

## Thalos 41

### Chapter 41: God-Kings Face Off

In the darkness, violet-blue lightning clashed violently with golden divine radiance. The resulting shockwave rolled the earth near the town's edge into layers of upheaval, tearing open a massive crater at the epicenter. From it, a chaotic swirl of divine power and shattered stone blasted outward in all directions.

While Thor and Freyr battled fiercely, the other gods were far from idle.

In the shadows, a single arrow shot through the air. A Vanir god raised his hammer to block it—he succeeded, at first. But just as the arrow glanced off the head of the hammer, it twisted in midair, ricocheting with a brilliant spark and suddenly veering to strike the Vanir god cleanly in the throat.

To onlookers, it appeared as if the arrow had missed and merely passed by. It was only when a trail of blood arced through the air that another Vanir god nearby realized his comrade had been critically wounded.

"An ambush?!" the wounded god gasped, only then realizing that his death-substitution amulet had activated—one life gone.

As the two Vanir gods prepared to retaliate, the ground before them erupted. In mere seconds, an entire forest of colossal trees burst from the soil, towering into the night sky and cutting off their path. The thick woodland formation made pursuit of the Aesir bow god nearly impossible.

While Vidar shielded Ullr, allowing him to unleash volley after volley of divine arrows, the accompanying giants also charged into the flanks, engaging the Vanir gods and their divine attendants in brutal close combat.

The side skirmishes turned chaotic, but on the main front—Rainbow Bridge—it went just as expected: the enemy arrived.

A massive sea dragon, over a hundred meters long, ascended the bridge in a manner that defied nature. Its head resembled a crocodile, its body resembled a whale—an unholy hybrid of sea beasts.

It slithered along the Rainbow Bridge, its massive form supported by a tremendous, spiraling surge of water that carried it up into the sky.

This shouldn't have been possible.

The bridge to Vanaheim had long been sealed. Though the rainbow light still shimmered, it was impassable.

Clearly, some kind of mysterious oceanic divine power had altered the properties of the bridge, bending the rules of reality for just long enough to force this impossible approach.

"Damn it!" Odin had carefully thought through how to stage a graceful defeat for this battle.

Now it seemed he wouldn't need to pretend.

After he hurled his first throw of the divine spear Gungnir, he instantly regretted ever giving it the attribute of Space.

When Gungnir collided with the massive sea dragon atop the Rainbow Bridge, it created a cascade of radiant law lines that lit up the western skies. The spear's spatial rending tore straight through the beast's defenses, blasting a hole ten meters deep and over three meters wide through its back.

For any lesser being—even a giant—this would've meant instant death.

For this hundred-meter monstrosity, it was a grievous wound—but not fatal.

Roaring in fury, the dragon crashed through the golden castle at the end of the Rainbow Bridge. The structure, built of giant stone blocks with walls gilded in gold, was almost completely flattened. Half the outer wall and much of the roof exploded outward in a rain of debris—shards of gold glinting in the light, giving the destruction a strange, dazzling beauty.

Odin and Heimdall threw themselves at the beast, attacking with all their might. But the creature's vitality was terrifying.

Sometimes, having a big health bar is a valid strategy.

The sea dragon, shrugging off the Aesir gods clinging to it, surfed the tides into District One of Asgard.

Row after row of buildings collapsed like sandcastles under a child's foot. Compared to the dragon's bulk, they didn't even register as obstacles.

In that moment, Asgard descended into utter chaos.

Taking advantage of the distraction, Njord and the Vanir gods made their grand entrance.

The Vanir God-King, white-bearded and mostly bald, wore gleaming armor in shades of sea-blue and white. Standing atop the shattered remains of the Rainbow Fortress, he swept a cold gaze across the battlefield.

Upon seeing the battered Odin and his companions, Njord raised a hand and gave a single, chilling command:

"Kill—!"

But just as the Vanir gods—each averaging five meters tall—charged across the ruins of District One, the tide turned.

"RAAAAH! Tear this beast apart—!!"

From the flanks, the giants charged. Led by Tiaz and the giantess Skadi, they swung massive clubs—each over ten meters long—slamming into the sea dragon with earth-shaking fury.

Letting brute-force fighters handle a brute-force monster was simple logic.

The Vanir gods rushed to counter the giants—only for the sky itself to explode.

A rain of swords—blazing, divine, and aflame with destructive energy—descended upon the battlefield.

Whoosh whoosh whoosh!

BOOM BOOM BOOM!

Countless magical swords, manifestations of the fire-element weapon Swords of Muspelheim, appeared in the night sky. They lit up the heavens and rained down like divine meteors, engulfing the entire area in flames.

The city—already designated as expendable—was reduced to a flaming wasteland.

Though none of the Vanir gods were killed, most narrowly avoided the sword clones using all manner of evasive magic and tricks.

Still, the entire street burned. Flames spread with the wind, racing toward the Rainbow Bridge and transforming the whole district into a fiery hell—the worst possible battlefield for the water-affiliated Vanir.

Across the blaze stood a towering figure wreathed in light, clad in golden armor, divine swords spinning around him.

Njord narrowed his eyes.

"You're the Aesir God-King, Thalos Borson?"

"And you're the would-be usurper—Njord, leader of the Vanir rabble?"

With just one exchange of words, the battlefield erupted again—Vanir gods cursing in fury:

"Barbarian! You dare call yourself a God-King?!"

"You know nothing of Vanir greatness!"

"Fool! Surrender now and we might spare your life!"

The Aesir, of course, fired right back, shouting and cursing with equal enthusiasm.

In the midst of this storm of words, none of the Vanir gods noticed a small Aesir unit slipping silently toward the Rainbow Bridge.

Njord did notice—but he could do nothing about it.

Thalos's presence was overwhelming.

Njord's divine domains were nothing to scoff at—Ocean, Summer, Storms—all formidable in their own right.

But Thalos's divine authorities? Kingship, Prophecy—already dangerous.

Add Sky, War, Death, Magic?

All first-class combat domains.

And that wasn't the worst of it. The swords orbiting Thalos shimmered with the divine power of different realms. Every one of them emanated the aura of a distinct world.

Njord's heart sank.

To face Thalos was to pit the strength of one world against the might of six or seven.

Granted, not all those worlds were fully awakened, and some of the Nine Realm Swords weren't yet showing their full power. But even a few were more than enough to give Njord a headache.

Still—Njord was the god of pirates and fishermen. He didn't know the meaning of surrender. Until he was utterly broken, he wouldn't back down.

Because if you don't fight—

How will you ever know... whether you could've won?