

## Thalos 31

### Chapter 31: The Vanir Gods

Inside Valaskjalf, seated upon the highest divine throne, Thalos watched his foolish younger brother with some amusement. The image of Odin standing eagerly at the palace gates stirred a dry, magnetic voice in Thalos's mind:

"Spring has arrived. Life awakens. It's mating season once again. The forests are thick with the scent of hormones."

And then—Odin's storyline simply stopped progressing.

Each goddess offered Odin polite thanks for his welcome, but not one entered the hall at his side.

Not even Frigg, his number-one hope, spared him a single proper glance.

All Thalos could see written on his brother's forehead was one big, tragic character: [惨]—MISERABLE.

Honestly, it wasn't as if Odin had done anything wrong. But life was cruel like that. The firstborn inherits. The strongest takes all.

The world doesn't remember the runner-up—it remembers the champion. And in a divine family, the second son has it rough... especially when the first is a God-King, whose strength dwarfs all others.

The palace was vibrant with celebration. Goddesses competed to offer wine, perform, and show off their talents to Thalos. Yet Odin felt like an outsider, lost in a party that clearly wasn't meant for him.

Especially when he saw Frigg, who barely smiled at him earlier, now dancing gracefully for Thalos, proudly showing off her divine beauty...

Odin felt like he'd been stabbed.

And then Thalos stood, and announced in full view of the gathered deities:

"Beautiful goddesses, I mean no offense—but the Aesir were built on strength. Our enemies draw near, and our glory must not be tarnished. I am willing to take one of you as my queen. But only if you can bear a child stronger than Thor."

It was a simple, brutal, and very Aesir condition.

The frost giants were endless, their threat ever-present. Naturally, the strongest warrior was the God-King Thalos. And his successor had to be stronger still.

If anyone objected to his having a child with the frost giantess Jörð and birthing Thor, then prove him wrong—give birth to someone stronger.

Far from discouraging the gathered goddesses, the challenge sparked their competitive fire.

God-King? That title is worth fighting for!

They were all goddesses—why should anyone get the queen's seat without a fight?

But... this requirement was a little extreme.

Even Frigg—so confident in her allure—was stunned. For the first time in her life, her beauty hadn't sealed the deal. While she hesitated, Gilda, the goddess of dawn and morning light, had already made up her mind and rushed forward, offering Thalos all her passion and loyalty.

Among the crowd, only the calm and quiet Sif, goddess of harvest and earth, chose to withdraw. She'd quietly set her sights on the soon-to-be eighteen-year-old Thor.

As for Frigg... she wavered.

At that moment, Odin couldn't hold back any longer. He stepped up beside her and said gently:

"Beautiful Goddess Frigg, my palace is not far. If you're tired, perhaps you'd like to rest there for a while?"

"Your palace?" Frigg arched an eyebrow. "The one with the bronze walls?"

Her eyes made no attempt to hide her disdain.

Odin hesitated. "...Yes."

Frigg's expression turned cold. "Forgive me. I don't think I'm any less than the other goddesses here. Even if I lose, I'd rather cry in the Golden Palace than smile in a bronze one."

She was a devout hedonist. No matter how shiny bronze might appear from afar, bronze is still bronze. To her, the God-King's brother was not the God-King. She made her intentions very clear—

"I came to be queen. I don't care who the God-King is."

Odin's face went pale.

He staggered away, gulped down wine after wine, until the alcohol dulled the ache in his chest. Leaning drunkenly on Loki's shoulder, he mumbled:

"Loki... do you think I'm useless? I can't do anything as well as my brother..."

Loki, usually quick-witted, found himself speechless for once. "Even without comparing your birth order... your brother is the strongest."

"Is there nothing I can do to prove myself?"

Loki hesitated. "...Apply to be the king of Jotunheim? Take command there?"

It was a valid path.

Jotunheim still had many giants loyal to the Aesir, and rogue frost giants constantly sprang up seeking revenge. Holding the front there would surely earn Odin some recognition.

But Odin shook his head. "Not enough."

"...Then I think you'll have to wait," Loki whispered. "I have a feeling His Majesty is preparing for war. A big one."

"War..." Odin's eyes suddenly lit up. He clenched his fists. "Yes! In war, I'll prove I deserve to stand as an equal! I'll make our parents, and every goddess, see me differently!"

That night, Odin left the Palace of Joy with his head held high—and began honing his spear, Gungnir.

One year later, the seemingly barren goddesses finally bore fruit.

Two new Aesir gods were born—both of purer lineage, without a trace of frost giant blood.

One of them was the famed Heimdall.

Thalos sighed as he looked upon the boy. After years of being misled by Marvel, he could hardly believe his eyes. No dreadlocks. No black skin. Just a snow-white warrior with chiseled features and a massive golden tooth, known by many as the "White Aesir."

His eyes could see for 300 miles, and his ears could hear across entire realms.

When he came of age, Thalos planned to put him on Bifrost duty, finally letting poor Jor the Bow-God off the hook.

The second child was Baldur, god of light—handsome, innocent, always wearing a radiant smile that made the goddesses absolutely adore him.

Both were fine boys... with one small problem.

They weren't stronger than Thor, Tyr, or Vidar.

Heimdall, born of Gilda, might one day catch up.

Baldur? His combat abilities weren't even in the same league. Frigg nearly blacked out when she realized this—and vowed to work harder.

As for Bor and Bestla, their greatest relief came when Odin finally got it together.

He snuck down to the mortal realm and seduced a woman named Rindr, who later gave birth to a son: Vali.

Though they were slightly disappointed that their second son couldn't woo a goddess, they were at least happy he'd started building a legacy of his own.

Ten years later—

As always, the great cow Auðumbla stirred again.

This time, the tremor was massive.

With a single lick, an entire carriage-sized chunk of glacier caved in, triggering a domino effect. Booming collapses followed in quick succession.

Within mere breaths, a massive ice canyon had formed.

From the valley below, countless colossal figures opened their glowing eyes.

As thousands of tons of ancient ice crashed from their bodies, beams of seven-colored light shot into the sky.

This event was so powerful that Thalos didn't need Jor's report. Sitting on his throne in the Golden Palace, he felt it through the world's will itself—an unmistakable ripple.

He stood.

"Oh? Finally here, are you?"

"Vanir Gods... you've kept me waiting."

"Vanir Gods... you've kept me waiting."