

Thalos 126

Chapter 126: This Is the Weight of the World

Thalos' relentless pressure had Odin pinned, and although Odin had been crushed by his elder brother all his life, this was the moment where he could no longer suppress himself. If he didn't explode now, he was no true schemer.

Because, in the end, a true schemer—even one who specializes in patience—would never sit still when it mattered most.

Just like what he did in Ragnarök: even knowing it was all his fault, Odin still had the courage to lead his people to a final battle, willing to face death and the annihilation of his clan.

The moment Thalos uttered the words "God-King's throne," the last thread of reason in Odin snapped.

"Even if you're my brother, you can't humiliate me like this—AHHHHHHH!"

As Odin roared, his hand shot toward Gungnir, the Eternal Spear. His three sons—excluding the laughably weak Bragi—moved in unison. Hodr and Vali both struck.

From the void behind Hodr surged countless shadowy beasts, clearly meant to overwhelm Thalos through sheer numbers. He wasn't trying to win—only to distract Thalos long enough for Odin to strike.

But Thalos didn't even spare them a glance. He didn't turn his head. He didn't move his eyes. He didn't have to.

A golden net descended from the heavens.

The Sword of Light—Alfheim—unleashed its radiance from midair.

One beam, five beams, fifty, hundreds.

Countless threads of light hung like curtains from the hall's dome.

So dense were these luminous veils that not a single shadow beast could pass through. Even grazing the curtain sent them into violent death throes—vanishing to dust within mere breaths.

That wasn't all—the hovering blade's tip fired a terrifying ray of pure heat. The searing beam, exceeding ten thousand degrees, didn't even have to hit. The heat wave it produced just by passing through the air sent Hodr staggering back in terror.

Meanwhile, Vali, bowstring drawn, suddenly found his world shift.

The Sword of Mist—Niflheim—swept across the air.

Vali was instantly engulfed in a vast, ethereal fog—an eerie realm of deep gray mist, like a haunting, mystical canvas from an unknown world. Not only could he not attack, he couldn't even see Thalos. The sword's power cloaked everything.

Back to Odin. He was ready. No wasted movement.

Since the fall of the Vanir, he hadn't fought his brother in ages.

He knew full well—his spear skills couldn't match Thalos' swordplay. If this dragged out, he'd end up dead at Thalos' feet.

Thalos might not want to kill him—he might only want to capture him—but that hesitation was Odin's chance.

Thalos ruled with virtue and integrity—he governed with trust. Odin didn't believe for a second that Thalos would just outright kill him.

One side held back. The other struck with all they had.

Odin had calculated it all—Thalos didn't have some absurd secondary heart like the surface's strongest giant Hrungrir. If Gungrir was thrown, it would hit, and it would kill.

This was his only chance!

Odin grabbed the spear.

Time froze.

Maybe Thalos had expected this all along, because he didn't seem the least bit surprised by Odin's ruthless gamble.

Yes—Gungnir possessed spatial abilities. Once thrown, it never missed the heart.

But that was only if Odin could throw it.

Odin was fast.

Thalos was faster.

Three divine swords vanished from over Thalos' shoulders, leaving only blurs of white.

In an instant: one pressed, one struck, one suppressed.

Thalos' movements were so quick that to Odin's sons, it looked like he struck with three swords simultaneously.

The Sword of Midgard slammed onto Odin's hand.

The Sword of Jotunheim pinned his left shoulder.

The Sword of Muspelheim locked down his right.

"ROAR—!" The three swords growled in perfect unison.

Two primordial giants. One god of the deep sea. Now sword-spirits, their fury bellowed into Odin's soul, shaking him to the core.

Odin's spirit rang like a gong. He couldn't tell up from down.

The three swords, each bearing a different divine element, unleashed a combined pressure that was beyond human—or divine—endurance.

At first it felt like two mountains crashing onto his shoulders. Then three. Then more.

Real worlds—held by the branches of Yggdrasil—pressed down on him.

Who could endure such weight?

Before his sons' eyes, Odin collapsed to his knees before Thalos with a loud thud.

Whether he wanted to or not, a kneel was a kneel.

And there Thalos remained—seated calmly atop his divine steed, not a scratch on him, composed and magnificent.

From the moment Odin's sons attacked to the instant Thalos suppressed them all—how long had passed?

A second? Two? At most, three.

What had seemed like an intense battle to Bragi, the god of poetry, had ended in a laughably overwhelming and absurdly one-sided conclusion.

Silence consumed the hall.

If this had happened to anyone but his own father and brothers, Bragi would have burst with poetic inspiration, crafting verses to be sung for generations.

But when the God-King's sword had fallen upon his own family... all he had was a blank mind.

So this... is the might of the God-King?

And my arrogant father dares dream of dethroning such a being?

Isn't that laughable?

Bragi's legs trembled uncontrollably, his back drenched in cold sweat.

Thalos, having crushed Odin in a single blow, made no attempt to conceal his contempt.

"My foolish brother! This... is the weight of the world. Can you bear it?"

Odin's face flushed red. His lone eye bulged with blood, veins stretched to their limit. It looked like it might pop out at any moment.

Yet he clenched his teeth and said nothing.

In that moment, he showed some grit.

Thalos chuckled coldly. "Heh... So you've still got a spine. Fine. I'll give you one chance. One month from now, challenge me before the Valhalla Palace in Asgard. If you defeat me, you can have the throne—and my life with it! But if you don't show... I'll expose to all gods and giants your attempt to poison Vili—and me."

With that, the divine swords pinning Odin and his sons vanished.

Before they could react, Thalos had already spurred his mount and ridden out of the palace.

As his silhouette began to vanish into the Rainbow Bridge's radiance, he flung back one final remark:

"My foolish brother! For the sake of the name Borson, I'll give you this last shred of dignity!"

Then the grand figure of Thalos disappeared.

Back on the Bifrost, Heimdall and Gullveig waited silently on bended knee.

Gullveig said, "Your Majesty, forgive me for speaking freely—but I don't believe Odin will come to that duel."

"I know."

Because what I want... is to force him into rebellion.