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**Mirror**

by UdSoul

**Summary**

Tony should know better than to poke an alien sceptre that enthralls anyone it touches. He should, but he is Tony.

**Notes**

Don't really know where I'm going with this or if I will continue to go, but I felt, like I want to put my own two cents into the rethinking of the glorious plots of the Marvel movies, because apparently we don't have enough of those :)))

p.s. Don't own anything. Never will...it's a depressing thought...skip.

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| Rating: | Mature |
| Archive Warning: | Rape/Non-Con |
| Category: | M/M |
| Fandom: | The Avengers (Marvel Movies), The Avengers (Marvel) - All Media Types |
| Relationship: | Loki/Tony Stark |
| Character: | Loki (Marvel), Tony Stark, Pepper Potts, Odin (Marvel), Frigga (Marvel), Thor (Marvel), Jane Foster (Marvel), The Avengers - Character, Nick Fury |
| Additional Tags: | Eventual Romance, Enemies to Friends to Lovers, Past Child Abuse, Implied/Referenced Rape/Non-con, Implied/Referenced Torture, Abuse, darkish, Panic Attacks, Implied/Referenced Suicide, Bullying, Implied/Referenced Mind Control, Mental Instability, Loki Needs a Hug, Loki Feels, Loki Angst, Loki Has Issues, Jötunn Loki, Tony Does What He Wants, Tony Being Tony, Tony is a knight in shiny armour, Angst and Hurt/Comfort, shameless butchering of Norse mythology, and marvel movies, especially Thor: The dark world, JARVIS - Freeform, Trust Issues, Lots of dialogue, It's pretty messed up if you think about it, Triggers, Odin's A+ Parenting, Thor is bad, Mushu (Disney) - Freeform |
| Stats: | Published: 2017-07-28 Completed: 2018-01-21 Chapters: 36/36 Words: 99510 |
Tony watched as Thor rushed his adopted sibling through corridors – gagged and submissive. He was relieved, but suspicion did not let him go.

At first, he, like everyone else, was happy that the Hitler wannabe will be taken back home, where people knew how to deal with a bratty God.

After the initial euphoria subsided, though and shawarma reminded him that he had run past his twenties fifteen years ago, Stark’s brain kicked in. The questions that popped in his observant mind didn’t let him sleep, but, alas, he couldn’t ask Loki because he conveniently was silenced under the excuse that words gave him power. Seriously!? Did the Wonderland folks think them to be idiots?

They apparently did, and, honestly, S.H.I.E.L.D sold them short. Nicky pooped his pants so bad, he was happy to give Thor everything – the tesseract, Loki, vast knowledge of new and unbreeched - just to see the guy off the planet. Stark heatedly disagreed but why listen to him, right? He was only one of the most influential people on this ball with resources that can put most countries to shame and a genius IQ to top it, but…yeah…feel free to scold him like a child and send him into the corner.

In retrospect, the theft he pulled after Nicky had the nerve to reprimand him in front of his newly formed cult proved that he was a child, but who cares? He displayed reckless behaviour way before S.H.I.E.L.D. decided to make a decent human being out of him, so nothing was new in the world.

“Let’s start, J.” Tony commanded rubbing his hands together. The sceptre Loki inconspicuously forgot on the roof of his tower was finally his to toy with and he couldn't wait to dive into the dissection.

The energy it emitted was close to the readings he got from the tesseract, but way out of line. Tony would bet his ass it was sentient.

Stark snorted. The level of idiocy the people around him displayed lately started to rub him the wrong way. How could they rely on the words of an otherworldly entity without asking the other side for, at very least, clarifications? He regretted not breaking into Loki’s cell. Sure the guy was nuts, but after Hulk recalibrated whatever short circuited inside him, Stark was willing to try.

The energy from the sceptre spiked and moved, catching Tony’s undivided attention. It spread tentatively, forming a tentacle like limb and blindly searched almost like it was sniffing around. Stark stared in wonder, his fingers unconsciously moved to touch but he snatched them away at the last moment. Too bad the octopus felt his heat or something. It dived after his hand and, when it caught him, Stark’s world drowned in brilliant blue.

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When he came to two things became instantly apparent. First, he wasn’t in the tower. Second, it wasn’t his body - if the childish hands, making an intricate gesture in front of him, were anything to go by.

He tried, experimentally, to move the limbs, but they were uncooperative, and it quickly dawned upon him that he was simply here for the ride. Great. That was just marvellous. The fucking sceptre dragged him inside what he presumed was Loki’s childhood memory. Stark sighed a long-suffering
sigh and settled in to watch.

The child repeated the movement again and again. Tony could feel the slight annoyance coming from him, but other than that he looked determined. It was sort of endearing to watch how young Loki grumbled and cursed while practicing magic but, at some point, he got bored. There was only so much finger wiggling a guy could watch.

Stark tried to focus his attention on something else, but the gaze scope didn’t allow him much. Loki was focused on his practice completely and that was something Tony could relate to. He was also easily obsessed with a project: doing and redoing it until it was perfect. But, fuck was it tedious to sit through when it was someone else.

Stark was on the verge of exploding when the child must have done the gesture right and the space around them lit up in flames.

Holy shit!

The fire roared around, licking the drapes and walls. The child sprung to his feet, laughing joyfully. Tony could feel the excitement and happiness cursing through Loki’s body, and couldn’t help but smile, congratulating the boy on mastering the spell, and remarking at what an astounding display of power it was and the fact that, during the invasion, Loki hardly used any of it.

The fire was dancing widely around the room but, nothing got damaged. Loki stretched his dainty hand and it curled around his limb, warming the skin. He felt the thin lips stretch in satisfactory grin and regretted he could not see the look on the boy’s face.

“LOKI!” The growl startled them both. Tony sensed the fear and panic leaping in the boy, fire getting out of the control and collapsing into itself, burning his skin. He heard the child hiss in pain but, still managed to erase the spell. The door opened with a bang, and a white, boorish version of Nick Fury stormed into the room. “How many times I must repeat: no magic in this house!” The man yelled grabbing Loki by the burned arm, squeezing it painfully.

Loki was petrified. Tears willed up in his eyes but, when he spoke, his voice was steady.

“Father, I can prove that magic is a useful tool if only you give me a chance.”

It must have been Odin who backhanded the boy so hard he got a whiplash and the skin on his lip split.

“Magic is a woman’s art. I won’t allow my son to practice it or do you want for the whole palace to see your twisted tendencies? As if your mischief is not embracement enough.”

“In many realms, my mischief would be considered strategy, father.” Loki rebuked, despite being horrified by the man. Tony swallowed nervously when Odin burned the boy with an icy stare.

“So be it.” He said, sliding his hand down Loki’s arm to clutch his fingers tightly and then bending them swiftly. The bones easily crushed under the force. Loki cried out, trying to move away, but Odin held him tightly, bringing more harm. “Let it be a lesson to you. Cross me again, and you will find yourself without the means to practice this despicable atrocity.” He then pushed the boy roughly making him fall. “I forbid you from contacting the healers.” Were his parting words to a trembling boy.

Loki stared at the closed door for a long time, cradling his injured hand to his body gingerly before curling into a ball and sobbing helplessly.
The room smelled of burnt skin and cotton. Stark could see only darkness and feel despair. It was choking him from the inside. He could not believe the cruelness he just witnessed. How in the fucking fuck could that happen!? Where was Thor!? Where was his mother!? It was straight child abuse.

“Tony! Tony! Tony!” He heard the worried voice of Pepper reaching him through the disgust and anger he was feeling. “TONY!” The panic in her voice was skyrocketing and he forced his eyelids to unglue themselves. ‘Thank God!’ She exclaimed hugging him tightly.

He hugged her back weakly, his body still in shock from the sudden mental assault. Her familiar scent helping to shake the nightmare from his shoulders. They may have ditched the romantic piece of their relationship but, other than that, they were going strong.

“What happened?” She asked him, loosening the embrace just enough to look at him.

“I don’t know, Pep.” He answered truthfully. “One moment I was working on X-thing, and the other BAM - lucid hallucination Tarantino style.”

“What did you see?” She inquired, shifting to run her fingers soothingly through his hair.

“Loki.” Tony shared, exhaling snakingly. “It was weird, Pep. I was stuck in his head, watching a memory, I guess of creepy ass parenting. If that’s how he was treated I’m not surprised in the least ‘bout New York.”

She looked at him warily.

“Tony, he used that to manipulate minds. It could be a trick.”

Stark shuddered remembering the all-consuming fear and desperation he felt. No one would want to share this. No one.

“I don’t think it is.” He murmured, confused by all of it.

Yeah, Loki had a shitty life, but who didn’t? He was still a murderer. One sad flashback didn’t justify countless bodies on his hands. *It does not justify the blood on yours too.* The sudden whisper in his head made him jump. The fuck!? Maybe Pepper was right. Maybe that shit was playing mind games or maybe he was going mad, who knew?

“How about a drink, Pep? Think I deserve one?” He teased, clumsily getting up with her help.

“No, but I do.” She sassed him back.

“Let’s get wasted.” Tony declared, stumbling into the elevator, making her giggle. Nobody noticing a faint green glow settling inside the arc.

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In his dreams, Tony was staring at the most appealing teen he has ever seen. She was tall and started to curve in all the right places. Just a bit, Stark thought, and she will become the fairest of them all. That was no surprise either, with her kissable lips, wavy, lush hair - which he desperately wanted to twist around his fingers - wicked, emerald eyes, winning smirk. She was a Goddess.

Tony watched Loki dancing before the mirror in glee; turning and twisting to look at himself; at his handiwork and swallowed nervously.
Stark was never shy to admit that he was a bit loose in this department – he loved a pretty face, and the God was ranking number one on his list, his craziness and wish to fry Earth hardly dimmed the appeal. However, like this – like a genius, young prodigy that managed to crack a shift shaping spell on his own to morph into a sex-on-legs stud – he was irresistible.

Tony yearned to touch him, to breath him in and to ask what the fuck went so terribly wrong. How did he go from this jubilant, curious being to the bastard who threw him out the window? And while he was at it – why he never used the spells? How did he become a sappy bond villain?

The Loki he sees through the mirror is a far cry from the Loki he knows. The dread sinks in. Stark gets the feeling that the answers to his silent questions will be answered in the most morbid ways.

He catches the shadow in the reflection a second before the God does, but it does nothing to prepare him for the assault. A male body pins Loki to the mirror, sharp teeth nipping at her ear. Tony can smell the rotten, sweet scent of ale and it makes his stomach recoil.

She tries to struggle, to drop the spell, but the panic is stronger. She is trapped in the incantation and by the man, who is groping her shamelessly.

“Don’t pretend you don’t want this.” The man mocks. “Ergi.”

Loki hisses and uses the wall to give her some leverage. She pushes with all her might, trying to turn and stab the attacker, but he snickers at her pitiful attempt, slamming her hard into the mirror. The glass shatters, slicing her skin. Tony could feel pain and the blood trickling down her face. Loki’s vision becomes foggy, a myriad of thoughts running and none staying. Stark feels the cold hands opening her legs; the bite on the neck; the slice of the fabric.

Loki snaps back, screaming, and immediately getting silenced by the hard blow on her face. The mist returns. She tries to push the weight away. She tries to wiggle out of the grasp. The overwhelming scent of ale returns, and something hard pokes her thigh, dangerously close to her core.

She hisses and then everything is overtaken by fire.

The man whales, kicking her into the chest. The bones snaps, but the spell stays. She watches him burn, and Tony can feel the satisfaction. He agrees.

But then there are people in the room. Those bastards are screaming at her, extinguishing the fire. They drag her to Odin who screams at her more.

They don’t listen. They sew her lips shut and throw her into the cell.

There she learns that words are overrated. There HE learns to hate.

Tony wakes with an erratically beating heart. He can still feel the sting on his lips and revolting scent of the ale. The panic lurking behind his gaze and he’s barely able to reach the side of his bed, before he throws up, making a mess of the sheets and the carpet.

“Are you well, sir?” Jarvis asks in crisp accent, grounding him. He could smell the vomit, and feel it trickling down his chin, a nasty taste in his mouth. His stomach rolls, but he keeps it at bay, gingerly sliding from the bed, not caring that he steps into the mess, and goes to the shower.

His hands are shaking, fingers uncooperative, but he is not discouraged. He has been here before. He knows the twisted and crooked alleys of the assault and the aftermaths intimately. So, he takes a
couple of deep, shaky breaths and wills his body to move.

The cold spray of water helps to snap him back to reality. He distances himself from the alien nightmare while the water washes away the salty sweat of fear from his skin.

Tony does not allow his thoughts to grip the memory of crude hands upon Loki’s chest or hard member poking his thigh. He blocks the pain of the needle piercing soft lips or burn of the betrayal when Thor holds him (LOKI!) down. He is not concentrating on the hate and humiliation that runs through the God while he is locked in the dark, stinky cell. Tony acknowledges that it came to pass and that nothing could be done about it; however, the future is still unknown, and for that, he is grateful.

He turns the shower off, and steps out. He is cold and shivering, but his head is crystal clear.

“J,” He says, while drying himself with the soft, warm towels. “Call, Pepper. We need to talk.”

Chapter End Notes

* Under reconstruction.

Thousand of thanks to the brave, amazing beta Chelsea Warren.
The fall

Chapter Notes

Thank you for the interest and kudos, dear readers.

Pangur_Ban, marikaAbowie, jaiparker, Ipazia: thank you for commenting. I'm glad you liked it. Just remember, in the future, that you asked for it to be continued :)))))

Gothicelvenqueen: cheers! ;) Tons of love from Baltic states :)

p.s. don't own nothing. everything belongs to marvel. eh...depressing still...skip.

“I could have done it, father. I could have…for you…for us.” He pleaded, desperate for him to hear, but his words, as so many times before, fell on deaf ears.

The world around him crumbled. The small fragments of hope to become their equal that he vigorously protected from extinction during his colourful youth were burned to dust under indifferent gaze of his father. Does he have a right to call him that now? He didn't know.

“No.” The great king of the Nines pronounced a verdict, shattering his heart. The merciful and wise All-father didn't hold a shred of sympathy for the filthy Jotun that was hidden amongst his respectable family. He guessed he had known that for a long while. He was a fool to try and fight the Fates. There's nothing for him to cling to - not now when his place in the world was so blatantly clear. Death may be the only true answer to all his questions.

He falls.

The fall is long and lonely. For all his deep knowledge of alienation, he realises he is not ready for that. The darkness scares him. Silence deafens and he cannot escape the demons that his unconscious was nourishing while he was running around pretending to be happy.

The bitterness, suppressed anger, and hate that received a nice watering during the last few weeks grows fully and there is no distraction from the poisonous emotions. They attack him mercilessly, erasing every good memory or thought he has until his soul is blazing with vicious desire to destroy.

The fall continues.

“Loki” He hears the sweet voice of his mother and flinches when the monster inside him reminds that she is not. She is the kindest woman in Nines, the fairest and the wittiest of them all. How could he ever presume that a failure such as he could be related to her? “Don't give up, darling. You were made for far greater things that you can imagine.”

Lies. Sweet, sugary lies.

He supposed she loved him. As a great woman she was, she could find a place in her heart even for a disgraced, unwanted monster. How handsomely he repaid her for all her trouble. She must be proud.

The shame rose in him unexpectedly, piercing his half-dead heart with guilt. The queen's tender
smile bloomed in the cold of the cosmos, warming his blood and burning his demons, making them hiss and writhe, unable to withstand the honesty of her affection.

“Mother.” He whined in distress, feeling young and vulnerable, like he was six again, trapped in the spell gone awry, seeking comfort and reassurance from the only being that never pushed him aside. “I am so sorry, mother. Please, take me home.” He sobbed but, the void was unresponsive and instead of protective embrace he got cruel stillness.

The fall ended.

He crushed straight into the hard surface. His bones snapped, piercing his insides. The blood rushed out of his body, into his throat, making him choke on it. His magic swirled, mending his broken body pitilessly. He couldn't stop it, screaming agonisingly while every fracture, laceration and wound was knitted back together.

It left him breathless and crippled, like off-handed compliments given by his golden brother or cold, reluctant praises of his father: the forced, unwanted care that he did not ask for or wanted, yet again was bestowed upon him by the power that should protect but maimed instead.

A loud shriek that did not belong to him pierced the static of the dead-land he landed in, and his heart trembled.

The ruckus he created caught the attention of the morbid creatures that inhabited this rotten world. He could hear them screeching and buzzing. He turned his head towards the noise and shrank from the sight, his body not able to do more, after the severe damage it sustained.

There were millions of them. Grotesque figures mutilated and disfigured by insane mages, stripped of everything that made them sentient, moulded to be perfect slaves, and were crawling towards him: a race that he was taught to despise more than Jotuns – Chitauri.

The foot soldiers - cannon fodder - a brainless mass of meat was not hard to outwit but, in his current state, he was free for the taking. He didn’t try to struggle, moaning when they roughly dragged him towards their mothership. Horrors were hiding there and he would be their main entertainment.

He lost consciousness for a while and they were the sweetest moments of his life because when he was harshly pulled out of the painless rest and into the hellish reality, the real agony started.

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The Other, a general of the Chitauri’s army and a passionate scientist, was not interested in Loki’s worth as a pawn or a prisoner - he was fascinated by the Jotun’s durability.

He tried many creative ways of inflicting damage, but to his ultimate delight his ward was still breathing and rather sane, which begged for research.

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Loki was not a stranger to pain. During his life, he overstepped many boundaries and broke millions of laws. His punishments were severe and at points downright torturous, but the Other broke him. The torment was never-ending.

The beast carefully monitored his responses and, when he got accustomed to the suffering, he changed the tactics, gifting him with an agony that he could not take. At one point, when it became too much, and he swallowed his pride and begged for death, which he was denied.
It went on and on until he forgot his name, but the Other quickly reminded him. The tormentor wanted him sane. He liked to see him broken and pleading. Loki did not care anymore. He longed only for death.

The situation changed when his cell was visited by a monster more morbid than his captor. Thanos was his name and he found Loki to his liking.

He took the last thing Loki had as his own – his mind.

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The first time he caught himself was when Thor smacked him into the ground, demanding the Tesseract. The crudeness and narrow-mindedness of his brother stirred enough pain in him to break free from the tight hold they had on him, but few seconds of clear mind had only proved that Thanos was right – he was not needed, nor wanted. They did not search for him. They did not care. He was lost for such a long time and all his so-called-brother can speak of was the cube. He did not listen further. He drifted away, back into the nothingness.

However, the glimpses of free-consciousness occurred more frequently, and he started to remember that Loki was, is and will be lots of things, but not a slave.

He uses those brief sparks to gather his magic and give bread-crumbs to hero-wannabies, hoping against all hopes that somebody will be bright enough to catch-up. He was not entirely surprised to see Stark.

At first, he could not recall his name or connect the face with the information his brain gathered while he was out, but the bright, shining circle in the mortal’s chest cleared it for him.

Anthony Edward Stark: a man of great intellect, vast resources and fabulous creativity, a perfect thing to manipulate. After all, they were so alike, it was unfortunate.

He saw him stalling, and noticed the bracelet, but chased the thought from his infested consciousness, afraid that they will see the same peculiarity he had noticed.

Loki played his role to perfection and, when he was finally near the source of unknown, tempting power - it shocked him. It went through his body in an aggressive, angry wave imploding everything in its path.

Loki wanted to scream, but the grip on his mind was instant and immovable. It went away a moment later. Memories assaulted him. He was disoriented. He thought he saw Fandral mocking him or was it Volstagg? A second later, he realised he wasn't on Asgard.

It’s Midgard. He’s at war with…himself.

However, he sees the ghost of his former life and misery. They mock and laugh at him. He hisses, snarling, when something collides with him, throwing his body to the floor. He does not register the pain. He springs to his feet, focusing on the green blur before him: a monster. He screams at it, adamant not to be bent to anyone’s will ever again.

The beast did not listen. It smashes him repeatedly into the floor until there’s no bone that is not fractured and leaves him there. The pain is excruciating, but he’s free.

The alien, soft blue glow so alike the cube’s, lulls him to sleep, and finally all he could hear is the soft buzz of a device he feels safe around - the only sound that he trusts not to hurt him.
The sugary grip of the dream is disturbed by a loud bang and screams of Chitauri. He can feel them dying, through the leftovers of the connection that also perishes. He exiles warily. He cannot believe that this nightmare came to an end and he shouldn’t, because when he crawls from the hole his body was lying in, there is no comfort for him, only chains and many accusations he does not know how to address or fight against, not that he can say anything – they gag him.

His mind is clear, though, and he uses it to catch glimpses of the creator that managed to break him free. It’s nothing glorious. It’s sort of pitiful. But let it never to be said that Loki was above helpless longings. He will never see the man again, so there’s no harm in it.

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They threw him into the cell without the courtesy of asking. They presume that they know everything about him already and he’s not opposed to the characteristics he is given – anything is better than to admit how disgraced and weak he was.

They patch him up, making him presentable and drag him to the great halls in chains. “It’s time to shine,” he thinks and smirks. Oh, he will burn!

Frigga dumps his desire to scratch the All-father’s eye out and, for a brief second, he wants to run into his mother’s arms and plead for forgiveness, but he doesn’t; showing the remains of his heart deep down and let the hurt speak for him.

Odin rushes Frigga out of the hall. Loki watches her leave before switching to the king. He jests and defends, behaving according to the new beliefs and attributes they have given him. If they wanted to think that he was after the throne, let them think so. He still cared little for his future or life in general and it was easy to play it off as arrogance until Odin shouted. “Your birth right was to die!”

He couldn’t stop the crushing, bitter hate that rose in him. His magic spiked, erasing the glamour, leaving burns on his wrist and armour, but nothing could suppress his desire for vengeance. In a flash, he was in the old’s man face, ruby red eyes burning with malice.

“Why haven’t you bestowed it upon me then!?” He growled, struggling to get out of his bounds and strangle Odin.

He was bested, of course, and thrown back to the cell, but the petrified grimace he saw on the formidable King’s face before they subdued him was all the comfort he needed.

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Tony woke-up with a start, grimacing at the pain in his nape. “Son of a bitch.” He grumbled, massaging the bump. The last thing he remembered was calling Pepper, and then WHAM another very disturbing, miserably embarrassing flashback.

“J, how stressed are we?” He asked his AI, going for a drink.

“Near shawarma incident, sir.” J sassed him, making the genius smile.

“She picked up exactly when I collapsed, didn’t she?”

“I don’t see why you insist asking the questions you know the answers to, sir.”

“Still heavy on rhetorical, J. It’s the best part of human race – the guessing of the unknown.”

“I don’t favour riddles either, sir.”
Tony shook his head at him, downing his drink.

“J, pull the video feed of the rude alien that spoiled our floors.”

“In a moment, sir. What are we looking for?”

“I’m not sure, J. But when I see it, I let you know.”

“Riddles, sir.”
Tony was staring at the monitors for the last three hours and couldn’t pinpoint the shift, even though, he knew exactly when and why it occurred.

He applauded Loki’s brilliance, but couldn’t stop himself from cursing it every other minute, because believe was not the word he operates with – fact is, and that remarkable dick hid it darn good.

Warm hands landed on his shoulders and sweet-flowery perfume reached his senses, breaking him from confusing thoughts. He smiled at the familiar gesture, patting her lovely arm.

“Hey, Pep.” He greeted, turning to face her properly. She smiled at him tenderly, offering a cup of coffee, which he gratefully took, making a large gulp.

“Don’t tell me it’s official, Tony.” She grumbled half-heartedly, waving at the monitor, where Loki was frozen with a sick grin on his otherwise handsome face.

“Let’s say I’m a believer, Pep. I honestly cannot leave the situation as it is, not after the last epiphany.” He said nonchalantly.

“I gather it has something to do with the New-York attack…” She prompted and Stark flinched.

“It does and doesn’t. Loki is innocent, Pep. He wasn’t planning on attacking. It’s a suicide attempt gone wrong.”

Pepper’s eyes went huge. She knew how touchy the topic was for him. Tony was not a stranger to dark thoughts, and there was no amount of arguing that will change his mind on this now.

He trusted the images he saw. Pepper could hear the rightful anger in his voice; could see the protective glimmer in his eyes. Tony Stark has decided that Loki is someone worth fighting for and he will move heaven and Earth to get his point across. Thus, instead of discouraging him or pleading to stop, she prepared herself to go in with him. At least, like this she will be able to help.

“What are you planning to do?” She inquired bluntly, shaking her head when Tony smirked at her mischievously.

“Hmmm, Pep, no lecture this time? You’re breaking my heart.”
“Too late.” She sing-sang. “You, already, decided that he’s valuable.”

“Captivating.” Tony corrected playfully, making her groan.

“Even worse. Please, Tony, don’t…” She pleaded.

“As you said, my dear. Too late.”

She watched him for a long minute, and her face falls. It indeed is. He is serious; like “iron man” grave, and she is not certain it won’t get them killed this time, but he is Tony and she is his PA, so – here it goes.

“Just so you know, I’ll hunt you down if you screw us, Tony. Your actions?” She reminded.

“Yes, ma’am.” He saluted, and she already could feel the headache coming. “I’m at loss, Pep, if to be honest. He is too good to leave any glaring evidence, and if he did – I cannot use it. It’s not, like I can speak in his favour either; and from what I have learned it won’t held merit, anyway.” He explained darkly. The deepness of offence he displayed slightly disturbed her. Form the angry, aggressive vibes he emitted, one could perceive that the situation was deeply personal, except, that it wasn’t. At least it wasn’t yesterday. “The only other option is to break him free, but I’m not sure he would want that. I’m afraid he does not want anything.”

“Plus, he’s locked in another world.” She pointed out.

“If they could come down. I can go up.” Tony waved her off. “The motivation to go on is something I don’t know how to fix.” He grumbled childishly.

“You found one.” She murmured, making him smile at her tenderly.

“I had you and Rodney to turn to, and if worse comes to worse, J will back me up. He is alone, Pep. There’s no one who cares enough to dig deeper, and I’m not sure if I can change the variables.”

This was a turning point.

Tony was watching her in anticipation, questions and insecurities swimming in his gaze. The God caught his interest, and whatever he saw in those dreams made him doubt Loki’s villainy. He was ready to move mountains to give a guy a chance, but was wary, probably because there were not enough physical evidence and Tony did not cope well with something he could not see.

She sighed. A campaign to redeem a crazy, trickster God is not what she was missing in her otherwise tedious and uneventful life, but she knew Tony. He will be obsessing over it until he breaks something vital, and then will blame himself for not doing enough. Naturally, it was healthy to question the sincerity of dreams he was having, but to do nothing is a sure road to insanity, and she will not add more fuel to his, already, existing issues.

“Dig deeper than.” She suggested.

“I did, but it’s not enough. The information I have comes from…oh…You mean ask him.” He said unsure. “That’s…that’s good, Pep!” He exclaimed happily.

“I’m in doubt, Tony. You suck at peoply stuff.” She mocked, making him snigger.

“I’m a charmer and you know it!” He defended playfully.

