

## Thalos 48

### Chapter 48

With his left arm wrapped around the stunningly beautiful Freyja, and his right hand lifting a golden goblet filled with fine wine poured by the now-servile Gullveig—dressed like a palace maid—Thalos embodied the classic image of a supreme god surrounded by conquered beauty. The sight electrified the hall.

Once again, the gods and giants howled with unbridled excitement.

What did this scene represent?

It was the ultimate rebuttal to the Vanir challengers.

It was the clearest symbol that the Aesir were on the verge of completely conquering the Vanir.

Within the Aesir, Thalos's prestige rose to yet another peak.

Perhaps every being in the realm offered heartfelt praise for Thalos—everyone except one god: Odin.

Because such a beautiful goddess... Odin wanted her too.

He cast a glance at Thalos—full of envy and frustration—a perfect mirror of an old grievance.

He remembered the arrival of Frigga, the radiant blonde goddess. He had fallen for her at first sight.

And yet?

She would rather cry in the golden palace than laugh in the bronze one.

She wanted a king, not some second-tier prince.

Odin accepted that humiliation.

But now with Freyja, it was happening again.

Even in defeat, Freyja had done everything she could to carve out a better future for herself and her brother Frey.

Were they wrong?

From their perspective, perhaps not.

And Odin knew that.

But he still couldn't accept it.

Why was he always left with his brother's leftovers?

Why?

Just because Thalos was the God-King?

This time... he couldn't take it anymore.

The seed of envy sprouted like mad within Odin, its roots digging deeper and deeper.

He clenched his teeth, his lips pressed tight—and just then, Loki caught a glimpse of him.

"Odin? You alright?"

Startled, Odin quickly forced a smile. "Ah, I'm fine."

"Really?"

Realizing he couldn't fool the cunning Loki, Odin confessed, "Honestly, I really like Freyja. But she likes big brother more. Nothing I can do."

"Ohhh, don't worry. Maybe you'll meet an even better goddess next time." Loki tried to console him sincerely.

Odin suddenly felt a little comforted. Perhaps only Loki in the entire tribe truly stood with him. His mood lightened.

Then Thor's voice boomed across the hall.

Raising both arms dramatically, he shouted:

"Second merit of this war goes to my valiant uncle—Odin! He flawlessly executed our God-King's diversion strategy, and even broke through the Vanir's Sea Temple!"

After speaking, Thor made a "raise-the-roof" gesture with his hands. The crowd erupted into cheers and applause.

Odin straightened his expression, walking with purpose to the steps below Thalos's throne and bowed respectfully.

Thalos looked down at Odin. His feelings were complicated.

He had clearly felt Odin's jealous gaze earlier.

Since arriving in this world, he had often wondered how to coexist with Odin.

Honestly, he had wished Odin had never drunk from the Well of Wisdom and stayed as the bumbling younger brother who followed behind him.

But fate's wheel turned on.

The ever-growing Odin would never be satisfied as someone else's shadow.

And now came the problem—after drinking from the Well, Odin's IQ rose, but his emotional intelligence tanked.

As God-King, Thalos couldn't afford to yield on such things.

This wasn't some Confucian monarchy. There was no emphasis on filial piety. This was the savage Viking pantheon—the strongest ruled. The chief bedded the most beautiful goddesses and claimed the brightest spoils.

If Thalos yielded, people wouldn't see humility. They'd see weakness. Cowardice.

He couldn't give an inch.

Odin knew this, yet still let his ambition fester. In that case, he only had himself to blame.

Looking at Odin, Thalos put on a perfectly executed expression of regret. "Ah, my brother. I can feel that you, too, care deeply for Freyja."

Odin said nothing.

"If she hadn't offered herself up, I wouldn't have minded letting her be yours. But she made her choice, and to better conquer the Vanir, I altered the plan. I took Freyja. I know this hurt you."

"OOOHHH!"

The giants and muscle-headed gods were just now catching on. Apparently... there really was something going on.

Now they were all ears.

Even Odin, standing below the throne, looked awkward.

He noticed Thalos had dropped the formal "I" in favor of a more familiar tone. After all, they were both half-bloods—half god, half giant. Calling each other kin wasn't wrong.

Thalos continued: "To make up for it, Odin, I will give you an opportunity."

An opportunity?

Odin's eyes lit up—along with everyone else's ears.

"Name a reward you feel matches your valor and wisdom. If you can prove yourself worthy, I will grant it."

This was both compensation and a deliberate opening.

Thalos didn't know if Odin would become the cold, cunning god of the myths. But in times of external threat, it was better to guide than suppress.

He was taking a gamble.

And for now, it seemed Odin hadn't turned dark yet.

But his ambition... it was massive.

"Your Majesty," Odin declared, "I wish to command the next campaign against the Vanir. If I can prove both my strength and strategy, and achieve victories worthy of our tribe's admiration—then once we conquer the Vanir, I ask to be given the right to lead them."

BOOM.

The crowd exploded.

"Whoa!"

"Did he really just say that?"

"I mean, Odin is pretty strong. I definitely can't beat him."

Voices of doubt, admiration, surprise—they were everywhere.

Thalos, however, simply gave the final word:

"Agreed. My brother, if you prove yourself, I will remove a few troublesome Vanir—three or five, at most—and the rest... shall be yours to rule."

It wasn't just Odin who was moved. Even Borston, their father, nearly shed tears on the spot.

Borston had long seen Odin's potential. If it weren't for Thalos, Odin would undoubtedly have been a worthy God-King himself.

Having two sons that brilliant... was its own kind of suffering.

But now, Thalos had offered a clear path.

He wouldn't give up the throne. But the conquered Vanir? Making them a subordinate tribe under Odin's leadership was a perfectly valid solution.

So long as the core remained strong, splitting off a branch was fine.

In fact, it was better than a forceful assimilation. With time and effort, the two factions could truly merge.

This tactic mirrored what Thalos had done after slaying the two progenitor frost giants—using marriage and diplomacy to make their remnants his vassals.

Same pattern. Same playbook. Same result.