

Thalos 32

Chapter 32: The Bell Tolls

Thalos felt a long-lost sense of excitement.

After slaying Ymir, that rush, that thrill of conquest and destiny—it had grown quiet.

That's life, isn't it?

When you're single, you crave a woman.

Once you have one, you start dreaming of a harem.

Eventually, you want those women to be goddesses—worthy, divine companions.

Becoming a God-King should've been the pinnacle of any transmigrator's dream.

With his intelligence, governing the Nine Realms was nothing more than a side hobby. He could've just lazed around in divine beauty, basking in adoration. But not a day went by that he forgot—

He was destined to face Ragnarök, the world-ending cataclysm.

Fighting against such a world-level fate—that was what made the divine game truly thrilling.

Ever since arriving in this world, even after he prematurely removed Surtur from the equation, Thalos had more or less been following Odin's script. He fathered the key children at the right times, watching how fate stubbornly snapped events back into line.

If there was any real place he could start breaking the pattern, it was with the Vanir Gods.

In the Edda, the Aesir could not defeat the Vanir, and so they were forced into co-rulership. That uneasy alliance planted the seeds of countless future conflicts.

But just because the world needs the Vanir doesn't mean it needs to share power with them.

Thalos's fingers lingered on the soft skin of the goddesses beside him. Frigg and Gilda flinched as his grip unknowingly tightened—not enough to harm, but just enough to sting.

He didn't apologize. He simply patted their supple forms, motioning them to retreat a little.

Then, his voice—majestic and mighty—rolled through the Golden Palace, echoing off the gilded walls with divine thunder:

"Sound the alarm—first level alert!"

It was a declaration. He wanted war. A challenge worthy of the Aesir's glory. A conquest worthy of a God-King.

"DONG—DONG—DONG—"

The bell tolled through all of Asgard.

Its deep peals pierced the dawn skies, breaking through the fading night as the rising sun bathed the Golden Palace in burning light. The clouds glowed red and orange, as though a giant had lifted a burning torch over the world.

The toll reached every corner of the realm.

Mortals turned their heads toward the shining palace at the heart of the sky, instinctively sensing something monumental had begun.

Giants paused their tasks. Gods halted their leisure.

They had all been told: when enemies approach, the bell will ring.

A long ring meant alert.

A short ring meant attack.

But the truth was... no one had ever heard it before.

Even when a hundred frost giants attacked, the bell had remained silent.

So what was happening this time?

Some troops were sluggish, others undisciplined.

But one unit responded instantly—like the wind, they assembled the moment the first toll echoed.

From their barracks, the Valkyries surged out in a cloud of mist.

By the time they landed, they were already armored—winged white helmets, blood-red battle uniforms, radiant divine spears and golden shields in hand, astride powerful white pegasi.

Only sixteen in number, but their arrival felt like a legion of thousands.

They were, of course, the elite warrior-maidens Odin had prepared in the mythos for Ragnarök.

This time, Thalos had called them early.

Each Valkyrie was either a mortal princess Thalos had handpicked or a goddess awakened from the ice. They wasted no time—galloping straight toward the palace like streaks of divine light, drawing gazes like the aurora borealis.

Close behind came Bor, Odin, Willy, Thor, and Loki, all fully armored.

Then came the goddesses. Then came the giants loyal to Asgard.

Bor, as always, voiced the question on everyone's mind:

"What's happening?!"

Thalos, clad in full golden armor, sat tall upon the throne. His gaze swept across the gathered gods and giants... then pierced space itself, reaching westward—toward the middle realms.

His voice, like an immovable decree, filled the hall:

"A force equal to the Aesir has awakened from the glaciers. The Vanir Gods have returned. And they will challenge our dominion."

In that moment, every male deity instinctively gripped their weapon.

Every goddess clenched her fists, excitement and fear stirring deep within them.

In times of peace, they'd scoffed and joked that the male gods were all bark and no bite.

But now? Now was judgment day.

Would the Aesir rise again in glory?

Or would some evil new faction dare to stand as equals?

The answer would soon be revealed.

Bor was the first to kneel, slamming his right fist over his chest with a heavy thud.

"God-King, we await your command!"

No fathers or sons—only leaders and followers.

Odin stepped forward after him, voice booming:

"If war comes, I volunteer as the vanguard!"

Thor stomped up beside him, towering taller than Odin by half a head.

"No, Uncle! You've already proven your courage. Let me lead the charge this time!"

Behind him, Tyr, Vidar, and Baldur also stepped up.

Odin could only sigh. Even his own nephews were stronger than he was.

More gods and giants followed suit, pledging loyalty with fists to their chests.

But Thalos raised his hand.

"No rush. Let's wait for Jor to report back first. In the meantime—Odin, go discipline the undisciplined mortal troops."

"Yes, Your Majesty!"

"Tyr, Vidar, Baldur—you three form patrol squads. Three shifts, rotating."

"Yes, Your Majesty!"

"Bor on standby. Thor, you're palace guard."

Every order clear and precise—like pieces in a grand war game, each moving into place.

Half a day later, Jor finally returned.

As expected—the Vanir had awakened.

Kneeling at the steps of the throne, he reported in a solemn voice:

"Your Majesty. I have confirmed the awakening of thirty-six unknown deities. Of them, thirty-five have traveled west to the middle realm of Vanaheim. However..."

Jor bowed his head further.

"One of them... has gone missing. My men and I lost track of them."

The hall fell silent.

And Thalos...

He narrowed his eyes.

"So... the game begins."