“Cannot say if it works with alien Gods, though.”
“Well, there’s only one way to find out. J, pull the research we did for Foster. I, think, it’s time we go outside the box.”

“It’s high time we did that, sir.”

Tony smirked indulgently, turning to the monitors. She smiled at him, kissing his cheek gently. She’ll be back here in the morning to drag him out, but right now she’ll leave him to his work. She must do her own preparations. After all, not every day they decide to expand to another world.

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He is watching them from the shades of the great tree, memorising their moves and coming up with counter attacks. They won’t let him participate. They hardly tolerated him when Thor was around; without him they were free to show their disdain in full.

In the sanctuary of his own mind, Loki could freely admit that it hurt. He was different, there is no arguing it, but Sif was a woman and they accepted her, so, why in Nines, they could not extend the same courtesy to him. He has proven his loyalty and usefulness to them. He had stuck out his neck for them countless times, saving from harsh reprimands and, on occasion, certain death and they still looked at him, like he was beneath them.

“Would you like to join, your highness?” Loki nearly jumped out of his skin, when Hogun’s colourless voice reached his ears. The man was unlawfully good at creeping.

He turned to him slowly, using a moment to calm his erratically beating heart and scold his features to a perfect neutrality, making sure that his voice will communicate polite indulgence, and nothing more.

“If you wish me to, I won’t oppose.”

Hogun smiled at him, throwing Loki out of balanced again and gestured for him to follow.

“It will be a delight, prince Loki.” He said eagerly, raising a suspicion in the young God, who was fast to squash it in favour of spending time with them.

The warriors met him with friendly comments and unnatural level of excitement. It should have put him on edge, but he was focused on the desire to belong far too much to notice the ruse. While he was talking, pleasantly, with Volstagg, the others circled him.

The first blow came out of nowhere. It connected harshly with his skull, throwing him into the dirt. The dizziness came, but he hadn’t time to shake it, before another kick connected with his torso, sending him rolling into the sand, cruel laughs accompanying his embarrassment.

Angry tears welled in his eyes, but he blinked them away, determined to fight back. He didn’t get the chance. They kept him close to the ground, not giving him the opportunity to rise or evaluate the situation. His body stung from hits and scraps. He could, also, taste the blood in his mouth, and was sure two of his ribs were cracked.

They mocked and degraded him, between the assaults, saying that they will never willingly associate themselves with a weakling such as he; that he was lucky Thor was his brother or otherwise his life would be much more miserable. They said it was sad that he didn’t die at birth, and now they are forced to suffer his company; even worse Thor must be kind and caring towards him, and Nines only know how hard it is for him to call such scum a brother. They pitied Thor for it.

Loki should have seen it coming. He knew they despised him. There was not a day free from jabs
and insults. They were never so blunt before, but the years of unpunished bullying got them arrogant. They knew he will not tell, fearing the reprimand. After all, one time he did risk sharing his pain, his father was swift to remind him that princes do not whine and deal with their grief on their own, which he will do right now. There was no point in hoping to be accepted anymore.

He called his magic to him, and it leaped to his fingers gladly.

He threw them away with a blast of raw power, but did not gave them a chance to regroup returning the courtesy. He created a trapping spell, immobilising them, and when they got a good look at his wicked grin and dancing fingers; when the fear pulled in their dishonest, boorish eyes, he allowed his anger to burn them.

The spells he created threw them around, like rag dolls. Their own weapons became their worst enemies. There was no place they can hide, and if one of them managed to ditch the punishment, Loki was quick to return them into a circle.

All-father stopped his glee. The Gungnir touched the ground muddling his spell, but to his ultimate surprise did not break it.

“Loki!” His father growled, and he was quick to distinguish the rest.

The All-father glared at them for a while and then gestured to follow. The warriors scooted closer to each-other, hissing at him, like a pack of rabid dogs. He scowled at them, flickering his magic, delighted when they flinched and blanched.

They were guided to the throne room, where his father reprimanded them for being careless and unnecessary cruel. He dismissed the warriors with a penalty: servants work for a half-a-year.

“Loki, I’m glad to see you can stand your ground, but the use of dishonourable tactics saddens me. I, think, a weak in dungeons will help you to reflect upon your wicked actions.” He drawld, waving him off.

Loki bit his cheek not to scream, and followed the guards obediently.

When they leave him alone, and he is sure the guards retired to their barracks, he carefully unscrews the handle and goes out of the cell. He is careful to put it back and lock it. He looks at the door critically, and when he is sure that nothing is out of place he moves forward, down the long corridors and into the cellar. There, behind an ancient wall is hidden a labyrinth – thousands of paths and one of them leads to the river, which is his preferred destination for today.

The outside world meets him with a cool air and dark skies. It is night already, and he breaths it in greedily. This is the scent of freedom. He looks at his right and sees the golden palace. It shines even in the dark, and his heart painfully clenches. He does not belong there – in the light. He belongs here -in the darkness.

The sardonic smile graces his features and quickly fades. The energies of Yggdrasil are calling him, and he is inclined to follow. He has a whole week free and figures there is no better place to spend it than Midgard. After all, he was in love with mortals and their crazy views and attitudes. He adored their constantly changing minds and wish to create chaos. Midgard suited him far more better than Asgard and sometimes he wished he could stay there forever.

The longing becomes unbearable at the thought, and Loki quickly steps on the hidden path, eager to see his beloved Midgard again.

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Tony woke-up with a groan, trying hard not to forget the image that was fading from his mind rapidly.

“J,” He mumbled. “There’s a bunch of stones in a circle similar to Stonehenge, but in the middle of what looked, like a fairy-field. Something Celtic, I think. Gods, could he be more specific…”

“I wish for you to be that as well, sir.” His AI answered sarcastically, and Tony snorted at him, grabbing the first tablet he saw to draw hastily on it. At first, there was nothing but scrambles, but with time they began to take form, until an hour later Tony was starring at the 3D version of the labyrinth he saw in the dreams.

“Impressive, sir.” Jarvis remarked, making Tony roll his eyes.

“I’m going on a hunch here, J, be reasonable.” He chastised, staring hard at the model.

“Should I make an appointment with an extrasense, sir or are we going blind?” The crisp voice answered, eliciting a suffering exile out of him.

“What do you want from me, J? I know it looks looney and smells fishy, but I cannot ignore it. You know the specifics, so tell me he’s not worth at least a try.”

“That I cannot do, sir.” Jarvis concurred, putting his mind at ease.

“Cheers, buddy. Now tell me you have found this freaking circle, so we can test a hypothesis.”

“Which states?”

“Loki is fucked up, but good.”

Pepper found him rushing around the penthouse with an excited grin on his face. She watched him for whole five minutes grabbing this or that thing, before he noticed her at the elevator doors, sheepishly smirking.

“Hey, Pep. How was your night? Mine was glorious. Another message from the divine bastard. You know, I think the Universe actually started answering my prayers.” He blubbered, fidgeting.

She looked at him appraisingly, before concluding that he took too much caffeine and was in no state to do anything.

“Sit. Relax. Explain.” She told him stern, and he immediately followed her command, which gave her a hint that whatever he thought off was highly important slash stupid, and he wanted her to approve badly.

“I had another one, Pep. Not glamorous. Poor bastard. The life he has…a Viking version of MIT; heavy on death and torture, though.” He shared, his eyes becoming glassy for a moment, and then he snarls lividly, shaking his head. “Anyway, he found a way to escape it and build his own slice of heaven here on Earth.” Tony continued, subduing the rage that was clearly seen in his eyes. “Jarvis calculated a probable location and I want to check it.”

“Why are you not in a suit and telling me this through comms?” She inquired suspiciously.

“You see…” He starts guiltily, like he knows that she will flip when she hears what he has to say.

“The root he took is not official nor stable, but thankfully it is a two-way street, so I need you to take
“You cannot be serious, Tony! I’m not signing this! You’re not going on a suicide mission to save some unstable God that threw you out the window! You do not know if he deserves it, dreams be dammed!” She hissed at him upset, her hands trembling and heart breaking. She could not believe him.

“Pep, listen.” He commanded in soft but firm voice. “I’m not suicidal, and I ain’t stupid. I was on the other side. There were millions of them, Pep. They will come and we will be defenceless. The only chance we had to find something out was shipped to another world, which may or may not be hostile, and I won’t stand by it. I don’t know about you, but I want to live, and he could be the only shot we have at survival.”

“You want to use him?” She asked, unconvinced. Tony scooped to low levels to get what he wanted, but he drew a line at certain points, and manipulating a broken individual was one of those things.

“Eww, Pep.” He shrieked childishly. “How could you think that! Disgusting. I simply want to ask him stuff, and may be, if he is willing, break him out. You know, what we agreed upon.”

“We didn’t agree on breaking anyone out and starting an intergalactic incident, Tony.” She warned him.

“Fine, fine. Talking, no tinkering.” He promised, but his smirk told her that he will be up to no good the moment he leaves her sight.

“Urgh! Tony, please, once in your life behave.” Pepper pleaded desperately, but knew it was pointless. She didn’t wait for another lie, continuing. “I will get papers in order and watch over while you’re befriending a mythical creature, but mark my words Tony, if you’re not back in a week I will find a way to get there and then the otherworldly army will be the least of your problems.”

“Yes, ma’am.” He saluted cheekily, and then added softly. “Thank you.”

“You're welcome.”
The flight to Shetland was long and, usually, Stark would use his suit to get there faster, but this time he chose a traditional means of transportation, namely his private jet.

He will not admit it, but the sudden loss of consciousness bothered him, and even though, Jarvis won’t let him fall, he preferred to black out on the comfortable cushions rather than in a stiff construction. No matter how much he loved his suit, it did not provide enough comfort for limp bodies, which is a good thought for a future project. He can never know when it may come in handy, since the life he leads is guaranteed to kick him in the nuts from time to time.

Hmmm…He can use a memory foam, per example. Nano-bots are great at modelling and shifting the material; stretching it until it accommodates the needs of the body…However, the excessive bulk may be a problem…like his wandering mind.

He chuckled at himself, forcefully pushing the itching ideas out. It can wait. Right now, he was in search of a portal that he saw in dreams gifted by an alien sceptre that belonged to a slightly unstable God of lies, who tried to take over the world and kill him personally. Fuck, it sounded deranged even in his own ears.

Tony groaned closing his eyes and resting his head on the back of the chair. Colours danced behind his eyelids, slowly shaping into the image of a slightly younger Loki, that was staring at his reflection unhappily. He looked at his silk, wavy, raven hair that was reaching his shoulders and scowled, making them straight and combing them back in one swift gesture. Tony whistled, appreciating the sexy effect that the hair-style has given him. However, it was only the beginning of the eye-feast that he was gifted with.

Loki peered at the image, and then waved his green robe off, appearing completely nude. He pocked his alabaster skin, scraping it annoyingly, leaving long, angry-red scraps on his toned torso, and turning from side to side to show off his perfect ass and mouth-watering back. He then suddenly froze, glaring at his fantastically gorgeous and fit frame, his emerald eyes burning with disdain and snarled slamming his right hand into the mirror, shattering the alluring image Tony had a pleasure to ogle.

Stark didn’t see the tears, but could feel them on Loki’s skin and the sadness, almost, made him want to cry as well, however the words – the broken whisper he heard, ignited his mind with the thirst for blood.

“Why Nines, I’m so ugly.”
Tony opened his eyes with a heavy sigh. It seems that Loki was a bit more fucked up than he originally thought. Figures. If Thor was the ideal Loki was striving to reach then he was in for a lot of disappointment. There was hard to find more glaring opposites then them.

Thor was naïve, brash, pig-headed, simple and clinically devoted to ideals he had no idea about. Loki was smart, cunning, curious, intricate and rebellious till the point of immorality. Moreover, Loki was hot as hell, and probably that was the only thing that should be said about him.

Tony, honestly, was at loss what to do with him. The flashbacks that he was having was messing with his hard-drive, rewriting the codes that he trusted in.

It was easier to operate with facts. Emotions was not his strongest point, but, the dreams proved that Loki was heavily charged with those, and Tony found himself still wanting to proceed.

The God captured his interest from the start. He was an enigma that posed too many questions to be ignored, and when they robbed him of it, Tony became obsessed.

He opened the doors Tony haven’t thought about. Highlighted the horizons he never knew existed. Taunted him with puzzles that he hasn’t a clue how to crack, and he fell into the messy chaos that was Loki.

Tony was right in the centre of the system that mixed, intertwined and assimilated too many hostile elements to be stable, but, despite it, still shined with pure genius. He had no clue what this Loki was about, but if he could trust the memories he saw, the God was in pain, and Tony wished nothing more but to soothe it.

Alas, he was at loss how to do it. He doubted Loki would be happy to see him. He wasn’t sure the God remembered him, despite feeling his interest through the flashback.

There were too many glitches in the programme, but he built his first suit from the scraps, so this may fly as well. After all, Tony Stark was not moulded for surrender and got what he wanted, period.

The only question was what he wanted – information or Loki himself.

“J, tell me there is something that needs my attention.” He whined pitifully, tired of the thoughts circling in his brain. There is no point in overthinking it. He got it bad if Pepper didn’t even try to raise an argument. She was better at understanding his unrealised urges anyway. All he knew was that Loki deserved better, and that he will try to provide it in any way he can.

“Almost everything in your life requires more attention than chasing Unicorns, sir.” J sarcastically chimed. Tony sniggered.

“You’re right, buddy. But he is one sexy Unicorn.” He added dreamily, recalling a recent image he saw, and, fuck, he wasn’t sure he could look at Loki without spotting an immediate hard-on.

“Your sex drive will kill you one of these days, sir.” Jarvis chastised him.

“J, you wound my heart. Do I look that shallow to you?”

“Tell me, sir, you would spare him a second glance if he looked, like Donatella Versace and I reconsider.”

Tony groaned, pouting childishly.

“It’s not the looks that matters.” He said stubbornly.
“But of course, sir.” J remarked condescendingly and Tony snapped, remembering degrading look in the mirror.

“It shouldn’t! If everyone just accepted that the nature is a great artist and does not make mistakes, simply adds exquisite variety to the existing primary form creating unique masterpieces, breath-taking in their own rights, we would lead much happier lives, that are unmarred by the socially accepted standard of beauty, which are idiotic and boring anyway.” He hissed, breathing heavily, his mind clouded by bitter resentment. “Take Loki, per example. He surpassed perfection in many departments, devilishly handsome appearance included, and thinks he’s an ugly duckling, because his frame is not boorish enough and eyes lack the blue…tint…Stupid!” Tony exclaimed, laughing foolheartedly.

“Sir?” Jarvis inquired, with, almost, concern.

“Gods, I’m an idiot. J, pull the snaps before and after Hulk.”

The tablet on a table came to life, showing two pictures of Loki. One was spotting a sick grin and murky green eyes; the other a tired, but relieved smirk and deep emerald orbs, that Tony came to appreciate.

“I see you.” Tony cooed gleefully, sobering a moment later. “J analyse all the video feeds and compare according to new parameters, save the results and send them to Pepper with my notes attached. Mark the file: slice of heaven.”

“Will be done, sir.”

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“It’s not even close to the picture you have described, sir.” J drawled into Tony’s ear, making the other cackle sheepishly.

“It’s round, isn’t it?” He remarked, standing in the middle of ruins, that reminded a deserted castle.

The atmosphere was eerie. The sun was casting phantasmagorical shadows, making the structure look otherworldly. He could taste the salt in the air, and feel the hair stand up on the back of his neck, his blood frozen in anticipation. He took a step to the passage, that was hidden from the curious eyes and was decorated with runes, that were Norse in origin, but, too complicated for modern science to crack.

Tony caressed the signs, feeling warmth emitting from them and then they stung him. It was a light caress, barely detectable, but he instantly recognised the signature. He felt it in the penthouse when Loki grabbed him by the throat and when the sceptre touched him the second time – he, presumed, it was Loki’s magic and he liked the feeling of it – cool, crisp and reassuring.

He had to wonder if Loki left those here; if they were a protection from wanderers, and felt happy that whatever connection was established between them allowed him to open it.

He had no doubts that he did, because the moment the buzzing of the energy settled the passage alighted with a rainbow light, shimmering and, dare he say, calling him.

He took another tentative step, but before he could breach the unknown, Jarvis chimed in.

“Sir, it would be highly unadvisable to step on the yellow brick road without the suit.”

“I do not wish to be stuck in a useless piece of garbage, J, besides I have my watch on me.” Tony
retorted, moving forward.

“Sir…miss…Potts…wld…apr…..” The further he went down the corridor of blinding, colourful light the lesser was the strength of a signal, until he lost J completely, like he predicted.

The construction of the path was mesmerising. He guessed he was enclosed in the tube-like energy cocoon that allowed him to pass who knows how many light years in a relatively short time. He would love to linger and study it in more details, but his physical state was against it, if light dizziness and slight pressure in his brain were anything to go by.

When he stepped out on the other side his head was hurting, and cold sweat covered his temples. He took a couple of deep, slow breaths to calm his erratically beating heart and upset stomach, before looking around.

The picture that met his eye was indeed unearthly.

He was standing on the secluded bank of a wide river with crystal clear water. The air around him was warm and dry, smelling of something sweet. On his right, in the distance, he could see little houses that formed a medieval-like city, on his left, rose a magnificent, golden palace with high, pointy towers that were glistening beautifully in the sun. Loki’s childhood home. A place copied straight from fairy-tales, but gifted only nightmares.

Tony, supposed, it’s not uncommon; his own house was the etalon of elegance and didn’t make his childhood any happier than Loki’s did. In the end, the appearance mattered little if the content was rotten.

Tony checked the electronics, which were blinking erratically and tried to assemble the gauntlet, that worked, like perfection. It was rubbing him the wrong way, naturally, but, until, he figures out how it worked here, good-old mechanics would have to do.

He tinkered for a bit with the settings and could minimise the effects of unfamiliar energies that were floating around enough to display a map and have basic functions, like recording and saving the readings. The alien spikes of power he reduced to one category – magic.

The map pointed him towards the tall, spiky bushes and he groaned, moving forward and hating the scraps that the twigs left on his skin. It took him fifteen minutes to get through to the small clearing, surrounded by tall trees and wild nature. He could see a small hill on the northern side, and spotted a heavy door, behind the humongous flowers, that looked, like morning-glory.

He cheered happily, jogging towards it, eager to reach the dungens, where he hoped Loki was confined. The door did not give him much grief, opening with a screech. Tony didn’t waste any time and slipped into the darkness, that met him with heavy moistered air, which smelt strongly of mould.

He sneezed and scratched his nose, walking carefully, as his arc reactor did not give much light. It would be easier to use a flashlight of course, but he didn’t want to attract any unwanted attention from whatever may inhabit this place by switching a torch on.

The luck, though, decided that she was tired of covering his ass, and after five hundred meters Tony came face to face with a lizandy-cat-like-creature, which blinked at him confusedly before baring its sharp canines and snarling menacingly.

Tony yelped, assembling a gauntlet and punching the morbid creature into the muzzle, not risking firing it in fright that the construction above his head may fall, and run.
Loki was staring at the golden barrier, bored out of his mind. The role they gave him was mediocre at best and it did not take much creativity to play it. The only challenge was Frigg.

She easily got to him - in the great hall, and several hours ago when she came to visit. She chastised him for illusions he created to entertain himself, afraid that he wished to be lost in a fake world, which he would have gladly done if not for monsters that were lurking behind a polished façade.

Their dialogue quickly became bitter. She trusted the same lies everybody did, tired of being the only one who saw something good in him. He, supposed, he deserved it. He tested her patience often enough, so, at some point, it had to run out. Too bad that it ended at exact moment he needed her most.

She defended Odin, calling him “his father” and he lashed out, shouting at her. She smiled at him bitterly, asking if she is not his mother. It killed him to say it, but the pain was stronger.

“No, you are not.” He said to her, barely able to hold tears and dispelled the illusion. He could not stand the torment shining in her kind gaze.

The wounds were raw, and the pus of betrayal, anger and hate was leaking freely out of them. He was disassembled and twisted, not sure who he was, what he represented and desired.

The vengeance seemed to be useless. It won’t change the horrors imbedded in his brain and fix the broken bones. The fight for the truth was not an option, since he was not listened to when he was relatively respected, as of now, it was easier not to speak at all, unless he spews lies they want to hear. The hopes of redemption and dreams of the future were off limits, since Odin will make sure he rots here till Ragnarok comes. Thus, he was left with his longings for death and utter, miserable loneliness.

It was a horrifying realisation, more painful than treachery of his fake kin, but he, Loki, was not liked nor cared about. There was absolutely no one in all vastness of Nines who will miss him.

At some point, he would believe Frigg would, but recent events proved that she will not. She will grieve, like a dutiful woman she was, but no more. He has been banishing the thought out of his mind, but since there is nothing left to hold on to, he could finally admit that she never truly loved him. He was a burden, a duty, and that’s that.

He closed his eyes, chuckling bitterly. He wondered why he is still clinging to this miserable existence. His magic was intact, so it wasn’t that hard to end it. All it would take a flick of the wrist, and there won’t be any Loki anymore. His mother would be free from the embarrassment that he is, and his father finally would be able to breath freely, as would his brother. May be the warriors were right. Maybe it would have been better if he didn’t exist at all.

The loud bang rudely snapped him from depressing thoughts. He opened his eyes, looking around confusedly. Who would come here?

He was locked on the lowest floor of the dungeons, in the cell that was designed specifically for him. After Odin discovered his secret he ordered to create a magic proof cell with transparent walls. It was made to mock him, because the passage that he used to snatch his freedom was right in front of him, but try as he might he could not reach it.

Nobody came here, except for the guard that left him food twice a day. Odin forbade it.

Loki got up and went closer to the eastern wall, where the passage lay and heard the loud bang again. It repeated several more times, and did not stop until the door flew open, and no other than
Tony Stark whooshed past. He did not look into his direction, hastily turning around and closing the door. He stared at it for a couple of heartbeats, before slowly creeping backwards. He stopped only when his back hit the wall of his cell, staring intently at the passage, his gauntlet ready to fire, as if he was waiting for Hel to get through any moment.

Thousands of thoughts ran through Loki's head, but whatever the mortal wanted; whatever agenda he had, Loki will not allow to degrade him. He had enough of people stepping over him, discarding him, like unworthy trash. He will not stand by it. He will alienate him, like he did with everybody else and when he leaves Loki would be free to proceed with his true desire.

“What brought you here honourable warrior?” Loki purred, delighted when the man stiffened, slowly turning to face him. When their eyes met Loki smirked at him viciously. Stark squawked, jumping away.

“Holy shit!” He exclaimed, watching the God with disbelief and joy that Loki purposefully ignored. “I’ve found you.” He added cheerfully, confusing the God further. “The hell you have in those labyrinths, Reindeer! It, almost, bit my head off. I don’t remember seeing anything, like it.”

The words that the mortal spewed where making no sense, but it was a welcomed distraction. He did not behave in any manner Loki had anticipated, so, he decided to humour him.

“The “hell” you speak of must be Odin’s pet. He put it there after discovering my love for wandering.”

“The cell is, also, conveniently close. Fuck, the All-father sucks in all kind of disturbingly colossal ways.” Tony mused, looking around the perimeter, before returning his gaze back to the God. It seemed that Loki’s cell was the only one here, which was splendid.

The God was surprised by the hostile attitude. To his knowledge no mortal was granted a pass to Asgard for centuries, so there was no way for the man to know what Odin was like and to be here in the first place.

“How did you manage to get here?” Loki inquired, allowing his curiosity to rule over his wish to stay indifferent.

“I used the hidden path you used.” The mortal answered easily, making the God frown.

“How did you find it and how, in Nines, you managed to open it!?” Loki demanded. He sealed it and nobody should have been able to break the seals. The mortal looked uncomfortable then, glancing nervously at the floor and rubbing his neck embarrassingly.

“I saw it in my dreams.” He explained awkwardly.

Loki looked at him stupefied, and then laughed at the ridiculousness of the situation. The mortal glared at him, crossing his arms and pouting, sending him into another feat of glorious laughter.

“Har, har.” He mocked, clearly upset, scoffing at the laughing God, but deep inside he was glad that he emitted this sound out of him. It made him look alive, and not defeated and lifeless, like a second before. “It worked, though.” He said arrogantly, adorning the amused smirk that lingered on Loki’s lips, a lovely aftermath of God’s glee.

“It does not explain how you got pass the wards.” Loki pondered out loud, highly entertained by the strange mortal.

“I don’t know.” Tony shrugged. “I didn’t do anything special, simply touched it. I guess I got
lucky.”

“Oh, mortal.” Loki cooed. “Those wards should have liquefied you on the spot, and the travel for such fragile and untrained individual should have ended in damaged brain and shattered consciousness. The creature Odin keeps in the labyrinth should have ripped you apart, and the door you brashly hit against should have melted the flesh of your skin, not to mention that time flows differently between here and there, and, since, I presume, you did not monitor your teleportation, years could have passed in your realm. Lucky indeed.”

Stark blanched, watching him with a horrified expression. Loki had no doubt that he believed in every word he said, and it was a revelation of sorts. First time in a long while, he decided to use the truth to screw somebody and they actually trusted him.

“Great. That’s just great.” The mortal grumbled in a small voice, and then caught himself smiling crookedly at the smirking God. “Now if you’ll excuse me, I’m gonna go home and have a heart attack.”

Loki chuckled, deciding to confuse the mortal further.

“Are you going Pulp Fiction on me, Stark? That’s just cheap.”

The phrase had a desired effect. Stark gaped at him openly, shaking his head and then staring at him, like he had turned into a bilgesnipe.

“I’ll get back to you on that later.” He finally managed to say, before turning around and walking brusquely towards the door, however, Loki was not ready to let him go. Oh, how his intentions have changed.

“If you ever attempt such foolishness in the future, I advise to touch the runes in the following order: west” He said, drawing a rune on the barrier, feeling an intense gaze of warm brown eyes on him and enjoying it. “north, east, north, north, west, east; and for the love of the Universe, bring some meat for the beast.”

“Dully noted.” Stark said seriously and slipped through the passage, careful to seal it.

The God stared at it for a longest while, trying to absorb the situation. It was surreal enough for him to doubt its occurrence, but then Loki didn’t remember Stark enough to conjure such and elaborate hallucination, so it must have happened.

Stark, by providence or sheer stupidity, have found a way to Asgard, apparently to seek him out. Whatever mortal wanted was still an open question, but Loki’s plans on him have shifted.

The mortal was that spark of intrigue he was missing for a long while, and he knew that this was self-deception, and it will crush and burn, and will be a horrible catastrophe. But this one tempting mistake will be only his to make and to regret.

