

Befitting

Von Juju-Chan

Kapitel 8:

"Loki! Loki, where are you?" His mother was searching him as were probably many more, but Loki was hidden. Even though he could hear her and only moments later see her, he refrained from showing himself. Loki simply stood next to Frigga watching her, wondering how long it would take her to unveil him. It was the first time he tried to use his magic in order to conceal himself from others. It had worked in his chambers when he was all alone. He had tried and it had worked so there was no reason to fear it would not work now as well. He held his breath as Frigga stepped closer.

"Loki, I know you are here. Where are you?" Just a little longer... he almost couldn't repress his laughter. Almost.

"Show yourself, Loki. Enough playing around." Frigga demanded, her voice both pleading and stern. He started to laugh and the second he did he knew his magic was wearing off and she could see him. And obviously touch him as well since he felt a tug on his ear.

"Loki!" She scolded him but not without a little pride showing through.

"Mother, let go of my ear, please..."

"No. We have been looking for you for long enough. I was close to asking Heimdall to tell me your whereabouts."

"Ouch. Heimdall is such a killjoy." He knew that Heimdall's power of vision was unrivaled in the nine realms and even surpassed that of his father.

"Stop talking like that, my son. We can only be grateful the Vanir allowed for such a valuable warrior and seer to come to us."

"I know, I know. I did not mean to... I mean... I would never..." He sighed and turned to his contrite face. And as planned, Frigga ceased to be angered.

"Alright. Now hurry up and get ready our guests will arrive soon."

Only when he was back in his rooms, he started to wonder how his mother had known him to be in this very room. Maybe his magic wasn't powerful enough yet. But it would be, soon. He smiled. And once it would be, he could do what he wanted without being constantly eyed by Heimdall. And just maybe he would be even powerful enough to hide Thor from his gaze as well so they would be able to sneak out together. Why did they all bother with this "coming-of-age" anyway? As long as he and Thor were together, nothing would be able to harm them.

Loki tried to shrug off this memory as it was somehow... embarrassing. Stupid. Irrelevant and meaningless. How often had he had to try over and over again until it finally worked the way he wanted to? Again and again until one day Frigga no longer found him when he hid from her. Neither did Odin but in the end Odin had never really searched him when he was hiding, no matter what he was hiding from. The final

ordeal had been the day of Thor's coronation. He clearly remembered their conversation right before the coronation was supposed to take place. How Thor had been nervous but refused to admit it. Refused to admit Loki, too, was worthy. Refused to admit Loki had been the one who had enabled them to escape only to return to be victorious. He had denied to grant Loki even the tiniest bit of recognition. Even though Loki had looked up to him for so many years and had longed to be just like Thor.

"I never wanted to be like him." Loki reassured himself. The words felt hollow even on his lips. He had known there was no way to be like the great warrior Thor. He had accepted this fact so long ago and hadn't accepted it at all, he realized. Thor was stupid, a dull creature barely fit to guide himself, let alone an entire kingdom. His plan had been successful, Odin had seen himself how his golden son had failed the crown. Still he refused to listen to him, not when he tried to defend Thor, not when he wanted to talk to him, never. And Thor was Odin's splitting image in every aspect. How he hated them both – they couldn't accept him but neither could they leave him be. Especially Thor always had to disrupt him over and over again. All he had left were the last hours here in his chambers, the one place he was at least relatively save from any of them.

Thor did not follow Loki right away as he had made quite clear he did not want to be bothered. He longed to be by his side, to comfort him and make him understand... understand what, he wondered. Thor did not understand his brother's wrath nor could he comprehend what had become of the one he once had known like himself. It was as if there were walls built around Loki and whatever he tried to get closer to him would only add new bricks to strengthen these walls. He pressed the gift his father had given him for Loki in his hand and a soothing warmth started to be emitted. The Loki he had known would have listened to him and would have understood him in a way no-one in Asgard did. Nothing had changed. Nothing and still his brother Loki was gone and replaced by this Loki he barely recognized. Everything had fallen apart but when? When had this happened? He tried to figure it out.

The day of Thor's coronation, they had talked. Loki started joking as he always did. He probably wanted to calm him, assured him he had waited for Thor to become king just as much as Thor himself did. Told him to never doubt his love for him. Had it been the truth or had Loki lied to him?

They had gone to Joutunheim together, his friends and his brother, to get the answers they needed. How had the frostgiants entered Asgard? Of course he wanted his brother to be along, what kind of brother would exclude his brother from the chance to finally have an honorable battle again? Loki had agreed, of course, he had said, of course he would come along to fight side by side with Thor. And they had fought together and, well, they escaped. Nothing had happened in Joutunheim, they had fought and then they returned with Odin. And Odin... cast him out. Thor heard Loki trying to say something for his cause but it was too late.

Once he was on Midgard he had met Loki again. King Loki... his brother had descended to see him and told him... lies. He had trusted him and Loki had lied, maybe to make his exile easier to accept, at least Thor had tried to see it that way. He had been grateful to see his little brother even though his message was everything but good. And then... Loki had tried to kill him. There was no denying this point, no misunderstanding possible. When Loki had sent out the Destroyer he had aimed to end him. And Thor had been unable to

accept this he still had believed his brother unable to do this. Nothing had happened to justify this. He had wanted to believe in Loki's brotherly love when he had decided to face the Destroyer alone in his weakened, mortal form and Loki had not hesitated to give order to finish him off. And still Thor had wanted to believe in him so badly, he had refused to fight Loki, refused to hurt him. Only when nothing else was left to do he had been forced to act the way the future king of Asgard was supposed to act, in order to save Joutunheim from destruction he had raised Mjollnir against his brother. And then Loki fell...

Thor sat down onto one of the big stones next to the way and sighed. He still felt the shock he had felt when Loki had let go. Felt this part of himself falling into the nothingness. What had happened to change Loki? He never found an answer, no matter how hard he tried. He had been so glad when he met Loki again – alive and well... and even more twisted and malicious than before. His pleas to Loki to come back home had gone unheard, Loki had chosen war against Midgard, against his friends and especially against him, his own brother. There was nothing to not understand but somehow Thor felt, no, wished to be mistaken. He longed for the brother he had lost and the man he had found on Midgard was the only way to find him again, somehow. Given there was a way to get his brother back at all. He opened his palm and looked at the shimmering thing. Thor had made his decision. *There is always hope*, Heimdall had said. He hoped Heimdall was right.

In the meantime, Loki had tried to calm down. His anger would not get him anywhere and he did not wish for his last hours here to go to waste because of himself being unable to control himself. Everything he had wanted to do was done. He had seen Sleipnir one last time. It hurt him to leave his son here instead of taking him along but it was for the best for both of them. Never would he forgive himself should anything happen to Sleipnir and there were no meadows greener than those of Asgard. Destruction, chaos and pain were waiting for him should he be unable to evade from the ones pursuing him. His chance of survival were by far greater alone. He opened the necklace of Frigga's gift and put it on. It would be a helpful keepsake.

For the first time since his arrival Loki went to the hall to help himself to some food and drink. He wasn't exactly hungry, but he was reasonable enough to be aware of his need to be in the best condition possible. He would need his strength, physical, mental and magical. Everyone went silent when he entered. Well, he had expected this to happen and chose to dissemble. Without seeking any contact he silently took a seat somewhere alone and took what he needed. After some moments the hall was filled with voices again but all gazes were upon Loki, who seemed to not even notice.