

Thalos 359

Chapter 359: Kingship Bestowed by the Emperor

Balder's mind went completely blank.

He truly hadn't expected that the Wind God's Sword—meant to be a ceremonial symbol—would actually refuse to accept him as its master.

What did this mean?

Did this imply that his new title as the Sumerian God-King was unjustified? UPDATE FROM Novel-Fire.net

Balder stood there frozen.

Thalos, too, was momentarily stunned. Enlil, now reduced to a sword spirit, had long lost all memory and reason, retaining only primal instinct. Thalos had never imagined that Enlil's subconscious would reject Balder simply for being too weak.

But as the saying goes: "If I'm not embarrassed, it's someone else who has to be."

This applied in the divine realm as well.

Thalos recovered instantly.

He sent out divine will to suppress the sword spirit Enlil:

"You're not serving Balder—you're just his backdrop. In a real battle, if you want to help, help. If you don't, you come back to me."

The sword spirit happily buzzed in response.

Their communication finished in an instant—Balder remained completely unaware.

With full composure, Thalos began narrating a new version of events:

"My son, Balder!"

"Your son is here!" Balder replied respectfully.

"You have governed selflessly, resolved civil disputes, and taught the people. Your merits have not gone unnoticed by me, nor by the world of Ginnungagap," said Thalos. Then he paused: "Before your ascension as God-King—heed this well..."

"I await Father-God's instruction!"

"Ginnungagap came first, the Aesir second. The Aesir are but agents of Ginnungagap's administration, not its rulers. I govern all worlds as proxy of Ginnungagap, and you are merely the steward of one realm. After your coronation, remain humble. The prosperity of the world must always come first. Kingship is not only glory—it is responsibility."

With those words, Balder no longer felt embarrassed.

"Father-God, your son understands!"

If Balder were expected to rule a realm outright and still couldn't wield the Sumerian divine sword, it would be deeply humiliating, perhaps even scandalous.

But if Thalos presented himself as merely a steward of the cosmos, and Balder as a manager of a single sector, then Balder's failure to control the sword was no big deal.

A sovereign vs. an administrator—those are two very different things.

In fact, many gods were startled to hear Thalos say such words. They had always seen themselves as masters of their worlds.

Any other being adopting such humility would have been seen as weak and lacking resolve by this group of proud, fierce deities.

But Thalos was different.

He had personally destroyed more than a dozen worlds and pantheons. The number of mortals who had perished by his hand was counted in the tens of millions.

This man, who stood atop a mountain of corpses and oceans of blood, was the Destroyer of Realms—and anything he said was law among the Aesir.

Power and wisdom were justice.

Thalos scanned the crowd with a gaze sharp and suffused with fate. Not a single god dared meet his eyes. All bowed in reverence to the soon-to-be God-Emperor.

In asserting his own authority, Thalos had, intentionally or not, overshadowed the divine aura of the newly crowned god-king.

Only the most astute among the gods realized what he had done:

He had executed a textbook case of "Kingship Bestowed by the Emperor."

If Thalos could grant one of his children the authority of a god-king, he could also take it away at will.

Digging deeper, it was impossible not to recall Odin's infamous rebellion during Ragnarök. Many believed that it was excessive autonomy in the god-king title that had led to Odin's eventual treason.

With such precedent, no god dared criticize this move—there was no angle of attack.

Once the Sumerian Sword was handed to Balder, Thalos's towering figure disappeared once more into the rainbow light.

He had to leave early—because with him watching, Balder, ever the dutiful son, would likely stumble under the pressure.

Balder was well-liked by nearly every god.

To put it nicely, he was diplomatic and courteous; to put it bluntly, he had a people-pleaser divine nature.

He cared too much about everyone's opinion, always trying to spare others' pride and feelings—which only made him more prone to losing his sense of self.

As long as Thalos was present, Balder could never act naturally.

But the moment Thalos left, Balder's aura changed—he radiated the presence of a true king.

He had his divine attendants read aloud a dozen new policies, all grounded in benevolence and compassion—naturally appealing to the Sumerian gods.

The crowd burst into applause and shouted praises.

Then came the traditional presentation of gifts to the new king.

Only then did many gods realize just how cunning Balder's strategist—an unnamed trickster god—really was.

Loki had discreetly leaked what Thor, as the eldest brother, was gifting Balder, and what he himself was offering.

This was a public signal: anyone giving Balder a gift had better prepare the highest-tier magical artifacts.

Top-tier treasures weren't things one could just summon on demand.

Especially for main gods, the gift had to match their status—a cheap offering would offend the Aesir purebloods and giants alike.

Naturally, Balder wouldn't just hoard gifts. For anything valuable enough, he would offer a return gift of equal rank.

On the surface, this made him seem incredibly proper and gracious.

But in truth, it locked in the highest-tier magical items only for Balder.

Items of this caliber were rare and irreplaceable—even the dwarves couldn't forge that many on short notice.

And those who received Balder's return gifts couldn't just regift them to other god-kings.

This ensured that Balder's coronation would outshine that of all his younger siblings.

Frigg's scheming was spot-on: when the other princes and princesses held their ceremonies, their gifts truly didn't compare to Balder's.

But what Frigg didn't know was that this vulgar display of luxury and vanity only made Thalos more disgusted.

"As expected, Frigg is obsessed with status and extravagance. I was right not to make Balder crown prince," Thalos muttered to himself in the empty throne hall of the Silver Palace.

No one dared reply.

Even the stoic Brunhilde, standing silently nearby, looked thoroughly uncomfortable.

Times had changed. Pureblood Aesir were no longer Thalos's essential military force. As long as they didn't overstep, he wouldn't bother with them.

The world of Ginnungagap was large enough to afford a few ornamental mascots.

In the following months, the remaining five new kings completed their coronations in turn.

Thus, the new structural framework of Ginnungagap's governance was finally established.

Though Thalos himself wasn't entirely satisfied with the system, he understood the constraints—ideology followed position. He could only reform as much as possible without fragmenting the divine alliance.

Too radical a step, and the internal power balance would falter.

As long as Thalos had unmatched force, civil war was impossible.

But force alone couldn't prevent deliberate sabotage from disgruntled factions.