

Thalos 40

Chapter 40: I Anticipated Your Anticipation

Deploying a special unit to raid the enemy's home base during a war has always been a solid tactic—provided two things are true: first, the main battlefield must hold. If the front lines collapse, even a successful raid only salvages a partial defeat. Second, the strike team can't be too weak—otherwise, it's just a delivery of free kills.

The beauty of it was that to the gods and giants, Thalos had simply sent his "somewhat weak" little brother into danger. If Odin got taken out, no big deal, right?

Only Thalos himself knew how absurd his decision really was.

While others send a single man to flank and lift the clan's glory, Thalos sent his God-King brother on the raid—with full expectation that the entire Aesir pantheon would rise in power because of it.

In this world, no one besides Njord could even stall Odin, not for a moment.

And more importantly, Thalos was the one who had shaped the laws of the Nine Realms. Did anyone really think he'd let Odin fall into a trap?

Even if the Vanir front line was just a diversion—bait set by Njord himself—Thalos had full confidence he could wipe out that bait and then sit back and wait for Odin, having fallen for the trap, to return triumphant.

And if by chance Odin made it back fine, but Loki died instead?

Even better. That'd be two wins in one!

No matter what happened, Odin—after being repressed for so long—finally had the chance to lead a mission of his own. Oddly enough, it made him feel like a long-caged bird about to soar, a kind of giddy triumph blooming inside.

Good thing he didn't say that out loud. If he had, Thalos's face might have turned strange—Little Ding, has it occurred to you that you might actually be the rightful God-King of the Aesir?

Thalos didn't notice Odin's joy. Instead, he calmed the rest of the gods: "Don't think the main battlefield is a thankless task. All spoils Odin brings back—including any goddesses—will be split fifty-fifty. You get first pick."

"OHHHH!!" The divine brutes immediately roared with excitement.

Of course, glory from slaying enemies had its appeal.

But what truly spoke to these muscle-brained barbarians was the word: loot.

The whole Gullveig affair had already stirred up their hunger for war. Now, with most Aesir goddesses smitten by their own God-King, more and more gods and giants were considering finding themselves a Vanir wife.

This was exactly why Thalos chose to share part of the spoils.

Being God-King was powerful—but not easy.

When you have overwhelming strength and political clout, sometimes giving up a bit of personal benefit is necessary. If not, the people under you might not dare to rebel, but they could just slack off.

Thalos had successfully completed the war mobilization. Meanwhile, on the Vanir side, Njord had no idea that Thalos had already anticipated his anticipation.

With battle plans finalized and departure imminent, Njord suddenly pulled aside his battle-hardened son Freyr, waving his hand to create a shimmering water curtain that sealed off the surrounding space.

"Freyr," he said, "your mission has changed. You are not to focus on killing. Your job is to make as much noise as possible—to draw the enemy's attention."

"But Father—what about you?" Freyr blinked.

"I'm not sure if that bitch Gullveig truly betrayed us, but I have to prepare for the worst. The enemy likely knows about you. So I've changed tactics. Once your squad lands, then I'll lead the main force in a surprise charge at the Rainbow Bridge."

"Ah? Then I'll notify my team—"

"No," Njord shook his head. "Gullveig is cunning. She may have secretly returned and could be spying on us. Announce the plan only when you're about to engage."

"...Understood." Freyr nodded seriously.

Soon, the bait unit set off under cover of night. No shining gear. No glowing enchantments. They moved like migrating birds.

Each warrior bore strange black magical wings and flew silently, wrapped in patches of thick and thin mist, slowly ascending toward the highest layer of the World Tree—Asgard.

Below them, moonlight occasionally broke through the clouds, bathing the scarred island in silver and casting glistening reflections on the magical sea serpents still guarding Vanaheim's core.

The silver shimmer flashed and faded with each interception of falling stones, hiding the eerie silence of the bait unit's ascent.

By all accounts, the ambush should have succeeded. But the closer they got, the more nervous Freyr became. The colossal, floating continent above remained still, too still.

Throughout the slow ascent, all ten Vanir gods and over a hundred divine attendants remained eerily silent, exchanging uneasy glances.

'Fortunately,' they encountered no divine archers en route—no ambush, no aerial traps.

Only when they touched down on the outer edge of Asgard's floating continent did they exhale in relief.

Ahead lay the distant town at the base of the Golden Palace mountain. Though shrouded in night, it still glowed with scattered firelight.

Freyr made a hand signal. "Let's go. Make it loud!"

"Yes!"

The Golden Palace was so bright in the darkness, it couldn't be mistaken for anything else.

And the town nestled at its foot had no walls, giving the appearance of a completely undefended target.

The night watchmen with torches were hopelessly outmatched. At first contact, the entire town was thrown into chaos.

It was like an earthquake had suddenly struck.

Massive water serpents appeared out of thin air. Waterballs the size of wagons slammed into houses, toppling them instantly.

"Wha—?"

"What's going on?!"

"Great God-King, protect us!"

The townspeople were in total disarray, some even launched clear out the windows by the impact of bursting walls and rushing floodwater, landing hard in the streets.

Several night guards tried to fight back, but were overwhelmed instantly.

Aside from the sudden ringing of the town's alarm bells, everything was going exactly as Njord had planned.

As Freyr looked toward the Golden Palace, expecting to see the Aesir God-King scramble out in panic—

A thunderous voice boomed from the sky, shaking his ears like a drumbeat.

"Well, well! The sewer rats actually showed up, huh?"

A towering god wreathed in lightning and gripping a short-handled warhammer descended from the sky atop roaring storm winds.

That wild, bearded face was full of amusement and mockery—like a cat toying with a mouse it had finally caught.

"I am Freyr, War God of the Vanir and son of Njord! Aesir up there—name yourself!" Freyr bellowed, slightly disappointed. This wasn't Thalos Borson, the sword-wielding king he'd heard about.

"I am Thor Thalson! Son of God-King Thalos Borson," came the proud reply.

Why Thalson and not Thalseson? Because "Thalseson" was just too clunky. Thalos had simplified it himself. Besides, in a divine barbarian household, naming conventions weren't exactly strict.

The moment their identities lined up—well, how fitting!

Crown prince vs. crown prince!

No more words needed. Thor shot down like a thunderbolt, Mjölnir raised high, and slammed toward Freyr with all the fury of a descending storm.