

Thalos 27

Chapter 27: The Nine Realms Sword

Having the runes wasn't enough. Only by combining them with Runic Incantations could one inscribe magic into wood, metal, stone—or any material—unleashing their full potential.

There was just a small problem: after all that effort, Odin did end up learning the original runes. However, anyone else who wanted to study them without Thalos's blessing might have to learn Mandarin first.

Even imagining that scenario was hilarious.

But that was for another time.

Right now, to obtain the Runic Incantations, they had to visit the Well of Wisdom.

The World Tree had three main roots:

One extended into the realm of mist, Niflheim, where the poisonous dragon Níðhöggr gnawed at its base. Thalos had considered slaying it—but like that strange cow, Níðhöggr didn't fully exist in Ginnungagap. It was a bizarre entity nestled within spatial rifts.

Another root was in Asgard, the home of the famed Well of Urd. Thalos liked holding meetings with the gods there. That well was now under the care of the twin goddesses of fate, Urd and Verdandi. Once they matured, they'd become permanent residents there.

The last root was in Jotunheim, submerged in the Well of Wisdom, guarded by the father of the fate goddesses, the wisdom giant Mimir, who drank from the well daily.

When Mimir saw the two divine brothers approaching, sweat poured down his face.

According to the Edda, Odin once sought wisdom at this very well.

Odin, who had a notorious reputation for reneging on deals, didn't use force for a simple reason—this was the realm of frost giants, filled with the descendants of Bergelmir, who had sworn to oppose the Aesir. His sons and grandsons, plus the frost giants the cow had licked into being, now formed a terrifying force the Aesir didn't dare openly war against.

If Mimir so much as shouted, Odin would've been in serious trouble.

Also, Mimir was Odin's maternal uncle. It would've been disgraceful for Odin to attack him.

But in this lifetime, there were only two types of giants in Jotunheim: those who sided with the Aesir, and dead frost giants.

Knowing the well's importance, Thalos had long ago filled a massive pit near the Well of Wisdom with the heads of frost giants—essentially building a macabre monument.

Why? Because in the original epics, Mímir had all kinds of shady ties with the Vanir gods. He claimed to be neutral, but in truth, he'd handed out sips of the Well of Wisdom to many Vanir, which is why they had so many bizarre magical arts capable of challenging the Aesir.

Thalos had seen that coming. No way would he give his uncle a warm welcome.

When Mímir saw Thalos, he trembled. "Your Majesty... are you here to drink from the Well of Wisdom?"

"I heard you've asked many for payment in exchange for a sip—often demanding things they simply can't accept?"

Mímir trembled harder.

As the saying goes: the ignorant are fearless. The more one knows, the deeper the awe.

Standing just 8 meters tall, Mímir wasn't much bigger than a regular Aesir. He was ugly, wrinkled, and covered in facial warts, with half-meter-long hairs sticking out like porcupine spines. Even as he bowed respectfully to Thalos and Odin, Odin wrinkled his brow in displeasure.

"It wasn't me demanding the price," Mímir groaned. "It was... the well itself!"

"The well?" Thalos raised an eyebrow.

Mímir bowed again. "Your Majesty, you personally reshaped this world. You should know better than anyone how many laws you embedded in it. To access the world's laws, a price must be paid—surely that's fair?"

Thalos was momentarily speechless.

He could impose laws in advance to punish his enemies—but of course, he wouldn't want those same enemies using those laws against him.

"So..."

"Your Majesty, you may drink freely. But he may not—" Mímir pointed at Odin.

Thalos was about to speak, but Odin laid a hand on his shoulder. "Brother, I still believe that discovering things on my own is more profound than being taught. I'm ready to pay the price."

Thalos hesitated. "Is it worth it?"

"It's worth it!" Odin answered firmly.

They were brothers, bound by life-and-death experiences. Odin had no mad ambition, but he had the pride every great warrior should have. He believed that, with courage and wisdom, he could one day stand as strong as his brother.

If Thalos had just handed him everything, Odin would've seen it as a form of shame.

Following fate's guidance, the two brothers walked to the crystal-clear Well of Wisdom and drank from it together.

One drank freely.

The other paid—with his right eye.

Thalos cast a glance at Mimir, who was smirking awkwardly on the side, and sighed. This old man brings misfortune on himself. He could've just explained that wisdom required a price—but no. No wonder, in the original myth, he got sold out, beheaded by the Vanir, and turned into a magical AI "computer" that Odin kept around for answering tough questions.

In this life... well, we'll see.

Over by the well, Odin's remaining left eye gleamed with divine light. With his right hand, he traced symbols in midair—runes appeared, combining with the Runic Incantations, forming complex new spell formations that embedded themselves into the branch of the World Tree he held.

Thalos knew then: the legendary Gungnir was nearly complete. All that remained was the finishing work by skilled craftsmen.

"Brother, I'm basically done here. How about you? What kind of divine weapon did you make?" Odin asked.

Thalos rubbed his nose, a little sheepish. "I may have... made a few more than one."

While Odin forged a single divine spear...

Thalos? He'd taken one World Tree branch from each of the Nine Realms.

Odin was puzzled. "Brother, can you even use that many weapons?"

"Uh... my fighting style is a bit unique."

Three months later, in the grand, golden palace, Odin stared in stunned silence at his completed spear—and then at the nine bizarre swords forged from World Tree branches.

Despite being wooden in origin, none of the nine swords still looked wooden. Their appearances had transformed entirely.

Just by looking, it was hard to tell they were even from the same set—other than their general sword shape.

Before the astonished eyes of gods and giants alike, Thalos gently raised his right index finger and gave a summoning gesture. One of the blades—an icy, two-meter-long greatsword—suddenly lifted off the ground. It traced a graceful arc through the air and landed softly in Thalos's palm, spinning slightly.

"This sword is called—Jotunheim."

The moment he said the name of the first sword, everyone present—gods and giants alike—instantly realized what this set of swords was called:

The Nine Realms Sword.

Yes! Each blade symbolized one realm of Ginnungagap.

They were a declaration of God-King Thalos's absolute dominion over all Nine Realms.