Chapter End Notes

Pangur_Ban: *\0/* C.H.E.E.R.S. *\0/* I’m so glad you’re excited about it so much you chose it over your sleep. That’s the most flattering thing, I’ve heard so far :) (sending
tons of love)

music9009, Darklightningstorm (Lightningstorm), snape_lust: Thank you for your comments. I'm glad you enjoyed it. :) Your joy is what my muse feeds upon (ehhe)

pallyndrome: it will get even "better", just you wait :)

Gothicelvenqueen: Flattering me, eh? Don't stop :)

GabxLuci2796: Cheers! For me Thor is always a dick, that being said, we'll see how much of a dick he'll be here :)

Mamitadolls: (catching heart emojis and showing them down a golden chest) my precious...Thank you. I cannot say how much it means to me, but it does a lot, like any other writer, I do appreciate a bit of swooning all over my humble work and talent :)
Tony didn’t think much about anything else, besides – years!, even the faint growl he heard in the depths of the labyrinth couldn’t shake the horror that settled in his stomach. Fuck, why was he so careless? He, naturally, thought that this endeavour may end unpleasantly, but the time difference did not cross his mind. He, presumed, since Thor could jump in and out real time it didn’t differentiate drastically. Loki, of course, could be fucking with him, and simply rushed him out effectively, but he didn’t risk challenging it – too much to lose on both sides. Thus, Tony was running to the spot, like hell-hounds were chasing him. Pepper will kill him.

The road back was but a blur, when he collapsed near the familiar rubble and Jarvis asked how his sally went, he wept, like a teenage girl. Thank fuck!

“It’s good to hear you, buddy.” He said in a shaky voice, painfully aware that he might have lost it all. “How long I was absent?”

“Seven hours, sir.”

Tony laughed relieved, and then scoffed. The little shit! He will fucking strangle him!

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Loki was still staring at the blasted passage, longing for the mortal to return. Imbicile. If he wanted so much for him to stay he shouldn’t have chickened out in the first place. However, his nature was not willing to give up that easily, despite his foolish heart that was ready to worship Stark simply because he came, no matter the hidden agenda.

It was complicated.

The mortal captivated his attention back then, with that curious device in his chest and foolhardy bravado. However, Loki was not having any second thoughts on Midgard, because he was sure he won’t see the man again. It should have not been possible, like building a machine that breaks mind-control, like taunting a God without the armour and surviving the encounter, like finding a hidden path and successfully teleporting, like crossing the labyrinth and breaking to him – like everything the man did.

It petrified Loki, so he pushed him away, exaggerating the troubles that the mortal could have faced, and it worked; something in his words scared the mortal enough to leave hastily. Loki was hoping that the mortal will not come back, but gave him directions, because if Nines by some mistake decides to bless him with his addicting company once more – he wanted him to be safe.

URGH! But why!? He was nothing to him. Fine, he freed him, possibly, saved his miserable existence, but he should hate him for it, not drool all over.
It was much easier to live when all he wanted was death.

The door opened slowly this time, making Loki’s heart beat excitedly. Unhappy Stark marched through, narrowing his eyes when he caught the God’s gaze. He strolled to the cage and pointed an accusing finger, growling:

“Years my ass, fucking bastard! I, almost, got that proverbial heart attack. If you didn’t want to talk to me, you could have simply said – get lost and I would have.” Stark fumed.

Ah, Loki thought, for him time meant close to nothing, for a mortal, though, it was everything – too bad that it was his biggest overstatement. Stark, surely, could have lost some hours, may be a day, but not more.

The man was glaring at him foolheartedly, arms crossed, a deep scoff on his handsome features and Loki was finding it adorable. The man was a spit fire.

“Get lost.” Loki teased him.

“The hell I will!” Stark immediately growled, freezing comically, and Loki doubled over with laughter.

“See, I had no choice, but to be creative, and you’ve lost time, haven’t you?” He said, when the glee settled, allowing him to speak.

“A bit.” Stark divulged unwillingly. “It still does not justify your cruelty. You’re a shitty host, Reindeer.”

“Didn’t it cross your mind that I’m here for a reason, mortal?” He posed a provocative question, because from all the assaults he did, unwillingly or otherwise, the offence on Stark was highly personal. The mortal, no matter how peculiar, cannot brush this off easily. Thus, he was sure Stark’s reaction won’t be pleasant, and by now, he’s remembering whom he is truly speaking with – a monster, that tried to kill him.

“The lack of hospitality does not make you a criminal.” The mortal replayed offhandedly, rising a wave of fondness and annoyance in the God.

“Viciousness does, though.” Loki argued, willing Stark to behave, like a sane being and stop making him believe that somebody saw him differently.

“That part is debatable. Who are we comparing you to? What are the parameters? Because you look rather unimpressive in contrast with the dictators that at one time attempted to rule our world, and was much more successful in it than you have been, by the way.”

Loki took a deep breath not to scream at the mortal. This argument was not going, as he planned it to go.

“I’d be a great king! I was born to rule!” Loki retorted half-heartedly. The heat was not there. It was something he repeated times and times again to entertain his false kin, since they were so bent on believing he wanted the crown. The words sounded false, however, Stark did know him through the bigotry of Thor, so it was safe to presume that he will believe this.

“Probably you were and you would be. I’m not the one to judge.” Tony shrugged nonchalantly. “But, we can both agree, your plan of attack was shit. It, almost, looked like you wanted to lose.”

Those clever brown eyes watched him shrewdly. Loki felt exposed and vulnerable. He didn’t
appreciate the feeling, so continued with the only defence he knew – malicious, cutting lies. He chuckled wickedly, levelling the mortal with a cold stare.

“Are you presuming that I would purposefully sabotage an invasion that would put me on the throne, for what? A protection of your pathetic species? Nines, mortal, and here I thought you were the clever one.”

“I am.” Stark said arrogantly. “I do believe you’re clever too, so, you screwed the plan, to what ends it’s still unclear.”

“Don’t presume to know me mortal!” Loki hissed, getting riled up for real. A part of him, was glad that Stark was not buying his lies, the other one, vividly remembered how pathetic he was and did not wish to share the experience.

“I don’t. Not really, anyway. It’s just there are a thousand better ways to start an invasion, and you ignored every single one of them to go for the obvious failure. So, I’m just saying, villainy does not really suit you.”

Loki glared at him icily and started pacing the cage, like a vexed animal, throwing nasty glances at him now and then, before he stopped, a tired expression settling on his attractive features.

“Ask your questions, mortal, or speak you part, do whatever you came here to do and leave me in peace.” The God said, suddenly becoming disinterested. The levity the mortal brought, no matter how pleasing, will end. At some point, Loki will do or say something that will rub him the wrong way and he will discard him, like everybody else. But, since the mortal was unlawfully tempting and Loki’s heart was unreasonably fond of him, he was not willing to prolong this, anymore, lest he believed that Stark truly cared.

Tony didn’t like the sound of Loki’s voice. It came out hollow and empty. It gave Tony the creeps and he said the first idiotic thing that came to his mind, in hopes to shake the God out of it.

“How do you know Pulp Fiction?”

The God held a doomed expression for a minute more, before blinking confusedly and shaking his head in disbelief.

“Are you for real, Stark!?!” Loki inquired, perplexed by the sassy mortal that had no common sense as it seems. “You get a free passage to the knowledge and miracles your kind won’t dare to dream about, and you ask me, a being, thousand years your senior and, almost, conquer to be, how do I know about a film!?"

“Fuck that shit!” Stark exclaimed petulantly. “I wanna know how do you, a being that lived in a society which doesn’t seem to want to crawl from under the rock, despite having all the means for it, stumbled upon movies, and while we are at it – how do you know what TV is at all!?"

“I haven’t watched it on TV, Stark. Everybody knows that the web is far more better.” Loki retorted naughty, enjoying a frustrated glare he got.

“You are fucking with me.” Stark accused, getting pouty again. Loki graced him with a sharky smirk.

“Naturally, dear mortal. I’m a God of Mischief, it’s what I do.”

Tony opened his mouth to retort and closed it with a snap, tapping his foot in annoyance. Pepper told him to be patient and not to bite, because apparently the good relationships did not start from glorious
snark. However, Loki made it hard for him, dancing around questions and jabbing him at every opening he got. Tony simply could not let it slip.

“You’re not a God.” He said convinced. “You may pass for one, seeing how brilliant and breathtaking you are, but I would go for an alien with a dash of divine. It sounds more truthful then pompous titles you folks love to flaunt.”

Loki watched him with a bit of a flush on his otherwise sharp features, and Tony smirked at him triumphantly.

“You may want to work on your insults, Stark, as they sound suspiciously, like compliments.”

“You called me “dear”, I had to reciprocate somehow.” Stark shrugged nonchalantly, making Loki, almost, blush. The mortal was quick-witted and kind. Loki enjoyed his company far too much than he should. The forgotten memories of safety and warmth returned, compromising his state. The God was aware it was pathetic to cling to the man, but he seemed to want nothing more, but to talk with him; spend time in his company and he didn’t know how to cope or react to it, especially, considering that not a minute ago he decided to be done with him.

“Seems too much praise for such a simple word.” Loki said careful not to show the mess the mortal made of him.

“I’m generous, like that, Reindeer. So, will you or will you not tell me how did you get your hands on the internet and why movies were your case study?”

Loki considered him for a minute, before allowing an indulgent grin to settle on his lips, flopping down the floor and crossing his long mouth-watering legs Indian style. Tony, figured, it meant he won. Loki won’t be chasing him out any time soon, but this not mean that the battle was over. The God simply changed the tactics and now he risked losing more than his company.

He got comfortable himself, settling near the cell. Loki waited for him to stop moving, before answering.

“What will I get in turn if I satisfy your curiosity?” The God inquired, and Tony chuckled. Loki raised the stakes and he was ready to call.

“What do you want?” He asked instead, trying not to snigger at the narrowed gaze.

Loki’s hands were itching with the wish to strangle or caress the mortal. He hasn’t decided yet. The question threw him off balance, like every little thing the mortal did. He didn’t follow the patterns Loki was used to, and this chaotic, refreshing attitude was screwing his mind.

At this given moment, besides death, he craved Stark’s presence, but he was not about to tell him that, so he settled on the second-best thing.

“Death.” He answered calmly, his being not reacting as joyfully as before at the suggestion. Oh, how pitiful he was. One kind word and he was ready to forget the torment he went through. How foolish his heart was; how desperate the need to be cared for.

“Hmmm…” Stark hummed thoughtfully. “That’s something I can give to you if you really want it, however, I cannot see why would you waste an opportunity to get something from me on a thing that you can get yourself.”

The mortal’s voice was void of any emotion, clear and precise. He was discussing a business deal with him, analysing pros and cons, calculating the gain and worth. Loki could appreciate that, but he
wanted something different. He wanted to rile him up; to have a reaction. He longed for passion, and even though it wasn’t the kind he desired, it proved that Stark was not indifferent. It was a testament of him getting under the mortal’s skin.

“Death from a hand of a warrior is an honourable way to go, Stark.”

“There’s nothing honourable in death at all, Reindeer. It’s a hypocritical bullshit that commanders feed their brainless solders with, so they die for the cause that do not concern them, and they could seize all the goodness, while troops slice each other to ribbons. But, you know that, don’t you?”

The God snorted at him, putting his head on his hand, looking unimpressed.

“But what if I still ask only that from you.”

Stark called his years of experience dealing with snobs, not to say something regrettable, and answered levelly.

“Are you sure? I can give you lots of things - technology, secrets, freedom?” He bargained, flinching when the God’s gaze became lifeless again.

Loki found it ironic how the man, who gave him a reason to postpone his demise was, also, the one who reminded him that it was unavoidable. He had no need for all those things. Freedom, a thing that at one point he craved desperately, tasted soar to him now. Freedom to be what – disgraced, unwanted and lonely? He will pass.

“Death is all I require.” The God repeated adamantly.

“Then I will kill you, however, I do not consider this an equal exchange. You tell me everything I want to know, and then, if you are still willing I will grant your wish.” He proposed coldly, and Loki flinched inwardly. It hurt.

“I can see why they call you a Merchant of death, mortal, and heartless as well – anything to get what you want.” The God drawled, finally feeling, like everything returned to the way it should be. Alas, Stark did not follow the root again. He emitted a frustrated sound, springing to his feet and throwing his hands in the air.

“Fine, Reindeer, let’s be honest. It will maim me to harm you, but if you wish it, so be it. All I ask is a chance to poke your brilliant brain, before it cease to exist, because it would be a fucking tragedy when it does.” There was unhealthy amount of anger and pain in his voice, that Loki did not understand. Stark was a stranger, but behaved as if Loki meant something to him.

“Oh, mortal.” He teased. “It is unwise to get attached so quickly, and more so to a lying monster with a death wish.”

“Don’t give a single fuck.” Tony retorted, not denying the implications and Loki’s head swam with hopes and sentiments. He, almost, growled outright. Stark was hard to deal with.

He could not trust him. He is not allowed to believe someone will care for him. It is unwise. It is plain idiocy, but, he has nothing to lose, and this is looking better than books. And hasn’t he already decided to make this mistake?

“Deal, mortal. Poke my brain, and when I get bored with you, you’ll kill me.” So, I don’t have to get over your betrayal, as well.

Tony swallowed nervously. He could not imagine how on Earth he will do that, but if this was the
only way, he will seize it, and pray that he will be able to change Loki’s mind.

“Deal.”

Chapter End Notes

Darklightningstorm (Lightningstorm): cruel, I like that :)

marikaAbowie, ImpishDesign : Cheers! Me and my muse are grateful for your patience and kind words :)

Darklightningstorm (Lightningstorm), snape_lust: good question. I suppose this chapter will answer it.

pallyndrome: He meant that they didn't look deeper, presuming all he wanted was a throne and considers that slightly offending. He's much deeper than that, and if Odin and Thor are easy to fool, Frigg is not so much, because he loves her, no mater what he says, and it makes harder to lie to her.
In the middle of the heated discussion about the worshiping and romanticising violence in movies and culture, Stark’s stomach growled loudly.

Tony blushed, glaring at the sniggering God, and turned away to search his backpack. He emerged disappointed. Naturally, food was something he did not think he’ll need.

“Hey, Reindeer, do they feed you here?” The mortal asked, smiling at him pleadingly. Loki, chuckled, shaking his head. He could not believe that this exuberant, childish thing is, also, a sharp-witted genius, weapon’s manufacturer and fearsome warrior.

“I do not think you’ll like it, Stark.” Loki said, waving his hand to present a grey loaf of bread that spotted a mould on the side. The mortal arched an eyebrow at him, and then his gaze became menacing, angry fire. He cursed quietly under his breath, before inquiring:

“Do they feed everybody equally or are you just special?”

Loki shuddered subtly at Stark’s voice. The God could hear the righteous anger there; the desire for retribution, and his heart flip-flopped at the knowledge that this burning passion was on his account. Stark was offended by his treatment. It melted Loki, but not enough to give in.

“I’m a prince, Stark, so, naturally, my treatment is unique.” He offered, delighted how stormy mortal’s expression got.

“Mhmh, I gathered.” Tony drawled, chewing his lip in thought. “Does your mother know of this?”

He asked carefully, and missed. Loki’s expression became poisonous, and his voice, when he answered was the perfect mirror of that expression.

“Surely, you know, she’s not my mother, Stark. None of them are related to me, so why bother. I’m a disappointment, a failure, and I am treated accordingly by all.”

Tony swallowed the curses that gathered on his tongue, and showed his wish to spew fire deep, deep down. He needed to stay calm for the next question, if he wanted to get an answer, and not to be stuck in a spiteful argument.

“Does it hurt you?” He pointed at the bread, but they both knew that this question had a double meaning.

“When I’m becoming weak enough to give in … it does not, much. Tastes awful, though.” Loki shared indifferently.

“Fantastic. Figures, that this joint has nothing good, besides you, Reindeer.” Tony grumbled, getting
up and putting a backpack on. “So whataya want?”

Loki looked at him, rather confused, and Tony had to chuckle. It seems he was good at perplexing the shit out of the arrogant God.

“You know what I want, mortal.” Loki said naughty, and got a dismissive hand wave.

“Yeah, yeah. But, before, that let’s have a proper meal, shall we?” The mortal offered, wiggling his eyebrows suggestively. It was not easy to maintain a straight face and laugh at the mortal’s antics, but Loki managed.

“I do not require a meal, Stark. I do not have a taste for anything.” He said, being honest. He truly did not feel hunger or desire to eat at all.

“Oh, come on, Reindeer, don’t be like that. I get it you’re in a depressive mood, but there must be something you want.” Tony whined, and Loki’s mood soared further. He was in agony, and he did not appreciate the mortal talking as if he had any idea how it felt.

“How many time should I have repeat it until it sinks in your tiny brain – I do not wish for anything, but death. Deal with it Stark or, better yet, fulfil your part of the agreement and be gone.” Loki hissed, hating how sad and grave the mortal became.

“I have dealt with it, Loki.” He said solemnly, blowing the God out of the water. “When I came back from Afghanistan with the hole in my chest - defeated, pitiful and scared - I, pretended, that everything was peachy. I was fine. I got through. I survived, but my behaviour upgraded from “reckless” to “downright suicidal”. I’d have died then, but, Pepper gave me a reason not to…” Tony shared with a dark look on his face, and then he shook it off, replacing it with a goofy version. “So, what I mean is – I still wanted a burger; that was literally the first thing I did, after I returned from that hell. What’s your burger, Loki?”

The God stared at him not sure how to proceed. His brain was swimming with questions, that he wanted and loathed to have answers for. From the way Stark spoke, he could gather that he got the same treatment Loki did. Stark knew what agony he was in, Loki could hear the ghosts of it in his voice. He, also, wanted to demand who the woman was and if Stark was romantically involved. He cursed his compromised memory. He was sure that something like that he knew back then but it came clean when the mind control shattered.

“A slice of a lemon pie.” He said quietly. The mortal deserved a treat for his endeavours.

“’K, one lemon pie coming up. Try not to miss me much.” He teased, before blowing him a kiss and disappearing behind the doors.

Loki was too preoccupied with the frivolous gesture to snark back. It felt ...Oh, Nines, how it felt, and he tried vigorously to erase it; to stop it from getting into his head. It did, anyway, making him long for mortal’s company even more, especially when the silence in the cell started creeping towards his bleeding soul, whispering profanities and infecting him with bitter doubt.

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Tony was whistling a silly toon under his breath. He was elevated. Loki ravished his neurons so indulgently, he nearly forgot how gobsmacking the God was physically. Tony could not say that now and then the thought of fucking the God silly did not cross his mind. He was a man after all, and he could appreciate what he was seeing, but it became a background noise in a flash, which got him concerned for a sec.
He was dancing on a thin ice. One wrong breath and from a healthy interest it will become an unhealthy necessity; one wrong blink and he will regret knowing about Loki in the first place. Then he chuckled, brushing the annoying emotions off; talk about being slow on the uptake.

He was, already, here, and he observed far too much to ever forget about him. He was going to get food, for God’s sake, and his slightly rusty brain department that answers for such things only now raises flags, hinting that he cares slightly deeper than he should, and if, Loki will continue to be what he is, it will steadily escalate to something Tony would loath to deal with.

Yeah, he will. Tony was good and exceptionally brilliant at many things, but relationships was not his cup of tea, especially with highly sensitive time bombs. He knows he will fuck up. It was a given. But, that said, he would rather prefer his heart broken than Loki’s brains blown out. He could deal with the hearth-break. He will not be able to overcome God’s demise.

What was so important about Loki, he did not know. For a scientific mind, the rapidness of the developing attachments was disconcerting. The first readings did not promise a favourable outcome, but after the third parties input, the variables changed notably, and Tony knew only one program that worked in such patterns – virus; or they were highly compatible from the start. It was simply hard to tell at once, since Loki was brainwashed and Tony’s hands were rather tied up.

At the first glance, the guy seemed to be legit, no matter the title. The deal they struck quenched the probable suspicions, since there was no gain for Loki, unless, of course, he was for real, which pissed Tony off; a tiny part of him was hoping that Loki was bullshitting and was not forced to go through those horrors.

Unfortunately, he did, which made any opinion about Loki that was told to Tony irrelevant. The God was not a spoiled, jealous brat that threw a temper tantrum, because his brother got a crown. He, also, wasn’t a half-backed dictator that wished to enslave Earth. Loki was a deeply hurt, abused and mistreated individual that got his ass sentenced for breaking out from torture chambers, mind-control and possibly saving the entire planet in the process. Wow, were they a bunch of grateful assholes or what?

The God didn’t care, though, and that disturbed Tony a lot, because, from the experience, he knew that no amount of acceptance and love will gonna fix this. If it did, he would be blissfully happy with Pepper, and not buying lemon pies for alien Gods that lived in another dimension, access to which could severely damage him at any given time.

Whatever. In the end, Loki was the best thing that could have happened to him. He knew exactly where the God was coming from. There is nobody else who could understand what Tony gone through or what Tony is about so intimately. So, Tony will cherish every second he got with this amazing creature, and will not waste time on doubts.

He walked back from the village shop with a happy smile stuck on his face. He was content with the conclusion he made, but his expression soared when he saw a familiar pattern of spandex. Really, now!?

“Hey, Rogers!” He cheered falsely. “What brought you here and in full regalia?”

“Hello, Tony. You’re hard to find these days. How are you?” Rogers greeted in a friendly manner, flashing an ideal American smile, and Tony had to squash a burning desire to punch him in his perfect teeth. Brainwashed hypocrite.

“Peachy, but I don’t think you came here to discuss my state.”
“I’d like to say it’s not true, we care for you Tony, but I sought you out, because the sceptre went missing.” Tony was torn between rolling his eyes – yeah, they cared for him in the same manner Thor and his baboons cared for Loki – and laughing – only fucking now they noticed it! However, he settled for amused disbelief.

“How the fuck, Rogers? Isn’t it supposed to be hidden somewhere very, very impossible to get to?”

“We didn’t give it to Thor.” Rogers divulged awkwardly, and then his expression became completely mortified. “S.H.I.E.L.D. supposed to keep it safe, but Hydra infiltrated it and by the time we contained the situation the sceptre was gone.”

Tony made a titanic effort not to fall on the ground and roll laughing. Instead, he remembered how pig-headed they were when he tried to put some common sense into them and the scoff that formed on his face would have made Loki proud.

“I’ve told you, Rodgers, S.H.I.E.L.D. cannot be trusted. What possessed you to give them the sceptre, after we found out that they used tesseract to build weapons of mass destruction or tried to nuke New-York!?”

“For all we are powerful, we are civilians, Tony. We cannot possibly keep such a weapon safe.” Rogers reasoned, and Tony outright growled at him – stupid fucking fuck!

“Because they did such a splendid job! Oh, and, you are a civilian, Rogers, I ain’t!”

The great Captain America had a decency to flinch and look guilty on the road.

“What do you want me to say, Tony? That I fucked up? That I should have listened to you? I did and I should. However, it won’t fix the problem. All I ask, Tony, is a moment of your time, to see if you can track it, like you did with the tesseract.” He pleaded, and Tony had to concur. First, because Rogers will not leave him alone, and second, because he was the thief.

“Half an hour, Rogers, and then you’ll leave me the fuck alone. God knows, I’m not ready to socialise.” With idiots, like you, especially when there is a grumpy deity in wait of a lemon pie.

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Loki was aware that he was beyond needy, and had absolutely no ground to get upset, but he did. Stark was taking too long to come back, and he began to worry.

What if the mortal decided that he is not worth the trouble after all? What if the blasted beast hurt him? What if his charms failed and Heimdall saw him? Why it mattered so much?

The answer to the last question was glaringly obvious. Loki has noticed how his whole being gravitated towards the man. No surprises there as well, after all, Stark was genuinely interested in Loki’s personality, digging deep with no shame or care for the consequences. He battled with him, until Loki had no choice but to give in, not to mention how appealingly the mortal looked. However, there was not much Loki could give to such an attractive individual.

He was but a shadow of his former self, and, since, he was not good enough then, right now he could not dare to imagine that his broken being will suffice.

Stark was brilliant, radiant and in many ways out of Loki’s league so far it was pitiful. He could not hope to entertain the man or capture his interest, beyond novelty. He will leave him, when the truth comes to light. It will hurt, but at least, not long, if Stark will hold his end of the bargain.
Loki bit his lip not to whimper, curling into a tight ball. Nines, he does not need the ache. It was foolish to get infected with the longings that he has no right to have. He did not know if the man’s heart was free or if he favoured his gender at all.

Loki was aware that customs on Earth were different, and they were not as acceptive as other’s species were. Asgardians were hard on it too, but did not haunt the poor souls. However, it gave him grief in the past as well. He remembered ridicules and shaming; warriors watching him with morbid curiosity and pain finding someone, who will not discard him at once. They did anyway, leading him on and then laughing at his broken heart.

Sijur, a young noble knight that Loki was helplessly captivated with, was the cruellest of them all. He bestowed him with kindness and genuine curiosity. They were together for years. Loki was convinced he has found his other half, until he cheated him, and with no other than Thor.

Loki has found out that their affair was going on and off since day one, and the parting words that Sijur spewed crippled his heart for eternity: “There’s a reason you’re a second, Loki.”

May be there was. No, certainly there is, and, Loki was sure that Stark didn't settle for anything but the best, which he never was and never will be.

Chapter End Notes

marikaAbowie: Cheers! Someone has to make it better. It's depressing as khmh... :)))

LuciferTheRising: Cheers! I'm glad you like my Tony. He's a sweetheart here :)

Darklightningstorm (Lightningstorm): I'm glad it did. I tend to be a bit hand-wavy, so the question helps to keep me in check :)

Mamitadolls: Thank you. Glad you're enjoying this :)

Kitty_Grell_Laufeyson: Hello, lovely dictator. Usually, I'm not the one for submission, but, well...(does the curtsy playfully) whatever, my reader's wish, I guess :) That being said, cheers! :)
Rogers wasted plenty of his time on unimportant things, like trying to get him back on the team, convinced that together they would be able to find the scepter faster. Tony brushed him off rudely, literally saying that they screwed up his life and he was far better off without them. He was a consultant, and the Captain should remember that when he decides to remind him, again, that he was a part of some mythical team. A team that had no time for him after the accident, but came running when the shit hit the fan. That is how probably Loki felt every time Thor asked him to tag along.

“Good job, Loki and fuck you, but don’t forget, the next time we screw up we’ll remind you how ungrateful you are and how you should be happy that we allow you to save our asses.”

Fortunately for Tony, he was a rich and influential bastard that Earth couldn’t afford to vex, so he had a privilege to send them to hell every time they try to screw him. Unfortunately for Loki, he was a second prince who could not say shit, but refused to keep his mouth shut, and Tony respected him for it.

However, Rogers did one good thing, reminding Tony that he overlooked tons of important stuff in his wish to dissect the God. Yeah, Loki bluntly laid out to him all the reasons why he should be dead by now, and still missed couple of vital points, like the time when the guard brings him food or the all-seeing-fuck that Thor’s mentioned flittingly, and who by some miracle missed Tony sneaking in and out of his city. The latter he did not know how to beat, but guessed Loki will tell him, and prayed that before the God does, the watcher continues to be blissfully blind to his presence. The former, though, could be monitored by the tiny Spybot, which he, also, will infiltrate into the city to gather information and such. Loki, naturally, was his main interest and single priority, but, then, he never experienced a problem with multitasking.

“J, send the latest data to Pepper and make sure the Avengers stay the fuck away from here, ‘k?” He murmured, while stuffing his back-pack.

