reported what was happening, Odin could only gnash his teeth.

At this rate, his carefully hidden reserves of rebel giants would be uprooted within half a month.

These small clans—only 20 or so giants apiece—were the perfect fodder for Thor's superior one-on-one strength.

Then came an even more infuriating blow: Thalos had reportedly instructed the giantess Skadi to try and take up the North Wind divine office. Although it was a wind-aligned domain, it partially overlapped with Odin's own Winter office.

Without the North Wind, the power of Winter would be severely reduced.

On a peaceful day, Skadi and Odin might have cooperated.

But the moment Odin stirred trouble, they would be rivals in divine authority. Their clashing domains would weaken Odin's control of his own powers.

Thalos had outmaneuvered Odin. Again.

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Inside the now-empty great hall, Odin yanked Mimir's head up and shook it violently.

"Hey, old man! Your ideas aren't working!"

Mimir, dizzy from the spinning, groaned.

"My lord, the success of any plan depends not just on my advice, but on your decisions and resolve."

Odin's eyes sharpened.

He had to spread chaos.

Only widespread disorder could undermine the Order, and shake the foundation of Thalos' rule.

Of course, the risk was real: if he spread too much chaos, the whole Ginnungagap world could turn into a monster-infested nightmare—full of abominations with dozens of heads. If that happened, even if Odin did seize the throne, would it even be a world worth ruling?

Odin hesitated. For once.

Yet less than a week later, the Dark Elves revolted.

They demanded half of Svartalfheim to establish their own empire. The Dwarves and Gnomes flatly refused, and the two races began open warfare underground. Even Valkyrie mediators were rejected.

So far, so tolerable—it was still a mortal conflict.

But then came a new kind of weapon—rumors.

"Have you heard? The High King despises pure-blooded Aesir. He'll never take a pure-blooded Aesir goddess as his queen."

"The King's just a barbarian. He likes crude giantesses more."

"Look at the royal children—most of them have giant blood."

The rumors put Thalos in a rare defensive position.

He had used Thor's sincerity to break Odin's schemes, and used Skadi to pressure Odin's divine dominion. But clearly, his foolish little brother wasn't stopping—he was doubling down.

Rumors, after all, spread best when they're half-true.

It was true that few pure-blood Aesir held high positions.

For instance, no pure-blooded Aesir ruled a single sub-realm. In contrast, the half-blood god Freyr, a descended god, ruled Alfheimr.

Most Aesir knew this was part of Thalos' strategy to absorb the Vanir lineage.

But that didn't stop jealousy and resentment.

Even Frigg came to test Thalos' stance.

He answered her with silence.

And silence, often, is an answer.

To be fair, Thalos wasn't blameless—he'd fathered many children, but never declared a Queen of the Gods.

The pure-blooded Aesir's desire for power would never be satisfied.

First, because they lacked real talent.

Second, because few of them could fight.

Half of the Aesir gods needed golden apples just to stay young and beautiful. Why would Thalos hand power to such unreliable folk?

His silence cast a shadow over the usually jovial Palace of Joy—far fewer Aesir came to revel lately.

And then came another rumor.

"Have you heard? The King plans to poison his third brother Vili—so he can seize complete power from the giant faction."

"No way! The King isn't that heartless!"

This one was too absurd. Not even the frost giants believed it.

But that's the trick—raise suspicion with a lie, then slip in something more believable.

"The High King is going to marry Freyja as Queen of the Gods!"

This rumor... set Asgard on fire.

The pure-blooded Aesir lost it.

"Freyja?! She's just a descended goddess! A Vanir transplant! How dare she claim the queen's seat?"

The irony?

Freyja herself believed it.

She dressed up in her finest and went straight to the Silver Palace, in full view of the gossiping Aesir.

Even when Thalos uncharacteristically drove her out, it didn't stop the rumors.

Truth was, until Thalos publicly declared a queen, no rumor would ever die.

Back in the Silver Palace, Thalos' gaze grew sharp—cutting through space, locking onto Odin's face in distant Jötunheimr.

"My foolish little brother... You think this is clever?

You've pissed me off.

And let me tell you something, you idiot—

What you can't win on the battlefield...

You'll never get at the negotiation table."