

# Befitting

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## Kapitel 17:

Loki looked at the spot with silent amazement. Whatever kind of energy those things were using, they surely were not immune to it. The missile had broken the shield of a unit of the same kind. And a shield basically consisted of the same essence as the energy that was used to conjure it. And as their shields could not withstand their own energy, the units themselves wouldn't be able to do so, either. Loki grinned. He liked it when a seemingly difficult problem turned out to be so easily solvable. Sure, 'easy' was a relative judgement but at least he knew now what he had to do. And he had to do it fast so he could go back to healing this wound that kept on etching so painfully. He turned to keep an eye on the remaining three units and reached for his second dagger. Unfortunately he only had two, well, had had two, the first one had vanished alongside its target. So he had to think of something else to take care of them unless he wanted to lose his other weapon as well.

With a smirk he rushed into the center of the triangle the things had formed and stood there. He knew they would attack him right away and he had an idea on how to get rid of them and given he was lucky, this would help him to get rid of all three of them at the same time. It would cost him a lot of his scarce power, true. But afterwards he would have the time to figure out how he could replace it. He closed his eyes and felt his hackles raise. This foreign energy was heavy, a maelstrom of obscurity and it was both weaving itself deeper into where it had hit him and calling for this exact energy to retreat. It felt as if he was being torn apart on the most basic level but he could sense the energy's movement, even though this sensation was buried underneath the sheer pain it caused. All three of his enemies were concentrating, moving not their bodies but a more fundamental part of their existence in absolute synchronicity. And they were about to strike. He could feel it as if the world had completely slowed down whilst every sensory perception was sharpened: A breeze had sprung up and forced its path even to this place in the woods and it smelled of something bittersweet. There was something like a silent whisper murmuring things he failed to understand but that appeared to be either encouraging or to a certain degree even afraid, if that was the correct way to describe it. And then the air was pulled in three directions with him in the center. It began and just when the sizzling was about to reach him, he jumped, leaving behind a shadow double.

After that, everything happened so fast he almost didn't notice it himself, rather witnessing it from a dreamlike point of view: the energies missed each other by inches

and crushed their creator's shields, and Loki used this to cause a blast of fire to quickly shatter the rests and he threw daggers made from ice to finish them the way he had finished the first one. He had always been dead on target had need been for that. And he fortunately was fast enough to use his remaining energy to conjure a strong shield that would protect him from the following happenings. It still felt as if he was torn apart, pulled in three directions before he was forcefully hurled away, crashing into one of the trees where he remained motionless. The fight was over and he had used up most of his energy. He would have to rest at least a little before he attempted to get up. With a sigh he looked at the smoldering debris of where he had fought. It looked as if thunder had struck there with all its force. Grimacing, he straightened himself. No time to dwell on such thoughts – his leg needed his attention. The spell or whatever it was was still eating away at his leg, thankfully cauterizing the wound in the process so he wasn't losing more blood than necessary. He carefully cut away the cloth and hissed when he had to pull it off from where it had stuck down to the wound's edges. It looked quite nasty but at least healing magic usually did not require too much energy. He concentrated the energy in his left hand – and frowned. Somehow it felt wrong. Loki shook his head and focused: he had to take care of his wound first. Hovering his hand right over his wound he released his energy, causing it to mend his flesh and skin. But it did not work properly, his wound did not close and he noticed that somehow part of his energy was sucked away. So this was the reason he was constantly weakened? He withdrew his hand, observing how the wound partially opened right back up.

He leaned against a rock behind him and tried to figure out what to do next. His usual healing spell did not work and something seemed to be taking away his energy. His enemies seemed to be indifferent to whether they caught him dead or alive, he had expected them to want him alive so they could thoroughly punish him for failing them. All he knew was that he had to go on to find a way to mend something that was broken beyond repair so he could return to a place that wasn't even home and where they obviously wanted him just as dead as the Chitauri did. And as *he* did.

He put forth his hand and summoned some green mist in order to at least check the one thing he could check right now. Just as he had suspected, there was a crack in his magic and he could observe how some of the green mist he had willed to hover over his hand was drifting off, away from him and closer and closer to the next cocoon in his proximity. And then it faded. So this was at least an explanation for his magic not returning to him: these cocoons seemed to feed on it whenever he conjured it and probably even when it was returning to him. So it would be wisest not to use magic as long as he was in these woods. Well, wisest would be to leave here altogether. He stood up and held his breath when he felt a sharp pain: The wound had opened up all the way now. Maybe he was lucky and the energy working within it would soon fade away but he wasn't too confident about that. He took a few steps and gathered his bag he had dropped where he had hidden. Its edges were a little scorched but it was intact. At least this little comfort he had. With stiff steps he went away. There was no time to waste for too many reasons. He would have to find a way to sort out those problems en route.