“Sir, may I remind you that you haven’t slept in a long while?” Jarvis asked courtly. Tony snorted, shaking his head.

“Jarvis may I remind you that I don’t give a fuck?”

“Mr. Loki may not share your love for insomnia, sir.” J answered crisply.

“Believe me buddy, he does. I wish he wouldn't, but we all know that wishes do not really come true.” He murmured, checking the list in his head; looks like he is ready to go.

“Sir, I do not appreciate you melancholy.” J warned.

“What did you expect J? I’m sleep deprived and enamoured with a highly depressed individual, not a
healthy combination.” Tony grumbled, ready to go out.

“Enamoured, sir?” The repetition made Tony pause and analyse the word. The meaning of the word went as follows: to be filled with love or have a linking and admiration for someone. He was not sure about the “love” part, but his liking and adoration Loki got no question.

“That’s what I said, J. Ta-ta.”

The curious spider caught Loki’s eye. The thing was minute. It looked, like an insect. However, at the closer inspection, which the creature allowed by crawling up the barrier and into his direct eye sight, it appeared to be a robotic construction that could belong only to one creature.

“You are back.” Loki concluded, trying to keep inappropriate yearnings out of his voice and, almost, succeeding in it, searching for the mortal.

“Did you doubt it?” The audacious, precious mortal asked, stepping closer to his cage with a bold smirk shining on his face.

“I was informed that you have a life, Stark, but it seems the information was false.” Loki taunted, willing his madly beating heart to calm.

“I do have an awesome life, Reindeer, and it upgraded to downright sublime when I found a way to wonderland and got hooked with its best wizard.” Tony pronounced cockily, liking how Loki’s pupils blew and a pale rose hue coloured his cheeks. “Which reminds me of three things – a pie, a guard and an all-seeing fuck in the skies. Let’s start with the pie, shall we?” Tony offered, looking expectantly at the God.

It took Loki some time to process what the mortal said, since his speeches were atrocious and mostly incoherent, but when the hot, embarrassed pleasure freed his mind, he pointed at the right wall.

“There is a panel there. Push it, put the food in and close it.”

“Sounds easy enough” Tony snarked, following Loki’s explanation, fascinated by the barrier that extended itself to a box, and then moved to another side without breaking the solidity of the construction or damaging the food. His mind instantly conjured several theories, but he ruled them to watch Loki, who took the pie reverently, as if it was a rare treasure, and then looked at him, eyes unbelievably bright and warm, before whispering soft: “Thank you.”

The moment was intense, but Tony refused to dwell on all the wrongs that was committed against this gorgeous man for such a reaction to occur, and brushed it off with a brash: “Don’t mention it.”

Loki gifted him with an indulgent smirk and invited to join with a gesture. Tony nodded courtly, taking out his own food, and they settled to have a dinner. For some time, they ate in silence, enjoying each other’s company and easy atmosphere that has built between them, until Loki decided to breach it.

“You should not be worried about the guard or Heimdall…” Loki started, but was interrupted by Tony.

“The who?”

“An all-seeing fuck in the skies.” Loki clarified, entertained by how Stark’s face has stuck between offended and, dare he say, aroused. “I will inform you when the former should come, and the runes
will shield you from the latter.”

“Oh, that’s so sweet…” Tony teased to receive a death glare, which made him snigger.

“It’s practical, mortal. Do you have any idea how bored I am!? You, no matter how crude, are better than nothing.” Loki hissed with poisonous shyness.

“Hey, Reindeer, I didn’t mean to raise your hackles up. I would totally protect you too, if given a chance.” Tony reassured him hastily, to get another angry hiss.

“Do you think me weak, mortal!?” Loki growled, upset that Stark would think he cannot stand his ground. He could admit that he was not at his best when they met, but still, he was a formidable opponent.

“Whoa, whoa, Loki, hold your horses. Nobody said, you’re weak. Fuck, you’re, probably, the strongest guy I have ever met. I, simply, meant that if you ever need it, I have your back.” Tony confessed, trying to placate the God. The words seemed to appease his anger, but brought out the sadness.

“Why would you do that, mortal? You have no idea what I have done or what I am. My own kin have forsaken me, and you want me to believe that you will not…” He said, laughing bitterly by the end. “I cannot afford that.”

“Why not?” Tony challenged, feeling sick to his stomach. “You have nothing to lose, haven’t you?”

“I still have shreds of my pride, Stark and I refuse to be fooled again.” Loki said jaded, hating how his abhorrence and insecurities were spiralling out of control. He wanted to intrigue Stark, not push him away. However, the words the mortal said were too infectious, too pleasing, and he shirked from that, afraid to get burned and wishing Stark would put him on flames, so he has no place to run nor to hide.

“Huh, good thing that I don’t, then.” Tony offered, flaming the God.

“You would trust me, mortal!?” He spewed in disbelief.

“Easy.” Tony promised, convinced that the God will not betray him.

“Then you’d be a fool.” Loki warned, because no matter how much he was captivated with the man, he could not guarantee the mortal won’t get hurt, because of him or by him.

“I’ll take my chances.” Stark shrugged nonchalantly.

“But why?” Loki whined bewildered. “Why someone, like you, who is easily comparable to a sun and can outshine Thor himself, will be interested in spending time and extending his good will to someone, like me?”

“Like who?” Tony asked boldly. Loki swallowed not wishing to tell him, but if this was the only way to gauge a true reaction out of him, so be it.

The God called his magic, tapping into his rage and hurt, to bring out his true self. He could feel the air becoming colder around him and could hear the mortal’s gasp, however it wasn’t one of horror and when he opened his ruby red, the expression was not one he expected to see, but he still moved with the explanation that the man demanded.

“A monster from nightmares, doomed to live in the cold and dark of the night.” Loki whispered icily.
The blue began to fade, but the awed look on mortal’s face didn’t, and he was sure it was wistful thinking from his part.

“I, think, you got it wrong, Loki. I, think, you’re the moon.” The man said, and Loki chuckled.

“A dead, ugly rock that floats aimlessly in the skies and it’s useless on its own….hmmm…I, think, you might be right, Stark.” Loki concurred bitterly; here it is - a true evaluation of his-self.

“That is not what I said, Reindeer. You see, the moon, probably thinks so, because everybody yapping about how the Earth holds it on its place, and how the sun gets it to shine, but what they do not say is that the Earth will fall apart if the moon disappears. It allows Earth to flourish, and protects it from asteroids, taking the worst hit on itself. The years of constant abuse left it scared, but it’s not a sign of weakness. It’s a testament of its resilience. The sun, though, shines too brightly. Everybody loves the sun, but from a fair distance. If you get too close you’ll get burned, if you get too far you’ll freeze. So, everybody dances in the middle, leaving the sun blaze alone in the cold cosmos. The moon, though, is not scared of its lights. It takes it in and makes something good of it, alighting the night with softer version of its fire, giving hope and disassembling darkness. Do you get it Loki? The moon is unique, one of a kind and breathtakingly beautiful.” The mortal explained calmly, like he was not confessing something impossible; like he was not thawing Loki from within.

“Oh my, mortal, what would your partner say if she ever hears the speeches you give to convicted criminals?” Loki jested, not ready to absorb the devastating amount of implications he heard. The mortal laughed, smirking at him playfully.

“I’m free for the takin’, Reindeer, if you’re willing.”

The gall Stark had was unbelievable, but the brazen flirting stroked Loki’s ego in all the right ways, and he was but a man, so he gave in, like he wanted to from the start.

“Consider me interested, Stark.” Loki allowed, and was rewarded with a sultry smile, that raised a few things.

“Oh, baby, I promise you won’t regret it.” He cooed cheekily, making the God laugh.

“I already do, insufferable mortal.”

“Tony.” The man corrected in a light-hearted manner.

“No.” Loki said, deciding to praise him. “Either you allow me to call you by your given name – Anthony, which meaning reflects your status perfectly, or I’ll keep calling you by the names I see fit.”

“I won’t deny you, Loki, especially on something small, like this.” Tony concurred easily, his voice rough and deep.

“We’ll see, Anthony.” Loki purred, liking how the syllables rolled from his tongue and the heated, dark gaze he received for his efforts.

“Can’t wait.” The man said dazedly, and then blinked the desire out, replacing it with another kind of curiosity. Loki smirked at him kindly. He was wondering when the thirst for knowledge will overshadow everything else, and was impressed by how much time he was given. “How does it work?” The mortal asked, caressing the barrier, and Loki wished it was his skin under those fingertips.

“Magic.” The God answered cryptically, enjoying the annoyed huff he got from the mortal.
“You do realise that hiding something from me is the best way to get me obsessed.” Stark grumbled.

“Huh, should I have known that I would have kept my desires hidden.” Loki hummed sensually, enjoying the effect he had on the mortal. However, Anthony was clever. He, probably, played this game hundredths of times before and was not easy to sway from his goals.

“I admit, not that it wasn’t obvious from the start, you are unlawfully distracting, but the fact that you are trying to dance around the topic is even more so. What’s the deal, Loki?”

The God was inclined to disagree with the mortal. He wasn’t the one who was abnormally captivating. Anthony has broken every rule; every pattern Loki has ever known. He communicated with the God on completely different level, with unknown attitude, that encouraged Loki to be himself. He uncovered Loki’s schemes and asked bluntly for the truth, at which point lying or diversion became useless. Striking.

“I’m afraid you’ll do something regrettable if I tell you how it works.” Loki shared, swallowing his pride and showing down the uncertainties. Anthony told him quite plainly that he wants him. He has every reason to question it, of course, but the temptation to believe it was too great to ignore.

“Like break you free?” Tony asked cheekily.

“Like that, yes.” Loki said solemnly, sobering the mortal.

“Why?” The man asked levelly, but Loki could see the supressed anger and hurt in his wonderful, brown depths.

“It will get you killed, that’s why.” The God explained patiently.

“Care to divulge the details?”

Loki shook his head, a stubborn expression stuck on his face and Tony got it for the best part, but it still pissed him off royally.

“You cannot know that!” He exclaimed. “I fucked the terrorist over with a hole in my chest, and nuked the alien army. I got here fine and dandy. So, you got a lot of nerve to say that screwing some fairy-tale prison will end me.”

The fierce protectiveness that shone in God’s gaze during his speech gave Tony no chance to change Loki’s mind. He understood that this argument was a practice of hypocritical demagogy, because if the roles were reverse he will not in a million years tell him how to do it. Fuck, sometimes he wished they were not that much alike. “But I guess, conflict of interest.” Tony finished tiredly.

“Exactly. Thus, cease annoying me and tell about this curious creature.” Loki inquired, tapping at the barrier where the spider was still sitting. The God smiled amusedly, when the mortal’s eyes lighted up with pride.

“This is a Spybot. I got them here to steal the secrets of this world undetected.” Tony shared and Loki snickered.

“Oh, do tell what mysteries they have unfolded.”

“I can do better.” Tony bragged, scooting closer and pushing a button on his wrist-watch. A holographic display sprung to life to demonstrate dozens of videos. “I can show you.”
Loki looked awed at the technology and mischievously grinning mortal. He was remarkable, that one. Oh, so extraordinary.

“This is magic, Anthony.” Loki praised, proud to catch the attention of such an individual.

“Science, Reindeer.” Tony corrected, smirking at him arrogantly.

Chapter End Notes

marikaAbowie, Mamitadolls, ImpishDesign, LuciferTheRising: So, you collectively hate Steve...hah, welcome to the team! ;)) Cheers! I'm glad you're sticking around still. I am happy that you write comments, that make me smile and get me all exited about my own scribble. (sending heart emojis)

Bloody_Princess: Total bitch! As I said never liked Thor that much...(cruel smirk)

Holy effing cow: Cheers! Such lovely words...always warms my heart ;)


The dreaming mortal and the protective God

Chapter Notes

Thank you for your interest and kudos, dear readers
Enjoy

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Anthony collapsed mid-word. Loki’s heart ceased to beat for a few painful moments to restart with desperate rhythm. Nines, what happened!? The man seemed to be healthy, just a bit tired. “Please, no!” The God snarled, his first landing with a dull “thud” on the barrier.

It could not be happening. Anthony could not die!

Nines, he felt so helpless. Useless. All the power of the Universe under his fingertips, locked in a box beyond which lays a man that he could … he is … “Please, no.” He whispered brokenly, sliding down the wall, eyes never leaving the man who gave him a reason to live.

“Fenrir…” Anthony murmured in anguish, making the God flinch. How does he know this name? “Fenrir, stop! Run!” The man shouted, sobbing and curling into himself.

Loki exhaled, relived. Anthony blacked out from the exhaustion. Stupid mortal. The name that have fallen from his lips, though, piqued the God’s curiosity. Upon his first arrival Anthony mentioned dreams, and by the sound of it they were not pleasant and involved him, to what extent it is yet to be discovered.

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The screams from the village froze his blood. The people were running towards them, some covered in blood, some with insane look upon their faces.

“Monster! Monster!” Their screeched, hastily leaving their own land. He felt pity towards them. Shouldn’t they stay and fight for what was theirs? He didn’t understand, for him there was nothing more precious than his home. He would gladly give his life for its safety.

“Father,” Thor said, coming closer. “It appears to be a gigantic wolf.”

“A wolf?” He asked, a sick worry settling in his soul. “A black one?”

“Yes, brother. Do you know the beast?” Thor asked completely serious. It was known throughout the kingdom that the second prince had a weak heart that sympathised with morbid creatures. He saved the serpent and tamed the eight-legged horse. All-father was not pleased, but chose to overlook that distasteful inclination, like prince’s fascination with magic, when it became plainly clear that the only way to stop him was to kill him.

“I hope not.” He murmured in distress, and then added firmly. “I need to see it.”

They rode to the cage when the beast was confided, and his heart sank. His dearest friend was trapped in his primal form, driven mad by a spell it seems. He could not look at the turn fur and scrapped muzzle, the clever eyes that he loved to gaze into clouded by bloodthirst.
“Do you know it?” His father asked and he nodded his head, hoping that he could save him.

“His name is Fenrir. He is a shape-shifter from Alfheim. I, think, he is cursed. If you allow me, father, I will free him from it, so we could give him justice.”

“Justice?” His father chuckled. “Oh, dear boy, your softness has no boundaries. I have half a mind to order you to bring me its head, but I know you don’t have it in you. Thor, my dearest son, if you may.”

Thor laughed, getting off his horse and strolling into the cage, ordering to let the beast go. The wolf snarled at Thor, launching.

“Fenrir, stop! Run!” He shouted, but his friend was too far gone to listen. He was growling at Thot, trying to rip him. Thot laughed, toying with the poor soul. He could not watch. “Please, father.” He pleaded. “He is not a beast. He is sick. We need to help him. Please, I beg you.” He beseeched, but his father was adamant.

“Yet again you disappoint me, Loki. Meekness is not something I want to ever see again, dear boy, and for you to remember that I’ll give you a reminder.” He said coldly, turning to the battling Thor. “Son, decapitate the beast and gift the head to your brother.”

Thor raised his eyebrow in confusion, but easily followed the order. The thunder God walked triumphantly from the battle-field, wolf’s head cradled under his arm; cheers and praises of merry folk following him.

“Why would he need its head, father? Little-Lo looks sick already.” Thor questioned, throwing piteful glances at him.

“He needs to learn how to control his timidness, Thor. Won’t you agree?” His father asked, and Thor nodded, offering the head to him. “Take it. We will show it your mother. She will be proud.” The king ordered, and he followed it, his hands shaking and his heart dying, but never muttered a word. He, already, done enough.

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The God woke-up from a light doze, to find Anthony close and staring. He smiled at him tenderly, his brain not fully awake, and raised his hand to caress that golden, silky skin, but his fingers bumped into the barrier, awaking him instantly.

“You’re cute when you’re sleepy.” Anthony giggled with a light tease, and Loki would have gotten annoyed but the mortal seemed to gravitate towards his hand, and he decided for another approach. He laid his hand flat on the barrier just to see what the adorable man will do. Anthony did not disappoint, grinning goofily and pressing his cheek right in. Loki thought it will amuse him, and to some extent it did, but it, also, brought out stronger emotions. He choked on tenderness and his eyes became unforgivably glassy. Loki was grateful that the position they were in didn’t allow Anthony a direct eye contact or he would die from embarrassment.

“What am I the rest of the time?” He asked with a bit of snark, to break free from the overwhelming fondness that was drowning him.

“Scorching hot, that’s what you are.” The mortal purred, low notes of primal desire ringing in his voice, resonating within Loki.

“High compliment, coming from the sun itself.” Loki cooed, wishing nothing more but to lay his hands all over that gorgeous body; pin him to the floor and make him beg for his touch; make him
swear that he won’t leave; that he is his. Alas, he was confined and is doomed to live without ever tasting that divine-looking skin.

Anthony chuckled, turning to face him properly. The man’s eyes were warm, and a happy smile that was sitting on his kissable lips made his features look softer, more captivating. Loki smiled back gently, feeling pride. He was the one who created that expression. He would, also, love to be the only one who could protect it, but this desire was way out of line, so he squashed it before it dared to settle in his mind. Anthony deemed him worthy enough to flirt, no need to spoil it with unnecessary clinginess.

“I guess I deserve that, calling you “the moon” and stuff. But, I wished, you’d believe when I tell you that there’s nothing to compare you with. You’re on such a high level the sun itself pales next to you.” Tony murmured, the memories of the dream buzzing on the background. He could not believe he was sitting next to such a being. He could no grasp how lucky he was that Loki noticed him, and his heart broke every time when he was reminded that Loki was abused beyond comprehension. He was literary stripped of every good thing he stood for to be gifted with prejudices, alienation, jealousy and neglect.

Tony wished he knew how to heal him. He wished he was better with emotions and rapport. He desired to know how to erase the nightmare and gift Loki happiness, but, alas, he was what he was – a damaged, obsessed, selfish bastard that was stuck with the equally broken and depressed God, whom he adored but did not have any idea how to save.

“I find it hard to trust, Anthony.” Loki said solemnly, confirming every dark thought Tony just had, but the mischievous smile that was hiding in the depths of his gorgeous, green eyes gave him hope. “However, coming from you it does not sound, like a lie and I was always partial to flattery.”

Tony snorted, rolling his eyes.

“I’m not a parlour magician, Reindeer. I am a scientist. I deal with facts, not fiction.”

Loki smirked bloodthirsty at him then. The expression was feral and sent chills down Tony’s spine. He had no right to be that excited about the expression that promised him pain, but he couldn’t help it. God demit, Loki was sex incarnated!

“What did you mutter, imp!?” The God hissed, but the bite was fabricated. Tony, however, knew that only because the dreams got him acquainted with Loki’s general ways, and now he could sort off guess when the God was playing him.

“Come on, Reindeer, do not twist my words. I did not mean to offend you.” Tony whined, righteous hurt in his voice.

“Did you now, imp?” Loki questioned with glaring sarcasm.

“Well, may be a little.” Tony confessed in a small voice, looking sheepish, and then they broke out laughing.

“Damn, Loki. I can see why folks piss their pants when you’re playing the offended card. Really scary.” Tony praised, brushing mirthful tears away.

“Hmm…” Loki hummed. “I wonder how you can tell the difference. It won’t have any connection with those dreams you are having, will it?”

The colour on Anthony’s cheeks rose, and he became suddenly shy, clearing his throat and rubbing his neck nervously, trying to keep the eye contact and failing.
“It kinda will.” He said finally.

“Would you like to share?” Loki prompted keeping his demons on a tight leash. He did not know how and what occurred, thus, jumping to conclusions won’t do him any favours. Anthony was nothing but delightful and deserved a bit of trust from his part.

“I don’t really know if to be honest. I tinkered with the sceptre when the thing decided to connect and then I got those weird dreams, that felt more like flashbacks. But then it led me here, so now I’m sure it was memories.”

The testament of how much Loki has fallen was the fact that he got angry at the mortal not because he saw something embarrassingly personal and had a gal to follow it, but because he touched the mind-gem. Nines, know what Thanos could have done with him if not for the device in his chest. Hel, why he was so careless!?

“Are you mad, Stark!?” Loki hissed at him upset. “Have you any idea what that thing could have done to you!?”

“Yeah, vividly.” Tony said, a certain darkness pulling in his gaze. Loki flinched. That was the part of his life that he hoped will die with him, but it seems Anthony knew. Nines, the humiliation. Did he pity him? Did he decide to save a broken weakling? That certainly made sense.

“All you thinking that I pity you?” Anthony asked him straight, and like before, Loki was left with no other choice but telling the truth.

“That thought crossed my mind.” The god answered reluctantly.

“I don’t. I admire you. I cannot phantom how could you survive that.” Tony said gravely, holding his gaze, and then waved around. “This, as well. It’s beyond cruel. I would go bonkers in a moth, you, though, lived in this hell for centuries and thrived. Fuck, how did you do it, Loki? I’m blown away by the sheer power of will you have. You were fucked over by everyone and still stood for what you thought was right; still tried to do good. It’s amazing.”

Loki did not have a suitable reaction to Anthony’s words, since kissing him silly was out of the question, so he decided to clarify something, instead of acknowledging his speech.

“What else did you saw?”

“I saw how you mastered the fire spell and shape-shifting. I have watched how warriors beat you, and the execution of your friend.” Tony said, his voice clean of any emotion. Loki was grateful for that.

“I see.” The God said, taking a deep breath. He could not change that. Anthony saw what he saw and draw an unexpected conclusion out of it. Maybe he was not jesting when he said that Loki is something unique to him; something divine. May be Anthony truly saw him that way. At very least, he knew what a failure and disgrace Loki have been and still decided to come; still blessed him with his acceptance and affection. Maybe Anthony will not forsake him. Maybe he has finally found someone who will truly appreciate and understand him.

“I’d say I’m sorry, but I am not.” Anthony proceeded, probably, because Loki failed to say anything more. “It brought me here, and I rather not be anywhere else.”

Loki smiled at him tenderly. It did not matter. He was glad that Anthony knew. He would not have told him himself, afraid that it will push him away. The shameful secrets, though, would have eaten him from within, constantly reminding him that he was a fake, a disappointment, a mask. However,
Anthony looked behind it and found the creature pleasing. Loki would cherish this kindness till the end of times.

“I’d say I’m mad that you have such intimate knowledge of my downfalls, but I am not. I’m relieved you know and still here.” Loki answered with truth, delighted when Anthony rewarded him with a pleased smile. “However, I still feel rather violated and at a disadvantage. Care to put us on level ground?”

“Here he is, my God of mischief!” Tony cheered joyfully. “I will tell you whatever you wish to know, Loki or if there is any way to give you a Starkpad, you can read it yourself.”

Loki did not correct him, more than pleased that Anthony called him his; not something he would allow in the past, but his mortal was in no way an ordinary man, thus, he had rights nobody had before.

“I do not know if Odin’s magic will allow it to pass…” Loki said, feigning thoughtfulness. “Care for an experiment, my dearest imp?”

“Duh!” Tony mocked, springing to his feet and opening the panel. Loki watched him with adoration, happy beyond believe, because Anthony did not correct him either.
The transfer of the Starkpad did not go as smoothly as they wanted it to, which fascinated Tony to no end. The barrier did not allow it to pass and Loki’s face fell. He anticipated something like this.

“It’s calibrated to allow only certain things to pass…” Tony murmured, fetching his bag and taking the candy bar out. He put the bar atop the Starkpad and closed the panel without resistance, chuckling degradingly. “I, guess, All-fucker did not see that coming.”

“Nobody did.” Loki muttered affectionately, taking the device and switching it on. The screen came to life showing him dozens of files: technology, culture, literature, history, arts, you name it. The God’s hands trembled, but he quickly took his emotions under control. “You made this for me.”

“Yeah.” Anthony confirmed. “I wasn’t sure if you’d talk to me, so I compiled some stuff that I find interesting in hopes that something there might intrigue you enough to consider me. However, it went rather splendidly without it, so it slipped my mind.”

“I…this…” Loki choked on words, emotions spilling all over the place. This man, who saw a glimpse of his glorious life went out of his way to make him feel something. It floored Loki. He couldn’t grasp how a heart can be so golden, and praised Nines for allowing him to touch it. “Thank you.” He finished lamely, his voice rough and vision blurry, but at this perfect moment it did not matter.

“You silver-tongued devil, you.” Stark teased him, eliciting a laughter from the God.

“You are something else, imp.” Loki complimented him, finding no other words to describe Anthony. The man chuckled.

“Whatever you say, Reindeer, ‘cos you know – it’s not me, who’s divine here. I’m just glad you do not know Tarantino by heart or I’d start worrying.”

Loki sniggered, putting the device aside for the time being. He was grateful that Anthony was so thoughtful, but the man was, also, wrong. He was the most captivating thing in the Universe, and nothing else has the chance to satisfy the God, not anymore.

“Says the man who quotes yet another bloody masterpiece. I wonder what interests you in those?”

“The absurdity of horror. The characters are exposed to trauma and explicit violence constantly, which leads them to a breaking point with two possible solutions – accept or go crazy with guilt. I adore how they never chose the second option. The bloody hell suits them, and I, sometimes, wish it
would look good on me too.” Tony shared with unreadable look.

“Ah…but if I recall correctly you were heatedly argumenting for peaceful approach, deeming unnecessary violence a cave-man tactic.” Loki argued, fascinated by the duality Anthony was harbouring.

“Yes, I did and yet I’m flying in an armoured costume blasting the bastards that dared to cross my sense of rightful off the skies.”

“Thus, you mean to say that you are standing on that proverbial crossroad unable or unwilling to choose, and the movie interpretation or rather justification of violence soothes your guilt? Or is it going deeper, Anthony? Are you perhaps afraid that you becoming a monster? Do you think you took too much responsibility? Are you seeking redemption or confirmation that you are not insane?” The God inquired curiously.

“Fuck, Readier, when did you get a psychology degree!?” The God smirked at him mischievously, and Tony groaned. “No, Dr. Smart-ass, I do not wish to talk about it.”

“Oh, my dear, I thought you were willing, if not to say obligated, to share.” Loki jabbed him with a bit of a poison. The God was aware why exactly Anthony was unwilling to discuss this, but could not miss the chance. The device paled in comparison. Dry facts lacked the rainbow of emotions the man lived through and evoked in him. He wanted it, and he was not about to deny himself such pleasure, even though it was drawn from his dearest misery.

“I gave you a Starkpad, haven’t I?” Tony got defensive. Even though he promised Loki to tell anything he wanted to know, Tony prayed that the God would simply read it, may be asks some clarifying questions and leave it be. Tony did not go pocking his misery, so why in hell Loki did?

“You, also, said you’ll tell me whatever I wish to know.” The God reminded, and Tony outright whined.

“Don’t be cruel, Reindeer. I did not analyze any of the disturbing things I saw, and definitely won’t ask for clarification!”

“Why would you need to ask, Anthony? I was under impression you relived it all.” The God stated rather coldly, making Tony sigh in defeat.

“God, it will be such a mess. I need a drink.” He complained, his expression sore.

“I gather you don’t have one.” Loki said rather pleased.

