

Thalos 54

Chapter 54

Thalos appeared oblivious to Odin's dark thoughts. His gaze remained fixed on the lower realm.

He did not hurl curses at Njord. Instead, his tone was one of condescending mercy, spoken as though from a throne beyond reach: "O Vanir gods, soon you will understand. When I extend goodwill, you'd best accept it. Because that is the best fate you will ever be offered."

Hiss— A collective shiver ran through the bodies of Freyr, Naxxus, and the rest of the Vanir gods for reasons they couldn't explain.

Thalos's words sounded like a threat, yet when considered deeply, they didn't feel like one—they felt like a guarantee.

Unlike the impulsive Odin, Thalos gave them an overwhelming sense of absolute control. As though nothing could escape the destiny he had already written.

It was the kind of despair where no matter how one struggled, or how many times they started over, they could never break free. Like an invisible hand tightening around their throats, slowly dragging them toward ruin.

With the exception of the clueless Njord, every Vanir god trembled violently, their bodies shaking like leaves—including Freyja and Gullveig, who already stood at Thalos's side.

Freyja was the first to kneel, head lowered: "The only god who defied Your Majesty's will is Njord. Please, let Your Majesty's anger fall solely upon him."

Gullveig followed: "The rest of the Vanir were merely dragged along by Njord."

Their feelings were complex.

In their hearts, they had long accepted their place among the Aesir. But their Vanir heritage remained an eternal mark upon them. If Thalos chose to wipe out the Vanir, they would lose their homeland—and thus any remaining usefulness.

Worse, they didn't want to watch their kin, friends, and family be dragged into destruction by Njord's madness. Even if Freyja was his daughter, the only right move now... was to sever ties in advance.

The most telling thing?

No one—not even Njord—doubted that Thalos could do it. That was the real essence of his power.

Thalos ignored Njord's ravings. His giant projection faded as he turned his gaze upon those around him.

"You've all worked hard. Rest for two days. On the third, we will bear witness together... to the destruction of the Vanir."

His words were light—too light. As though he were swatting a fly rather than sentencing an entire god clan to death.

And it was precisely this ease that reignited the spirits of the battered gods and giants. They roared with uncontained excitement.

"Long live His Majesty Thalos!"

"Only His Majesty is truly invincible!"

"Hahaha! I knew it—no enemy can escape His Majesty's grasp!"

All the bitterness of failure vanished. Now they longed for the spectacle of destruction three days away.

Even Odin, in that moment, found himself desperate for Njord's death.

But Thalos quietly watched Odin's retreating figure, and in his heart, he understood.

He now saw why, in the Edda, when the two tribes exchanged hostages as part of their fragile peace, Odin purposely played a trick—sending the slow-witted Vili (known in some versions as Hœnir) along with the wise giant Mimir. The Vanir, feeling deceived, killed Mimir in rage and sent his severed head back to Odin.

That cunning move allowed Odin to use the Vanir's hand to rid himself of a dangerous ally.

He hadn't won the war on the battlefield... but he'd made up for it with trickery.

And that decision had far-reaching consequences. In the Prose Edda, it's implied that when Ragnarök came, the Vanir sat back and did nothing—watching the Aesir be slaughtered.

Thalos sighed inwardly: My foolish little brother... Even you want Njord dead so badly. Don't you realize? The only real chance you ever had to shake my rule... was to ally with that madman you hate so much.

But outwardly, Thalos smiled.

There is no greater cruelty of fate... than this.

...

After their rescue, the gods and giants indulged in drunken revelry in the Hall of Joy until dawn, then collapsed into exhaustion for an entire day.

On the third morning, they assembled again—this time with the mortal army newly reorganized—on the great plaza outside Valhalla, awaiting their god-king's inspection and the descent of a new miracle.

This time, the platform was no longer occupied by the unreliable Odin, but by their undefeated, all-powerful sovereign—Thalos.

Thalos looked down at them. His expression was calm. Then he glanced sideways at Odin, who stood with a lowered head, his spirit dim.

He spoke in a private voice only Odin could hear: "My foolish little brother... it's been three days. Have you figured out why you lost?"

Odin lowered his head further. "Because I lack your strength, Brother."

Thalos shook his head. "No. You lost because even after drinking from the Well of Wisdom... you're still a fool."

"Huh?" Odin looked up, stunned. "That's impossible!"

Even the nearby gods pricked up their ears.

Thalos delivered the final blow. "If I were you—even without the Sword of the Nine Realms—I'd use your Winter domain to craft a boulder ten times the size of the Golden Palace... and drop it on Vanaheim. And if that wasn't enough—then a hundred times. How would Njord stop you?"

Odin's eyes widened in disbelief.

That—was insane.

He'd never even considered such an idea.

But the more he thought about it... the more it made sense.

Asgard towered high above Vanaheim. The Vanir would have no way to stop it.

Odin's voice trembled with regret: "If we were to do that now—"

"No." Thalos cut him off. "Opportunities, once missed, are gone. If it were me, I'd have used something better."

Odin felt a surge of despair and self-doubt. Am I truly that foolish?

He had just suffered a soul-crushing defeat at the hands of a transmigrator's wisdom.

Meanwhile, Thalos left the brooding Odin behind and led the assembled army to the western cliffs of Asgard.

He merely raised a hand and made a pulling gesture toward the void.

In that instant, every observer seemed to hear a soft pop—like something being pulled loose.

"Look!" While Heimdall was the first to notice, it was the bow-god Ullr who shouted aloud.

Vanaheim—the ocean world built atop the Ginnungagap chasm—suddenly showed a massive vortex in its heart.

Only Njord truly felt it: from that vast whirlpool at the sea's center, hundreds of thousands of cubic meters of water vanished every second.

Where was it going?

Njord didn't know. All he knew was that a plug had been pulled—his ocean, his authority—was being drained away. The sea flowed out of Vanaheim and into a massive pit in Midgard.

The water remained the same, but once it left his realm, it was no longer part of his divine jurisdiction.

Which meant—his divine power was being stripped away.

Over ninety percent of it.

"NOOO—!"

A heart-piercing scream echoed through the Sea Temple as Njord howled in despair.

Back in Asgard, Thalos turned and handed the Sword of Jotunheim to Odin.

"My foolish little brother... would you mind bestowing upon Vanaheim a true winter storm?"

Odin's eyes lit up with the mad joy of vengeance.

"With pleasure, my king!"

Divine Judgment: WINTER'S WRATH

—Descends.