

Thalos 38

Chapter 38: I, Gullveig, Am Skilled in Song and Dance (Bonus Chapter)

The moment Brunhilde said it, Gullveig's divine body trembled violently on the spot, shuddering like drying rice under the sun.

It was such a raw, visceral reaction—there was no way anyone could fake it.

Within the sky prison, lit by the steady glow of eternal fire elements, everyone clearly saw that Gullveig, though resurrected each time she was killed, wore garments that never mended. After a few more kills, they were torn apart in large patches.

And that made things even more visible: her waist, once densely inked in dark tattoos, was now a patch of flawless white.

Even Thor, who wasn't known for deep thought, suddenly realized: "Ah! The tattoos... they're her lives?"

Thalos sneered. "She likely used some form of dark sorcery to seal powerful lifeforms inside her own body. When she suffers lethal damage, the injury is redirected to one of those stand-ins. But once she runs out of those 'substitutes,' the next killing blow will truly end her."

As Thalos carefully revealed the final secret behind Gullveig's so-called immortality, all the arrogance once etched on her face crumbled. She fell to her knees, head banging against the floor again and again.

"Lord Borson! I'm sorry! Truly sorry! I didn't mean to mock the Aesir! I was following Njord's orders, provoking you into a rash assault so that you'd recklessly invade Vanaheim... Please forgive me! I never meant to insult the Aesir—"

Gullveig was terrified. She was genuinely afraid now.

Perhaps it confirmed an old truth—those with multiple health bars are often the ones who fear death the most.

Thalos curled his lip. "I'm not a sadist. I'll give you a chance—remove the rest of those tattoos yourself."

Gullveig's eyes went wide. She desperately wanted to say no.

But if she didn't do it, Thor would gleefully keep killing her until every last substitute tattoo was gone.

"Ah... Uuuuh..." Overwhelmed by pain and despair, Gullveig finally broke down. "O-Okay... I'll remove them now. Just... please allow me to use my magic..."

Thalos nodded slightly.

Gullveig didn't dare play any tricks—most likely because the terrifying divine sword was still lodged in her body.

Waves of black light shimmered over her as one tattoo after another exploded into mist, each one triggering violent spasms in her body.

When it was over, she stood there like a lamb awaiting slaughter, allowing the Valkyries to thoroughly inspect her from head to toe.

"Your Majesty... is this... enough?" Gullveig asked with trembling humility.

Thalos could hear the fear in her voice, the groveling words tumbling from her lips. He sighed and said, "I liked you better when you were unruly. But this version... isn't bad either."

The once-arrogant Vanir goddess gave him a fragile smile—a clear sign of submission.

That very night, during the banquet in the Hall of Joy, everyone gasped when they saw the Valkyries drag Gullveig inside.

The visual contrast was extreme: a Valkyrie not even 1.8 meters tall was tugging a five-meter-tall Vanir goddess with a rope that she could've easily snapped at any time—yet Gullveig looked docile as a lamb.

The recently rotated giants and gods burst into laughter and cheers on the spot.

"Hahahaha!"

"Isn't this the same goddess who mocked the entire Aesir tribe this morning?"

"Where's your arrogance now, huh?"

"Come on, break free! Want a sword? Let's fight again!"

A torrent of mockery pierced Gullveig like a thousand daggers. Her entire body trembled violently, but she kept her head bowed, not daring to speak a single word in protest.

With the devastating meteor strike from earlier, the giants and gods were now fully convinced of the God-King's brilliance.

That little embarrassment Odin suffered earlier in the day was long forgotten. They jeered and insulted Gullveig with unrestrained glee, delighting in the taste of revenge.

Thalos clapped his hands. Instantly, silence fell over the hall.

"Enough. Gullveig has clearly understood her mistakes. To atone, she has decided to join the Aesir as a divine attendant. Now, let her present a traditional Vanir dance as a token of goodwill."

What is humiliation?

This is humiliation.

The harder she had mocked the Aesir in the morning, the harder karma hit her back by nightfall.

She had absolutely no desire to perform—but after submitting, that unwillingness was forcibly transformed into compliance.

As the crowd howled and whistled, she knelt before the God-King. Then, as the dwarven musicians launched into a hastily prepared Vanir melody, she moved like a puppet, extending her limbs in rhythm. Her face twitched from the effort of smiling as she danced, pretending she didn't hear the jeers all around her.

This kind of multi-layered degradation—this was how you break a goddess.

Watching her graceful, if somewhat mechanical, movements, Thalos couldn't help recalling a pattern he'd seen before crossing into this world: Why did ancient emperors always seem to end up with enemy kings who were "skilled in song and dance"?

Simple.

If your head wasn't hanging on a city wall, you had to learn to sing and dance. There was no third option.

For the Aesir, who had only recently evolved from savages in hides gnawing on raw meat, enemies who mocked their kin didn't deserve a gentler ending.

She couldn't match the elegance of light elves, and her looks were merely above average—but just her identity as a Vanir goddess was enough to make the audience scream in excitement, thumping their chests and waving their weapons.

After three full songs and dances, Thalos walked forward, slung Gullveig over his shoulder like a sack of grain, and carried her off toward the back hall.

The banquet erupted in a deafening roar.

Gullveig hung upside down over Thalos's back, her ears filled with the ecstatic howls of gods and giants.

The unbearable humiliation tore through her like a thousand arrows.

And yet—shockingly—she found herself... grateful to Thalos.

Grateful that he took her away rather than killing her on the spot.

It preserved the last sliver of dignity she had left as a goddess.

Pushed to the brink of shame, she was horrified to discover—she was beginning to enjoy the feeling of being conquered.

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The banquet featuring Gullveig as the main act continued for three straight days.

On the fourth day—

Thalos brought her to the western cliffs of Asgard. After glancing at the giants still gleefully hurling boulders, he summoned the Bow God Ullr and Heimdall.

"Can you spot Njord?" he asked, then turned to Gullveig. "Describe your former master's appearance."

After a brief search with their far-seeing divine eyes, the two gods locked on the same figure.

"Found him," they said in unison.

"Good. Then please deliver a gift to Njord with your arrows."

"Yes—!"

"Gullveig," Thalos added, "leave a message for your former boss."

"...Okay." The once-sharp-tongued goddess now sounded like a bullied, submissive girl.

Not long after, the weary and irritated Njord received an unexpected present.

It happened suddenly. The sea serpents, who'd been intercepting falling meteors for days, failed to react in time to this particular projectile—faster and more precise than the rest.

Njord had long since grown tired of the meteor barrage.

But after holding the line for three straight days, his perception had dulled—understandably so.

So when Ullr's arrow cut through the sky and slammed into the courtyard of Njord's divine palace, it was already too late to stop it.

BOOM—

The marble tiles of the grand plaza shattered into rubble, leaving a massive crater. At its center stood a divine arrow, gigantic by mortal standards, still pulsing with divine energy.

As sea wind blew across the ruins, a distinctly feminine item fluttered like a banner.

Reading the runes and message inscribed on it, the face of Vanir God-King Njord twisted into an expression darker than ever before.

[Sorry, Njord. I, Gullveig, have decided to join the Aesir and serve His Supreme Majesty Thalos Borson.]