“’Course not. I did not need alcohol around you, Loki. Not until recently.” Tony bristled.

“Why are you so upset, Anthony? It cannot be worse than you saw. I am not in a place to judge or think ill of you. However, if I do it will be the highest form of hypocrisy and a sure sign for you to leave here and never come back.” Loki said seriously, deciding to soothe his fuming imp. He was not being fair to him, using Anthony’s good grace to satisfy his sick need for closeness, if not physical than emotional.

“No, I rather think my problems look artificial in comparison.” Tony shared reluctantly. “My life is, almost, happy considering the hell you’ve gone thorough, but it haunts me, and I…” He fell silent, looking at the floor. Loki’s heart bled with sympathy and guilt.

“Your pain is not insignificant, Anthony. It is important for you, and as such deserves to be heard and soothed.”
“Do you truly think so?” Tony asked unsure. He was not in habit of sharing his troubles. J, did not count, since he was not strictly human and dealt with Tony’s whining in efficient way – provided solutions or listened without comment, which equalled to “shut up.” This arrangement worked for him. He didn’t have to worry Pep excessively or admit what a morbid creature he is. He, also, could ignore his emotional problems and focus on science, blissfully ignorant of the demons that wanted to tear him apart, and if everything else failed, he could drink himself to stupor, sleep it off and go on, like nothing ever happened.

Loki was different. Tony could not dance around the topics or mask the truth in gibberish, because the God payed attention, and worse, some of Loki’s demons were a mirror reflection of his own.

“Mhmm. However, if it’s too much to ask, I won’t push.” Loki gave in, allowing sentiment to win over his greed.

“When did you ever gave in, Reindeer? You’re going soft.” Tony mocked playfully.

The God chuckled, a bit surprised that Anthony’s teasing did not bring the bitterness forward. On the contrary, it felt liberating to be able to jest about terrors they both faced, and suddenly Loki understood what enamoured Tony. Those films were filled with gore to the brick, and yet, they laughed in its face, refusing to bend and break over circumstances that they could not control, instead, they reconcile it to come out stronger and better, like Anthony did. Whatever demons haunted him had no control over his choices. He was vibrant, positive-minded and full of life. Anthony if not won then was winning his battle with darkness, and Loki, only now noticed that the man was crippling his torments too.

“I am, don’t I?” The God asked gently, caught in wonderment. “It’s your doing, imp.” He added, struck by the realisation. Anthony was not a placebo or a distraction, nor he was a dependency. The man was healing him for real. “Will you tell me what troubles haunts you or you prefer I don’t pry?” Loki tired again. Anthony, probably, will make a decent being out of him some day, but it was a long way away.

“Hmmm…I owe you, Reindeer, so let’s get even.” He said with a heavy heart. “It’s nothing grand, but I guess I got a bit fucked up along the way. I mean my family was alright. The father was an asshole, but couldn’t hold a candle to your adoptive shithole. I, also, had my own “Thor” in the face of Captain fucking-perfect America, and couldn’t live up to his greatness. MIT acquainted me with all the joys of bullying, social awkwardness and jealousy. But unlike you, I gave up on my dad around seventeen, and fucked them all around mid-twenties. It’s hard to be depressed when you’re acclaimed genius and the world practically eats from your hand.” Tony bragged, arrogant smirk on his face, but Loki was not buying it.

“However, it did hurt you.” The God remarked.

“It did. It sometimes does even now. But people will always shit on other people, so at some point you learn to give as minimum fucks as you can, and just continue doing your thing, you know.” Tony shrugged nonchalantly.

“So, you did.” Loki encouraged.

“So, I did, and fucked-up royally. Before I became “Iron man” I was called “Merchant of death.” My company, “Stark industries”, were working on weapons, and let me tell you I loved creating them, I still do, but at this point they are strictly monitored and, usually, made for me. Then not so much. I trusted a snake and it bit me.” Anthony hissed with barely hidden loathing.
“Is this how you got a glowing circle stuck in your chest?” Loki asked, taping his sternum.

“It’s called arc-reactor.” Tony explained with an amused smirk. “Yeah. As you know, already, I got tortured in Afghanistan, what you do not know is that my “father figure” sold me to them to get control over my company. He, also, tried to kill me personally, so, I killed him instead. After the incident, I reinvented my vision and build another goal, but violence does not leave me. I’m still the same old merchant, simply with better toys and cleaner PR.”

“That’s what bothering you?” Loki asked, afraid to hear the answer.

“No, Loki. I, think, you know what’s bothering me.” Tony said, looking at him pointedly.

“You’re afraid that it’s not bothering you enough. You are scared that you are a monster, but at the same time, the Universe is a cruel, harsh place that has no mercy and only monster has a chance to survive. As a practical mind you see the benefits, as a humane being you cannot justify the viciousness.” The God whispered snakingly.

“Yeah. So, I drink, avoid sleep and invent crazy things, trying, unsuccessfully, to postpone the unavoidable.” Tony shared, humorous grin on his lips.

“The day you have to admit you are one.” The God said, regretting he started this. Anthony was way much closer to him that he could have ever foreseen. The man knew that as well. He was aware of it from the start, and he warned him in advance, but Loki did not listen, and now he will have to dance with two devils instead of one.

Anthony nodded, but strangely serene, confusing Loki.

“Why are you so calm?”

“Hm, because the day has come and it wasn’t epic.” The man shared, looking at the God calmly, and he shivered.

“What do you mean?” Loki asked in a small voice, pleading mentally for Anthony to be silent, and praying that he won’t keep his tongue.

“Loki, please, don’t. I’m guessing you’re terrified, but we both are aware of how this works. I voiced it. I analysed it. I have a fact. I will work with it. The end.” Tony confirmed Loki’s suspicions in an off-handed manner.

“You’d be an admirable God of lies, Anthony.” Loki told him, letting him know that this wasn’t easy and his bravery is admired, but is not mandatory. If Anthony wanted to be weak, he could. Loki will not criticise him, only ever support.

“No way! If you couldn’t pull that hideous helmet off, I’d totally look, like a jackass.” Tony snorted, stretching and shooting him a grateful look, but choosing to brush it off. Loki had no squabble with it either.

“You look, like a jackass right now, and I see no helmet.” Loki snarked, letting the horrors go. Anthony laughed at his unimpressed glare, cooing:

“We were lucky you wore it, because if you didn’t, the better part of the troops would have been distracted by your stunning looks, and you would have won regardless of your wish to lose, babe.”

“You’d too?” Loki asked, toying with him, simply because he could.
"Duh, babe! Or did you think I allowed you to get that close to the arc for what – scientific purposes? I was fucking stunned by you!" Tony defended, with a lot of boldness and even more passion. He was such a delicious picture, with his lips curled into confident smirk; brown eyes shining with appreciation and desire; pose relaxed and inviting. Loki’s fingers twitched with thirst to touch, and he unconsciously licked his lips, immediately getting ignited by those smouldering eyes.

"Say, Reindeer, are you still adamant on staying locked and shit?" Tony asked swallowing, his voice liquid fire. “Because I really want to kiss you right now.”

Loki could not stop himself even if he tried. Probably later his mind will remind him that this was a stupid thing to do, and he should have had more control over himself, but Anthony taunted him openly and he was never known for being patient.

He moved to the barrier quickly, an inch from the maddening mortal – his mortal – a man that dared to bring him to life; to goad him and start an inferno that threatened to burn him alive, and hissed, his voice low and soaked with darkest desire to own.

"I would love nothing more but to ravish you breathless, dearest, but I will not risk your life. I’d rather die never knowing how you taste, then allow such brash foolishness.”

Tony glared at him, rolling his eyes and moved closer, plastering his body to the barrier, and if not for Odin’s magic Loki would feel every inch of it. He stood on his tip-toes to look Loki straight in the eyes and whispered: “I hate how protective you are,” before leaning in and kissing the spot where the God’s lips were.

Loki whined – pitifully, agonisingly, not hiding the torment and scorching want. Anthony deserved such reaction, for such a heart-breaking action.

"Are you very sure?" The rebellious imp asked, challenging him.

“I am very sure that when I do get out of here by trickery or otherwise, you my dear, will be in great trouble.” Loki promised him heatedly, loving how Anthony trembled and bit his lip, forgetting in the heat of the moment that this was never the plan; not noticing that his unconscious already decided that he has a future.

“I’ll hold you to that.” Tony purred, and Loki would tease him further, but his magic buzzed unpleasantly and he grimaced. “What is it?” Anthony asked concerned.

“The guard.” Loki said, his expression sore. “You have to go, and, do rest. I won’t have you collapsing again.” He added sternly, to be laughed at.

“Sure, sure.” Tony drawled, stepping back reluctantly and grabbing his stuff, before turning back to him. “See you later, Reindeer.” He said, smirking broadly.

“See that I do, imp.” Loki said, getting his emotions in order. Anthony nodded, blowing him a kiss and disappearing behind the door, leaving the God with a wildly beating heart and a new goal forming in his mind.
A dream for two

Chapter Summary

I do not write summaries for this story... but this is just too perfect to pass...

marikaAbowie: OH MY GOD JUST KISS ALREADY!!!!
Tony: Geez, girl. No need to shout. We are, actually, in this fucked-up fairytale and do you see us stressing?
Loki (holding Tony close): Patience is a virtue, but, that's being said, (gleares at the poor, unfortunate author) readers are getting antsy, dear creator.
Author (roles her eyes): Yeah, readers... (mumbles quietly) It's not me who's being overprotective...
Loki (politely, with a sharp, wicked smirk): I didn't catch that, care to repeat?
Author (pales): Errr...
Tony (imitating the Author mockingly): Thank you for comments and kudos, dear readers. That's what you wanted to say, correct?
Loki (chuckles darkly): and Enjoy
Author: ...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Tony waltzed from the portal with a foolish grin on his face and head full of rainbows. Something inside him buzzed peacefully, and he thought that this must be how happiness felt like. His personal, moody, fucked-up felicity. He stopped, looking at the sky and then around himself – the scenery he was not in the habit of considering, brought him joy - and wondered if the world finally became a great place to be.

He lingered and stared, feeling the light breeze on his skin, hearing creatures wondering around, taking in all the boring, irrelevant stuff – the shapes of the clouds, the intensity of colour, the scent and the warmth – suddenly understanding the lyrics of sappy love songs; the beauty of paintings; the drive behind poems...

“Huh…” He breathed out, shaking the spell of. “He is one hell of a mage.”

“Sir?” Jarvis asked politely.

“Hey, buddy. Is everything peachy in our kingdom?” Tony inquired, starting to walk, feeling the fatigue. Probably, he should sleep a bit, just so he could stay longer with Loki, since the guard seemed to forget to bring food every day, which reminds him: grocery shopping. “J, find some diligent cuisine on this rock and make an order for two, don’t forget lemon pie.”

“Of course, Sir. I will try hard not to forget. Concerning your first inquiry; Miss Potts have called to check upon you and strongly suggested you call her back in person. Director Fury demanded you contact him as well, but I took the liberty and blocked his ongoing messages.”

Tony chuckled at his AI’s supreme voice, and regretted, again, that Jarvis rejected an idea of embodiment. He would be a bomb!
“I knew I could count on you buddy. Dial Pepper, please.”

“Wise decision, Sir.” J approved.

“Pfft. We both know that I’m not so secretly terrified of her. I’m just glad she does not know Loki yet, because when she will...Gods, I’m so doomed, J.” Tony whined, already feeling the proverbial clouds gathering above his head. There would be no fun anymore – no giving addresses to shady people, no taunting hulk, no blowing up stuff, no experimenting on alien glowing sticks...His life will become safe.

“Sir, Loki is a God of lies, chaos and mischief. He is a well-known prankster, war-criminal and wanted by dangerous and highly dangerous individuals. Your adrenalin addiction will not face withdrawal.” Jarvis explained patiently, and Tony face split in two.

“Oh, sweet, sweet child of mine, you gladden my heart.”

“I live to please you, Sir.” Jarvis snarked.

“Heh, in the future we’ll be in so much trouble, J, like you cannot imagine. He is veeeery protective.” Tony drawled, getting inside his improvised shelter, that he created using the ruins. “Why Pepper is taking so long to answer?” He whined impatiently, flopping on the matrass.

“I’m afraid to be presumptuous, Sir, but that may be because she is running your company.”

“She is better at it than I am, J, and you know I do not apply anything but the best to everything that I have.” Tony mumbled, rubbing his eyes, and stiffening a yawn. Damn, he was beat.

“That’s why Sir has me for science, obviously.” Jarvis bantered, but in a quitter manner. Tony could hear the soft melody playing; the one that lulled him to a dreamless rest.

“No only, buddy. You’re my only family.” Tony reassured him, his eyes closing on their own.

“If we follow this logic, Sir, what Mr. Loki’s role in this be?” He heard his AI asking, but was too far gone to answer.

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Tony was dreaming of the white fields under indigo-blue skies. The grass was high, and soft to the touch. There were no troubling thoughts in his head, only serene calmness. He smiled, walking towards the horizon.

For some time, it was the continuous sea of white and blue, but, after a while, a blood-red splash caught his vision. He turned to have a better look, and gasped. A little meadow was presented to his gaze, in the middle of it sat his favourite God, his eyes closed and pose relaxed. There was a smile on his lips, and his face was clean of sorrows. He looked young, like this, but Tony had no doubt that it was his Loki. He stepped closer, holding his breath. He wanted to remember this perfect picture, when his God looked absolutely content.

When he was sure that his mind saved all the nuances – the shadows that long, dark lashes threw on the sharpest of cheekbones; the black, curly tresses that framed angelic face; the rosy, kissable lips, slender neck and tempting collarbones that peaked from the red cloth -  Tony stretched his hand to caress the alabaster skin.

The skin was silky in texture and cool to the touch. The feel sent goose bumps of pleasure down his body. Loki shivered, opening his mesmerising, emerald eyes and stared at Tony, with a bit of
confusion and barely contained excitement.

“Anthony?” He asked.

“Loki.” Tony said his name, like he didn’t dare to say it in reality – a prayer. The God’s eyes widened impossibly, and a pitiful, little whine have fallen from his lips.

“Don’t call me that, Anthony. You said it yourself, I’m not a God.” He dismissed him with a horrible longing and universal sadness. Tony hated it. He wished he could press the greatness and beauty back into him. He could not do it in real life, because the waking-world Loki was not ready for that. He will not believe him yet, but he could shamelessly adore him here, because Tony decided what he wants – Loki, all of him – exclusively and eternally.

Tony rubbed Loki’s skin with a thumb gently, liking how the God’s eyes clouded with desire and he leaned into the caress, never braking the eye contact. Tony moved forward brushing their lips briefly, making them both shiver, when an electric shock travelled down their skin, adoring the icy taste of sweetness. He, thought, it to be ironical – the dark God tasted, like candy.

“In general sense, you are not.” Tony murmured into his lips, darting out his tongue to lick those tempting lips, just to get a better taste. Loki’s flavour became reacher; a holy sweetness with a tang of spice. Tony was absolutely in love with it, and wondered if he kissed him fully will he get this delicious, painful burn. “But for me you are one true God whom I am desperate to worship and serve to. Thus, tell me, deity, will you allow me to show you how divine you are?”

There was a tremble followed by a hush, choked sob. Loki turned to nuzzle his palm, and hide behind the curtain of his glorious hair. Tony could not hear the sound, but felt the moisture on his skin. He hated tears in general, but this felt different. He wasn’t troubled or stressed by it, panicking, because he did not know what he did wrong and how to stop it – no – here, right now, he knew exactly why this is happening and what he should provide; he wanted to give that – free of charge, any time.

He touched Loki’s hear gently, caressing it soothingly, allowing the God to cling to him, and embraced him, when the other brought him to the ground, practically crawling into his lap.

It was an awkward pose, since the God was so damn long, but Tony did not complain. He liked the chill feel the body clinging to him gave, and the weight was pleasant, as the fresh, earthly scent. The God felt perfect to him, and Tony moaned, brushing his lips along Loki’s jaw comfortingly, since their new position allowed him the access.

“You are ideal, Loki.” He murmured, pleased by the God’s quite moan.

The God shifted, arranging himself in a way that allowed him to look at Tony comfortably. He was now sitting between his legs, his long limbs caging his hips, Tony’s legs stretched under his. Loki smiled at him tenderly, his eyes glowing with wonder and a bit of shyness. He took his hand, running his fingers down his skin, pleasure alighting his face, and then kissed the inner side of his wrist, leaving a trail of light pecks, till he reached his upper arm to bite it softly, before going up and claiming his lips with no further ado.

Loki’s caress was soft, but demanding. The God nibbled at his lips, asking for entrance and Tony granted it without hesitation. The clever tongue slipped inside his mouth to caress, and intertwine with his own. Tony grunted, clutching the God’s clothing, stopping himself from pouncing. This meant to be agonisingly slow.

They parted for an inch to get some air into their lungs, caressing each other with their heated gazes.
Loki gifted him with a brilliant smile, that was just a bit predatory at the edges and moved. Tony’s chuckle fell to the grown, when God’s curious lips travelled along his jawline and down his neck, lapping at the sensitive spot above his collarbone. Tony hissed, feeling teeth, grinning wantonly. Loki was holding back as well.

The God nibbled and kissed the area thoroughly, before making his way to Tony’s ear, teasing the organ sensually.

“I cannot possibly see how a being of your statue can serve anyone, even a God.” Loki purred with conviction. “It is me, who should kneel before you and plead to be taken…” He continued, but Tony could feel Loki’s feral smirk with his skin and dark, seductive power with his soul, so, the next words were anticipated and aroused him greatly. “But I rather take your offer and fuck you into submission so you could never leave me. So, you’d be forever mine.” The God said tugging his hair rather harshly to tip his head and loom over, but the kiss was torturously gentle, tenderness hitting him, like a whip. Loki pushed him back softly, but despite the overall delicacy, his touch was skillful and confident. The God covered him with his body, rocking in small motions, exploring his mouth boldly, while talented hands were searching for sweet-spots, and Tony could clearly see his place in all of this.

Loki did not want to wake up from the dream. He wrinkled his nose in annoyance, chasing the sounds from his mind, desperate to stay with the beautiful mirage that was slipping through his fingers. He gave a final lick to the sun kissed skin, breathing in the rich scent of sandal wood and let the alluring fantasy to fade.

The God opened his eyes slowly, basking in the afterglow of enchanting illusion, wondering if Anthony would ever allow him to rule his body, like that. Loki could admit that it was exactly how he wanted it to unravel. Anthony was this rebellious, careless, unstoppable and unbendable power, which will not tolerate any master, and the thought that the being such as he will give the reigns to Loki willingly, simply to please, was addicting.

In a dreamscape, he felt omnipotent. There he was formidable and glorious. There he was a rightful king and omniscient God, all because of the Sun.

Loki sighed, willing his body to calm. Those were dreams, and reality taught him not to get caught in those, but he could not deny it anymore – he wanted Anthony far more than he desired death. It paled into the comparison. It yet to be seen, however, if any good will come of this, and he will not break the deal in case it will crush and burn, but the original plan should be altered. He desired to get the taste, so the cage must go.

Tony woke-up with a feverish tickling all over his body. He could swear he felt every teasing caress the God bestowed him with, and that tongue was truly a dangerous weapon. He was rather glad that he did not experience it in a real life, because all Loki should do is kiss him and Tony would gladly throw any world to his feet.

Damn, he was in deep shit this time, but fuck he relished in it. He thought, in passing, that Loki may drag him to the edge, but the God threw him into the bottomless pit of truest affection he could muster – that screamed trouble, and was highly hazardous. Tony grinned, like a mad man he was.

Jarvis was so right when he said that his fetish will not be forgotten. Loki was sharp, and Tony will enjoy all the cuts he will sustain.

“Fuck, J, if only you knew what hell I brought upon myself…” Tony said dreamily, mussing if he
could break Loki free from the cage without the God noticing what he was up to, until it would be too late to stop him.

“I can imagine, Sir, especially, since one of its ugly demons will appear here in ten seconds.”

“What?” Tony asked to see Fury storming in. “Never mind.” He said, motioning for weapons to go on standby.

“Stark!” The director roared, before taking the picture in, and glancing away in brief show of discomfort to return with full glare.

“What!?” Stark bristled indignant. “Can’t a man have his peace!? I’m obviously busy” He added naughty, pointing at the prominent bulge in his pants. “Visit another time.”

Chapter End Notes

Rhyfedd: Hello :) That was intense. Thank you for your interest. I like how you dissect the story. It's very faltering.

AceOfLesbians: (bows) Glad you found it enjoyable :)

LuciferTheRising: Cheers, cheers, cheers, cheers! :) So, I won't get greedy ;)

Mamitatolls: Ahhh, we adore you too, dear ♥♥♥ I'm glad it does. I hope it will continue to do so too :)
Trust Fury to be unfazed by his boner. The guy seriously needs to learn some manners, and, probably, visit a psychiatrist, who will explain the meaning of “personal space”.

The director looked around the barren walls, work tables, papers and designs lying around in disarray, before arching an unimpressed eyebrow at him.

“Sometimes I wonder, what in this misery gets you off, Stark?” Fury drawled, killing Tony’s excitement effectively. Why he decided to join the Avengers initiative, again? Ah, the imminent death or slavery…Yeah, that sounded, like a diligent reason.

“The things that gets me off will melt your brain, Nicky, so, I advise not to dwell on those.” He retorted with a shit-eating smirk, that made a vein pop on Fury’s temple. “That said, they are intriguing and you are keeping me from enjoying them. I must confess, it vexes me.” Tony pressed, sniggering when the one-eyed fuck scoffed.

“Is all a game to you, Stark? Is there no shred of decency in you?” Fury chastised.

Tony rolled his eyes, shook his head, levelled Fury with a glare and stared hard, to shook his head again in total disappointment.

“I am a weapon manufacturer, like my father, and my grandfather, and probably the one before him. Do you think decency was a valued characteristic in my family?” Tony asked sarcastically.

“Your father…” Fury started, but got cut off by a furious Stark, who sprung out of bed and bared his teeth at him.

“My father is dead, and if you try to resurrect him again, you’ll be too.”

The Director’s eye went wide, and he re-evaluated Stark who looked uncharacteristically hostile. He must truly have interrupted something the meddling, unstable creator considered more important than humans survival.

“Anyway, why are you here? I told, Rogers, everything I knew.” Stark whined, flopping back on his improvised bed, and Fury allowed his body to relax.

“You told him less than nothing, Stark. However, I’m here to discuss another issue. Jane Foster has created a ruckus, and was taken by Thor, before we could question her. At the site, we have found time shifts, and portals that lead to disturbing places. We need your expertise.”

“On what exactly? You know I don’t think portals, Nicky.” Stark drawled, looking bored and a bit cutting on the edges. This hostility was fresh.
Stark did not favour them. It wasn’t a secret. The man was clinically averse to authority. Stark could not function under any government, that’s why he became one himself. It was under the wraps and not something they would allow for public consumption, but a few chosen ones were painfully aware that “Stark Industries” was not a company, it was a country, with an exclusive fire power that may and surely will wipe the planet with their asses and thrive. Thus, it was all a game, truly. If Stark suddenly decides that Earth annoys him, there will be no Earth, and what scared Fury the most, there is no one who could stop him, not even self-proclaimed Gods, whom Stark crushed singlehandedly.

Fury, thought, they have gotten to him. A show of alien power; a proof that he cannot stand alone, no matter how powerful or untouchable he was there was something bigger than him and it worked. Stark became more pliant, cooperative and they relaxed for a heartbeat and it was enough for the genius to hack their servers; to dig up all the dirt and grab their balls so tight they could barely breath. He used their leverage against them and threw it in their faces, coming out smelling roses from the sewerage filled with shit.

It did not cripple him. It made him wilder, and estranged him further. As if now, Fury could see clearly, if they make one wrong step, Stark will scorch the earth beneath their feet and laugh, while they’ll be burning to ashes. The question was what brought this on? Was it their brush dismissal of his recommendations or this was a bigger issue; the one they could not possibly see, because their brains were not capable of grasping things as his could. However, no matter the split and open wish to disregard them, they could not afford to lose Stark completely, that’s why Fury came here personally. He did hook Stark once, he could do it again.

“You think strategy, Stark. I admit we shit the bed. You were right in regards of Thor and shady businesses they pull right under our noses. They do not recognise us, as anything but ants. We’re equalled to the sandbox in which they measure they dicks before moving on to another one. You saw it miles away. You tried to warn us. We did not listen and now I’m in the position of a beggar.”

“Huh, that’s new.” Stark commented, but did not look especially interested. Fury grinded his teeth. Stark will make him writhe. “However, my cholesterol is high enough, so stop buttering my ass and cut to the chase.”

“The WSC wants you ASAP on the scene. I’m authorised to use any method of persuasion.” Fury divulged, and was not surprised by the reaction.

“Oh, why haven’t you told me this from the start, Nicky? I’d go running immediately.” Stark snorted sarcastically, getting up again. “Wanna drink and talk terms?” He offered opening a bar, and taking whiskey out.

“I wouldn’t mind.” Fury agreed, feeling progress. Stark served him a drink, before settling back with his own.

“The only way you’ll get me Nicky, would be if all the data, findings: material or otherwise, will automatically become SI property.” Stark said solemnly.

“You know they will never agree to that.” Fury argued.

“Either this or “fuck you”, Nicky. It’s that simple.” Stark shrugged, sipping his drink.

“They’ll come hard at you, Stark.” Fury warned, but there was no bite there. The Director, more than anyone else, was aware that they posed no threat to the man, but tried to bargain a better deal anyway.

“Then I’ll crush ’em. But, it’s in our best interest that they don’t. I’m busy right now, you see, and
the petty war will hold me from a thing that I’m craving so badly it hurts. Who knows how my frustration will cripple the land…” He drifted off, his face getting a darker look. Fury swallowed. The motherfucker decided to screw them bigtime, and there was nothing he could use against him, only submit and do, as he wants.

“I’ll make it happen. When will you come?” The Director asked, getting up. He stretched his welcome to the limit and it was time to get out, before his ass gets fried.

“In a couple of days. I need to wrap up here first. In the meantime, J will get legal with you if that’s alright?” Stark said dismissively.

“Yes. You’d better be there, Stark.” Fury threatened out of habit.

“I will.” The man promised smirking at him in a way that made him uncomfortable. Fury nodded his goodbyes, and rushed out not wishing to stay in one place with that highly sensitive time-bomb any longer.

Stark watched the Director go and rolled his eyes. If it wasn’t for the mischievous, green-eyed miracle that he was enslaved by, he would shoot Fury on the spot and then wipe the WSC from the existence, just for presuming they could bully him into anything. However, it would take precious time and the opportunity to study other paths were intriguing. He, also, didn’t want government’s dirty hands all over precious alien tech, thus, it was better get elbow deep into this, since he wasn’t about to commit another theft.

Stark sighed, feeling sore and bitter. He didn’t want to go. He craved to stay here and sneak back to Loki. He desired to see him again and talk the shit out of their intellect, and then flirt with the God who illuminated his entire being. He was longing to ravish the beautiful being that reconstructed his heart, hooked it to the high voltage cable and made it go on again on something far more precious than stubbornness.

