

Thalos 171

Chapter 171 Lady of the Lake

Lancelot was simply unlucky.

The Celtic world was a largely isolated realm, centered on the Emerald Isle and a few nearby islands. In some versions of Christian lore, Lancelot fled to France after his affair with the queen was exposed. But in this world, there was no such France—just a small collection of islands surrounded by ocean and beyond that, the "end of the world."

Knowing he had broken his knightly vows, Lancelot realized he could no longer remain in Britain. So, he fled to other lands.

In truth, he was acting blindly in desperation. Had he fled to Queen Medb's camp before she was defeated, he might've leveraged his charm to push Guinevere aside and latch onto Medb's favor instead.

But such was the age—an era when information moved glacially slow. Lancelot fled in such a panic he didn't even know about the Fianna Knights' rebellion. All he knew was that they were strict about chivalry; if he went there, he'd be hunted down and executed.

And now he'd landed himself in the worst place possible—on Erin, walking straight into Odin's domain. Odin, the schemer who took all the benefits but dodged every burden.

Odin was desperate for manpower and had no problem sheltering Lancelot. But he didn't trust a knight who betrayed his king and broke his moral code—not unless that knight was remade as one of his own.

Guinevere stood there like a statue, staring blankly as chaotic energy enveloped her lover. She didn't even dare scream, afraid she would be next.

To become one of those twisted, grotesque chaos giants in the great hall? Guinevere would rather die.

Unfortunately, what they wanted didn't matter anymore...

Elsewhere, in Camelot—

King Arthur was in the middle of deploying his army to crush Mordred's rebellion.

If this were the tale of *Le Morte d'Arthur*, Arthur would have expanded his realm into the European mainland and crushed Emperor Lucius of Rome. But this Celtic world had no France, no Roman Empire. Arthur had gone east across the British Isles to confront the Saxons, leaving his rear vulnerable—one man stole his queen, the other his kingdom.

Arthur had married the stunning Guinevere as queen. But like his father, King Uther, Arthur also had a child out of wedlock—this one conceived under more tragic circumstances. His half-sister Morgan had used a potion to disguise herself as Guinevere. Arthur, believing her to be his wife, lay with her. When he awoke, wracked with guilt, he sought to reconcile with Guinevere.

Morgan, however, got what she wanted—a child of Arthur's blood. Coincidentally, Guinevere had witnessed the whole thing, which led to her eventual affair with Lancelot.

The child born from Arthur and Morgan was both his nephew and his son: Mordred—the one who would rebel and ultimately bring about the fall of the kingdom.

It was an absolute mess.

Incest, patricide, betrayal—this drama made even the fratricidal games of Thalos and Odin look tame.

At least, in this version of the world, Arthur wasn't yet burdened by the Holy Grail. There was no mass exodus of knights seeking the Grail, never to return. No Gawain, Gareth, and Gaheris splitting the kingdom into warring factions after Lancelot's rampage.

In most versions, Arthur and Mordred fought to mutual destruction, with only Bedivere left alive to stand by Arthur's side at the end.

But in this world, a hidden hand had intervened.

When Lancelot abducted Guinevere, a sudden mist blanketed the skies. Gareth and Gaheris, in hot pursuit, lost his trail.

And just as Arthur was marshaling his forces and preparing to negotiate with Mordred, something extraordinary happened over a seemingly ordinary lake.

An enormous arcane array appeared in the sky. The barrier between order and chaos—the world's boundary—shattered like a curtain being drawn back, yielding humbly to its new master.

A golden beam of light pierced through the clouds and fell upon the deep lake.

From the crystal palace beneath the waters, the graceful water spirits—fairies of the lake—felt the overwhelming presence.

They raised their heads. Their sight transcended the water's surface and beheld the sky.

The world itself seemed to pause.

No wind stirred. Every leaf hung low, as though in reverence, awaiting the arrival of a supreme being.

No birds chirped. No insects buzzed.

All things—wind, water, earth—fell silent and bowed to the descending will of divinity.

The most beautiful of the lake's spirits opened her sapphire-blue eyes. Reflected in her pupils was the translucent, majestic silhouette of a vast god.

In that instant, she felt the very laws of her domain—the laws of water—being rewritten.

All water, from sky to sea to her own lake, was submitting in reverence to the being that now approached.

And yet... he did not come to destroy them. That much was clear.

Feeling the sacred aura in the air, knowing that this great figure in the sky was watching her, the Lady of the Lake surfaced and fell to her knees.

"I am a mere spirit of the wilds. I greet Your Majesty."

She didn't know his identity—but Majesty seemed the safest guess.

[Are you the one who granted Arthur the Sword of Promised Victory?]

Her heart trembled. She could no longer even comprehend the gap in their power.

"I dare not claim credit for a sacred blade. I merely wished to help Britannia thrive."

[I do not blame you. I am here on behalf of the Celtic World Will. I am to become this world's God-King. I am Thalos Borson, King of the *Æsir*.]

She felt a resonance deep in her soul—an acknowledgment of truth from the very foundation of the world.

She and all the lake fairies bowed low, their voices rising together.

"Long live our king!"

And thus, their bond was forged.

"Very well. Then I grant you elevation—from Lady of the Lake, to Goddess of the Lake."