

## Thalos 435

Chapter 435: The Universe Is So Big—I Want to Go See It!

Is this... the brute's intuition?

Is ultimate recklessness actually great wisdom?

Come on—anyone who's run rampant across battlefields for over a hundred years without a single defeat can't really be brainless.

Thor gives people the brute act day in, day out. Truth is, he just doesn't like using his head—he certainly has one.

Thalos was briefly nonplussed. "My son! This will be a bout between equals. Even your father has no guarantee of certain victory..."

He flipped on his daily sweet-talking mode without missing a beat.

Thor's bearded mouth twitched; his big eyes said plainly he didn't buy it. "Father, save it. Ginnungagap is way too big—I really can't govern all that. How about when you take Olympus, you bundle up all of Zeus's wives and daughters? I heard the Queen is gorgeous..."

Thalos cut him off instantly. "Hell no. I don't want Hera, that venomous shrew!"

Thor sighed, almost wistful. "Father, and you say you 'don't know' the Greek pantheon?"

"..."

"Father, all that civil work is a pain. I like it better when you hold the grand strategy and I lead the charge."

Thalos's voice cracked like a whip. "Thor! Understand your station!"

But Thor didn't flinch. His gaze was clear. "Father, I've realized that as long as you use Prophecy to learn a pantheon well enough, we're guaranteed to win."

Thalos felt his whole divine being short-circuit.

A kid not even two hundred yet, blurting the hard truth!

Kids these days are getting harder to manage—no charm at all.

What could he do? He set his jaw. "Anyone can be careless, but not those at the top. You must always practice 'overestimating the enemy.' If they conform to the prophecy, great. But never, ever, treat them as trash that can be beaten at leisure."

Seeing his father stubbornly intent on dumping the burden on him, Thor began to waver. The Aesir's own model of "great wisdom hidden in foolishness"—Thunder God Thor—picked a flanking maneuver.

"Then, Father, if you really aren't here—and I face hard decisions in state—who can I rely on?"

Note the highlight: Thor asked about decisions, not mere advice. The weight is different.

Thalos stared into Thor's eyes for a long time. Seeing no retreat in them, he finally sighed. "For domestic matters you cannot decide—go to Gilgamesh."

"I knew my little brother was reliable—" Thor brightened, all but saying: If you throw the pot at me, I'll just toss it to Gilgamesh.

Thalos clamped a big hand on his shoulder—so hard Thor couldn't break free—and stared him down, enunciating each word:

"The ceiling of a pantheon is never set by administration, nor by the number of mortal believers. It is set by force. Only absolute force guarantees that all you cherish won't be taken, that you'll never have to look up at anyone in this universe and beg for mercy that doesn't exist. Do you understand?"

Though Thor himself was the Thunder God, he suddenly felt like a mortal, struck into charcoal by a heaven-sent bolt, his soul tingling numb.

Yes.

The world is never short of wolves.

Without force—

—you are nothing.

If they lost, the Golden Palace where he'd grown, the family he treasured, the wife he loved... the thought of it all being taken or destroyed squeezed the last bit of carelessness from Thor's heart.

"Father, now I understand. Even though I'm lacking in civil craft, you still back me as Crown Prince."

"As long as you understand."

For gods as for nations, raw force won't set the upper limit—but it props the lower one. In this barbaric universe of slavery, without force you are a lamb awaiting the knife—destined to be a slave.

Thalos remembered the world before he crossed over: a chorus with "civilization and freedom" on their lips, the same old nature in their bones. If his motherland had been a bit weaker, they'd have swarmed to tear it apart. Got spare money you don't put into the army... saving it up for indemnities?

Precisely because he was a traveler—and because his homeland had known bitter history—he understood and stayed wary. He would never be like Zeus: indulgent, chaotic, wrecking his own world into a mess.

Back to the point: seeing Thor finally grow, Thalos felt true relief. At last he circled back to the question Thor had asked at the start.

"My son, perhaps you don't understand why I said I might leave the burden to you." He paused. "I am confident I can defeat Zeus. But we'll speak of it when victory comes. Only after I set Ginnungagap in order will I make my choice."

"Father..."

Thalos didn't meet Thor's eyes. He turned instead to the vast window, gazed far out, and, in a low voice, said something that stunned Thor—and the Valkyries around them—for a long time:

"The universe is so big. I want to go see it."

Plain words. Crystal clear.

And they thundered in the heart.

Thor was struck speechless. From the day he could remember, Father had been omnipotent. From creation onward—war without, governance within, succoring the people—there was nothing he couldn't do: war, faith, politics, court—he excelled in all.

He was the perfection atop perfection, leading the Aesir from one peak of triumph to an even higher one.

Precisely because Thalos was too perfect in the eyes of gods and mortals alike, simple Thor had never once thought of replacing him, or stepping up early. And the Aesir live for ten thousand years on average—Thor had never worried that his young father would age and falter and need him to take the reins.

Thor had been happy his whole life.

He hadn't known that fathers, too, grow weary in spirit—that they also hold a poet's yearning for the far beyond.

Thor's thick lips trembled. After a long moment, he squeezed out a sentence; his wild, rough eyes were wet. "Father, promise me—when you've seen enough—come back."

Thalos smiled. "Of course. I know too well the bitterness of being a rootless soul. Ginnungagap has long been my only home in this universe. When we win, I'll probably take the goddesses I've conquered and roam for a few decades. When I'm tired, I'll come home."

Case closed!

A world-shaking scoop!

The wise and invincible God-Emperor of Ginnungagap has admitted it with his own lips—his soul did not originally belong to Ginnungagap.