He was desperate to break him free till the point of irrationality. He could not see him locked up. It made him vibrate with disgusting longing of bloody retribution. Just the thought of Loki’s unfair treatment made him a savage brute, who wished nothing more but to rip Odin’s throat out, and that won’t do.

He acknowledged that Loki was far beyond important. He was invaluable, and Tony did not cope well when someone of this importance was not available to him. The frustration will lead to stupidity, which usually was not a problem, but this time will cost him greatly. Thus, he needed to cool; to process it and come up with a solid solution. Unfortunately, J couldn’t cover the emotional palate. He needed a different kind of expert.

“J, reach out to Pep.” He asked.

“Yes, sir.”

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Loki was amusing himself by re-reading the plays of Shakespeare - “Hamlet” was his favourite, there was something compelling in the idea of killing the entire family out of grief and youthful spite - before clicking at the file that he truly wanted to read.

He was not sure what was stopping him, but it did not feel right. He had this irrational sense of guilt despite getting a permission from Anthony. For a long while he had no-one to protect or cherish. The misguided feeling of inferiority that made him believe he cared for his fake-siblings did not count.
The emotions he felt for them were poisonous. It brought him torment and misery, whereas, the sentiments he held for Anthony alighted him from within, thawing his frozen, abused heart, and made it swell with soft, golden light that he was desperate to preserve.

These emotions made him mindful. After all he was aware how anxious he was to appear ideal for Anthony, loathing for him to be aware of his weaknesses. He wanted to be worthy of his affection, and suspected that Anthony was no different. Thus, reading the sweet imp’s mishaps and shameful secrets felt, like an intrusion. However, he did want to know more about the man, and theoretically it was justifiable.

Ah, no matter. Anthony fucked him up majorly, but still not bad enough to sway him from the read.

Loki did open the file, and the first page made him laugh.

[Mister Loki, I apologise for the improper address, however, no one will think of doing this, so I must. My creator is a master of many wonders and only a fool will think he cannot stand for himself, but he is, also, a sensitive man that has his vulnerabilities hidden from the public eye. The following text will give you an opening to destroy him, but I strongly suggest you take the gesture as it meant to be taken and honour the trust you have been given, otherwise, with outmost regret I should inform you that I will take action, which will end in your demise. Choose wisely, Mister Loki and take good care of my creator. Yours faithfully, Jarvis.]

The God was amused by the Stark’s AI. The sentient creation conjured a new experience for him – a shovel talk. Never he had a partner that considered him seriously enough to alert the close ones. It warmed him from the inside. This was the proof he was under Anthony’s skin and there was no reward sweeter than this for all the horrors he withstood.

The further reading was not in any way entertaining, though. Anthony’s life was depressingly grotesque. Many of his struggles Loki shared too, and that made the read painfully personal. Loki sympathised with the man and longed to maim his abusers. He, also, was impressed beyond wording. Anthony was uniquely formidable, and the God was glad they were not enemies. The fact that the man wanted him made his head swell with arrogance. He could not have found a better match if he tried.

However, one thing, from all the unhappiness and crippling stood out - Anthony’s thoughts on his family, which did not shower him with affection, but still had a place in his deeply scared heart.

[It’s all shit and giggles, I hate-y(s) and slamming doors, but when they’re gone, they’re gone. Finito, kapish? And, suddenly, you find yourself with a bottle of whiskey, soaking wet and miserably pathetic, sobbing breathlessly, clinging to the tombstone, pleading for forgiveness... but the deal with death is – it’s uncaring and silent. There will be no answers and no second chances. So, the point is, you either sort your shit while everybody’s breathing or regret your pussy tendencies till the end of your cowardly life.]

Loki did not agree with self-reproach, and self-loathing that bled into the memories that Anthony has shared, but he could recognise the irony and mutual hypocrisy. They were a reflection. He got luckier, though. His family, however fake, was still here. There was no reconnecting with Odin, as he will be more than happy to dance on his corpse, but Thor and Frigg...no, his mother... deserved some consideration. All right, may be not Thor. There’s too much ill between them, and he was sure the oaf will add plenty more, however, his mother...she did no wrong. Her patience was angelic, and if he was honest with himself, he could admit that he was unfair to her. She wanted to give him hope, a sense of belonging and he found a way to cut her out of childish spite.

He sighed, closing his eyes to calm the raising hurricane of negative emotions, but a light brush of
wind startled him. He dropped the tablet, raising his head. There she was – his second chance.

“Mother.” He greeted, keeping his voice levelled, discretely waving the device to the table; won’t do any good, but he just couldn’t let it lay there.

“Mother?” She mocked him. Loki groaned, feeling the colour rise on his cheeks.

“I wasn’t thinking straight and was out of line. I am ungrateful and undeserving of your affection or mercy, but I am your son no matter the blood, and I apologize for lashing out on you.” He beseeched, painfully sincere. She watched him with a penetrated look and smiled softly, nodding her acceptance. He exiled relieved, inviting her to join him with a gesture.

“Heimdall returned to his duty.” She remarked casually, settling in across him and briefly scanning the tablet, before returning her attention back to him. “The curious vibrancies of air around your cage that he informed me of makes a perfect sense now, as your overdue apology.”

Loki paled, and rage that consumed him scared him back to common sense. He was flabbergasted by his own reaction. The God was ready to hurt her to keep Anthony safe. It was disconcerting thought, but never anything felt so right and true in his life as this crushing desire to protect the one he adored.

She watched him with a wise eye, like he was transparent to her. An indulgent smile was lingering on her lips, and he sagged. He could not fight her. She may allow him a sense of tricking her, but it was never the case. She knew, always.

“Don’t fret, my child. I will not compromise your friend. They seemed to have a good influence on you. You look healthier.” She said kindly.

Loki took a deep breath, and snarked with controlled resentment.

“Until Odin hears of it.”

It hurt. The possibility of not seeing Anthony again ate his insides, like acid. He was not sure if he could function without the man’s smart mouth and promising smiles.

“He won’t.” She promised, taking him aback.

“I appreciate you giving me the warning, but don’t be cruel, mother.” He pleaded. This sort of lies he cannot entertain. They will destroy him before Anthony’s absence will take a toll on him.

“I am not, my son. The deeds you have committed upset me. I do not stand by the half of them, but I, also, acknowledge that sometimes life demands questionable and despicable actions of the ones who fight for their existence. Thus, I will not have Odin punish you more than he already has.” She said heatedly, a furious fire burning in her gaze, and then she smiled in a way Loki has never seen before. It was cold and vengeful. “Moreover, he allowed my child to fall into the void. That will not be forgiven nor forgotten.”

“Why haven’t you told me this before, mother?” Loki asked in a small voice, feeling guilty for his thoughts and actions. He condemned her and judge her when she was loyal to him. She loved him, and it broke his heart.

“You were not ready to listen, my dear. Now you are, and I’m grateful to whomever stitched you.” She said gently.

“His name is Anthony, and he is a natural disaster, unpredictable and brilliant, like a sun in zenith. He blinded me, mother, and I’m afraid I won’t be able to accept the light if it’s not his.” Loki shared,
glad to be able to talk with her freely.

“He sounds like a worthy man.” She approved, and it made him lightheaded. “I’m happy to see my children finally settling.”

“Children?” Loki asked curious.

“Yes. Thor brought his mortal lover here.” His mother shared.

“I guess Odin flipped.” Loki laughed joyfully.

“He did, but saw reason. Jane is sick. The poor girl managed to find Aether, can you imagine?” She said, her voice marred with light concern. Loki sniggered. “Your mirth is unbecoming, my child.” She chastised playfully, before her expression became serious. “I wish you were with me, Loki. It’s hard to rule those oafs with one voice of common sense.”

“I cannot apologise enough for lashing out in such a crude way, mother, but it’s done.” Loki said, brushing off the regrets. “What you’d ask of me, my Queen?”

“Is there a possibility to remove Aether from the girl without killing her?” She asked.

“Hmmm…” Loki hummed thoughtfully. “There is at least three ways I can think of, but all of them will maim her severely. She’ll be alive, though.” Loki finished with a mischievous grin, giggling at his mother’s unimpressed stare.

“She may be not as impressive as your beloved is, but Thor cares for her deeply and I will not see him upset by your doing. I rather see how she spoils it herself.”

“Oh, you do not approve of her that strongly, I wonder what the wench did…” He commented.

“Nothing, really.” His mother shared with a bit of shame. “It’s not her fault that she’s not that smart or remarkable…Nines, Loki, she’s so plain, it’s disgraceful. I cannot understand what he has seen in her.” She complained to him. He smiled tenderly at her. It felt, like old times.

“Unfortunately, I cannot change her hair colour and sway almighty Thor’s affection that way.” He patted her arm consolingly, and she smiled at him.

“Thank you, my dear child. However, it won’t work this time. She’s a brunette. “

“Merciful Nines, how low mighty Thor has fallen!” Loki exclaimed, feigning horror and their both laughed.

“Tell me is it wrong of me to be so shallow?” She asked.

Loki chuckled, waving around.

“Not exactly the right son to ask, mother. But, no, I don’t think so. You wish the best for us. It’s natural to feel hostility towards the one you deem unworthy.”

“You are the only son I can ask, my dear.” She said standing to hug him, and stopping at the last moment, scoffing. “My child, you must do something about your predicament. It’s getting ridiculous.”

“I’m on it, mother.” He answered seriously.

“Good, good. I must go now, my dear. Tell Anthony I said “hello” and will maim him if he hurts
“Mother!”

“Hush, my child. It’s a mother’s right. Also, Malekith is coming, and you don’t want him here for it.”

“Time table?” Loki inquired.

“Two-three days, and then make sure he’s not here for several weeks to be on the safe side.” She said with a soft smile.

“Thank you, mother.” He said sincerely, whishing he could touch her.

“Always, my child.” She answered sweetly, before disappearing.

Chapter End Notes

RenneMichaels: Right? :) I am sure of it. He probably has a special time in his day devoted specially for it :D

Mamitadolls: Thank you for finding time to praise me :))) ♥♥♥

Lokislonelylady: The shouts were for the kiss, location was not specified :P :))))
Cheers!

marikaAbowie: Thank you, luv. I'm glad you liked it. I was a bit nervous about the summary part, but, hey, it went great :)))

Kitty_Grell_Laufeyson: As if you can command me, mortal :) But yeah, won't be bad at some point :)

LuciferTheRising: :)) I love your enthusiasm. Cheers!

Lilipdlgb69: Cheers! I'm glad you like it.

Rhyfedd: (bows) Glad to meet the expectations. You are marvelous you know. Your comments, your involvement, questions...they make me think beyond...I thought of so many ways of twisting this story, it's distracting. You're distracting and inspiring. I love it, thank you.
If you want to make the God laugh make plans

Chapter Notes

Thank you for your comments and kudos, dear readers
Enjoy

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“'It’s so nice of you to call…” Pepper cooed sarcastically.

“'Course, Pep. You know I can’t live without your attention for long.” Tony answered in the same tones.

“You mean function?” She asked rhetorically, smiling. “It’s good to hear you, Tony. What’s the matter?”

“I won’t even pretend it’s not the case, ‘cos it totally is. I’m getting stupid, Pep. Fast.” He shared, rather concerned and she got serious.

“I assume it has nothing to do with the Avenger’s crusade, and everything to do with what Fury fears most?” She inquired. Tony pursed his lips, puzzled.

“If you mean my humble ass going on a rampage, because the fucker tried to fuck me - no. It’s not the case. It’s more of…” He drifted off.

“Personal matter. Tony, I get it, and so you know, Fury’s ultimate fear is that you’ll make an alliance with the wrong person. Nobody missed the attention you gave him. Nobody.” She emphasised.

“Huh, and here I thought he knew I do not need an otherworldly power to crush ‘em.” He mussed distractedly.

“Tony, Loki.” She said, not liking how fast his attention snapped back. Pepper feared the worst.

“Yeah, Loki.” He said dreamily, making her flinch. Damn, it was bad. “He is a stubborn, protective, selfish piece of work, who does not allow me to break him free, because…URGH!...It makes me restless, Pep. I’m obsessing, and fucking Fury with his insignificant demands… I cannot ignore him, though. There’re things I better get to… But, I…the thought that he is there, out of my reach, locked up, like a dog…I… It makes me wanna destroy, Pep.” He finished disgusted with himself.

“How did you allow him to get so deeply, Tony?” Pepper asked gently, steering his passion into a positive channel.

“He’s a deity, Pep. He doesn’t need permission.” He said reverently, and she sighed, that part was done. Tony was in love. Time to test for probable damages.

“Why is he against jail-break?” She asked neutrally. This may backfire in so many ugly ways, and if Loki was using Tony or hurting him, she’ll find a way to fry his godly ass.

“Because he is an overprotective idiot, that fears a little fun!” Tony whaled, upset.
“Ah, so the potential escape can hurt or kill you, I gather. Points to him.” She finalised, giggling at Tony’s sour expression.

“Fuck, it’s, already, starting…The end of the era. You hear that, J. She is taking his side…fuck!” He cursed, and then a tiny, giddy smile appeared. “I hope it means he cares.” Tony murmured wistfully, and it was cute; the insecurities of young relationship; the guessing and anticipation. Pepper’s heart would have melted at the site, and it did a bit, but mostly it raised worry in her. They were not regular human beings. It was an intractable, unpredictable, snarky genius and potentially unhinged, prone to violence, silver-tongued mage stepping into unstable and devious waves of romantic connection. Their fights won’t involve broken plates and bruised egos’. They’ll destroy countries, worlds even, if worse comes to worse.

“You hope?” She teased, brushing the dark thoughts away. They, also, can be great for each other and the Universe. Time will tell.

“Heh, you know me, Pep. I won’t recognise attachment even if its drops to its knees and sucks me off. He said he’ll consider me, though, and that hot, on the edge, flirting got my hopes high.” He confessed, a bit of colour appearing on his cheeks.

“What about you?” She inquired. Pepper was aware that he was deeply attached, but she wanted to know if he was, and if that’s the case, what he was planning to do with it.

“I, think, I’m totally screwed, Pep. He is mind-blowing and mind-numbing. It’s not the body or information that I want or desire, no matter how drool-worthy it is. I want Loki. I feel restless if he is not close to me; if I cannot reach him. I long to fix him; to make him happy. I’m prepared to sacrifice a lot, probably, myself too, just to see him satisfied. I gave him “the file”. I told him everything, and he got it; truly understood. I cannot forget about it. I cannot let it go. I’m hooked. He has me in whatever capacity he wants.” He confessed calmly, like he gave a lot of thought to it, and it impressed Pepper. Tony was difficult when it came to emotions. They were too chaotic for him, and passion that he felt quickly became obsessive and suffocating. He slipped into darkness and moodiness, doubting himself; trying to shut it down; break free, and she couldn’t keep him together; to take him in, but prayed that Loki will, and it looked like he did good already.

“That’s a lot of progress, Tony. I’m impressed.” She praised, and saw Tony becoming uncomfortable.

“Pep, I don’t mean to hurt you. You were great. I mean…ah…It’s different with him. It’s like I’m looking in the mirror and he’s staring back at me. There’s no discomfort between us. It’s harmony. I know what he needs and how he needs it. I feel no pressure and I see how the machine is working. It’s magical and at the same time basically rational, if you get what I mean?” He said, unsure if she follows.

“I do, Tony. You love him.” She said simply, smiling happily at him. She was glad he found this, even if it was not with her.

“Yeah…” He said softly. “So, what do I do not to get ferociously idiotic?” He added in a brash manner.

“Hmmm…there is one thing you can do, but it won’t be easy. In fact, it will be the hardest thing you have ever done, Tony.” She said, delighted when he leaned in to the screen, his full attention on her.

“Talk to him.”

Tony sputtered, throwing his hands in the air. She laughed.
“The joke is getting old, Pep. I’m dying here!”

“I’m serious too, Tony. If what you said is true, then he knows how you feel and won’t make your life harder than it should be; talk this through; scheme together. Probably, you’d come up with a perfect plan of escape.”

“Problem is, the “let’s-break-you-free” topic is taboo, like “Stark-senior” banned.” He shared dejected.

“Oh…” Pepper remarked. “Will you hate Loki if he brings it up?”

“Hmmm…He knows better than to do that, but I guess, if he wanted to clarify something…I mean, I won’t be thrilled about it, and probably bite harshly…but no. I cannot hate him for anything. He’ll make it into something good anyway.” He mused.

“There’s your answer.” She said with an indulgent smile.

“Oh, all right. I see…Thank you, Pep!” He exclaimed.

“Your welcome. Is there anything else you wanted to talk about?” She asked, seeing clearly, he had already forgotten her.

“No.” He said distractedly, and then blushed. “Errr…I mean…How are you?” He inquired lamely. She giggled.

“Your attempt at politeness greatly appreciated. I’m good, Tony. You may go.”

“Thank you, Pep, truly. When I’m stable, I’ll apologise. Bye.” He said, moving away.

“Bye.” She said to the dark screen, hoping that this will not end in tatters.

<**>

Loki pretended for a half-an-hour that the absence of Anthony did not affect him much, before falling onto the bed ungracefully to indulge in full blown sulking.

The thoughts in his head were running circles, whispering how he missed the way Anthony spoke and the way he moved; how he thought; how he commanded adoration and alighted him.

The arrogance made itself known mocking the softness he acquired. There were days when he would be brash and uncaring, set on the goal and willing sacrifice anyone in his quest for desired treasure. He was free from attachments and weight of sentiment. He would manipulate and play, until he got bored and walked away, like nothing happened. Those were the lies he was telling himself for centuries.

Loki - the stoic, sneaky God, who did not need others and was free from emotional ties that brought sentimental fools down. He was better. He was improved. He did not need a reminder of how fickle the promises of undying love were. He was smart. He needn't to have a second lesson. He has learned it the first time.

At very least, he liked to pretend he did. It was glaringly obvious why he made a spectacle of himself. A basic need for love and recognition drove him. He was deprived of affection for so long it drove him mad, and to think that he had found what he was searching for; fighting for, destroying and killing for; in a man that should despise and hate him was unbelievable, and highly desirable for it.
Anthony was a paradigm of impossible. The man brought the transformation and conducted it flawlessly, crushing, reorganizing, reshaping, breaking and then rebuilding him anew.

Loki became a better version of himself. A stable one. The one that knew it’s not alone. It’s cared for, recognized for all its flaws and glorious strengths. Anthony saw him and chose him, and there was no better feeling in the Universe.

“Hey, Reindeer. Hope you’re missing me.” His imp’s sweet voice broke into his musing, and he turned, ogling the man shamelessly.

“I am and I was.” Loki answered truthfully, adoring the flush on Anthony’s cheeks and a heated stare. He was addicted to the displays of imp’s affection, and since being himself aka truthful, was the easiest way to gain it, he followed the course. Besides, truth was never rewarded so handsomely before. “What took you so long?” He asked, half concerned, half caprice.

“For starters, I didn’t want to get caught by your guard or piss you of, so I rested.” He spewed the word, like it was something rotten. Loki sniggered at that. Oh, what a treat Anthony was. “Then other unpleasant things got in the way resulting in unreasonable amount of time wasted on petty things.” Tony complained.

“What things?” Loki inquired, getting off the bed and coming closer to Anthony, who looked troubled.

“I’ll tell you later.” Tony dismissed him, flopping on the floor and Loki followed wordlessly. “But before I’ll get to that discussion, which will be painful in all kind of awkward ways, I propose we have a date.”

“A date?” Loki asked, respecting Anthony’s wish to keep whatever troubles worrying him to himself, for now.

“Yeah. You said you were interested, and I figured, why not do what normal people do for a change.” Tony shrugged, taking out a circle-like device, a bottle of wine, a glass and various packages from the backpack.

“I’m a God from another world, sentenced to spent the rest of my days in this foul place. You are in the said retched place, illegally sneaking food and entertainment. This is not normal nor it has a potential to become so.” Loki teased, while Anthony busied himself with preparations.

“Smart-ass.” Tony grumbled affectionally, installing the device. “Here we go.” He said, returning to the spot, where Loki was, already, sitting with a glass of wine, waiting. Tony pushed a button on his watch and the machine came to live, showing a big screen.

“Ah, we’ll be watching a movie.” Loki remarked, feeling mushy. He wasn’t bestowed with romantic gestures often if ever, and, to his shame, he could not remember when somebody wanted to indulge in idle activities with him, so, this was new and precious.

“Yeah, if you want to.” Tony said, a tad insecure. Loki smiled at him encouragingly.

“I’d love to. Unfortunately, at present time, I cannot court you properly, Anthony. However, when I resolve this predicament, I’ll make sure to spoil you.” Loki promised, dead serious, and Tony’s heart skipped a bit. He didn’t know if the God noticed, but he basically told him he wants to get out, and that titbit of information made Tony’s night.

“Sure.” He agreed, smiling at Loki brilliantly.
“So, what are we watching?” The God inquired, brushing the place, where Anthony’s shoulder met the barrier. Tony made sure to touch the spot, where Loki’s fingers lingered, before answering.

“Inception. There’s something about living in other’s dreams, you know… tempting.” Anthony said pointedly, a knowing smirk on his lips and Loki trembled. He foolishly hoped that it might be the case, but did not truly gave it thoughts. It was the rarest of occurrences, but the possibility of them sharing one – that one – please, Nines, let it be true.

“Absolutely. However, dreams often are too good to be true, that’s when you know it’s not a reality.” Loki argued, treading carefully.

“Yeah, right. I thought so too. But then I dreamt you, and you’re real.” Tony said, and Loki smiled sweetly, humming.

“I’ve dreamt of you too, Anthony.” Loki divulged, stalling. He, already, told him in the heat of the moment, what he longed to do, but that was played around and ignored. The God knew intimately what significance maintaining a control had in their life and what it meant to give it away. It was tricky. It was a confession.

“What about?” Tony asked, but the tone lacked curiosity. He behaved as if he knew already, and Loki desperately wanted it to be so, but was reluctant to push in fright he’ll spoil it.

“Affection.” He answered generally.

“Did you like it?” Anthony asked inquisitive.

“Immensely.” Loki confessed. The powerful desire to have Anthony in that way sipping into his voice, making it rough.

“Good. ‘Cos whatever you saw in that dream, I’m sure I’d enjoy too.” Tony reassured, his voice hitting a seductive note.

“Will you? Are you prepared to give me that much?” Loki asked, going all in.

“In a heartbeat.” He said easily, no doubt or regret in between.

“You know it’s a dangerous game you’re playing…” Loki purred, longing to be out and on him that instant.

“I’m not playing, Reindeer. But I’m fine with getting burned.” Tony confessed, keeping an easy-going attitude, despite the weight of the words he was saying.

“Oh, my dearest imp, such humility, when we both know it’s me who will be reduced to ashes.” Loki answered in kind.

“I will not let that happen. If I can help it, nothing will touch you ever again.” Tony promised, and Loki believed him.

“Except you, of course.” The God added playfully.

“If you allow, yes, gladly.” Tony smirked at him suggestively, making him yearn for other possibilities.

“In a heartbeat.” Loki answered in his words, feeling the truth in them.

“You know, it’s scary how similarly we’re fucked.” Tony jested.
“At least, we get the humour.” Loki countered, and they sniggered.

“Yeah. So, movie? "Inglorious basterds"?” Tony inquired, loving the sassy smirk he spotted.

“For a second there, I started to doubt your taste.” Loki drawled, nodding.

“Be careful with that, ‘cos I chose you too.” Tony bantered, pulling the movie.

“Yes, that’s definitely says it’s good.” Loki snarked, arranging himself in way that allowed him to press the best part of his body to the spot where Anthony’s back was rested against the barrier.

“No, Reindeer. It indicates that its awesome.” Tony smirked, glancing at him around the shoulder. Loki blew him a kiss, giggling at the open wanton look he got, before Anthony turned his attention to the screen.

“I swear I’ll fuck you senseless the moment you’re out…” Loki heard him grumbling, smiling wildly. He was happy, and whatever comes he will not lose this feeling.

Chapter End Notes

marikaAbowie, LuciferTheRising, badwolf5225, ImpishDesign: (mwahahah) You’re cute, dear readers. Teaming up, again :) But you know she dies already...right?

divinecrone: Hello! Cheers! Another one for "Team Frigg". We'll see, we'll see...

Morfanerina: Cheers! Yeah, that’d be awesome :)

Lokisloneylady: Don’t worry ’bout it. You cannot force the muse. They are all fickle...I have stories that will never see the light of the day or hope to be finished...It happens :) To gain inspiration, you can talk with somebody you trust or to strangers. ‘Cos I personally am a possessive bitch when it comes to my stories (babies), so I do not take advices kindly...but random plot guessing or comments can get you far...like a lot of comments my readers leave...so many stories were written cos of them, ’cos of you :) But the most important part is to believe in yourself. You are awesome, and if the story does not come, may be it does not deserve to be written by your hand :)

Rhyfedd: You are scary and awesome, all in one wrapping. Keep thinking on it and with me. It's a pleasure to read your reviews, and I will try to keep you involved and guessing, 'cos, honestly, I always, loved a challenge. :)

Mamitadolls: Hey, my personal pool of adoration :) Thank you for keeping me in pleasant mood and inspired to continue. ♥♥♥
Tony laughed his ass off on the intricate and dark humour, appealing to him in all the wrong ways that felt right for all the wrong reasons, but Loki was right there with him, chuckling at immoralities as freely as he did, so, yeah, date night was a success.

“They fucked Landa masterly.” Tony commented, when the screen turned static, mirth ringing in his voice. “Damn, I wish I could pull this off with those who tries to fuck me over and walk free.”

“You are trying to tell me you can’t?” Loki asked, amused. The film was greatly entertaining. The company even more so.

Tony chuckled, shaking his head and turned to face the God properly. He was tipsy, and the closeness, a sense of comradeship was muddling his brain. He felt comfortable in his own skin, thus, the words that came next weren’t mindful nor he felt any reluctance to speak his mind unfiltered.

“I’ll forgive this blindness, ‘cos you’re a fucking royalty used to smite your enemies in whatever way you please, but I, regrettably, am but a humble human, who is tied by, not many, however, unbreakable social expectations. I cannot stretch my lovely extravaganza to mayhem and murder, ‘cos then I’ll be a supervillain and those are selling bad.”

“Oh, you’re worse than that, my lovely imp. You’re a vicious beast hiding in plain sight, under polished façade of philanthropy and good grace. You cultivated an image of a hero; a saviour, and slipped them a drug, instead of medicine. They became addicted. The withdrawal will not be tolerated. It is lethal. They know it and they will worship you like it or not, so, do not tell me you cannot burn them, because I am acutely aware you can. What I’m interested in is why you won’t, foolish strive to do good aside.” Loki taunted, preparing to get very comfortable under Anthony’s skin.

“Hmmm…You’d seduce me to the dark side in a second, Reindeer.” Tony murmured thoughtfully.

“If you believed in such canonic terms, that is.” Loki commented with a knowing smirk.

