

Thalos 80

Chapter 80 - 80 Jörmungandr

After the incident with killing Hati, Thalos confirmed that the best strategy was to draw out these forces ahead of time and deal with them preemptively—that was the only way it would truly count.

Simply killing a "puppy version" of Fenrir would likely not be enough to weaken Ragnarok's forces.

In the epics, Asgard was besieged by the five great monsters, and tracing back, the fault surprisingly still lay with Odin and the gods themselves.

After gaining dominion over the world, the Aesir gods spent their days drinking and reveling, their prosperity built upon the offerings of the mortal realms, while caring little for the fates of the mortals themselves.

Fenrir grew ever larger, and the gods merely exiled him to the Iron Forest—until he became so big that even gods were terrified, at which point they scrambled to fix their mistake.

They had failed to conquer the Vanir fully; the Vanir even managed to nurture a serpent, Jörmungandr, in the oceans, and the Aesir simply ignored it—an unmistakable act of negligence.

The unrest in the underworld was partly because the gods despised Hel's ugliness and exiled her, and partly because Odin tinkered with Valhalla, intercepting souls without limit, disrupting the natural cycle between the living and the dead.

Odin killed Ymir but left Surtr alone—a fatal blunder.

Finally, aside from Thor, almost none of the Aesir were willing to venture into the frozen wastes of Jotunheim to eliminate the rebellious frost giants, allowing them to multiply and even found their own kingdom.

The entire Ragnarok of the epics, aside from the chaotic power's invasion, was basically a grand karmic retribution for the evil seeds the Aesir had sown.

Indeed, there is nothing new under the sun: what spectators see as massive explosions of misfortune are often just a bunch of irresponsible people digging holes and leaving them unfilled, letting minor disasters accumulate into cataclysms.

Among all these monsters, the only one that couldn't entirely be blamed on the Aesir was perhaps Nidhogg, the poisonous dragon gnawing at the World Tree's roots. That creature was stuck in the space crevices and wouldn't emerge until the appointed time.

If memory served, it was Nidhogg who killed Freyja.

"Sigh, being the God-King is too hard!" Thalos muttered, casually stroking the hilts of the nine divine swords as if playing with a bunch of adorable pets.

At the same time, his divine sight once again crossed the void and fell upon Jotunheim.

There, a heartbroken Loki suddenly felt a dreadful sense of foreboding.

His lover, Angrboda, also turned deathly pale. "My love, did you feel that?"

"Yes," Loki nodded heavily, then, thinking he was being discreet, made a shushing gesture.

Unfortunately, his lover lacked his cunning mind and instinctively placed her hand on her lower abdomen—where new life was already growing.

It was just like how inexperienced people, when nervous, would habitually touch the pocket where they kept their valuables.

Loki naturally pulled her hand up to his face, smiling reassuringly. "It's okay."

Loki, ever alert, waited a while longer, and once he felt the divine gaze shift away, he pulled Angrboda closer, looking her in the eye and speaking solemnly: "Don't think that just because Sköll was let go, Odin is still reliable. If he can betray our descendants once, he can do it countless times."

"What should we do?" Though Angrboda held a deep grudge against God-King Thalos, her poor wit offered no good ideas.

"If our children are destined to be tainted by chaos, they won't survive. Our best hope is to secretly give birth to them and send them away immediately."

Angrboda's heart broke. As a mother, her love for her children was infinite; she didn't even care whether they looked human or not.

Her intelligence was never on par with Loki's; she would simply obey whatever he decided. Since Loki had commanded this, she would comply.

Three days later, feeling the onset of labor, Angrboda informed Loki. Loki left illusionary doubles of them in their palace and secretly took her to Midgard.

There, in a cave by the sea, Angrboda gave birth to their second child.

The moment he saw the baby, Loki's heart sank halfway.

Another non-human form?

It was a gray-white serpent, already five meters long at birth. Though its body was slender, it clearly wasn't the offspring of a giant.

Loki immediately understood—this was likely another product of the chaotic influence Thalos had spoken of.

The 'tiny' gray serpent lifted its head and calmly stared at its parents, whose forms were utterly different from its own. Though confused, the soul bond linking it to them was unmistakable.

Loki sat cross-legged on the wet sand, letting the seawater soak his ornate robes. "My child, can you understand me?"

The gray serpent nodded obediently.

"My child, I shall name you Jörmungandr."

The serpent visibly perked up, a simple gesture that strengthened its bond with the world—and this ripple of emotion was felt by its parents as well.

Angrboda kissed her child forcefully, weeping. "I'm sorry, my dear. Perhaps your very existence is a mistake. You are a symbol of chaos, and that damned God-King Thalos will hunt you down in the name of protecting 'order.'"

Jörmungandr seemed confused at first, but quickly displayed anger.

Loki at first sagged, then his gaze hardened as he spoke firmly, "Jörmungandr. We cannot protect you as you grow. Your only option is to hide in the deep sea and gather your strength. Understand?"

Jörmungandr nodded again.

Loki's voice grew sharp. "Order or chaos—it doesn't matter. When you've gathered enough power, seek out your dead brother Fenrir's descendant Sköll, and confront the Aesir gods. If the gods still refuse to acknowledge your existence, then overthrow their damned dominion!"

The giantess hesitated, frightened. "Loki, can we really overthrow the Aesir?"

Loki clenched his fists. "Even if we can't, we must try. They killed our son, then our grandson. Maybe Thalos sees it as justice—but did the Aesir ever consider our feelings? They left us no choice!"

"Yes!" Angrboda seized Loki's hand, her gaze steeling. "I was once terrified of bearing children. Now it seems—we need even more powerful offspring."

"Indeed."

Loki's falling out with the gods had not happened overnight.

During peacetime, Loki's pranks had offended every single Aesir god equally. Thalos's execution of Fenrir and the slaying of Hati were merely the breaking point.

Since the gods despised him, and even Odin no longer protected him, Loki naturally sought another path.

Perhaps because Thalos had not yet completely severed ties nor delivered a final blow, Loki had not made his ultimate decision to declare war on the Aesir.

But it was only a matter of time.

A Loki who pursued personal pleasure at all costs, cared nothing for the bigger picture, and was indifferent to the struggle between order and chaos was doomed to walk the path of no return.