

## Thalos 49

### Chapter 49: Then Don't Blame Me for Being Ruthless, Little Brother

Odin was just about to agree when he suddenly heard a few loud-mouthed giants "whispering" at a volume of 120 decibels:

"Odin? Can that kid really do it?"

"Can he beat that Njord?"

"If he can't beat Njord, why would those sly Vanir gods accept him?"

Odin was taken aback. He realized his big brother was truly treating him generously. Such compensation would be considered a tremendous favor anywhere. But in the end, you've got to have real strength to forge iron. If he couldn't convince the others, even if he was handed the Vanir throne, he wouldn't be able to hold it.

At this moment, Odin, who still had a sincere heart, felt a wave of shame.

What was I even thinking?

Big brother can claim the most beautiful goddess because he's strong enough!

I haven't even proven my own valor—what right do I have to demand the most beautiful goddess?

Odin straightened up and solemnly slapped his chest with his right hand, declaring, "Thank you, Your Majesty, for your trust. I, Odin, swear that within one year I will conquer the Vanir and complete the subjugation of their clan."

"One year? He actually needs a whole year?" the giant Tiaz muttered.

Seeing isn't always believing. Everyone had just watched Thalos casually kill Njord three times and now thought this Vanir king was no big deal. And yet Odin was saying it would take a year? Everyone immediately felt Odin was not up to the task.

Other giants nodded one after another, and many of the Aesir gods either frowned or nodded in agreement.

Odin cursed in his heart: Big mouth!

Thalos was pleased: Well done!

Odin quickly changed his tune: "Half a year—no, I only need three months."

"Good!" Thalos clapped decisively. "Then three months it is. Within the Aesir clan, aside from me, Bor, Bestla, and the goddesses, you have full authority to deploy everyone else. If anyone cowers from battle, you have my leave to execute them!"

Odin was instantly full of confidence: This Vanir kingship—I, Odin, will have it for sure!

"Thank you, Your Majesty!"

There was an uproar among the Aesir.

Honestly, if Thalos had gone back on his word just now, considering the recent victory, no one would have said anything. You're the god-king with the biggest fists—whatever you say goes. At most, people would grumble quietly later.

But not only did Thalos openly admit fault, he even offered a compensation plan beyond imagination. That made it hard to tell if he was a wise king—or just using the opportunity to cultivate his own brother.

Either way, this was both the god-king's family matter and a chance for other giants and Aesir gods to rise.

Under the god-king's rule, Thors and his children occupied the entire second tier of power. As long as they were around, gods and giants without blood ties had no chance to rise. In contrast, Odin only had his son Váli, and perhaps Loki and his brothers as hangers-on—far from enough to rule a god clan.

So what Thalos did was not only giving benefits to his brother, but also sharing benefits with the rest of the gods and giants.

This also showed off the Aesir's proud tradition of martial virtue.

If you can fight, you get to rise. If not—get lost!

When Odin declared the "three-month deadline," the gods and giants finally smiled in satisfaction.

"Yeah! That's more like it!"

"Odin, we're counting on you!"

The giants' booming voices echoed throughout the Hall of Joy. The gods nodded at Odin as well.

In that moment, all of Odin's frustrations vanished, and his heart was filled with gratitude toward his big brother.

He followed up on the moment: "Since His Majesty is giving me such a once-in-a-millennium opportunity, I shouldn't be tied down by worldly possessions. I'll give up my share of the spoils and let the other meritorious ones have it."

"Whoa! Whoa! Whoa!" The gods and giants naturally cheered.

According to merit, Thor was given Njord's eldest daughter, Radwig, while Tyr received the younger daughter, Krupvor, as a servant. The rest of the contributors all received appropriate rewards.

With the spoils distributed, the atmosphere in the Hall of Joy reached a new peak.

The dwarf musicians played their instruments with vigor. Beautiful light elves flew back and forth through the air, offering wine and food to the gods and giants.

In the center of the hall, several Vanir goddesses danced gracefully to the music.

Seeing this, Bor and his wife were extremely pleased.

"Passing the throne to Thalos was the wisest decision of my life."

"Wasn't it, my dear?"

An excited Bestla plopped herself down. Luckily, Bor reacted quickly and instantly enlarged himself—otherwise, he feared he'd be crushed to death. With Bestla perched on his back, Bor strolled off to the inner hall.

Thalos glanced at the scene and for once felt a little shy. He too carried Freyja off to the inner hall. Gullveig and the valkyries trailing behind him hurried to follow in quick, delicate steps.

With the god-king around, everyone held back. Once Thalos left, the Hall of Joy hit its climax. Many of the victors eagerly began enjoying their spoils right then and there.

Peeking through the not-yet-closed palace doors at what was happening inside, Freyja felt another wave of gratitude toward Thalos.

At that moment, Thalos was surprised to find Odin and Loki waiting for him—along with Vili.

"What's the matter, my dear brother?"

Odin let out a long breath and smiled sincerely: "Brother, I was so afraid you were going to call me your 'foolish little brother' again."

No! You're still that foolish little brother!

Best Actor Thalos curled the corners of his lips: "You did well this time."

"Thank you for the praise." Odin deliberately avoided looking at the goddess resting on his brother's shoulder, and carefully said, "Thank you for your support, big brother. I'll make this battle against the Vanir look beautiful."

Thalos said seriously: "Njord's power is not simple. You were still too hasty this time. If you had held to the one-year deadline, I could've easily taken care of him for you."

As Thalos finished speaking, he clearly felt the goddess on his shoulder tremble slightly, while Gullveig behind him began breathing heavily, her eyes glowing with fervent devotion.

One in sorrow, the other in fanatical faith.

Odin's reaction was the most interesting—he showed a clearly conflicted expression, then made no effort to hide his ambition: "Brother, I think I can do it. If I have to rely on your strength, then I'm not worthy to be king of the Vanir."

Foolish little brother—those are your own words!

Loki, ever the troublemaker, dug a huge hole for Odin and cheerfully said, "If you're so useless, Odin, why not just come with me to guard Jotunheim?"

Odin froze for a moment, then, not wanting to lose face, pounded his chest and vowed: "If I can't defeat Njord in three months, I'll go guard Jotunheim for the Aesir!"

Thalos very nearly rolled his eyes. He was beginning to understand why the Edda practically screamed one thing between every line: It's all Loki's damn fault!

Whenever the Aesir had no way out, it was always Loki who came up with the plans.

The brilliant schemes were his. The terrible ideas were his too.

Loki, with his divine and demonic dual nature, could lead the Aesir to paradise—or drag them straight to hell.

In the Prose Edda, Njord actually survived Ragnarok and became the new leader of both tribes, turning around and getting the last of Odin's sons killed.

If Njord, sitting on home turf, were really so easy to deal with, he wouldn't have fought the Aesir for years, both sides suffering heavy losses and being forced into a truce.

And yet when your "own people" like Loki dig a pit—you, Odin, actually jump right in!

Foolish little brother... then don't blame me for being ruthless.