“Yeah, if I did. But, honestly, I do it out of spite. I do not have to explain it to you, Reindeer, when you’re smart as I am, the world is just a playground. I can pretend as much as I like that I do care about fates of others, but, in the end, it’s collateral damage. Thus, I can sway into any label, won’t change much for me, but for the world…Oh, those fuckers love to talk about how I’m crazy, unstable, rabid monster that cannot play with others and one day fuck them all royally, and they are right, I can do that, but I won’t, because that’s exactly what they expect.”

“And there is no fun in meeting expectations. Nines, I’m so stupid…” Loki drawled, glaring at the chuckling imp.
“That you are, but, you are, also, young, you’ll learn.” Tony offered with an infuriating, patronising smirk stuck on his face, and it did rob Loki the wrong way.

“Don’t you dare to start it, mortal. I’m older than your civilisation.” The God hissed, mortified. He knew Anthony was right. He was old comparing to humans, but by Asgardian standards not so much.

“I get it, you’re embarrassed. But you shouldn’t be, making mistakes is a part of growth, and, fuck, do I wish mine was as spectacular as yours. In my mid-twenties, where I assume you, roughly, are, I was high and drunk, selling bombs and rockets I made from my pre-school drawings, because I was too stoned to design anything new. You, though, fucked up half the galaxy, being legitimately brain-dead. If that’s not something to be immensely proud of, I don’t know what is.” Tony said, and Loki could hear pride in his voice; the recognition of his talents and intellect; the admiration of his skills, and he couldn’t hide the grateful smile that fought its way in.

“Fine. You’re forgiven, for now.” Loki allowed.

“Hmmm…I apologise for bringing it up. It was a dirty move, but I wanted you to see the other side too.” Tony confessed, looking sheepish. Loki waved him off.

“I admit it was a catastrophe. I’ve been stupid and clumsy. It was a spectacular error of judgment, which I lacked to begin with, and I paid a high price for it too.” The God agreed, and felt calm. No rage, hatred or misery was spotted. It was a fact. Loki could talk trauma with Anthony all day without flying off the handle, because the man spoke the language fluently.

“Yeah, talk about fitting the bill, heh?” Tony joked, before melancholy took him. “I wished you hadn’t, though. It’s mushy and out of character, but you got me functioning on butterflies and rainbows, so, I cannot stop thinking about shielding you; pampering you; doing everything I can to take you away from this nightmare and then making sure it will never happen again.”

Loki smiled, stretching his hand and putting it on the barrier. Tony did not hesitate to do the same. The God watched their connected hands for a moment, before returning his attention to Anthony.

“I’d bet a weak ago you’ll die laughing if somebody told you, you’d be this sugary.” The God teased. “I’d die laughing too, if somebody said I’d love to hear all that fluff and long for more.” Loki confessed. Tony laughed, smiling at him broadly.

“Dead on, Reindeer. But if you really want to hear something rainbow-vomit worthy, you should listen to what I said to Pepper the other day. Oh gosh, it has “Twilight” written all over it.”

“No way, that sappy?” Loki asked, eager to learn what Anthony had said.

“Full blown trashy romance. The clichést of the cliché. You’d not be impressed.” Tony murmured, getting shy.

“I was so far.” Loki encouraged.

“It’s because you’re severely deprived of any kind of affection, and I’m fucking lucky that you tolerate my clumsy advances.” Tony said jokingly, but Loki got alerted. This did not sound, like a wish to wiggle out of confessing. It sounded, like a true doubt.

“You know I want you, Anthony, right?” Loki asked, not wishing to beat around the bush, and felt sore when Anthony glanced away for a brief second.

“Yeah, you made that clear.” He agreed, but Loki was taken aback by the insecurity he saw in those
lovely eyes. Did they not discuss it already? Wasn’t it obvious how helplessly compromised he was?

“No. I think, I didn’t. We are on the same page, Anthony.” Loki reassured.

“Are we?” Tony inquired, but it wasn’t what the God anticipated. There was insecurity and doubt, but it lacked the cutting edge. It, suddenly, downed upon Loki that if he says “no” or decides simply to have some fun, Anthony will not condemn him, because it was deeper than losing control, and getting helplessly attached. Anthony wasn’t asking for anything. He was giving himself freely. It floored him, and at this moment Loki could swear he never loved anyone more.

He, also, was shocked to learn that Anthony was not doing it consciously. He did not choose to be brazenly honest, he simply was. His imp had no clue how to recognise the emotional undertones. Anthony guessed them, probably, by observing and analysing Loki’s behaviour. He most likely was not aware of how deeply Loki has fallen, and the God should remedy that asap.

“Yes, we are.” He said seriously. “And, so, you know, you put Gods to shame. Everything you do or say is perfect. Except, may be, one thing – you truly suck at emotions, my dearest imp. Your intuition is flawless, though.” Loki teased, trying to confirm his suspicion. Tony giggled.

“It’s not a secret, Reindeer. I was so uncertain when it came to you, ‘cos you are highly wired on them and I’m a fucking klutz. Wonder, how you managed to get so friendly with ‘em…” Tony inquired, and Loki smiled at him gently. Anthony was painfully sincere, and it won him over every time.

“You did very well, probably, because you haven’t a clue how to do it. So, you didn’t try to manipulate me. You just were. I got hooked on the attitude, became an addict, and I will not survive a withdrawal.” Loki admitted, rewarding him for the bravery and effort. “My mother, of course.” He answered the original inquiry. “She made sure I was loved and cherished, and did not become an emotionless retarded.”

“There’s one hell of a mother you have.” Tony praised, not missing how relaxed Loki was. That could mean only one thing. “Mended that particular bridge, have you?”

“I did, and must thank you for it. If it weren’t for your brash disregard of my fragile state, I’d have degraded and wouldn’t see the obvious, yet simple, truth.” Loki confessed.

“Which is?” Tony asked curious.

“Odin never loved me. I am but a mere tool for him. A disposable one. Thor is an idiot, who will do anything to please his ego. Mother loves me, despite my many flaws, but it all does not matter. My self-worth should not be connected to praise people give me. I’m worthy of anything I want, and acceptable as I am.” Loki shared, a bit apprehensive.

“That sounds legit, except for “acceptable” part. You are a fucking God, Reindeer, don’t forget it.” Tony teased.

“You told me yourself, I am not one.” Loki mocked.

“Then you shoved me an error of my ways and I became a believer.” Tony snarked back.

“Personal God then.” Loki corrected magnanimously.

“I wish. But the moment people truly see you…heh…you’ll be worshiped in no time.” Tony whined possessively. “You know what, I think I like you here better. The energy-thingy is annoying, but, at least, you’re all mine.” He added darkly, albeit, playful.
Loki adored the jealous notes he heard. They made him feel cherished and important, but he was a God of mischief, so, he goaded Anthony.

“Are you certain?” He purred, pinning his imp with a smouldering stare. “I for one would be thrilled to touch you.”

Anthony whined shamelessly. The sound rich with need and hellish want.

“You’re a fucking tease, Reindeer. You love to tell me how willing you are, and it drives me nuts, imagining your clever hands upon my body and your wicked tongue wrapped around my cock, but you’re not allowing me to help you. You insist on staying locked, and the mixed signals are kinda vexing.”

Loki narrowed his hypnotising emerald eyes at him, and the cocktail of displeasure, awe and lust buried in there, awakened a craving that Tony did not know how to satisfy. It wasn’t hunger, it was ravenousness. He wasn’t aware he could feel this much and frighteningly deep. It was scaring the shit out of him, but the warmth he could see and the longing he could hear in the God’s voice kept him locked in place. Pepper told him it was love, but Tony bet his ass it was something much darker and primal. A feeling that the world has forgotten. It was nameless. It was vicious. It demanded to consume, and Tony was inclined to dissolve in it.

“You do love to dance on the edge, imp.” Loki hissed, his voice rough with desire, but words filled with irritation. “I wanted to spare your pride, but since you are insistent I will tell you why you cannot ever break me free. This construct is an admirable trap, and I would applaud the ingeniousness of it, if it wasn’t designed to mock me, and to think that Thor of all people came up with the idea…” Loki took a deep breath to calm himself, and chuckled bitterly. “This cage is a monument built to honour Thor’s intimate betrayal. I was foolish believing he will keep my secrets. He didn’t, blabbering them out the moment he felt it will gave him credit. Ever wondered why I can use magic in here, Anthony?”

Tony watched the God carefully. It seemed he unintentionally opened a Pandora box. If before he thought that this discussion will be painful, now he wasn’t sure he will come out of it alive.

“It struck me, as strange. But, I thought, the restrains were not powerful enough to keep you contained, so they come up with this design. The walls around you theoretically, hell practically, can fuck with your energy nullifying it, like the magnetic fields of this place fucking with J and stuff. However, then, you wouldn’t be able to use it properly… You haven’t whined about it, though, which means…” Tony’s eyes went huge. “Fuck! They are not jamming you. They are feeding of you. Fuck!”

“Ta-da!” Loki sing-sang.

“Fuck…” Tony repeated, defeated. “I truly cannot help you…”

“Nobody can.” Loki said soothingly. He wasn’t joking when he said it will kill Anthony. The knowledge that he could not fix the situation was ten times more devastating for the man then any physical harm could ever be. Loki saw that in an instant, and tried vigorously to dance around it. However, he could not afford to protect his imp’s ego any longer. He would rather reassure Anthony’s heart of his affection. “I’m a bit surprised you didn’t argue.” The God added intrigued.

“Scientist here.” Tony snarked, but bitterness still lingered. “You say it’s Thor’s idea, but I do not see how that brute could came up with something so devious.”

“He ripped it off. If you ask him he’ll say he was defending me.” Loki spit, getting worked up.
“How the fuck making you into a battery for your own confinement is in any way defending!?” Tony sputtered.

“First thing you need to know to understand is that I’m different from other mages. Magic is one of the basic elements from which Universe consists. It is everywhere. The mage, as a rule, is a conductor of said energy. They know how to access it, and how to use it to their advantage. The more powerful the mind and the body of the mage, the more prominent and potentially dangerous the talent. However, you can cut the mage from the magic, in a way, you stop electricity flowing, and, since, magic does not accumulate in the body the mage becomes useless. In my case, you cannot do that. I am inseparable from my magic, because I’m the source of it.” Loki explained, watching Anthony carefully. This was intimate, and came with a certain vulnerability. He literally gave Anthony instructions on how to dispose of him, permanently.

“Fuck…” Tony repeated, being in a geeky trance. His mind was greedily sucking in the information, arranging it into appropriate graphics and files.

“Thus, the restraints cannot contain me properly, and do hurt me… rather unpleasantly.” Loki divulged hesitantly.

“You mean, like keep you short-circuited long enough and the energy will tear you apart – that kind of unpleasant, yeah?”

“Yeah” Loki confirmed, mocking the imp in the process. He adored and hated Anthony’s bright mind…mostly adored. “So, when Odin found out that instead of sitting in the cell, I was walking the Nines, he ordered to chain me up for unreasonably long time, and Thor seized the chance. He pleaded with Odin not to do that, because the magic will kill me. Odin, naturally, was confused, and then the oaf spilled the beans, telling him that I could use magic, despite being cut from the outer source. Imagine the king’s surprise and my misery. The cage was built not long after.”

Tony whistled, digesting the information.

“The concern Thor had sounds reasonable…” He commented out loud.

“Except that he knew I could wiggle out of the restraints enough for my magic to leak freely, and I begged him not to tell Odin under any circumstances.” Loki explained.

“Then why he told him? I mean I don’t search for excuses. I despise Thor for many reasons that do not concern you, and after I saw your life…pfft…I outright loath the guy. I simply want to know how he works.” Tony explained.

“Why?” Loki asked, a cutting smirk appearing on his handsome face.

“I think you know why. At least, your smirk does.” Tony teased.

“No.” Loki said firmly.

“Why?” Tony inquired.

“I want to do it myself.” The God shared.

Tony clicked his tongue in annoyance.

“You know, you’re not fun at all.”

“Oh, we both know that I’m a firecracker, but if you think for one second that I will allow any harm
come to you, and Nines forbid, on my account, you’re sadly mistaken.”

The intensity in the God’s voice, the fierce conviction and steal gaze, made Tony think twice, before he answers or challenges Loki’s claim.

“You are stuck here, though, and Thor is free for the takin’. Scratch the fact that he fucked up your life, he’s trying to screw mine as well, so, you know, while I respect your right to protect me?” Tony said the words uncertainly, not used to the concept of somebody willing to protect him. “I kinda don’t need your blessing to kick his ass. Your knowledge of inner working of his mind would be a great help, but I can do without just as fine.” Or may be not. Tony was not the one to tread lightly, and Loki, as so far, had no problems with his boldness.

“I have utmost belief in your abilities, Anthony, but threaten to go against a powerful opponent alone again, and I will implode these walls and live long enough to beat the living daylights out of you. Alright?” Loki said sweetly, and it shook Tony to the core. He swallowed thickly and nodded, not trusting his voice at the moment. The God smiled satisfied, and asked. “How Thor managed to sully your life?”

“Besides the obvious,” Tony waved around. “The fucker stole Jane, and by doing it, awoke one eyed namby-pamby that run to me, beginning to shovel the shit they left behind. Unfortunately, I cannot ignore the call, which means I won’t be seeing you for some time.” Tony complained.

“Hmmm…” Loki commented, hesitating for a moment. He could let Anthony go without explaining the situation. It will not be lie. He will simply withhold the information. Besides, it will only add futile worry, since Anthony could not participate. It will be better that way for all of them.

“Hey, Reindeer.” Tony called, and Loki immediately focused on him.

“Yes?” He inquired, not sure what his imp wanted, as his expression became blank.

“You were not justifying lying to me a moment ago, were you?” Anthony asked, and Loki flinched.

“How did you know?” The God asked, feeling uncomfortable and unreasonably guilty.

“I just did.” Tony shrugged, but his face fell.

“I apologise, Anthony.” Loki said sincerely. “It’s new to me. I am not used to sharing my thoughts or being myself for that matter. I’m bound to fell back to my ways in moments of danger and uncertainty. You are precious to me, and I wish to shield you from the dirt and problems that I and my world brings.”

“I can relate, Loki, but do not lie to me, please. I’ll react poorly, I assure you.” Tony warned.

“Understood.” Loki said, confirmation and a promise. “Do they know why Thor took Jane?”

“No. Will you tell me?” Tony asked softly, giving Loki a choice, and God exhaled relieved. Anthony was marvellous.

“I will. Jane stumbled upon ancient, malicious power that took a residence inside her body. It’s called Aether, and it’s frustratingly annoying and more so, because of its connection to the dark elves. Malekith, the ruler of the dark elves, came to its possession in the past and gave the Nines much grief. He was defeated and run off to space, believed to be lost or dead. Unfortunately, it is not the case. My mother confirmed that he is alive and coming for it.”

“Ok…I have so many questions, I’m bursting. What is Aether exactly and what it can do? Why it
took residence in Jane and how the fuck it’s connected to some space looser with pointy ears who supposed to be dead, but isn’t? But more importantly how your mother knows about it and what the fuck you’re going to do with all of it, being locked up here?” Loki chuckled at Tony’s perplexed face.

“Mortals…” He mocked fondly. “The Universe is a strange and mystical place, where laws are bent and twisted till the point of nonexistence. There are powers beyond any kin and wonders that do not fit into rational thinking. Some things cannot be explained or understood. You need to learn to accept that, Anthony.”


“I possess knowledge you won’t dream about, mortal.” Loki growled, at the amused imp.

“So why won’t you enlighten me, oh, wise one?” Tony taunted, and then became serious. “It’s fine not to know, Loki.”

“I am aware.” The God hissed, hating the fact that he was put into this position. He played brave for his mother’s sake, but, truth to be told he was lost and scared. The dark elves were a force to reckon with and his current predicament robbed him of options. He was reduced to a sitting duck, unable to do much difference in the upcoming conflict. There were ways around it. However, they were so slim, it was unfortunate. Loki was afraid he won’t be able to get out in time, and all it takes to bring him down is to tamper with the barrier.

“I think you are not.” Tony commented, waving his death glare off. “You are, also, forgetting you’re not alone. I’m here and ready to help. Let’s break this fucker to molecules and find a way to fuck him together, ‘k?”

“All right.” Loki agreed with a heavy heart. Last thing he wanted is for Anthony to be involved in all of this, but he was right, lying won’t cut here and if he wanted his imp to stand by him permanently, he should be able to accept that “autonomy” became a table for two.

Chapter End Notes

Mamitadolls: Oh, dear, if you thought the previous one was sugary, this one will be more so, and the next one will make your stomach ache from all the sweetest it will make you consume (winks) Aww, precious...you melt my heart (hugs)

marikaAbowie: Ah, we wish :)

LuciferTheRising: Cheers! I have contradictory thoughts on Pepper...sometimes I make her lovely, 'cos honestly I think no one is better than her in navigating TonyxLoki bumpy roller-coasters....Sometimes, well...I outright hate her :)))

Rhyfedd: Great. That's great! I feel accomplished by doing it (smiles) Loved your comment, and looking forward to the next one.

Morfanerina: Sounds cheerful :) Too bad life's not that easy :)
They resumed drinking, toasting for the most fatuous things and giggling at sheer stupendousness of their words. They were stalling, prolonging the time when the Universe belonged solemnly to them, evenly divided and the only inconvenience that could be spotted in this ideal world was the transparent barrier in between.

They were smart; both calculated the variables and went through the solutions, before the first glass of wine ended. It did not look shiny for them. They knew there was no fabulous way out of it; they will lose again and this might be the last night they have. Heck, knowing their luck it probably was, but they both sucked at goodbyes and this is exactly what it was – a bitter, harsh farewell, and beyond was waiting an uncertain future filled with useless hopes.

“Fuck, Loki, I wish it was easier, you know.” Tony whined, getting into the state of proper drunk. “Fuck, why we cannot have a break? I get it we fucked up enough shit to wind up in hell no questions or better yet take the throne and rule over, but, fuck, don’t we deserve a half an hour before devil knows we’re dead? Just s tiny piece of happiness…”

Loki watched him, dark amusement swimming in his gaze.

“Oh, my dearest, you drunk yourself to the philosophical blubbery’s laced with a self-pity party.” The God purred, his vision unfocused.

“Yeah…wonder why you on the same page…should you…I don’t know, have more tolerance?” Tony inquired, and got a condescending smirk in return. A twisted, malicious shadows were dancing in the emeralds he loved, and Tony gulped, anticipating mayhem.

“Keen observation.” Loki praised, tones wickedly amused, and then he waved his hand. The cell shimmered, throwing golden-green light bunnies onto the dark walls behind, and Tony gasped, disturbed by the picture they revealed.

“The Fuck!” He exclaimed, watching terrified Loki’s greyish skin, with raw burns and irritated cuts spotting here and there. The God’s hands were crippled; some fingers broken, skin missing on the wrists, and Tony could only guess what was hidden beneath the clothes. “Loki, you idiotic bastard… Why haven’t you told me? Why haven’t you told your mom?!”

“Don’t want to ask me why I’m showing you now?” The God taunted, but it was heavy on spite.

“I know why, you ass. You’re finally fucking comfortable to do so. Hell, you told me how to contain you, hurt you, kill you, and now you can show me that there is not much to kill from the start. Shit, I’m going to mutilate Odin.” Tony cursed, quickly spiralling into hazy rage.
“Anthony.” Loki warned, but Tony’s glare shut him up. The force of that stare was, almost, enough to shook him out of the gloom that took over when Anthony voiced his pains so brazenly.

“Don’t you dare.” His dearest hissed. “I’ll fucking impale him on the golden spikes of his own god-damned castle, and you’ll keep your mouth shut about it. You’ve done enough as it is. Why the fuck, Loki?!”

“I don’t know.” The God growled. “It wasn’t important at the start, and there’s no escape from it. Odin will not allow healers to come, and mother will not have a way around it. It was pointless worry and I didn’t want to add more grief, but you are going and I…I wanted you to see me…at least once…me.” He said his voice shaky.

“It is not you.” Tony bit, still angry and awfully concerned for his God. “You’re blue-skinned and red-eyed.”

“Yes.” Loki whispered. “I’m, but it will take too much energy to fight the cloaking spell. So, this should be enough.”

“Oh, fuck! A battery, shit! How am I supposed to leave here at all, Loki!?” Tony spit, going up and started pacing to get read of the nervous energy. He was steadily spinning off the rails.

“You must!” Loki urged, regretting his frivolity. He was stupid to do so. How else he expected the man to react?

“Have I told you to shut up? I’m certain as fuck that I did.” Tony bristled, levelling him with a furious stare.

“You don’t get to tell me when I should keep my tongue, Anthony.” Loki said, his anger cold. He was the guilty party here. He should have allowed Anthony to go peacefully. This separation was hard enough as it is, but he couldn’t simply let him go. He longed to show him everything. He was tired of pretending. It was low and selfish, and he will pay a high price for his weakness.

“Huh! Watch me.” Tony said, and embraced his fury. “You don’t get to tell me how to treat this…you! What happened with your wish to protect me, huh? Was it bullshitting? You played me good, Reindeer, believed every word you said. You knew it will crush me, so why not let me go, huh? If you’re so caring…if you are on the same page…” Tony teared and jabbed, and loved seeing the God squirm uncomfortably.

“Anthony, I…” Loki pleaded, but faltered. He wasn’t sure what his goal what with this anymore. It just came. The doom that was lingering above their heads; the impossibility of the attachment ever sticking; the constant insecurity and dancing on the sharp glass…Anthony is leaving. Nines, he is leaving and Loki couldn’t deal with it. However, before they could have parted on a high note, and he spoiled it, allowing the fear to rule him for a moment. He overstepped, and now Anthony could leave him for real. “Please, I beg.” He forced the words out, pass the constricting throat.

“Fuck it!” Tony growled at him livid. “Fuck you, Reindeer. I applaud your abnormal cruelness. Bloody fucking hell, did you match the titles they gave you; to use this against me, when you know exactly what it will do to me…Damn, you are a twisted, heartless, abomination. A sick wicked fuck.” The man accused, and Loki’s heart sank. He deserved it.

“Finally saw me for what I truly am.” Loki said calmly, preparing himself for inevitable. “But, remember, before you leave me for good, you made a promise.”

Tony stared at him hard, muttering something under his breath eyes never leaving his form. He
watched the God, emotions changing in his gaze from indignation to thoughtfulness, and back again, until he rolled his eyes and huffed.

“You know, Reindeer, all you had to do is say you don’t want me to leave, and, may be, confess that maintaining an illusion is taking a toll on you. After all, you’re shit-scaringly powerful if All-daddy hadn’t found a counter source to contain you.” Tony said tiredly, delighted when the God turned crimson and averted his gaze. “I don’t want to leave. I will never want to leave you, Loki.” Tony promised, getting the God’s attention back. He watched him in disbelief and painful hope, eyes teary. He looked weak and needy, scared out of his mind, with a dash on anxiety and guilt, and Tony smiled at him condescendingly. “But try to put my grey-haired heart through such bullshit again, and you won’t have to worry about Them coming after your ass, because I’ll become your worst nightmare.”

“Isn’t it a futile threat, since I’m more powerful than you?” Loki inquired, embarrassed by his own outburst and going defensive, despite getting out of the storm barely alive. The smirk that Anthony showed him, made Loki tremble.

“Try me, and by the way, the deal is off.” Anthony remarked nonchalantly.

“What!?” Loki hissed indignant.

“You heard. You’re mine now, and I will not let you die, and if you do, I’ll find a way to bring you back and you’ll wish you haven’t been that stupid in the first place.” Tony said gravely.

“Who said I’m yours, mortal?” Loki asked, torn between arousal and offence.

“Every stupid thing you did and said, Loki. I admit I didn’t deal with it properly, since I’m quite new at this, but I recognised it by the end.” Tony said, relatively calm. The anger was fading from him. The monster was going dormant, finally catching on.

“Recognised what?” The God inquired, taking a deep breath.

“Affection.” Tony said, smiling at him knowingly. “You may be better at spotting emotions than I am, but when it comes to the ones that really matter, you do the same stupid shit. You get worked up over nothing and then blow everything up.”

“You’re out of this world, Anthony.” Loki chuckled, relaxing. “However, this goodbye is not nothing. I do not know how to say it, worse, I do not wish to. I know it’s better that way, and I know nothing can be done about it, but I am selfish, and I long for you to stay.”

“Exactly my thoughts.” Anthony agreed, sliding back down to the floor and putting his hand on the barrier. Loki did not hesitate to mirror his gesture. “There are so many things I want to tell you, and more so to do, but time is running out, and I will leave you. It’s the practical solution. It will be hell, though. I will miss you drastically, and worry every second, knowing what I know now…Fuck, I’ll be a mess, but when it’s over, and if Odin sticks to his assholness, like holy writ and I will not see you on Midgard, I’ll come here and burn this whole joint down. Just swear, come what may, you’ll do everything in your power to stay alive.”

“I will.” Loki promised, biting his inner cheek harshly, not to sob. He made a fool of himself already, no need to add more.

“Good.” Tony said, raising his hand to caress the spot of the barrier where Loki’s cheek might have been, and the God leaned in, trying hard to wield his tears away. “See you.” He said, getting up and taking his things, Loki watching him attentively.
“Anthony.” He called, but when his dearest looked at him gaze soft and warm, he got verklempt.

“I know, Loki.” Tony said, and the God shivered. His name sounded, like a prayer fallen from worshiping lips.

“Please, don’t forsake me.” Loki whimpered, beseeching, pride forgotten. There should be no pride between them. They were too deep for such rudimentary concepts.

“I never will.” Anthony promised, turning around and walking away. Loki watched the closed door for a moment, before breaking down and crying his heart out.

Tony walked through the portal on autopilot. The fairy-tale broke to shits and he was raw and hurting. The God’s haunted image was torturing his bleeding heart, and it took everything from him not to suit up and do one thing he wasn’t allowed to do.

The prophecy had fulfilled itself. He has fallen down the abys and could not crawl back. It turned out to be worse than he had conculcated. Loki was living on stubbornness, and the cage was sucking what was left of him. The time was his worst enemy, and the Universe threw another delay into his face.

He could see reason in all of this. His participation in the predicament Asgard found itself in was not debatable – there could be no participation. He, also, could not free the God, as there was not enough time to study and experiment. Moreover, Loki was in no state to pull something like that. It was a high risk to uptake if the God was healthy, like this, any tampering will surely end him.

The sensible course of action was to lay low, and continue with his business here, trusting the God to take care of himself, but there was a catch. Loki was not openly suicidal; his depression became passively-aggressive. The wounds that he hid and the strain that he put on his body unnecessarily, were glaring evidence of it. It was palladium and “last-doughnut” type of situation, and it sacred him.

Helpless. He was backed-up into the corner, gutted and overpowered, but, luckily, it was something he knew how to operate with. He has scraps, and it looked, like they won’t make it…fuck it! He will make sure, they will.

“J, you’re conspicuously quiet, so tell me what shit is waiting for me.” Tony asked, a reckless plan forming in his brilliant mind.

“The Avengers tracked the decoy you used in your sally, sir.” Jarvis informed him immediately.

