

Thalos 147

Chapter 147: The Return of Loki the Grandmaster

"Your will shall be done, Your Majesty," Loki said with utmost deference. He knew better than anyone who held the real power now.

If this had been Odin asking him to do something like this, Loki might have worried about being thrown under the bus the moment it was done.

But it was Thalos!

Thalos, who had uplifted his entire family!

Compared to his insane firstborn Fenrir and his two mad offspring Sköll and Hati, every relatively sane member of Loki's clan had been spared—or even honored—by Thalos.

Loki had no reason to refuse anything.

There was only one question: "Your Majesty, do you wish me to release Odin openly, or... quietly?"

"Keep it quiet for now," Thalos replied. "But you may consult with Hela on how to send a soul into the other world. As for the star coordinates and anchor point... Heimdall will conveniently be reassigned elsewhere. You'll find the designated 'Alpha' coordinate on the Rainbow Bridge's star chart."

"Understood!" Loki had no further objections.

He knew his role: to get his hands dirty for the sake of the High King. On the surface, he had reconciled with the pure-blooded Aesir, but who could say if new grudges might not arise? With his slick tongue and mischief-prone nature, it was only a matter of time before he offended someone again.

When that day came, only Thalos would be able to protect him.

Besides, helping his old buddy one last time? That suited Loki just fine.

After leaving Thalos, Loki went to find Hela.

When she heard what he had to say, she fell silent for a long while. "Father, do you... trust His Majesty?"

"Well... of course," Loki replied, albeit a bit hesitantly.

Hela let out a long sigh. "I used to worry. We're 'outsiders,' after all. If peace really came, would we be the first to be purged?"

"..."

"But now I see that's not necessary." Hela gazed toward the direction her father had mentioned. "With a new enemy looming, every potential internal conflict will be smoothed over in the name of victory. In time, we really will be one family."

The effects of Odin's betrayal had left lingering shadows.

Fools and mediocrities only saw Odin's madness. The truly insightful pondered—was Thalos' image of virtue and glory truly as flawless as it seemed?

When even your own brother isn't safe from your blade, the pressure on subordinates becomes overwhelming.

Now, by suggesting they spare Odin, even if it was just to bait a trap, Thalos had reframed the narrative. It was no longer a ruthless execution—it was brotherly mercy.

Whether Odin would stir up trouble in the other world... well, that remained to be seen.

Hela was smart. She saw through every layer—and chose to cooperate.

Thus, during the week-long celebration in the Palace of Joy, Loki began his act.

On the third night, he once again crept into the chamber that held Odin's soul crystal.

"Odin, are you still there?" he whispered.

[My dear brother! Of course I'm here. Where else could I go?] Odin replied. He didn't ask for anything. Instead, he pushed his situation aside and began reminiscing—chattering about old times, fond memories, mischiefs shared.

...

"Remember when we tore down that giant's lair while he was away?"

[Yeah! Good thing Father showed up and killed the beast before it ate us.]

...

To the guards, it looked like Loki was drinking alone. But in truth, it was a heart-to-heart between two gods separated by life and death.

Fourth night. Fifth night. Sixth. On the seventh, Loki returned again, this time bringing a new kind of mead.

At last, that night, after getting drunk once again, Odin couldn't hold back any longer.

[Loki... I'm a wreck now. Even if I were to reincarnate, my soul is so fractured I'd come back a mortal at best. Could you—would you—ask my brother to let me reincarnate in Midgard?]

It wasn't an unreasonable request. Whether or not Loki relayed it wouldn't change anything.

Odin just wanted to see if Loki would still be willing to help him.

Despite all his mischief, Loki had never truly hurt anyone—not mortally. He hadn't pushed Hodr to kill Baldr, nor betrayed the Aesir outright. Not until after Odin's cruel punishment and long years of resentment.

At heart, Loki was a good guy.

Odin's words nearly broke his resolve—but then Loki remembered all the times he'd been betrayed. He remembered who was watching. And he hardened his heart.

Sigh... Odin, your fate will be what it will.

The next day, Loki really did go see Thalos.

In the Silver Palace:

"Your Majesty, you should probably beat me up a little. Otherwise Odin might get suspicious."

"Indeed," Thalos said, tossing the Helheim Sword to Hela. "Give your father a nice slash."

And so it was done.

Not long after, Loki returned to Odin's chamber, face marked with a fresh, glowing green scar—Hela's signature.

Thus began the performance of a lifetime.

"Damn that Thalos!" Loki raged. "Becoming king made him forget who his family is! He beat the hell out of me just for asking about you. Said I should leave your soul to rot in torment. He said once the celebration ends, he's coming for you next!"

He broke into sobs.

"You might have done wrong, Odin, but you're still his brother!"

[Maybe I am the foolish brother he always said I was. But I truly regret it now. This is my punishment. I'll pay for it myself. If—when—he finally forgets me... then maybe you can beg him to let me be reborn as a mortal.]

Odin had mastered the art of retreating to advance.

He wasn't asking for much—just laying groundwork. He figured Loki might waver, and when the time came, perhaps reach out again.

But what Odin didn't expect... was for Loki to be so "impulsive."

"No!" Loki shouted. "You sinned, yes! But you died, lost your divinity and most of your soul—you've paid the price! He has no right to keep torturing you!"

He pulled out a crimson soul crystal.

Odin, despite being nothing more than a soul, felt his breath catch.

He could sense the power within it—

Hela's power.

That crystal could very well set him free.

"Take it!" Loki said. "I got this from my daughter. It can create a fake soul with your memories. A cursed thing, really. But it might just fool Thalos."

[I'll take it!] Odin replied without hesitation.