

Thalos 279

Chapter 279: A Long-Awaited Secret Infiltration

Loki shook his head with a smug air, full of "I'm the expert here—just follow my lead" energy.

"Thor, you don't get it. Think about it. Would our people ever allow a few slaves to slack off and do absolutely nothing?"

"Of course not. So what's the deal with them?"

"It's a basic hypnotic trick. Just enough to make the overseers ignore them." Loki grinned brightly.

Illusions and trickery—this was his bread and butter.

This is exactly why the God-King sent me here.

Thor, sitting cross-legged on a tree branch, rested his chin in one hand. "So... this means it's not time for me to get involved yet?"

Loki gave him a sidelong glance. "Exactly. Not yet."

In their long history, whenever Thor was sent in, it meant it was time to slam the door and start smashing heads.

Back when he'd first come of age, Thor didn't have this kind of patience. But years of experience—like the infamous incident when his hammer was stolen—had tempered his temperament somewhat. He might still hate bad situations, but he'd at least learned to wait until it was his time to act.

Even if waiting was boring, it didn't stop Thor from pulling out a mountain of snacks and chomping away noisily beside him.

Loki was exasperated.

If it weren't for his illusionary barrier, they'd have been caught by now.

Finally, as the slaves finished their day's labor and the meager dinner rations were handed out, those few suspicious individuals began to move.

Slaves were always underfed—heavy labor, just enough calories to not drop dead. Yet these individuals weren't eating slave rations. They simply walked over and took half the meal of an off-shift overseer—who didn't even react.

"Interesting," Loki muttered, intrigued by the scene.

It wasn't even that late—only about 8 p.m.

For most residents of Ginnungagap, nighttime was just when life began. Thanks to Thalos' reforms, the common folk could afford candles and even oil lamps.

But for the Mayan slaves in the labor camps, once the sun went down, it was straight to sleep.

Inside the large communal longhouses, snores soon filled the air.

Exhausted from the day's toil, the slaves quickly passed out. Only those few unusual individuals remained awake and on the move.

They gathered and, with practiced ease, opened a hidden hatch in the floorboards and slipped inside.

From his vantage point through the window, Loki saw it all. He turned and poked the now-snoring Thor.

"Hey. It's go time."

And so, the two towering Aesir—each the size of three or four mortals—shrunk themselves via illusion magic into the form of former Mayan priests and slipped inside, quietly following their targets.

After all, even among slaves, a priest's appearance was distinct from a commoner's—easy to pick out if not disguised properly.

Loki crept forward carefully for a few paces... then stopped in frustration.

He turned to glare at the thunder god. "Can you not walk like a stampede of oxen?"

Thor, a classic brute, couldn't help but stomp wherever he went. Every step shook the floor like a drumbeat. Expecting stealth from him was a joke.

"Uh, I'll try." Thor, disguised as a Mayan priest-slave, looked vaguely embarrassed.

Luckily, the day's labor had drained the other slaves completely. No one noticed their noisy approach.

Loki quietly opened the hatch and crawled down, Thor following behind.

The moment they entered, Loki felt a strange sensation—a ripple of air brushing past him.

A mortal might've missed it, but not Loki with his finely tuned senses.

Thor whispered, pinching his nose to stay quiet: "What was that?"

"You felt it too?"

"Yeah."

"I think we've entered a spatial rift. Or maybe a pocket dimension."

"So we're not in Ginnungagap anymore?"

"Technically yes. And no."

Thor's eyes widened as he turned back. The short flight of stairs they'd descended now floated awkwardly above a stretch of stone path, completely disconnected from any physical floor. The surreal scene left even the sturdy thunder god momentarily stunned.

Before them was still night—but the buildings that greeted them were utterly alien.

They were supposed to be underground, beneath the longhouse. Instead, they were looking at a strange new land.

In the distance stood a house the size of a villa, but its architectural style was foreign and sinister.

It reeked of blood.

The faded red lacquer and dried bloodstains merged in the moonlight. The tattered eaves and sagging cobwebs were speckled with dark, coagulated drops.

These weren't fresh. Every inch of rot and decay seemed to whisper old, horrific stories.

Dim moonlight washed over the warped wooden floorboards—each crack seemed to seep dried crimson.

Bloodied handprints adorned the shattered paper doors, shifting subtly as the wind blew. The breeze carried a faint sound—like something flaking off in pieces.

To the left stood a dry pond and a neglected rock garden. The gravel was mottled with stains, and brownish crystals had built up at the base of a cracked stone lantern.

A lightning-struck cherry tree, its upper branches broken, bore a faded rope hanging from its limbs—its knots crusted with dark, jelly-like gore.

Had they not been gods, even Thor and Loki might've flinched at the scene.

Loki silently pointed to a corridor.

Dust coated every hallway—except one. That path, too, had dried blood—but the trail ended abruptly at a corner, as if scrubbed clean by some invisible force.

Loki made a dramatic gesture, offering the lead with a smirk—After you, tough guy.

Thor rolled his eyes. But he wasn't worried. Even disguised in human size, they weren't without protection.

The silver armor he wore had been forged by dwarves—an artifact of the highest grade. Its runes, personally inscribed by Thalos, gave him immunity to wind, water, lightning, and death attributes. His durability was among the highest in the Aesir.

Just to be safe, he summoned Mjölnir.

Though under illusion magic, the hammer looked like an ornate Mayan priest's staff.

As he stepped into the next room, Thor realized he'd been overly cautious.

The transition from outer walkway to this strange chamber was distinctly disorienting—a clear sense of spatial shift.

The room was silent. Dusty. Like a storage room.

Above them, through wide wooden slats in the ceiling, the scent of blood drifted down. Thor could glimpse blood-splattered walls in the room above.

He could also hear voices—several people walking, dragging something heavy across the floor above.

Loki's eyes lit up. He flashed a thumbs-up, grinning in excitement.

Footsteps creaked down the stairs.

Thor's grip tightened on his hammer.

Then—someone emerged.

Spotting the two disguised figures, the newcomer didn't even flinch. Perhaps the dim lighting masked their features.

"You're Machá and Hoteka from the Aztecs, right? Good. The new priest ritual is starting—we're short-handed."

Loki didn't miss a beat. In flawless Mayan, he replied,

"That's us. We're ready."