

Thalos 357

Chapter 357: The Sixth King

Whether these technocrats would someday develop personal ambition or stir up trouble was a question for the future—for now, what mattered was that they were extremely capable in their official duties.

Thalos had cleverly disguised this bureaucratic reform under the guise of enfeoffment, raising his most competent children in civil affairs to the throne as "kings."

Enki was one of the few deities who fully saw through Thalos's intentions.

The Aesir pantheon had long since encountered a serious issue as their world expanded: administrative capacity lagged far behind territorial growth.

And it wasn't simply about entrusting capable individuals and expecting everything to go smoothly.

There were already many examples of this backfiring in the Celtic realm—knight-lords who were illiterate left taxation and internal affairs to bureaucrats, who then abused their power, extorted the people, and left the land in ruin. When things spiraled out of control, the lords would kill the officials to save face—but by then, the stolen wealth had long vanished and the territory was half-dead.

If there hadn't been kings—and above them, gods—to keep the lords in check, they'd have toppled long ago.

Advisors could offer suggestions, but in the end, decisions must come from the top.

And this placed enormous demands on the leaders' all-around competence.

The core problem of the Aesir pantheon was that its central gods were almost entirely brutes.

Sure, the full-blooded Aesir had produced powerful offspring by interbreeding with giants. This gave them godly bodies and incredible strength—great for small-scale battles.

But whether human or divine—once numbers reach a certain point, power lies not in brute strength, but organizational capacity.

This isn't just rhetoric.

Imagine dozens of gods, each scheming against the other. If everyone enters battle thinking about how to sell out their teammates, and their attendants and subordinate gods feel the same—what battle could possibly be won?

The Aesir were certainly strong, but with a flood of new gods and surrendered deities joining them, the challenge became how to unify them and harness their collective power. That alone required an exceptional mastery of divine leadership.

And what shocked Enki the most was this:

Thalos—half Aesir, half giant—was born of a father who wasn't even a tenth as smart, and a mother who could do little besides fight.

So how the hell did the Paulson family produce such a strategic, multi-talented god-king?

By all logic, a person's intellect and worldview should be limited by their divine domain, let alone their era.

Now, if Thalos had broken from tradition and appointed outsiders based purely on merit, it might've benefited his rule over the lower worlds—but he would've lost support among the traditional Aesir.

Instead, he handpicked talented offspring from his own bloodline and cleverly used the pretense of "king-making" to enact a sweeping technocratic reform.

To deflect potential backlash, he deliberately elevated Sumerian-blooded gods as lightning rods for criticism. A masterstroke in balancing factions.

Had Enki not been one of the victims, even he might've applauded.

Among the five new kings, two were of Sumerian descent.

Everyone knew that in the orthodox Aesir line, Thor was the crown prince and Balder the newly appointed king—but politically, most turned a blind eye to Thor and focused only on the two Sumerian kings.

The Celtic gods, in particular, were green with envy.

Sure, Arthur was deeply favored and always entrusted with crucial roles in battle. But one: Arthur lacked divine lineage—he wasn't from the Tuatha Dé Danann. Two: he had no Aesir blood, making him ineligible for royal title.

Then, right at this sensitive moment, a bombshell hit:

From the Silver Palace came the news—Scáthach had given birth to a goddess by Thalos!

The Celtic pantheon rejoiced.

Thalos named the child Brighid, and declared that when she came of age, she would be made queen and given governance over Midgard.

Only Thalos himself knew just how symbolic this was. In Celtic mythology, Brighid (or Brigid) was one of the most revered goddesses, worshipped by both the Brigantii and the Brigantes. She governed mortals and gods alike, nourishing deities, the land, crops, and livestock.

With that, the structure of the Six Kings was finalized. Word soon came from the Golden Palace:

"This round of appointments is hereby concluded. Except for Brighid, who is not yet of age, the other princes shall assume their roles immediately in a probationary capacity."

They called it a 'training period'.

Only those who safely completed this trial—without causing major disasters—would be officially acknowledged as god-kings.

This satisfied all the major factions within the great Aesir pantheon.

Only a few of the sharpest divine minds realized: every god was still on Thalos's hook.

Thalos was like a master fisherman, drawing them all in with bait, slowly reeling the line, and in the end—not a single fish escaped his control.

And that damn training period? Ten whole years!

Only after ten years—if Thalos personally judged the performance as satisfactory—would they begin preparing for the coronation ceremonies.

To immortals, ten years was a blink.

But for any administrator, ten years was more than enough to expose every flaw.

Anyone can fake it for a day—but no one fakes it for a decade.

This gave Thalos plenty of time to monitor, adjust, or—if needed—revoke their titles under the excuse of poor governance.

At the same time, preparations for Thalos's coronation as God-Emperor began in earnest.

And no, this wasn't an exaggeration.

Among gods, it was perfectly normal for such ceremonies to take ten years to plan.

This was the event of an era—no detail could be overlooked.

Various proposals were submitted like bids in a public tender. The gods voted: each main god had two votes, subordinate gods one vote. The winning proposal would be chosen democratically.

Keep in mind—this was coming on the heels of six royal coronations.

Those ceremonies couldn't be too lackluster—each faction wanted to one-up the others.

But the God-Emperor's coronation had to outshine them all.

And this... genuinely gave the gods a headache.

The Sumerians had Enki to guide them.

The Celts had Arthur, whose brain still worked.

But the full-blooded Aesir? Utterly lost.

In the end, Frigg and Balder—mother and son—were forced to do the unthinkable: they had to go beg Loki for help.

Yes, Loki—the very giant-blooded bastard Frigg had always resented the most!

Sure, Hela was arguably smarter and more reliable—but Hela was Loki's daughter!

Already having failed to secure Balder the title of crown prince, Frigg was humiliated enough. Having to ask Loki for help made her downright miserable.

The idea that some petty mortal-born god might outdo her son in prestige—it drove Frigg mad.

And so, she bit the bullet and approached Loki.

No one knew exactly what they discussed.

But for several days afterward, Thalos noticed Loki grinning smugly all the time—and every pure-blooded Aesir who crossed his path? They all pinched their noses and bowed obediently.

Loki, naturally, was loving it.