

Thalos 43

Chapter 43: Beating a Drowned Dog

Thalos had already tested Njord's strength.

For this Vanir god-king who could fight Odin to a stalemate in the epic Edda, Thalos's personal evaluation was: Yes, he could kill him—but it depended on the battlefield.

If they fought head-on in Njord's home territory of Vanaheim, it would be a pyrrhic victory. Thalos might win, but Vanaheim would be utterly destroyed, and the elemental balance of several other worlds would be thrown into chaos. That kind of loss was unacceptable for the one who held dominion over all Nine Realms.

But in Asgard—Njord was significantly weakened.

Yes, he could still draw oceanic power from Vanaheim, but even so-called "unlimited" resources have a flow rate limit. A mountain stream can't compare to a mighty river.

When holed up in his home base, Njord summoned water with the force of a flood. In Asgard? It was a trickle.

Thalos hadn't used his full strength from the start for a simple reason: he didn't want to take any damage himself.

After all—if you fight a dog and get bitten, are you going to bite it back?

Why had Thalos held back earlier?

Because he was aiming for a clean victory—no injuries.

Now, after Njord had been worn down by three waves of intense divine power, he was exactly where Thalos wanted him: exhausted, with his old power spent and his new strength not yet regenerated. His movements visibly slowed.

Thalos, already in a dominant position, seized the moment and brought down the Sword of Alfheim with ruthless precision.

He didn't hold back this time.

In that instant, the nearby floating continent of Alfheim—home of the light elves—dimmed. The sword glowed brighter than ever.

A beam of radiant golden energy, far larger than before, surged forth from the glowing sword suspended in the sky. In a blink, it shattered Njord's divine shield, pierced through his chest, and pinned him to the ground like a golden stake through a vampire's heart.

The scene left the Vanir gods horrified.

The god they saw as invincible—their mighty king—had just been killed.

"Ah?!" gasps echoed through the ranks.

Njord had never imagined the same sword, just moments apart, could vary in power so drastically.

Caught completely off guard, he lost one of his divine lives on the spot.

His form twisted grotesquely, unable to hold his humanoid shape.

Thalos wasn't surprised when Njord transformed into a massive, hundred-meter-long sea dragon. With a casual horizontal sweep of the light sword, he cleaved the beast down completely.

When he flung the corpse aside, Njord's true body reappeared in a nearby pool of water, just as expected.

But this was far from over.

In most real battles, the deadliest damage doesn't happen during the clash—but in the aftermath, when one side is collapsing and the other presses the advantage.

And Thalos was not one to show mercy.

With perfect timing, he hurled another divine blade: the Sword of Muspelheim, embodiment of fire.

At the exact moment Njord tried to summon another shield, the fiery blade tore through space and impaled his abdomen. The poor sea god let out a wretched scream as his body ignited from within.

Flames erupted throughout his body. Fire consumed his organs and flesh—but remained trapped inside a strange layer of watery membrane clinging to his skin, making him look like an overinflated balloon filled with lava.

Two seconds later, he burst.

And still, Njord endured.

Truly, this was the same Vanir god-king who had once stood toe to toe with Odin in the early Edda days. Even grievously wounded, he lashed out in fury. With a backhanded wave, he summoned a towering tidal wave and hurled it toward Thalos.

But Thalos only smiled.

With a flick of the Sword of Niflheim, swirling fog twisted the oncoming sea wave and gently redirected it away—like guiding a charging bull by the horns.

Only then did Njord finally give up his second divine life.

His second corpse: a massive, snow-white crab, its shell spanning more than a hundred meters.

Still, it wasn't over.

When Njord appeared for the third time, the skies above shuddered.

Countless metallic particles gathered together in a swirling mass, forming a titanic, 30-meter-long black iron sword—the Sword of Svartalfheim, representing the dwarves.

Unlike the others, this sword had no edge.

It was the epitome of blunt-force trauma. Pure weight. Pure impact.

Normally, Njord would've avoided it with ease—he had countless tricks and evasive techniques to dodge brute force attacks like this.

But at that moment?

His power hadn't regenerated.

The oceanic energy he tried to draw simply wasn't enough.

"AHHH—!"

The sword came down with the weight of a mountain.

It cleaved him clean in half, from his bald head straight through to his groin.

Agony.

Unbearable agony.

That was Njord's third life gone. His third corpse took the shape of a grotesque deep-sea anglerfish, its head bloated and monstrous.

That final death shattered the morale of the remaining Vanir gods. Many began looking for ways to retreat.

Now Njord was wary.

His next appearance was split into over a hundred water-elemental clones, each one resembling him and exuding his divine aura.

He had divided his last remaining life across these many clones.

No more speeches.

No more boasts.

Njord desperately hurled a flurry of water orbs in all directions, not to attack, but to disrupt the battlefield, buying time for his followers to escape.

He didn't even dare look at Thalos.

He unleashed another few enormous tidal waves to obstruct Thalos's line of sight—then he and his forces leapt from the edges of Asgard, fleeing for their lives.

He knew: if he didn't run now, he might never get the chance again.

Thalos cast one final rain of divine light.

Only a few twitching tentacles of a slain giant octopus remained.

"Heh. Come and go as you please? What do you think Asgard is—a marketplace?" Thalos's expression remained calm, but to his enemies, his smile was terrifying.

Rising into the air, divine energy streaming behind him like wings, he painted a golden trail across the sky.

With a sharp whistle, the nearby valkyries snapped their reins—snow-white pegasi leapt into the skies, carrying their riders into pursuit.

In the heavens, a phantom of the divine spear Gungnir appeared.

The moment had come—

Time to beat the drowning dog.

Odin's strike team immediately stormed the Rainbow Bridge.

Not all Vanir gods could fly. Most of their divine attendants certainly couldn't.

They needed the Rainbow Bridge to escape.

A few Vanir gods chose to stay behind and hold the line.

But they were no match for Odin.

One throw of Gungnir—space itself warped and twisted.

The light blinked—and a handful of Vanir gods collapsed, their massive bodies crashing to the earth.

Unfortunately, this didn't mean Odin had killed them.

But it did mean... they weren't going anywhere.