

Befitting

Von Juju-Chan

Kapitel 3:

"Thor, please go to him. I'm sure he needs you now more than ever." Even though Frigga tried her best to keep her appearance as ever-serene queen of Asgard, Thor could tell quite easily how sorrowful his mother's voice sounded.

"And what do you expect me to tell him? 'Let's just forget everything?' I'm sure it's not that easy, mother. Loki brought this upon himself. I did, what had to be done." He clenched his fists, uncertain whether he felt anger or something else.

"Everything else will be decided soon. I brought him home." Hearing this, Frigga shook her head and approached her elder son with a gentle, sad smile.

"My son... I know you are hurt a-..." Thor jumped up.

"What do you know? I'm hurt, is this what you wanted to say? Because I most certainly am not." He turned away, ashamed at his behavior towards his queen and mother.

"I'm sorry, mother. But I'd prefer to not see Loki." Not in the state his brother was currently in, he added in his mind. A moment of silence stood between them, before Frigga spoke, but it was merely a whisper.

"...we don't know to what end this all will come. It might become an eternity you won't be seeing him again. And maybe..." Her voice cracked and died. Some thoughts were never meant to be spoken out loud.

"Don't even think this way. Father wouldn't allow it." It felt like something heavy was weighing him down whilst he watched his mother's small figure leave. Even though Odin was king of Asgard, the council consisted of him and several other members, the elders of Asgard. And Loki had done things that were worthy of the most severe punishments.

Without realizing, Thor hurried to where he knew his brother's chambers to be. He didn't even hesitate to knock or ask for permission to enter. The room was sealed, Loki's voice was sealed – those of the royal family could enter at will, as did the guardians. Only his brother was prevented from leaving.

He found Loki asleep on his bed. It seemed aeons ago that he had watched over his little brother's sleep and it gave him a strange feeling of having been stuck when he recognized this wasn't his younger brother as he remembered him. Yes, sometimes the heart did shape memories of its own. He did know Loki was far from being a child, but something inside him had clung to this memory. But lying in this bed, exposed without cover, was a man he barely knew, somehow. What had driven this usually so prudent – or at least sensible – man to do as he had done? When had everything gone wrong? When had his own brother turned to a stranger whose heart was so deep in shadows, not even the light of Thor's brotherly love could allow him to have at least a

glimpse of what was hidden inside. All these questions remained unanswered. The part of Loki's face that wasn't covered with the muzzle seemed blank, somewhat calm and gave him not the tiniest hint. How could he ever understand his brother again? Thor sighed. In his mind and more so in his heart there had never been any doubt that Loki was his brother, not even when Odin revealed to him Loki's true descent. The thought of repudiating him had never once crossed his mind.

But then there was his anger. His disappointment and also hurt. It wasn't over yet, this Thor knew, for Loki had stirred up things far too big for him to handle, not even with all his cunning. Asgard would give him one punishment, but he was sure somewhere, someone else would wait for his chance to retaliate upon Loki for the loss of an army. For not getting the Tesseract. There were many interesting tales to be told by his brother and he would eagerly listen to his explanations. Even if most of them were probably lies anyway.

It took Thor a while to notice the glare that lingered on him.

"I see, you are finally awake, Loki." He noticed Loki's frown and shook his head.

"Well, I certainly hope you had a pleasant rest, brother. Mother asked me to look after you, but it appears you are not quite fond of me being here." Thor had no idea how true this was. The aftermath of his dreams had not yet ceased to effect Loki's thinking and for a moment he feared he was still there, shattered on the ground with Thor standing above him, ready to aim his last, fatal strike against him. He sat up with a sudden movement, not wanting to remain in the position he was in and opened his mouth to sneer back at Thor but found himself unable to produce any sound. The muzzle, it dawned on him. Yes, he was safe in Asgard. Well, safe given the circumstance his punishment was awaiting him.

"I'm afraid mother was wrong when she suspected you to want company. Well, I thought so. Maybe father will allow you to have your seal removed so you can eat and drink something. Until then it seems pointless to be here when you insist on being like this. I might come back soon." With this Thor turned from him and a split second Loki heard himself asking him not to leave him. Again no sound left his lips and the thought remained but a thought. In an instant, Loki wondered why he had thought this – of all beings in the nine realms, Thor was one of those he wished to see least. In the end it was his brother's fault he was in this condition. Thor had valued his love for Midgard and its weak creature higher than his so-called brotherly love. Again the muzzle proved effective in silencing Loki and keeping his verbal venom to himself. He heard the door creak when Thor opened it to leave, but suddenly the blonde turned around once more.

"Once you have this seal removed, Loki, you shall tell me all about your reasons. You will not leave out anything and you should not even dare to consider bending the truth."

And then Thor was gone.

It took some moments for Loki to let Thor's words seep into his consciousness. Had he actually just threatened him? He chuckled, feeling his whole body contract, unable to prevent this outburst, however inaudible it was. His brother had just threatened him. He couldn't remember the last time this had happened but he was sure it had to be millennia away. He pressed one hand against his shaking body and used the other one to brush aside the tears in the corners of his eyes. It was just too amusing. Thor had never been one given to threatening, especially not against him. Oh yes, he thought, this time I really managed to get him angry. This realization both amused and

frightened him. Even though Thor had always been prone to irascibility it had never been aimed at Loki or anyone else of Asgard. But now... well, he wasn't one of the Aesir anymore.

Whilst Loki still tried to figure out what his realization practically meant, Thor wandered through the corridors of the residence. He wanted to calm himself before confronting his mother again. For a moment he had despised Loki's whole being, the way he had shamelessly displayed his vulnerable, bare figure, the look in Loki's eyes... every little thing about him stirred his inside and this distressed him. He had come to Midgard to get Loki back to Asgard, to bring his little brother back home, not to start a grudge with him. Alas, in the end he was weary from the fight, exhausted from the long celebration... surely it was just a momentary aberrance in his mind. He sighed when he came to a halt in front of his mother's door and took a second before he knocked.

"Come in, Thor." He didn't even wonder she knew it was him. His mother had always known when he or his brother were in front of her door.

"How is he?" He shook his head.

"I can't tell. Irritating. Irritated. And for once silent." Before he even noticed it he grinned slightly. It was seldom for Loki to be unable to talk back so this condition was rather... exhilarant. Frigga lowered her eyes and nodded.

"I see... Odin was here. Loki's punishment is decided, it seems. He did not tell me what it was, but he wants both you and Loki to come to the throne room once the sunset starts. You shall escort him. Only you." So his father had frozen even his own wife, the queen out of the sentencing.

"Don't worry, mother." It was all Thor could say. It would take some time before sunset given it was only just noon. And this made him nervous. Why would Odin want them all to wait so long before telling them the decision the elders had made? He was torn between knowing Loki deserved the most severe punishment, his own anger, his wish to not see his mother sad because of what would happen to her younger son and also the part of his soul that kept reminding him painfully he, too, cared too deeply for his younger brother to actually wish for him to face the punishment he deserved.