

## Thalos 64

### Chapter 64: An Alternate Version of the "Valkyrie Plan"

"Huff huff! Heh heh! Haha! Hahahahaha!" Watching the mutated little snake perish in the Fire of Order, Thalos rarely laughed aloud.

No, this was closer to manic laughter.

After finally finishing his laughter, the corners of Thalos' mouth lifted. "As expected! Loki will never let me get bored!"

Be it man or god—

After being the God-King for so many years, no person or thing could truly excite Thalos anymore.

That psychological threshold naturally rises over time.

At first, Thalos was merely a wanderer drifting through the chaotic world. All he desired was to stumble upon a stable, orderly world before his life ran out, so he could continue living.

Now that he had encountered the world of Ginnungagap and survived, of course he had to do something for it.

This was the karmic "cause" that Thalos owed the world, and as for how to get through the "effect" of Ragnarök, that was up to his own efforts.

Loki represented the world's instability.

Actually, the fact that the world was in such a hurry to give birth to a host of gods to govern each domain in an orderly manner clearly indicated that the world of Ginnungagap, on a primal level, still wanted to grow and develop a perfect self-sustaining cycle.

Unfortunately, the epic tale shows that Ginnungagap's world evidently messed up. When it could no longer support so much life and divinity, a kind of internal purge akin to raising venomous insects began.

Whether a world or a country, chaotic expansion is fine during periods of growth. But once the game shifts to a zero-sum scenario, war becomes the simplest way to handle it.

Winners continue to feast and prosper. Losers die and are forgotten.

Thalos figured everything he had done wasn't for nothing:

First, he killed Surtur, the progenitor of the fire giants, and used his body to significantly expand the world's space during its reshaping. That was essentially making a bigger cake.

Then, while reconstructing the Nine Realms, he balanced the elements more evenly and filled the world with systematic physics formulas from Earth, thereby regulating its laws. This meant that the world would run far more smoothly than the crude model Odin once built in the epic.

Odin's world could barely function. Thalos' world operated efficiently.

That left only one final question—what was the world's carrying capacity?

Everything has its limits.

Just like how the amount of atmosphere a planet can retain depends on the gravitational pull from its mass.

Or how many people a piece of land can support depends on its productivity.

Within the world alone, Thalos had ten thousand ways to increase productivity and feed more beings.

"The only thing I'm afraid of now is that too much external chaotic power will exceed the World Tree's capacity to filter and purify it."

Thalos murmured to himself, then left the core and descended to the Misty Realm of Niflheim beneath the World Tree to once again inspect the venomous dragon Nidhogg, who never ceased gnawing at the roots.

Nidhogg, like that bizarre sacred cow, existed within the world yet was impervious to everything in it.

Thalos should've loathed the dragon for gnawing at the tree's roots.

But interestingly, although Nidhogg was indeed chewing at the roots, nothing said the World Tree couldn't grow new ones.

Thalos saw with his own eyes some roots he hadn't seen last time growing toward Nidhogg as if feeding it.

He found this quite amusing. Back before he crossed over, while studying in school, he used to get annoyed by those math problems about filling a tank with water while it drained at the same time.

Back then, he thought those were brain-dead.

Now he realized, the world was full of crap like that!

Thalos laughed joyfully.

He had no intention of killing Loki.

This was like in warfare—if you knew the enemy could only resupply through a single route, and you had surveillance on the entire supply line, any smart commander wouldn't destroy that line.

Whether it be countries or worlds—

In the end, it's a matter of comprehensive strength.

Since the invasion of Chaos couldn't be stopped anyway, wasn't it better to keep the seed of Chaos under your own watch?

Just because Loki was destined to blow up didn't mean Thalos should blow up his own armory first.

Thalos made a firm decision: "I really do need to prepare both plans."

First, defuse the bomb in advance—see if it was possible to convert the overflowing chaos power in Loki into Order. If that could be done perfectly, then the power of Order in the Ginnungagap world would be stronger, and it wouldn't matter if the world self-destructed or shrunk in size and reduced the number of gods.

Second, implement the Valkyrie Plan.

In the epic "Edda," Odin, aware of Ragnarök's coming, made lengthy preparations. He activated the Valkyries to collect the souls of powerful mortal warriors as Einherjar, hoping they'd help him defeat the World-Ender in the final battle.

Harsh truth proved that Valkyries and Einherjar were utterly useless against behemoth-level enemies.

The Valkyrie Plan that Thalos was preparing shared only the name.

His real target was the other world, the one also undergoing a process of order.

First, he found Brynhildr.

"Brynhildr, can I trust you?" After some tender whispers, Thalos asked this question.

"Of course, my Lord!" Ever since their intimate relationship began and she had given birth to Hermod for him, Brynhildr held the highest status among the Valkyries, and she considered herself half an Aesir.

Such close bonds meant she would unconditionally follow all of Thalos' orders.

Thalos revealed his plan.

Brynhildr's eyes widened, full of disbelief. "There's another world beyond Ginnungagap?"

"Yes. The two worlds are almost twins, joined at the hip. If Ginnungagap can't withstand Chaos, then we'll need that other world as a backup. As the God-King, I can't just leave Ginnungagap. That's when I need some adventurers."

"I'm willing to venture out for my Lord!" Brynhildr said with utmost seriousness.

"No need for you to go personally. Worlds have barriers. Ginnungagap has one, and the other world likely does too. I can only find cracks in that world and send in a group of pioneering warriors. As for the next steps, we'll see after I get their responses. Your task is to join the other Valkyries and filter out powerful mortal souls, then train them into Einherjar."

"Understood."

The beings of the Nine Realms also worshipped the Aesir gods, but out of a philosophy of "diverting rather than blocking," Thalos had never prohibited mortal nations from fighting each other or competing for resources.

To every victor, Thalos granted blessings fairly.

Under such a selection system akin to raising venomous insects, there was no shortage of powerful mortal warrior souls in the lower realms.

Compared to the Aesir gods and giants, they were still too weak.

But as scouts, they were just right.

Don't forget, Thalos held dominion over both War and Death.

Mortal behavior in these domains also served to strengthen Thalos' divinity.

In the fifth year after implementing the new Valkyrie Plan, Brynhildr presented the first mortal hero to him.