

Befitting

Von Juju-Chan

Kapitel 9:

The next morning the court rose early in order to see Loki off. Most of them were only present because they wished to make sure the man would actually be gone, some still unbelieving this outrageous thing happened in the first place and there were also those who were simply curious. The royal family was first in line, at least the king and the queen were present. In front of them stood Loki, garbed in a simple leather armor. No chains indicated he was a prisoner.

"Loki, you are hereby exiled from Asgard and stripped of every bond that connected you with Asgard, the Aesir or the royal family. Until you either fulfill the task given to you or die in the progress you must not return." Odin held Gungnir in front of Loki, only for a moment until Frigga approached her younger son.

"Everything you will need in order to survive the first time out there will be in this bag I, queen of Asgard, give you." She handed him a small bag and seized the opportunity to softly squeeze his hand, unnoticed by the others, whispering so only Loki could hear her.

"Return to us, my son. I will always await you." The second she stepped back her warm, motherly expression faded and made way for the stoic mask of the queen. But Loki, too, did not show any emotion, only accepting anything said or given to him. It was as if he was not actually existing at all and only a mere puppet was standing there. The sharp voice of Odin finally got through to him.

"Is there any last thing you wish to say before you will depart?" Loki looked around, bewildered because someone was missing and he only then realized who it was.

"...Thor?"

"Thor Odinson is not present as you can see. Anything else?" The corners of Loki's mouth twitched. So Thor had finally abandoned him as well.

"Nothing... my king." There was so much he wanted to say, to scream into their faces. To make them understand so they would open their eyes. *Was it really my fault? Have you not separated me from you from the beginning? Lied to me, kept me from knowing the truth, held me down to feel better about yourselves? Why did you all insist on mocking me, calling me prince when I was little more than a relic stored here until need to use it arose? Was it my fault I have been unable to take this any more? Not one of you has ever cared about me. Especially not my so-called family. You Aesir are a bunch of lying hypocrites, stupid brutes who enjoy backstabbing just as much as you enjoy slaughtering anything the comes in your way.* He longed to tell them but he found himself unable to do so. For the first time he could recall a prince of Asgard was to be removed from his aesir existence altogether. And for the first time Loki was incapable to even spit out his venom against them.

"So be it. I shall now open the portal that will take you far away from here to the borders of Yggdrasil's domain. You probably know best where your path will lead you to. One day you might return here given the Wyrdsisters are benevolent." Odin's voice was final: Everything that had to be said was said. It was over. Everything was over for Loki. He stiffened and forced himself to watch the portal's creation by the magical power of Odin. At first it was only a small black orb but it grew fast to unclothe a view into the dark nothingness of eternity. Loki knew this darkness too well, he had been there before and he shivered. Willing everything he had to stop himself from showing any sign of his fear, he stepped towards it. He stopped, almost able to touch it and turned to have one last look at his home. No, he reminded himself, he had no home – this was only the place he had lived for a long time. His eyes rested on Frigga, the woman he had seen as his mother his whole life. He could tell she was in sorrow but failed to understand why. There was no reason for her to grieve as she would have grieved a son. Or did he read too much into her expression? The small sparkle he saw in the corner of her eye could easily be nothing. And Odin... he looked like a king. But tired, somehow. Surely he had delayed his Odin's sleep in order to make sure he would depart as soon as possible, Loki thought bitterly. And this guy who had always boasted about how he would never let him down, how they were brothers no matter what... Thor hadn't even bothered to show up at all. How great a love was that to not even care about one final leave-taking. It pained him even though he had no idea why. What had he expected? For Thor to actually go through with his great words about how he would go with him? He was alone. He had always been alone so why would this change now of all times? None of the other faces he saw meant anything to him but he wasn't surprised to find Thor's friends hadn't bothered to come here either. Closing his eyes, he turned back towards the portal and steeled himself for the cold emptiness he knew would follow as soon as he stepped into it. But he had survived it once and there was no reason why he shouldn't survive it a second time. In the end he was free now... free to go wherever he liked, the only realm that was out of bounds was Asgard. So why did he feel so numb? And why were his steps so much smaller than usual, delaying the inevitable? He took one last breath of the sweet air of Asgard, air that smelled of spring and of splendor and of his own past. Another step – and it was gone, the cold kicking in right away but he did not yet fall down. Behind himself he heard a sudden commotion, loud voices and screams, scandalized, panicked. He made no effort to understand, nothing of this concerned him anymore. A sudden rush of warm air caressed his neck, making him shiver. One more step... and now he started to fall down, his eyes still closed, trying to blank out the sheer panic rising inside. The last time he fell it had been eternities. He prayed this time would be different. But he feared his prayer would remain unheard. Again.