

Thalos 76

Chapter 76 Heartbroken Loki

Thor had never lacked intelligence; he simply used to be accustomed to solving problems with brute force. It was only after years of scolding from his father that he began to prefer thinking things through instead of charging in recklessly.

Upon returning to the Palace of Silver, Thor, along with his brothers Tyr and Vidar, gloomily removed their helmets and handed them to the attendants before striding over to the throne where the God-King sat.

"Father! I suspect there are still descendants of Fenrir alive in Jotunheim! I request permission to enter Jotunheim to search for them."

Seated upon the throne, Thalos responded in a calm, indifferent tone, "Be confident, my son. Remove the words 'I suspect.'"

The gods were momentarily stunned, and then their faces twisted in fury, cursing angrily in nearly identical words:

"How dare Odin (Second Uncle)!"

Thor, with his fiery temper, exploded, "I'll confront Odin right now!"

Confront him? More likely you're planning to tear down Odin's Golden Palace fortress, aren't you?

Thalos sternly stopped Thor, "Violence cannot solve every problem! If you use force for everything, how are you any different from chaotic monsters?"

Thor paused in confusion, "Then what should I..."

"Let me teach you another principle—if you cannot solve a whole set of problems at once, break the big problem down into smaller ones, and deal with them one by one."

There was a brief flicker of confusion in Thor's eyes, but he quickly understood and bowed deeply, "Understood! Please, Father, proceed according to the rules! Meanwhile, I will have Uller and Vidar keep watch on Odin."

Among the gods, Heimdall was the best at reconnaissance, but he was tasked with guarding the Rainbow Bridge and could not leave. Nor could he keep constantly watching Odin.

The second-best in reconnaissance was Uller, but he was rather poor in close combat—this bow god, who could be instantly defeated by a young Thor, definitely needed a bodyguard. Fortunately, Vidar, as the god of the forest, was quite skilled in stealth and close combat.

The two of them made an excellent team.

Thalos nodded approvingly, "Very good. You are finally maturing."

Through the magical throne, he once again cast his divine sight across space to Jotunheim and murmured softly, "My foolish brother, do you still have a chance to overcome your shortcomings?"

In this lifetime, Odin could hardly be said to have a flourishing reputation; in fact, it had been steadily declining.

Odin was neither the God-King nor had he achieved any great feats of arms worth boasting about. On top of that, his repeated protection of Loki had caused his reputation among both gods and giants to fall below even that of fourth-generation gods like Vidar.

Yet, despite not being the God-King, Odin had caught the disease of wanting to become one.

Whether among humans or gods, only those who truly learned from others ever became outstanding individuals.

Most of the time, only being battered mercilessly by reality could wake people up to their mistakes.

If humans had such serious flaws, how much worse would it be for gods who considered themselves invincible?

The stronger they were, the more arrogant they became.

This was the normal state of the Aesir gods. A clear-headed transmigrator god like Thalos was an anomaly among them.

Extreme greed and inflated ambition constantly drove Odin to climb higher. Even knowing full well that his elder brother had strictly forbidden the experiment, Odin continued secretly.

Odin had already prepared his excuses—it was Loki who had begged him to shelter his grandchildren.

Exactly!

If anything went wrong, it would all be Loki's fault.

And Odin had a second excuse—he had used the Order Tablet. If the tablet had no effect, wasn't that his brother's failure?

Odin's scapegoating strategy was so flawless that he didn't even need to "ignore the facts."

He was simply a gambler desperate for supreme power, madly betting on the slim hope even as chaos surged around him.

After all, if things went south, he wouldn't be the one to take the blame, so he was determined to charge ahead recklessly.

The Valkyrie relayed Thalos's inquiry, "Lately, a large number of Fenrir's offspring have appeared near the Iron Forest close to Jotunheim. Second Brother, do you know anything about this?"

Odin replied, "No."

The next day, the Valkyrie reported again, "It's said that the two wolves you're raising have abnormal sizes."

Odin answered, "They've absorbed my divine power, so they're just a little bigger than normal wolves."

Seated upon the High Throne, Thalos sneered, "A little? Or a whole lot?"

He had already seen the two wolves hidden in a giant underground ice cavern by Odin—their shoulders alone were as high as a four-story building. Other than chaotic power, what else could make them grow so massive?

Meanwhile, under Thalos's continued questioning, Odin began to panic.

When in doubt, Odin had only one solution—find Loki!

Loki sat quietly in the palace Odin had built for him. Though the palace wasn't large, it had everything necessary, and Odin had invested considerable effort into winning him over. Loki now sat silently in a bearskin armchair, his entire body leaning back, projecting an aura of complete relaxation.

This only made it harder for Odin to guess what Loki was thinking.

"Loki, Thalos has sent another inquiry about the two wolves," Odin said, unable to hide the unease on his face. In his mind, Loki ought to be very nervous right now.

Loki's reaction was flat, "Oh, really?"

"Help me think of something. If this keeps up, they'll be taken to the Golden Palace," Odin pressed him.

Loki slowly turned his head mechanically and stared at Odin with vacant eyes, "Are you worried that after I lost my sons, I'll now lose my grandsons too?"

"Of course!" Odin insisted. But the slight hesitation in his gaze betrayed his true thoughts.

Loki's heart sank.

Loki, master of pretense, outwardly appeared utterly defeated, "When I entrusted Sköll and Hati to you, I hoped you could protect them. If even you can't... then their fate is sealed. So be it."

After saying this, Loki looked as if his soul had been drained. He staggered away, so unsteady it seemed a breeze could blow him over.

Watching Loki's retreating figure, Odin felt both helpless and resentful.

Damn it, Loki. Your sons, your grandsons—each one more troublesome than the last!

After parting from Loki, Odin wound his way through the hidden passages of his castle to the gigantic ice cavern where the two monstrous wolves were imprisoned.

"Awooo—"

Even before seeing Odin, merely hearing the familiar and hated sound of his footsteps, Sköll and Hati tried to let out threatening growls.

To be precise, one managed a growl, while the other, in pain, could only produce a howl.

"Shut up, you filthy dogs!" Odin's son, the god of vengeance Vali, who was guarding the twin wolves, viciously struck one of them again.

Rounding the ice tunnel's bend, Odin finally saw the two giant wolves, shackled tightly by cursed iron chains.