

Thalos 125

Chapter 125: Face-to-Face Domination

The fact that Hela was willing to go this far for Thalos was thanks to the immense debt she owed him in this lifetime.

Hela remembered kindness and repaid it. That was why she was willing to take the brunt of the backlash in Thalos' place.

In the Edda epics, when Odin begged her not to take the soul of Balder after his death, she—long since at odds with him—sneered and proposed an impossible condition: if every living thing in the world shed a tear for Balder, she would let him go.

In the end, a giant who had never seen the light refused to cry, and Balder's soul was claimed by the underworld.

Yet now, Hela agreed so easily. If Thalos did nothing, it would mean he willingly let Hela bear that cost alone—effectively burning through much of the goodwill between them.

How could Thalos be that foolish?!

Uncharacteristically, he placed both hands on Hela's shoulders—a rare gesture of intimacy that made her body tremble involuntarily.

"Hela, this isn't the noble soul you saw in your dreams, is it?"

Hela was momentarily stunned before shaking her head. "No."

"Good. What happened to Vili is our family's debt to you. I'll make it right by giving you another soul of equal power."

The God-King's promise made Hela quietly sigh with relief.

Sending a soul not on the list of the dead—a living king of a realm—into the underworld would drastically increase the backlash Hela would face. By offering a replacement soul, Thalos could minimize the damage to her.

Hela smiled at last. "Your Majesty, I believe in you."

"And I believe in you."

Bestla finally broke into a rare smile. Her niece—Laufey's granddaughter—was truly wonderful. She stepped forward and gave Hela a big, crushing hug.

"Dear, thank you! Truly, thank you!"

Hela, whose physique leaned more toward that of the Aesir, was nearly smothered by the giantess's hug.

But this familial embrace gave her a rare, heartwarming sense of belonging.

"We're all family, aren't we?"

"Yes, family!" Bor and Bestla choked out in unison.

Soon after, word spread from the Golden Palace: the death goddess Hela had agreed to the God-King's request not to take Vili's soul into the underworld. Meanwhile, the God-King himself would personally perform a strange ritual called a "surgery" for Vili.

In plain terms, Thalos was using his supreme authority to prevent his brother's death.

As for the surgery, Thalos cut Vili open. Since his foolish little brother wasn't going to die, Thalos simply removed all the internal organs that had been corroded by Jörmungandr's venom, and then stitched him back up.

Finally, Vili was placed on a magical bed resembling the mythic Odinsleep.

This artifact, enchanted by both Freyr and Nótt—current and former fertility gods—combined with Thalos' divine spell Water of Life, was designed to gradually restore Vili's body.

As for how long it would take, only the heavens knew.

Afterward, Thalos issued a rare decree: Vili remained King of Vanaheim, but all administrative duties would be handled by Nótt.

Mind you, Vili had always been a mascot. It was Nótt who had handled all affairs these past years anyway.

On the surface, nothing had changed.

But on a political level, this was a powerful declaration by Thalos—Even if my brother is only a mascot, even if he's half-dead, I will never strip him of the honor that belongs to him in any form!

That is what royal authority means!

Then, standing beside the Well of Urd, Thalos publicly vowed: "I will make the one who poisoned Vili suffer a hundredfold in pain!"

This wasn't just any vow—it was one sworn by the God-King himself beside the Well of Urd!

What was the Well of Urd? It was the home of the twin goddesses of fate. This meant Thalos had sworn upon his own destiny to exact vengeance!

With this, no being dared question whether this was a self-orchestrated act.

If Thalos had staged the whole thing himself, he'd be fated to suffer the hundredfold backlash he had invoked.

Thalos acted swiftly and decisively. Though he couldn't undo all the damage caused by the poisoning, his handling of the matter continued to demonstrate the majesty worthy of a God-King!

The unrest within the Aesir was quickly quelled.

But the matter was far from over.

The very next morning, Thalos personally launched a surprise solo visit to Odin's fake Golden Palace.

As the Rainbow Bridge shone down in its full glory, directly illuminating the palace gates with blatant disrespect, Odin's subordinates were stunned.

Who?!

Who would dare be so brazen?

Then, seeing that it was God-King Thalos himself, they were thrown into utter confusion.

Thalos had ridden there atop his divine steed Asgard, who was also a child of Loki.

With a sharp tug of the reins, the steed reared up on its hind legs and slammed its front hooves onto the palace gates.

Boom—! A resounding thunderclap echoed as two massive hoofprints dented the gilded doors, shocking Odin, Hodr, Bragi, and Vali—all four of his sons—into silence.

"B-Brother... what are you doing here?" Odin stammered, looking at Thalos, who radiated killing intent and was surrounded by the floating blades of the Nine Swords.

Thalos rode his steed straight into the hall—a massive insult in itself.

Odin hadn't expected Thalos to remain mounted, yet there he was, riding directly up to Odin's throne.

The divine steed was so tall that Thalos, from the saddle, loomed above Odin, even though Odin sat atop a raised dais.

Looking down with icy disdain, Thalos sneered. "My foolish brother! Do you really not know why I'm here?"

Odin panicked even more. He instinctively reached for Gungnir, the spear beside his throne—but a chilling premonition seized him. If Thalos truly wanted, the Nine Swords would pierce him long before he could grasp his weapon.

Dare to move?

He didn't even dare breathe.

Odin's scalp tingled.

"I-I don't know," he stammered weakly.

Thalos' voice only grew more domineering. "Foolish brother! When I called you foolish before, it was because I hated seeing you waste your potential. But now? You're just plain stupid!"

Faced with such blatant humiliation, Odin couldn't take it. He wasn't a total coward—he had some fire in him!

"Shut up! Brother or not, you can't just humiliate me like this!"

"Shut up?" Thalos' voice dripped with scorn. "You did all kinds of vile things in the dark, and I'm not even allowed to talk about it?"

"You're spouting nonsense! All three of us were nearly poisoned to death!"

"Pfft! Did I say anything about a poisoning attempt?"

Thalos' eyes were full of mockery.

Odin's heart sank—he'd just walked right into it.

The trauma of a childhood spent eating, sleeping, and getting beat up by his elder brother came flooding back. He panicked even more. "No—I—I mean..."

Thalos now glanced coldly at Hodr and Vali, who were creeping closer.

He suddenly let out a derisive laugh. "Odin! Look—your sons are braver than you. All my life, I've despised this side of you the most. Always wanting the best of everything, but when trouble comes, you never take responsibility. And you think you're worthy of the God-King's throne?"