

Thalos 96

Chapter 96: Someone's Bound to Be Unhappy

In Thalos's original plan, subduing Jörmungandr had never been part of the equation.

So when Jörmungandr suddenly stepped forward and pledged loyalty to the Aesir, it was completely unexpected. After all, in Thalos's eyes, the 10-kilometer-long World Serpent had absorbed a considerable amount of chaotic energy and was just about ripe for termination.

Who would have thought that Loki, ever so cunning, would figure out Thor and Thalos's plan, get Jörmungandr involved, and help take down the Kraken?

Even as a fellow god-king, the Odin of epics could shamelessly break his promises and find every excuse not to pay his dues.

Thalos wasn't the type to stoop to that level.

Of course, he left a little loophole—no further growth.

If Jörmungandr continued feeding greedily and absorbing the chaotic energy near the Midgard continent, its length would inevitably exceed 100 kilometers.

That's a terrifying number.

To mortals, it would be a literal mountain range.

Thalos believed his demand was already quite harsh.

He hadn't expected Loki and his son to accept it without hesitation.

"Please, Your Majesty the God-King, grant my son a chance to live."

"No matter how painful it may be, Jörmungandr is willing to endure it!"

Loki being willing to say that wasn't surprising—what was rare was that Jörmungandr agreed.

But really, Thalos had no idea how terrifying his own presence had become.

Think about it: when Jörmungandr was still a tiny serpent, it nearly died just from seeing Thalos from afar.

After finally growing to 10 kilometers long, what does Thalos do? He performs a live demonstration of slaying a sea monster.

The Kraken was one of the ten great beasts. Even if Jörmungandr fought it, dealing with such a slippery, soft-bodied creature, winning was one thing—but killing it would still be extremely difficult.

Kraken had all sorts of escape techniques—ink jets, contortion, soft-body skills—perfect for slipping away from Jörmungandr. But against Thalos, wielding divine authorities like [Ocean], it couldn't even lift a tentacle in defense.

In Jörmungandr's eyes, all it had done was add a touch of help to an already one-sided battle.

Since Jörmungandr submitted, Thalos didn't hold back: "Very well, let us try. I will inscribe runes onto your body, attempting to fully draw it into the realm of Order. During this process, you will suffer immense pain, expelling large amounts of chaotic energy—your body may even shrink. Can you accept that?"

Jörmungandr trembled, and that single motion triggered waves over fifty meters high around it.

It accepted.

Thalos told it to swim to the Iron Forest near the shore, where he would perform the "surgery."

It would be a long and painful process.

Later, Jörmungandr would likely regret it countless times, even begin to suspect the God-King intended to kill it...

With that handled, Thalos moved on.

As for the actual subject of this kidnapping case—well, Thalos had honestly already forgotten about it.

Only the ever-dutiful Thor, seeing that his father had acted, continued performing his job.

Amid lightning and thunder, Thor caught up to the giant shapeshifter Thjazi and fought a brief but not particularly fierce battle.

Maybe it was just coincidence, but it seemed that all who were skilled in shapeshifting lacked any real combat power.

Loki was like that, and apparently Thjazi wasn't much different.

To be fair, Thjazi really did love Idunn. When Thor came crashing in with no regard for her safety, Thjazi—still in eagle form—released her from his claws and launched a desperate charge at Thor.

It was a headlong charge into death.

Against the Aesir's top enforcer under the God-King's banner, Thjazi—dead.

After instantly killing his opponent with one hammer strike, Thor even doubted if he'd really just slain a kidnapper.

Only after flying back and catching the youthful goddess Idunn did he learn the whole story.

Thjazi had fallen in love with her. Disguised as an eagle, he evaded Heimdall's surveillance and observed Asgard from above for a long time. Upon noticing Idunn's trusting nature, he disguised himself as Loki and abducted her.

Thor knew that Idunn might have suffered during her captivity.

Whether to forgive her experiences or not—that was her husband Bragi's concern. Thor's job was only to bring her back safely.

After all, the old pure-blooded Aesir only cared about one thing—whether they still had golden apples to maintain eternal youth.

No one gave a damn about what Idunn had gone through.

When Thor and Loki successfully returned Idunn to Asgard, Thor naturally received praise from the pure-blooded Aesir.

As for Loki, those haughty gods originally intended to stiff him as usual.

But then, the voice from the divine throne spoke.

"This time, Loki played a major role. He not only contributed his wisdom—when the giant Thjazi used the sea monster Kraken as a shield, it was Loki who summoned his son, the great serpent Jörmungandr, to aid in subduing it. That's what allowed Thor to safely bring Idunn home. In fact, Loki's contribution in this rescue exceeds even Thor's."

"Yes!" Thunder Brother Thor nodded loyally in agreement.

Now it was the pure-blooded Aesir who felt awkward.

"We... well, uh..."

"Maybe we'll call it even..."

Seeing they still wanted to wriggle out of it, Thalos's expression darkened deeply. In that moment, he understood why, in epic tales, nearly every Norse god was a scheming scoundrel.

Odin took his benefits and then pretended nothing happened. These self-proclaimed noble Aesir were all the same—not a single decent one among them.

"Hmph!" Thalos let out a cold snort, his vast divine might rippling outward—every Aesir god present fell silent.

Thalos said coldly, "Did Loki merely save Idunn? No—he saved your lives. Compare the pranks he once pulled with the lives he just saved. Which is more important? If you can't tell, then you don't deserve to live. Leave the Aesir, and forget about golden apples!"

The Aesir gods trembled and fell silent. In the end, they could only lower their heads, walking one by one to Loki, bowing in apology.

Whether it was sincere or not didn't matter—those thank-yous sounded heartfelt enough.

Did Loki care if they meant it?

He didn't!

What he did enjoy was that feeling—when those who resented him had no choice but to bow before him.

"Hahaha! Gentlemen, you're too kind. Don't worry—next time trouble arises, you can count on your friend Loki!"

If looks could kill, Loki would have been tortured a dozen times over by now.

Not that he cared.

His daughter had risen in status, and now it seemed his second son might survive after all. Suddenly, Loki began to feel a renewed sense of belonging to the Aesir.

Thalos was happy. Loki was happy.

So naturally... someone had to be unhappy.

Right, Odin!

When Odin heard about it, his face turned black.

Bragi, by nature timid, was someone Odin had long stopped placing hope in—but that didn't mean he would allow Bragi to separate from Idunn.

After all, Idunn's golden apples were a strategic resource!