

## Thalos 74

### Chapter 74: The Pawn and the Player

Angrboda looked grim. She knew Loki was right.

The God-King would never spare a chaotic spawn—and her grandsons were unlikely to survive.

Stubbornly, she said, "But what if even Odin can't protect them?"

A sharp glint flashed through Loki's eyes. "Then we'll just keep making more."

Losing his son had left no small amount of bitterness in Loki's heart. That much was obvious. He was the kind of person who, the more forbidden something was, the more determined he became to do it. Rebellion was etched into his bones, shaping a personality that never cared for consequences.

As for Angrboda—well, female giants were just as wild as the males. They didn't care what was "right" or what kind of damage might befall the world. Whoever upset her, she'd make sure to return the favor.

So, that very afternoon, Loki went straight to Odin.

"Odin, I need to be honest with you—Fenrir... left behind children."

"...What?!" Odin didn't even try to hide his shock. He stared at the two fuzzy wolf pups that looked no more threatening than ordinary mortal dogs. To him, they were smaller than ants.

Loki, calm and composed, said, "You know how Lord Thalos is. He's biased against me. He spared me because of his rules, not because he trusts me. If these pups grow up and are labeled chaotic creatures, they'll be slaughtered just like Fenrir."

"So what are you saying, Loki?"

"The God-King gave me a pile of Order Stones. He said they'd prevent my offspring from becoming corrupted. I think... to keep them safe, I should entrust them to you. After all, I am your sworn follower."

It sounded so proper, so reasonable—and it gave Odin a massive headache.

He knew Loki had figured it out. Loki was angry—angry that Odin hadn't protected Fenrir. Loki still didn't believe his son could possibly bring harm to the gods.

Oh, if only Loki knew... that the prophecy said his son would be the one to bite Odin in half.

Now Odin was the one in turmoil.

In this world, he wasn't the supreme god of Asgard—just a feudal lord of a minor realm. If he betrayed Loki now, he'd have no one competent left by his side.

But if he accepted the pups...

Odin had also read the latest divine decrees.

If a God-King as composed as Thalos issued a warning like Ragnarök is coming, and declared state-wide grain rations and military patrols, then it meant something very bad was looming.

If Odin wanted to survive what was coming, he needed more power—more strength and more cunning.

He hated it—how his older brother, who had drunk from the same well of wisdom, always outshone him. And now, more than ever, he needed Loki.

He also realized something else—those wolf pups, feared even by Thalos, could become a powerful weapon.

They were Loki's grandsons. They listened to him. If Odin kept Loki close, then he could control the wolves by proxy.

Sure, the prophecy said a giant wolf would devour him. But Odin gritted his teeth and made a decision:

"I'll do it. Loki, I'll protect them. I'll use every Order Stone I have to decorate their den—make sure Chaos never touches them."

Loki's signature charming grin finally returned.

"Odin! I knew you'd protect them. You're my best brother!" Loki leapt into Odin's arms with enthusiasm, practically clinging to him like a vine.

Odin smiled awkwardly and patted his back. "Of course. We swore it, didn't we? To share mead and fortune together, as brothers."

"We did!"

"Oh right, what are their names?"

"Sköll and Hati! Angrboda chose them."

Odin's smile froze. His brows knitted.

In the language of the Aesir, Sköll meant betrayal, and Hati meant hatred or hostility.

The message was obvious—Angrboda was expressing her resentment toward Thalos, for betraying her trust and murdering her son.

Odin sighed. "No... they might already be part of the prophecy. We'd better rename them. One will be Gilli—Greed. The other, Kurrikki—Hunger."

For wolves, those were perfectly normal names.

Loki shrugged. "Whatever you say."

What Loki didn't know was that Odin was already planning ahead: if he couldn't control the beasts or hide them properly, he'd report them to Thalos and let the God-King deal with them.

That was Odin for you—always cautious, always calculating. He wanted the rewards, always turned to Loki for cunning plans, but never took responsibility when things went wrong. Loki was always the one who ended up taking the fall.

It was this cold, selfish, two-faced version of Odin that eventually drove Loki, in the Edda, to betray the Aesir entirely.

Still, this time Odin had accepted the pups, and at least his relationship with Loki remained intact.

Elsewhere, Thalos received word: Odin had taken in two young wolf cubs.

That made him pause.

In the epics, Odin indeed kept two war wolves with similar names. That, on its own, wasn't strange.

But he also remembered that Fenrir was said to have two sons—Sköll, who chased the sun, and Hati, who chased the moon. During Ragnarök, they would both succeed in devouring their prey.

Thalos furrowed his brow... for three seconds, then relaxed.

Even if Odin was dead-set on protecting Loki's grandsons, it probably wouldn't end well.

If those pups carried even a fraction of Fenrir's brutal bloodline, odds were they'd eventually turn on him.

What a joke.

The real question was: would dividing the same chaotic blood into two new vessels change the outcome?

Oh yes—it would.

That was like taking one twenty-year-old woman and replacing her with two ten-year-old girls. You tell me if that's legal.

"So be it. If the heavens rain and Odin insists on walking into a storm... let him."

"I've done everything I could."

The world is full of people who don't know their place.

They could live comfortably as a pawn—but they insist on playing the king.

They have no talent for being a strategist—yet they suffer from strategist's disease.

No helping that.

No matter how many times you try to stop them... they won't listen.

Thalos let out a long sigh.

"My foolish brother... My patience has its limits. The moment you cross that line, the karmic thread between us will be severed."

Seated alone upon the supreme throne, in a godless temple filled with silence, the God-King exhaled deeply, his voice lingering like distant thunder.