

Thalos 124

Chapter 124

So many years had passed.

The old remnants of the Vanir had long since adapted to Vili, the so-called King of Vanaheim.

He was exactly as God-King Thalos had once promised—nothing more than a figurehead in name, a mascot in function.

A pure symbol of Aesir dominance over the Vanir.

Vili was clueless and dull, understanding nothing. Whatever other gods told him to do, he did, never stepping out of line. At most, he would occasionally cry out "hungry" or "thirsty" when he needed food or drink—but these minor needs were always taken care of by divine attendants.

If this were an age where the two divine races had fought to a draw and exchanged hostages, trading Freyja and Freyr for this handsome idiot would no doubt have infuriated the Vanir gods.

But in this life, the Aesir had fought through the Vanir, holding absolute dominance.

Only two or three dozen Vanir gods remained. If they didn't keep Vili alive and well, what would they do—harm him and give the God-King a reason to wipe them out?

But Nótt had never expected there to actually be poison in the wine!

Ordinary poison couldn't possibly harm an Aesir god.

This had to be something incredibly rare, even infused with divine power itself, to be capable of killing a true god.

Nótt panicked instantly. "Poison? How could this be? Wasn't this wine bestowed by Asgard?!"

"Yes! That's right, we only opened it just before serving!"

But Vili had been poisoned badly—his lips had turned pitch black, his eyes blank, and all he could do was clutch his stomach and cry out in pain: "It hurts! Hurts so much—!"

The Vanir gods present were thrown into complete chaos.

If the king of a realm, appointed by the ruling clan, were to die here, they couldn't even imagine how furious the God-King would be.

"Hurry! Get water! Dilute the poison!"

"I'll summon water and force it into him!"

The Vanir gods scrambled in disarray.

By forcibly pouring water into Vili's mouth, they managed to make him vomit up some of the poisoned wine.

Just by looking, it was clear this was no ordinary poison—it reeked horribly and had terrifying corrosiveness. Even diluted, wherever it touched the temple floor, the tiles sizzled and pitted.

At that moment, a rainbow beam descended from the sky, and a familiar figure to Nótt charged in without ceremony.

"Gullveig?"

"By order of His Majesty, I've come to assist!" Gullveig didn't waste words. She took a magical flask and poured its contents down Vili's throat.

This time, Vili vomited out even more black-and-white, muddled liquid, now partially neutralized.

He seemed somewhat better, but it wasn't over—he was still writhing on the ground, clutching his stomach in agony.

"What's going on?!" Nótt asked with a pale face.

"There was an assassination attempt just now in the Palace of Joy—someone tried to poison His Majesty Thalos Borson. Fortunately, Freyr detected it in time, and disaster was averted. But who could've imagined the assassin would be so ruthless..."

"What kind of poison is this? And why do you have the antidote?" Too many questions swirled in Nótt's mind—she couldn't hold them back.

"This is the venom of Jörmungandr, the giant serpent born of Loki! Back then, His Majesty, fearing the serpent would cause harm, had me extract its venom early and research an antidote. I developed one, yes—but it must be administered in time. Otherwise..."

"Otherwise what?" Nótt pressed.

"Otherwise, the venom's power will corrode the internal organs. No antidote can undo that kind of damage! If the venom were spilled rather than ingested, it would be far easier to handle!" Sorrow weighed heavily in Gullveig's eyes.

This wasn't just suspicious anymore—this was clearly the work of an insider!

Without a traitor inside the Aesir, no one could have bypassed all the layers of inspection.

And really, who else could even obtain the venom of the World Serpent?

Everyone present—Gullveig, Nótt, and the rest of the Vanir gods—were shaken to the core.

The two goddesses exchanged tense glances. There was a question they both wanted to ask but didn't dare speak aloud:

Is the Aesir heading toward civil war?

The sudden assassination attempt completely ruined the New Year's celebration.

This time, all three Borson brothers had been targeted at once—only Thalos and Odin had noticed in time and hadn't drunk the poisoned wine.

But Vili had.

A dark, oppressive cloud now hung over the entire Aesir pantheon.

What was most terrifying was how all the previous rumors now seemed to be coming true, fermenting suspicion within the hearts of the pure-blooded Aesir gods.

Rumors like "he's willing to kill his own brother just to absorb the Vanir" had once been too outrageous to believe. Thalos had always demonstrated far more refined methods.

But the fact remained—Vili had truly been poisoned!

A blessing in disguise: Thalos had used the earlier duel to crush all dissent from the pure-blooded Aesir.

Might makes right!

Any further dissatisfaction would now only result in a ruthless, bloody purge.

Everyone held their breath, watching Vili's condition closely.

In the bronze palace Vili maintained in Asgard, he now lay at death's door.

Even after taking the antidote, he continued vomiting blood and passing bloody water.

No magic could heal the internal damage.

Thalos knew—Vili's stomach and intestines had been shredded by Jörmungandr's venom, his organs severely corroded.

Even in the epics, someone as overwhelmingly strong as Thor had died from this venom. How could someone like Vili possibly survive such internal devastation?

Bestla sobbed uncontrollably. Bor was silent for a long time.

The gentle old father clenched his fists, his face taut with muscle—already far beyond the point of fury.

"Thalos! With your wisdom, you've probably figured out who did it!" Bor could barely contain his rage.

Thalos' face was dark as night. He slowly shook his head.

Bor assumed Thalos didn't know.

But Thalos' response was: "Father, you don't want to know."

Bor's face instantly drained of color. "That—how is that possible?!"

"I wish it weren't."

At that moment, the Valkyrie Brynhildr entered. "Lady Hela requests an audience."

"Let her in."

Hela stepped in and said solemnly, "Your Majesty, I am now able to claim this noble soul."

Her words carried two meanings: first, that Vili had already technically died and entered the realm of the dead; second, her use of "able to" instead of "must" suggested there was still a sliver of hope.

This gave Bestla a flicker of hope. She looked to her son with pleading eyes.

Thalos said calmly, "And if I insist on keeping Vili alive?"

"If that is your will, I will comply," Hela bowed her head obediently.

To "comply"—that had yet another implication.

Even gods cannot do whatever they wish. Refusing to collect a soul of this magnitude would be a direct violation of cosmic law—and it meant that the god responsible would have to bear the backlash from those laws.

Even someone as powerful as Hela... would not walk away unscathed.