

Thalos 86

Chapter 86 - 86 The Arrival of the Goddess of Death

Returning to the Palace of Silver, Thor eagerly sought out Thalos. "Father, you're that strong? Why didn't you say so earlier? Come wrestle with me more often!"

Thalos was speechless.

Why would a father, who hadn't wrestled even female giants in years, want to wrestle with his stinky, foolish son? What would he gain from that?

Of course, Thalos didn't want to crush Thor's spirit, so he said mildly, "It's merely another application of the Earth's power."

After Thalos explained, Thor fell silent.

The reason Thalos could unleash such overwhelming power was because he used the Sword of Jotunheim as a medium, channeling the Earth's power continuously. His strength wasn't limited by his body—it depended on how much Earth energy he called upon.

"Father, isn't that cheating?" Thor complained.

"Oh? Then isn't Hrungrir's metallic skin cheating too? Frost giants aren't born with stone or metal bodies. If he can reinforce his organs, muscles, and bones with Earth's power, why can't I summon it to suppress him?"

Thor had no retort.

Listening carefully, he realized—it was basically two avatars of the Earth duking it out. Whoever could channel more Earth power would win.

Now Thor understood why Hrungrir had been willing to surrender.

"Father, if I use this method too..."

"Yes, theoretically your strength would also have no upper limit. But remember: whether Aesir or giant, the amount of power you can store inside your body has a cap. The more Earth power you hold, the less lightning power you'll be able to wield, and your control over it will weaken."

"Ah!"

"Remember, you are the God of Thunder, not the God of Hammers—or some mere strongman."

"I understand," Thor bowed humbly.

Watching his son leave, Thalos couldn't help recalling the battle between Thor and Hrungrir in the old sagas:

In that tale, the strongest giant discovered that the Aesir didn't fight fair and would gang up to kill him. So he arranged for a false giant to fight in his place the next day. During that battle, when Thor shattered the decoy's flint weapon, fragments flew into Thor's skull.

Even though Thor later found a witch to remove some shards, he was left with chronic headaches, which permanently lowered his maximum potential. When Hrungrir "resurrected" during Ragnarok, the Aesir were terrified.

In this life, Thalos had helped Thor sidestep that disaster entirely.

About a year after subduing Hrungrir, Thalos finally received a new signal.

That day, the sky over Jotunheim suddenly turned pitch black.

Moments earlier, the ever-present cold mist had shrouded the mountain-top palace—this tower personally overseen by Odin stood stubbornly against the frigid winds.

Together with the replica Golden Palace on the neighboring peak, it was meant to watch over the northern glaciers—where the cow Audhumbla continued to terrify the Aesir by unpredictably licking things out of the ice.

Despite many frost and mountain giants swearing allegiance to the Aesir, Jotunheim remained vast and sparsely populated, a lonely, desolate land most of the time.

The palace gates suddenly swung open.

A retainer on horseback broke the eerie silence with urgent hoofbeats.

Inside the palace, Loki watched his beloved Angrboda, drenched in sweat and writhing in agony. His face was full of guilt.

"My love, it seems this child will not escape the Aesir's notice like Jörmungandr did. He—or she—will likely be a true god."

The giantess forced a smile.

"Isn't that a good thing? Every Aesir god is irreplaceable. Giving birth to a true god will elevate your standing among them, won't it? Let's see who dares call you 'just a giant' again."

Loki's smile was strained.

Among the Aesir, Loki was known by many titles: God of Fire, God of Mischief, God of Trickery.

He proudly bore those titles, but pure-blooded Aesir didn't truly recognize them.

Only those with giant blood accepted him.

Long ago, Thalos had ruled:

"A true god is chosen by the world's will—not by bloodline!"

The fact that the God-King acknowledged him was Loki's greatest comfort.

Yet Loki, astute as ever, knew his position was precarious.

He sighed. "Let's first see how Odin reacts."

Even with their relationship frozen, Loki still nominally served Odin. As long as that bond wasn't officially broken, Loki had to maintain appearances.

Meanwhile, a strange rumor spread through Jotunheim:

Some of the giants Odin had slain were resurrecting.

Hundreds of them, in undead form, were gathering into a massive army to march against Odin's fortress.

The news deeply unsettled Odin.

To him, the boundary between life and death was thin.

His brother held the Death authority and could keep fallen warriors as einherjar.

If this new god possessed resurrection powers, wouldn't that clash directly with his brother's divine domain?

Odin could feel it—a shift in fate.

He was both excited and nervous.

Such a divine authority could shake the foundations of his brother's rule.

Odin was determined to protect this new god at all costs.

Especially after receiving word from Loki's servants, Odin saddled his steed and took his son, Bragi—the god of poetry—with him to visit Loki.

He was ready to offer blessings immediately.

However, he hadn't even reached Loki's palace when he was startled.

A giant's corpse stood guard at the palace gates.

A corpse!

The frigid air had preserved it.

Though its shriveled features were hard to recognize, the gaping wound at its heart—inflicted by the Eternal Spear—was unmistakable.

Its lifeless eyes stared blankly, yet it stepped aside, clearing the path.

Odin was aghast: "This... is the power of Death?"

Even Odin was shaken; Bragi was downright terrified.

Soon, they saw some of Loki's mortal servants, trembling as they saluted.

"Great Lord Odin, our master Loki awaits you inside."

"What's happening?" Odin asked.

The servants dared not answer: "You'll see inside."

Entering the great hall, Odin first felt relief.

It was a lovely little goddess, pink-cheeked and exquisitely delicate—a budding beauty.

Then he took a second look—and almost suffered cardiac arrest.

What kind of monster was this?

Her left side was skinless, showing only withered muscle.

A bloodshot, lidless eye twitched wildly.

Her left arm and leg were curled up like a dead fetus.

The right side was that of a goddess; the left, a horrific ghost.

Perfect beauty and ultimate ugliness—fused into one half and half.

The irony was overwhelming.