

Thalos 36

Chapter 36: The Manmade Meteor Shower

In the Sibylline Prophecies, the war between the Aesir and the Vanir is described as follows—

"This was the first grand-scale and brutally tragic war since the dawn of creation. The warriors of both divine races fought fearlessly on the battlefield, and every god's weapon was stained with the enemy's blood. Because the two sides were evenly matched, the war dragged on for many years, with both pantheons suffering enormous losses."

From Thalos's perspective, the blame for the Aesir's failure to overcome the Vanir in that epic still fell on Odin.

The Aesir had the home-field advantage, and yet a group of not particularly powerful newcomers managed to battle them to a standstill. That, in itself, was the ultimate defeat.

It all stemmed from one root problem—when the three brothers of the Aesir reshaped the world, they had grown sick of cold and eternal night, and so simply and violently dumped all the elements they didn't want into other realms. As a result, the Aesir, perpetually basking in sunlight, suffered from a kind of magical climate shock whenever they ventured out—no matter which realm they fought in, they always felt like they were at a disadvantage.

So why had Njord sent the "Legendary Undying Queen" Gullveig to provoke the Aesir?

For one, the Vanir were genuinely confident—and had a taste for courting death.

Two, it was entirely possible Njord intended to bait the Aesir into launching an invasion, only to surround and annihilate them on his home turf.

Think about it. With the Rainbow Bridge at their disposal, Odin might descend onto the Vanir's island with his war band, full of righteous fury, to demand justice—only to realize too late:

Njord is the god of the sea.

He could summon enormous tidal waves with ease and unleash omnidirectional, full-coverage strikes on the "airborne troops" of the Aesir!

And just when Odin and Thor had failed three times to kill Gullveig, utterly losing face, the Aesir's morale would be shaky. They would be compelled to attack anyway, or else they wouldn't be able to suppress internal dissent and fractures within their ranks.

That was the true fatal point.

Thalos suspected that in the epic, Odin had been forced into that very trap, step by step, by Njord.

But this lifetime was different.

Thalos's reshaping of the world had been more thorough, more balanced. He had personally lifted the Aesir out of their primitive barbarism. After taking down Gullveig, his position was rock solid. There was no pressure, no need to fall for any goad or rush to prove himself.

So then...

Behold—

The meteor shower!

Not long after, in Vanaheim—

The arrival of the Vanir gods had quickly drawn the attention of mortals trying to make a living in this world. They were thrilled that sea deities had finally appeared in the realm. At the same time, a second wave of Vanir deities awakened and rushed to Njord's side.

This development gave Njord even greater confidence.

As he looked up at the nearly floating landmass of Asgard in the sky, Njord felt a surge of disgust for the Aesir gods who dwelled in that higher place.

"Hooooo—"

Suddenly, a strange sound rang out from the heavens.

"What's that sound?"

It wasn't just the mortals helping to build the divine temples who were confused. Even the Vanir gods were glancing around in bewilderment, searching for the source.

That sound quickly morphed into a deafening blast. On the island, on nearby fishing boats—almost everyone saw it: a massive boulder tearing through the sky, displacing air as it plummeted into the ocean on the eastern side of the island.

"Watch out!" Freyr, the Vanir god near the shore, instinctively shouted.

With a terrifying howling wind, the boulder crashed down near a ferry carrying believers to the island.

BOOM—

It was a slightly off-target, but not completely off-target, throw. The impact point was less than 20 meters from the boat's hull.

The sailors aboard hadn't even realized what was happening when a towering wave, laced with razor-sharp stone shrapnel, slammed into them.

The roaring of the waves, the crashing impact, and the screaming of the crowd lasted who-knew-how-long. When one unfortunate sailor crawled back onto the deck, his face stung sharply. Instinctively reaching up, he felt his own teeth where his cheek should've been.

"AAAAAAH!" He joined the chorus of screams.

He was one of the unluckier ones. Most passengers aboard the simple, open, wide-decked wooden vessel suffered only minor to moderate cuts from flying debris—not life-threatening, though they bled a lot.

What truly struck fear was the beach.

Several shattered boulders now stood embedded in the once-calm, flat sands, their brutal presence utterly out of place against the peaceful shoreline.

"Watch out! More incoming!" someone shouted.

Everyone looked up in horror and saw more boulders, weighing hundreds of tons, hurtling down from the sky. It was as if the heavens themselves were punishing them, raining down a storm of destruction.

Njord, shocked and pale, quickly thrust out his hand.

With a surge of divine power, the previously calm ocean exploded into motion. A towering thirty-meter wave surged upward, perfectly timed to shield the harbor and the faithful gathered on the docks.

The wave flipped like a human performing a front somersault. Thousands of tons of water roared over the believers' heads, colliding with the incoming stone.

From behind the massive wall of water, people heard only dull, muffled thuds. That was the sound of the boulder hitting the wave, breaking apart and slowing on impact. Filtered through the water, it didn't even sound real.

The huge wave absorbed the shrapnel and carried it into the sea's depths.

"Praise Lord Njord!" the ignorant faithful screamed, hailing it as a divine miracle as they fell to their knees in worship.

Only Njord himself wore a face dark as iron, glaring up toward the sky.

With the second massive boulder crashing down, the clouds above had long since been shredded apart, revealing clearly the source—more immense "meteors" streaking through the heavens, trailing long tails of flame as they hurtled from east to west, straight for the island.

Even if Njord had been as dumb as Vili, he would've understood by now—this was no natural meteor shower.

This was the Aesir's revenge.

Through his expanded divine perception, Njord already vaguely grasped that these ten-ton boulders were being hurled directly from Asgard.

The awe-inspiring noise of their descent triggered widespread panic among the mortals.

Njord ceased his costly tidal defenses. With a soft murmur, dozens of swirling waterspouts rose from the sea's surface—serpentine water formations, not actual sea serpents, but elementally-formed constructs mimicking their shape.

They coiled and twisted upward, shooting jets of water high into the sky—perfectly aimed at intercepting the falling rocks.

More boulders fell, but none fared any better than the first. Each was struck midair by water bullets that acted like interceptor missiles, shattering the stones into fragments, which then rained down into the sea in a terrifying downpour.

The mortals continued to glorify their god's majesty.

But no one noticed that Njord's expression had gone pitch-black, as dark as the bottom of a pot.

These stone missiles showed no signs of stopping. Eventually, both mortals and Vanir gods became numbed to it. It no longer felt like boulders were being intercepted—more like snow drifting lazily down, indifferent to the concept of danger.

But was that really the case?

High above, Thalos smiled as he watched the scene unfold.

"Exchanging the giants' brute strength for Njord's divine power... is there any deal more profitable than this?"