

Thalos 90

Chapter 90: Thjazi the Sackman

Thjazi's shapeshifting abilities were formidable. Even as an eagle, he managed to slip past the ever-vigilant Heimdall unnoticed.

Day after day, he did nothing—just hovered around Asgard's periphery. And that's how he fell for Idunn.

Though Asgard appeared relaxed on the surface, the reality was quite the opposite. Every major city was patrolled by Valkyrie-led guard units. If someone so much as raised their voice, Valkyries would arrive on flying steeds in under two minutes. Within five, the entire crime scene would be locked down.

Thjazi wanted to make a move, but Idunn was a total homebody. She never went out. He had no opportunity to snatch her.

Then one day, while returning to Jotunheim, he spotted Loki—the traitor of the giant race.

With a dramatic dive, the giant eagle with an eight-meter wingspan scooped Loki into the sky.

"Put me down! Let me go!" Loki's cries echoed through the air.

"Shut up! Or I'll drop you to your death!"

Though he could have escaped in bird form, Loki, ever the drama king, covered his mouth and played the frightened victim.

Thjazi snarled, "You traitor to your own race! You should've rotted in Hel ages ago. But I'll give you one chance—bring me the goddess of youth, Idunn. Trick her into the Ironwood somehow. If you fail, I'll kill you the moment you leave Asgard's protection."

Honestly, Loki almost burst out laughing.

After all, he was the god of mischief.

If Thjazi had picked someone else, Loki might have hesitated.

But Idunn?

One, she wasn't Thalos's blood kin.

Two, she was Odin's daughter-in-law—and Loki had plenty of reasons to get back at Odin for selling out his grandson.

And three, who would panic most if Idunn went missing? The answer: all those aging pure-blood Aesir whom Loki despised!

That settled it. Loki accepted the job.

Feigning terror, he gasped, "No, please, don't kill me!"

"Then get moving!"

"I—I can't go near her. The pure-blood Aesir hate me. Heimdall constantly watches me. If I go missing, he'll notice immediately. I'll ruin everything."

Thjazi froze. "Then...?"

"Since you're a shapeshifter, why not become me? Go pretend you found a new apple tree in Ironwood. Tell her you ate one and felt young again. Trust me—she'll follow you."

Thjazi, clueless about Loki's cunning, found this very reasonable. Plus, Loki's being monitored constantly did make sense.

"Fine. Go distract Heimdall. And don't try anything funny—I'll just fly away if you do."

"Of course, of course!" Loki darted off to stall Heimdall.

Soon, 'Loki'—Thjazi in disguise—showed up at Idunn's home.

"Oh, beautiful goddess of youth! Guess what I found in the Ironwood? A golden apple tree! I ate one of its fruits and instantly felt like I was back in my prime!" He flexed his muscles for effect.

Thjazi's hammy, amateurish acting wasn't even in the same league as Loki's. But a con only needs to be good enough for its audience.

Unfortunately, Idunn was the perfect mark.

Her eyes widened. Her pupils quivered.

"This... This can't be true!"

"It is! I swear on Loki's name!"

The irony, of course, was that swearing on Loki's name was like swearing on a cloud.

And yet... Idunn believed him.

"Really?"

"Really!" Thjazi thumped his chest proudly.

Idunn's innocence was almost offensive. With heartfelt joy, she exclaimed, "I must see it for myself!" She even brought a few real golden apples for comparison.

After quickly packing a few items, she followed 'Loki' to the edge of Asgard's cliffs.

"Loki, why aren't we using the Bifrost?"

The fake Loki smirked, "This way is faster."

Before she could respond, he transformed into a massive eagle and snatched her up, soaring beyond Asgard's wall and diving down to the mortal world.

Everything happened so fast that even the watchful guards failed to notice. They only heard a brief feminine scream and saw nothing.

To be fair, Asgard's walls were enormous, with a watchtower every 500 meters and an arrow tower every 100. The perimeter was vast.

Still, the scream was reported—though it didn't make it all the way to Thalos.

After all, "a woman screamed near the wall" was hardly urgent news for a god-king.

Coincidentally, Idunn's husband Bragi happened to be away, traveling between Asgard and Jotunheim.

It wasn't until nearly three weeks later, when aging Aesir came to request their monthly apples, that anyone noticed Idunn was missing.

Panic ensued.

They rushed to Thalos and called an emergency council.

The best hunters, like Skadi, used magic to pinpoint the exact moment Idunn vanished. A witness even said it was Loki who had taken her.

Naturally, all fingers pointed at Loki.

But Loki had an ironclad alibi.

Watching the once-proud, youthful gods rapidly age into wrinkled old men and women, Loki nearly burst with laughter.

A true actor needs discipline.

With a face full of innocent grievance, Loki cried, "I'm innocent! That day I was with Heimdall, begging him to stop spying on me. We argued for three hours straight!"

Heimdall's mouth twitched. He looked like he wanted to strangle Loki with his golden teeth—but his honor-bound nature made lying impossible.

He nodded grimly. "Yes. Loki was with me at that time."

The aging Aesir gasped.

One old god stepped forward suspiciously. "Could someone have impersonated him using shapeshifting?"

Heimdall, ever blunt, replied coldly, "Impossible. No one else is as insufferable as that guy."

Solid logic. The gods were convinced.

Loki wasn't pleased. "Wait! Was that supposed to be a compliment or an insult?"

"Shut up. I'm your alibi."