“Great. Did they connect the dots?” He inquired, reaching his hideout and started packing.

“They did, but you’re needed elsewhere and, of course, you are aware that there is no physical evidence, only theories, sir.” J explained, and it made him smirk smugly.

“Damn, I’m great.” Tony gloated, dissembling the weapons. “J, call the drones back. We’re done here.”

“Yes, sir. Any other requests?”

“Alert Fury. Tell him I’m coming, and in no mood to deal with Avenger’s shit.” Tony asked, putting off the drama.
“Will be done, but I should note that they may not listen, sir.” Jarvis warned him, and he smirked crookedly.

“You know, J, I, almost, wish they do not.”

Chapter End Notes

Lov_pb: Hi, cheers! :)

AnaLuz: Thank you :) Another one for team "Save Frigg" :)

Mamitadolls: I was reading your comment thinking: Gods, she'll be so disappointment when she reads this one...and then I saw this...driving + checking the phone.... and I like, Nines, do I sympathize with Loki's wish kick Tony's ass when he is not very reasonable ... Anyway, cheers, dear. Your adore keeps me going ♥♥♥:)

JoinTheDots: Cheers :) I'm glad you like it :)

LuciferTheRising : Oh, then you're in for a treat, 'cos I dislike those two and long to see them beaten and bleeding and miserable :)

AceOfLesbians: Awww, cheers! That's so sweet. I'm happy you enjoy my story :) 

Rhyfedd: Bear with me, my dear thinker :) I'm not a great scientist, not at all, if to be honest :) The cell is a nasty piece of work, and I have no idea if it can work that way in reality...but I thought it to be, like draining energy mechanism...it takes enough power from a hostile element, to contain the said element, leaving it weak and drained, so it has no chance to fight back, and since it's designed to suck the energy no matter how much you use, you'll still be there, and if by chance you collapse it, well the chances you'll survive are very slim...

Alchemy, yeah...I love it when they mix two together...as for this work, I guess you just have to wait and see, because if I get discussing twists with you...which I really wanna do...your comments got me thinking of dozen other stories to write, already...I'll go telling you the whole plot and then you'll lose interest, and I will lose it too = no story to write :)

The fact that I do get under your skin from time to time is a tasty treat and highest of compliments...because if this can be called "art" it should do exactly this - make you feel something ;)}
Family ties

Chapter Summary

Thank you for your comments and kudos, dear readers
Enjoy

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Time - a concept that has avoided grasping since the beginning of the Universe. It is relative, illusionary, priceless and valueless simultaneously. Loki had no reason to count it before, and now urged it to go faster; begged to stop dragging seconds till the turmoil comes and his stolen illusion of fairy-tale future crumbles beneath the hard boot of reality.

“Congratulations, Liesmith, you still have stings to pull.” The verminous voice of rotten King boomed in his cell, and he opened his red-rimmed eyes to look at Odin indifferently. The All-father seemed to be surprised by the lack of reaction and Loki could not fault him for it. Some time ago, he would go for his throat, as of now, he cared less for the man, and it felt liberating. He finally saw the king for what he was – a cruel tyrant.

“You’d believe so, won’t you, Liesmith. I guess it’s Frigga’s fault. She infected you with self-worth and ambition, treating you as a part of the family, even going so far as to plead on your behalf alluding to the exception we have for royal members during the critical times.” Odin drawled, his voice filled with pompous arrogance. “Thus, I came here personally to show you your place, beast.”

All father waved his hand, and Loki started suffocating feeling the magic being ripped from him. His body was set ablaze. He felt like he was being skinned alive, but did not allow himself to whimper. When it was finished he found himself lying on the ground, panting. His head swam, and his stomach was spasming uncomfortably.

“You got confused along the way, dear boy.” Odin mocked, stepping around his fallen from, and grabbing his hear, harshly pulling his head up. Loki hissed, but was unable to break free, his eyes spotting a reflection before him – Jotun. “I must confess, I misjudged as well. It’s rarely when I can refuse my wife’s requests, but she was right, live in the illusion long enough and you’ll believe it to be true. Unfortunately, for you, dear boy, you’re not a royal, not even Aesir, your very skin is a lie. You have no more privileges than a horse I have in my stables, but then I’m proud of my stallion, which cannot be said about you.” Odin ridiculed, pushing him down.

Loki’s head connected with the concrete painfully. He grunted, ignoring his screaming muscles, and forced himself into a sitting position.

“It’s not me who you should convince, All-father. I’m aware of my stance.” Loki bit, and loved the subtle flinch he spotted on otherwise snobby face.
“Yes, that’s true, dear boy. However, the next time she manages to sneak up here, you’ll be far gone to answer her inquiries, and I assure you, I’d be more than happy to explain for you.” Odin said with a twisted smile, hitting the Gungnir on the flour and the transparent walls became mirrors. “Farewell, dear boy.”

Loki watched with horror shadows dancing there; twisted nightmares that played out in front of his eyes; screams and moans, pleads; and the most despicable of them, was staring back at him. Its blue skin pale and battered; red-eyes huge with desperation and powerlessness.

The fairy-tale did not break, it upgraded to the outright terror.

<**>

Tony was watching the video and scraping notes on the tablet. According to the data he managed to gather here the path itself was not stable and could spew people out anywhere. He got extremely lucky that Loki’s magic recognised him or else he would be splattered along the rocks of Nowhere. Thus, as he theorised previously, the runes were an incantation that allowed to control teleportation – setting a destination, stabilising the path, cloak it and the traveller from prying eyes, blah-blah-blah. So, if he manages to tune them in the right way he may have a chance to reassure that Loki will be looked after.

“Hey, Tony.” Pepper greeted him, coming into his lab, and he smiled, standing up to hug her.

“Hey, Pep. Glad you managed to come.” He said, letting her go.

“I wouldn’t miss this for the world.” She said, settling opposite him. “What are you watching?” She asked pointing at the monitors.

“It’s a recording from the palace. Queen’s quarters.” Tony shared, glancing at the lush rooms and rich designs, walls covered in golds and decorated with tapestry.

“Impressive.” Pepper whistled.

“Posh.” Tony grimaced, and they giggled. “Did you bring the research?”

“Yeah, I did.” Pepper nodded, passing him the papers. Tony frowned, taking them and scanning through.

“Would it kill her to use a computer…” Tony grumbled, chuckling at the note. “Not uncertain… that’s reassuring.”

“J, scan those, and combine with what we have gathered.” Tony said laying out the papers on the table.

“Will be done, sir.” J answered courtly.

“Thanks, J. How are things with the other project, Pep?” He asked, offering her a drink, which she took gratefully.

“As well as you have expected it to go. It will take time, Tony.” She said, sipping her wine.

“Huh, lately time is a pain in the ass.” He complained, downing his scotch.

“That bad, hm?” Pepper asked, reading freely the pain and worry of his face.

“We are fucked, doesn’t even begin to cover it.” He shared and she felt that nothing more will be
“Can I help?” She inquired, and he shot her a brief, grateful smile, before it blended into the showmanship mask he wore during crises. The one that meant to show he was on a high horse and murder anyone who dares to question it.

“Neah, Pep. I’m planning something you won’t approve and I rather not argue.” He dismissed her, and she sighed heavily.

“Can I, at least, know the extent of the damage control I will be doing?”

“I want “Highway to hell” to be performed at my funeral, and write “So long suckers” on my tombstone. Other than that, not so much.” He said, smirking at her crookedly and she rolled her eyes at him.

“If you won’t come back from whatever hell you are determined to go to, Tony, I’ll dress you in pink and play Justin Bieber, weeping dramatically and telling everybody what a true fan you were.” She threatened, watching how his eyes widened with disgust.

“You wouldn’t dare!” He hissed. She raised her eyebrow at him, staring. “Fuck, Pep.” Tony cursed, chuckling.

<**>

“Sir, I must warn you that the percentage of lethal outcome is above average.”

“Figured that out on my own, buddy, but, thanks, for the voice of confidence.” Tony snarked, putting the arch together.

It was quiet. S.H.I.E.L.D.’s agents crawled back to their caves, leaving the whole place for him to tamper with. He warned them not to disturb his experiments, remarking that any unwanted attention will be punished swiftly, as in: shoot first, ask later. Tony hoped that they heard enough about him to believe it and won’t be poking around. If they do, though, Pepper will have a nasty PR crisis on her hands.

“I do not work with such concepts, sir. Your blatant disregard of calculations indicates reckless behaviour, which in the past lead to severe trauma. I saw it as practical to remind you of possible consequences.” Jarvis explained stoically.

“Huh, your rationality is endearing, J.” Tony murmured, connecting the last wires. The arch alighted with soft, greenish-blue light that was coming from the runes. The portal, that the arch was built around, swirled and glittered, familiar energy pulling Tony in.

He watched the light dancing around, preparing himself. The move was uncomfortably thoughtless. It was a half-cooked theory made of raw, alien ingredients. Jarvis was right, no matter his love for brash actions, this idiocy was at first. He was a man of science, hard facts and proper calculations, and, yet, he stood before a path that was made of maybe’s, hunches and “as luck would have it”.

Sheer stupidity, that how it was called, but, he remembered how those hypnotizingly beautiful eyes watched him with despair and hope, like he was the only thing that was keeping them sane, alive, and could not let them down. He could not forsake the God who believed in him; an alien that he grew to appreciate more than his science. Loki was worth it all.

“Baby, here I come.” Tony drawled, and stepped inside the lights that sucked him in and tore his mind apart.
Tony came to himself, finding his body in an awkward kneeling position, gasping for air and something sticky trickling down his neck. His muscles shook, and the attempt to stand failed miserably. He looked around, his vision hazy, but could conclude that he was in the similar colourful tube. The pressure on his brain was merciful, and he kept hearing strange sounds, but did not give in. Tony took a deep breath and crawled forward, praying the he will reach the other side intact.

Tony fell through the portal and landed on a fluffy carpet. The fibres tickled his nose, obstructing his, already, heavy breathing, but he didn’t have a chance to move, as something hissed and plastered him into the wall. The force of the blow knocked out little air he had and he coughed, finding it hard to suck it back.

“Who are you?” He heard through the ringing in his ears, and tried to focus his swimming gaze. When he did, he saw a woman, dressed in sky-blue, expensive looking dress. Her features were delicate, yet firm, and he was ready to weep with happiness. He had reached her – queen of Asgard.

“Your majesty.” He croaked, his voice weak and rough. “I apologise for the intrusion, but there is an urgent matter I need to discuss with you, if you will be so kind to listen.”

The queen sized him with a penetrating stare, before smiling at him gently, and snapping her dainty fingers freeing him from restrains that were pinning him to the wall. He landed with a heavy thud, by miracle managing to keep himself upright.

“You must be Anthony.” She concluded, showing him with a gesture to follow her. He did not hesitate to do just that, keeping silent. They walked through a hall, and into a smaller room. “Sit.” She pointed at the chair, near the round marble table. Tony nodded, and followed her order. When he sat, a cup of yellow liquid appeared before him. “Drink that, before we speak.” He nodded again and took a sip, his eyes widening. It was the tastiest thing he ever had. The pressure was living his body; headache calming and muscles relaxing, by the time he finished the cup, he felt, like a new man.

“Is it magical, ma’am?” He asked exited, curiosity taking over him.

“No, little one. Sometimes remedy is nothing more but a clever compound of naturally occurring elements.” She explained with an indulgent smile, and Tony had to bite his inner cheek not to snark at her.

“Uhum…” He murmured, feeling fidgety. She didn’t seem to be hostile, but he was wary, nonetheless.

“I assume you came to talk to me about my son, am I right?” The queen inquired pleasantly.

“Yes.” Tony divulged, pondering on how much he should tell her, and whose allay she truly was. Loki seemed to have mended whatever there was broken between them, but Tony, also, was aware that she was not giving her adopted son enough comfort. “Why” was an interesting question to pose, but it surely will get him slayed, so he had to find it out subtly. Too bad he sucked at subtlety big time.

“Don’t overthink, little one. Speak your mind and let me decide if your worries are worth my consideration.” She said encouragingly, a patronising ring to her tone, and it raised Tony’s hackles. Loki was suffering alone in that goddamned hell, forgotten and forsaken, and here she was radiating
impatience and morality, behaving, like he was wasting her time on trivial matters.

“I worry for his wellbeing, ma’am. His body is severely damaged. He is malnutritioned, and denied medical care. The cage takes too much energy and he cannot heal himself or worse he won’t. I beg you, could you, please, find the time to consider this matter.” Tony asked politely, keeping minimum wrath in his voice, and flinched when the queen’s demeanour changed. She became cold and distant, regal.

“Do you presume that I would have left my child to suffer such if I have known how poorly he is treated?” She asked, her voice void of any emotion beside righteous fury.

“I mean no offence, ma’am, but his life begs to presume the worst.” Tony retorted, with controlled disdain.

“Yes, unfortunately.” She said, anger melting and giving a way to sadness. “He always was rebellious, bringing Hel on his head for fun. I lost count of sleepless nights I spent in worry, wondering if he’ll be coming back alive… My influence is not all-reaching, Anthony. I cannot protect him from everything.”

“Have you tried to, ma’am?” Tony bristled. “Your husband, your oldest, crippled him beyond recognition and continue to do so under your nose, and you seem to be fine with it.”

“You’d be wise to watch your tongue, little one. You know not of what you speak.” She warned, and Tony scoffed at her. “That being said, it warms my heart to see that Loki found himself a fearsome champion. I approve, but harm him and you’ll find out quickly how unjust your perception of my affection towards my youngest is.”

Tony gulped nodding his head. Frigg was inspiring a primal fear in him, and he could see where Loki was coming from. He was mama’s boy. The queen smiled at him gently then, but her eyes still glimmered viciously.

“You are right, of course. It is hard to admit, but I allowed many mistakes, and overlooked far more than I should have. Rest assured, I will not do it again. My husband crossed me gravely this time, and I was in the middle of deciding on proper punishment. You, little one, are Fates sent, and do nicely.” She cooed, her mood improving.

“What will you ask me to do, ma’am?” Tony inquired, feeling relief. It seemed that life decided to stop being a total bitch to them.

“Wonders, little one. Pure wonders.” She said with a mischievous smile, and Tony smirked back, thinking that maybe he could banter after all.

Chapter End Notes

Darklightningstorm (Lightningstorm) : You're naughty :)

ImpishDesign: :D Thank you for your comment, improved my mood drastically :D

Mamitadolls (blushes, and gives the sweetest and the warmest hug one could muster)
♥♥♥ Thank you, dear

Morfanerina: Yeah, kinda remembered I wanted to make this twisted and rich on
disturbing :)

Frigg considered herself to be an even-minded, balanced person who chose diplomacy over dirty, dishonourable mind-games and intrigues court and the Royals favoured above all. Staring at the golden parchment, which had only two words written “not applicable”, she was forced to rethink her principles and it unsettled her.

Thousands of years she has lived in harmony with her feelings and deeds, never questioning her set of moral principles, until she decided to adopt an orphaned baby boy. A beautiful, bright, gifted child that she adored at the first sight.

He gave her predicaments and reasons to revaluate who she was and what she was standing for. A God of change he was, bringing the light to dark places and spotting darkness in brightness. Her husband, though, claimed him to be the God of chaos and lies, whereas, her sweet baby boy preached nothing but uncomfortable, naked truth. He exposed the unwanted, shameful secrets in a reckless, brash manner, and was ridiculed for it.

Certainly, Loki was not a saint. He grew in a hostile environment, fighting for the spot under the sun constantly, and cultivated sharp, venomous teeth, as a result. However, he was not evil and never will be.

He was sardonic and cynical, effective and rational. He could be a ruthless diplomat or a subtle beast, depending on a situation, and still possess an understanding heart.

She was proud to be his mother, and ashamed of her blindness. The mortal child was right to accuse her of finding more important matters to attend, instead of focusing her attention on her youngest. She knew Odin to be overbearingly harsh towards the boy, but she didn’t see it as her place to intertwine, soothing her baby boy and guiding him only when he asked for it.

However, it stops tonight. She cannot bear the cruelness nor deny her husband’s twisted tendencies. Odin pushed the boy over the edge knowingly, devastated and raped his nature, and she will not stand by it. Her baby boy deserved to lead a normal life, and she will make sure he is free from the burden that is Asgard.

<**>

She walked into the throne room, where her husband was hiding lately, pose determined and face hard. Odin did not even try to send her away, dismissing the underlings and giving her his full attention. It seems he hasn’t lost all his wit yet.

“I gather you have something on your mind, wife.” He inquired pleasantly, smiling at her softly, and she wished she could return the courtesy, but he crossed the line. Thus, she narrowed her eyes at him and presented the paper.
“What is this?” She demanded, her voice full of indignation. “Am I reduced to your lackeys now too, husband?”

Odin flinched, taking a regal pose.

“You chose to make an official request, wife. I have acted accordingly to your wishes.” He explained confidently.

“If my wishes were met, I would have enjoyed an evening tea with our son, instead of practicing semantics with you, husband.” She bit, letting him know that he will not get out of this easily.

“That is the root of our problems, wife. You took the duty of watching over the Jotun too close to your heart.” He answered back, prepared to raise and argument.

“Chose your words wisely, husband, as you are speaking about my child.” She warned, the annoyance getting the better of her. It was pointless to insist that Loki was his son, as well, since her husband made it clear he wasn’t considering Loki as such anymore.

“He is not your child, wife.” Odin insisted. “How you forgotten how much grief he gave you? How profound the embarrassment was?”

“He is my child, husband, and it will do you good not to discard this fact in the future.” She said adamantly. “How you forgotten how much joy he gifted us? How intense was the happiness?”

“He destroyed our reputation and few kingdoms, wife. He brought devastation to many lands and forfeit many lives.” Odin argued.

“He untangled many assassination attempts and saved our kingdom countless times, husband. He won many wars and half the realms are in unpayable depth before him.” She opposed.

“He tried to kill our son!” Odin boomed, getting agitated.

“We both know, husband, that if Loki wanted Thor dead, he would be.” She retorted calmly, watching how her husband’s face got crimson with fury and her heart broke. In the end, it was simple. “That what it is, isn’t it? You cannot forgive Loki his brilliance. You were proud of him once, husband. I remember how you radiated joy, watching his accomplishments, until you understood that Thor is nowhere near his greatness. Loki is more capable and powerful than your own seed and it ate at you. It poisoned you, and you tried to break the child, but it did not work, and you allowed him to die.” She hissed, pain and disgust shining in her gaze. “I will not stay silent any longer and cover your pettiness.”

“How dare you speak of our son such, wife? How could you choose Jotun over our blood?” Odin growled, livid.

“That is the root of our problems, husband. You seemed to forget that I have two sons.” She reminded him calm.

“He was punished accordingly, wife. I will not change his sentence.” Odin said stubbornly.

“Tell me he is treated well. Lie to me, husband, and tell me you have made sure he is not being punished more than it’s necessary.” She hissed at him, and scoffed disappointedly when he averted his gaze. “I will go to the dungeons immediately, and will try to correct the atrocities you have committed.”

“I forbade it, wife!” Odin roared, standing from the throne and looming over her. She met his fury
with cold indifference.

“Mark my words, husband, you’ll come to regret the day you refused Loki his freedom. As concerns my wish to see my son, if you try to stop me tonight, Odin, tomorrow you will have no wife.” She declared, turning around and walking out the door.

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The place they were keeping him tasted of dump and dust. She scrunched up her nose in disdain, stepping over a puddle on unnamed liquid. The smell was foil, and the only light alighting this wretched hole came from the cage Loki was confined in, giving a place an unhealthy, eerie green glow.

It was a scene from nightmares. A hell for condemned souls, and she felt a strong wave of affection towards the mortal child. The air must have been hard for him to breath, and the place, loaded with dark magic and poisonous energies, was not compatible with his fragile statue. He put himself in danger simply by being in one room with Loki, and didn’t complain once.

There was no sound. The cage was not transparent, as she remembered, and the dread settled in her stomach. She came closer putting her hand on the barrier and it shocked her, filling her being with terror and malice. She flinched, a tremor of disgust traveling down her body, but did not waver.

Frigg concentrated, projecting her image, pushing through Odin’s and Loki’s magic. It took a toll on her, and at first, the picture was blurry, but when it sharpened, Frigg froze with horror.

She saw Chitauri, dragging her boy down to their mother ship, and twisted face of the Other, bending and mocking, torturing. She heard the degrading whispers of mad Titan, twisting the shattered nature. She felt burning need for assistance and care, and excruciating pain at the realization that nobody was coming.

Frigg’s eyes welled up with tears, and she looked around hastily, spotting her boy in the corner, curled up in a tight ball. He was motionless, and she rushed towards him, falling on her knees next to his form, her hands lingering and inch from his skin. She could not touch him, but, at least, she could spot a heart-beat. She exhaled relieved, calling him by his baby pet name: “Lo-lo.”

The reaction was immediate. He untangled himself and looked around feverishly, until his huge with trepidation and torment eyes landed on her form. He relaxed considerably, crawling to her manifestation and curling around it, his magic giving her a resemblance of solidity.

“Finally.” He breathed out, his voice rich with relief and happiness.

“You have waited for me?” She inquired surprised, and he chuckled.

“I always wait for you, amma.” He reassured her, and she bit her lip not to whimper. He was accustomed to her surprise, like he had been in this situation before, but she wasn’t, which implied despicable.

“How often do you slide into illusion?” She asked, her voice shaky.

“More often than I care to admit, amma.” He shared, and she hugged him tightly, her magic crumbling not able to withhold her emotions and Loki noticed. “You’re not an illusion, though. Mother cease this. It will hurt you.” He said, trying to dispel her, but she resisted.

“Why are you allowing this horror to repeat itself?” She asked, fearing the worst.
“Like before, I am weak to resist it.” Loki shared, his voice uncaring.

“Take mine then, and end it.” She offered, but he shook his head. “I’m not asking, my son.” She hissed. “I allowed you to get lost in the agony, to fall, to get tortured, locked up and be ripped apart again. I do not deserve your mercy or forgiveness, but you will do as I say, because no matter how heartless your mother is, you are better. You won’t allow her to suffer, now will you?”

“As you wish, my queen.” Loki submitted, taking the magic from the projection and slowly erasing the spell. The process was long and tiresome, by the time it ended, she was drenched with sweat and panting heavily.

Her baby boy, looked like a ghost; dark circles under his eyes, battered, unhealthily thin body that shook with effort to staying upright. His eyes were dull, agony shining in them feverishly, sweat dripping from his temples; mouth pressed in a thin line. He knew how he looked, and he hated the fact that she sees him, like this – disgraced and defeated.

“Lo-lo.” She whimpered, biting her inner cheek not to fall into hysterics. “My poor baby.” He averted his gaze, balling his hands into fists, and she moved pushing the elixir through the barrier. “Drink it.” She commanded, ignoring the burning stare he gifted her with. “Come on, Lo-lo, don’t be stubborn.” She urged, and he huffed at her.

“You are demanding, amma.” He allowed, not even trying to stand up and simply crawling to the bottle.

These several minutes, while her abused, half-dead child was dragging his uncooperative body towards the medicine and healing, were the worst moments in her life. She couldn’t help but question how many times he was in the similar situation, pleading for her to come; to save him; to see him and understand and she wasn’t there. The guilt she felt burned a whole in her heart, and at that second, she regretted the plan they conjured with the mortal child. She ought to slay Odin for this and put the All-father’s crown on her baby boy’s head.

Loki took the potion with a shaky hand and drank it, hissing, when his body started to heal. The damage was extensive, and the mending process was unpleasant. It got a lot worse, before it got better, but he made sure to keep the pitiful sounds inside, not to disturb his mother further.

“Thank you, amma.” He said, his voice hush and sweet. She saved him, and he felt grateful to her, but the question bobbed up: “How can you stand me?”

“What do you mean?” Frigg inquired, looking him over. He appeared to be a lot better. The smaller wounds have disappeared completely; the bigger ones closed and left only light-pink scars, which will fade in time. Loki pointed at his blue skin, and she smiled sadly. Another glaring proof that she failed to be a good mother to him.

“Lo-lo, I cannot express how deeply it scars me to see how profoundly I have failed you, and I should be the one to ask that question, but so you understand, I’ll show you.”

Frigg called her magic and knitted an illusion that surrounded the cage.

Loki watched in fascination the soft-sandy colours of infirmary, his mother whaling in despair, kneeling over the cradle where an infant’s unmoving body was laying. He could sense her hurt and his breath hitched. She has lost her child.

He observed how she withered, joy leaving her. Odin was at lost what to do, as nothing seemed to elevate her, and with each passing day his worry grew. Thus, despite, his better judgment he took her
with him to Jotunheim, afraid to leave her alone.

The change of the location didn’t help her, until, she wondered off and ended up in the abandoned shrine. She walked around the magnificent building aimlessly, when a faint whimper caught her attention. She listened closely and moved towards the sound, reaching an altar where a Jotun baby were lying. Its breathing where hollow, and life was leaving it rapidly. She grabbed the baby pouring her magic into it, praying for it to stay alive and it did, opening its red-eyes and smiling at her. She smiled back and cooed. The baby giggled, touching her cheek and morphing into Aesir, its eyes becoming brilliantly emerald. She gasped, beaming at it.

“Precious Fates sent. My dear baby boy.” She murmured, taking it with.

The illusion faded, leaving a gentle smile upon her face. Loki watched her adoringly, his head buzzing with contentment. Odin was full of shit. He was wanted. He was important. He was chosen specifically by a grieving woman that saw so much worth in him that she decided he will do nicely as her blood, and it made him lightheaded.

“I assume I never changed shapes after.” Loki inquired curious.

“You did, once.” She countered. “It terrified you greatly, and we decided to strengthen the spell to shield you from it ever happening again.”

“Didn’t go as planned.” He jested.

“Unfortunately.” She drawled, with a smile.

“I can change easily, then.” He said, and his skin indeed changed without much hassle. “Huh, wonder how that works…” He murmured captivated.

“You will have plenty of time pocking yourself after you’re properly healed, Loki. So, stop wasting energy on vanity, my dear.” She chastised, and he grumbled returning to his original form.

“Happy? And so, you know, I’m deeply scared by my appearance.” He retorted naughty. She laughed.

“Fates, my dear, do you truly believe I’ll buy that?”

“You could, since it did break my world for a moment there.” Loki countered, and she sobered.

“We assumed that you were appalled by your skin, because Jotuns harmed you, and you, as an infant, associated the look with death, pain and danger. Since, you haven’t seen the original version of you it sticked.” She reasoned.

“Stories, also, were helpful.” Loki remarked sarcastically.

“Yes, they were, but you cannot convince me that the hate is deep rooted. You’re open minded creature, Loki. A shape shifter. Your best friend is a giant snake, and your first lover was a half-horse, not to mention the mortal you’re captivated with.” She retorted.

“Yes, yes, mother. I get your point. However, it’s still hard to accept it; to look in the mirror without flinching.” He shared his pain.

“That is something we all have to learn how to live with.” She said gravely, meeting squarely his surprised look. “At least you can change your skin at will, most of us are not blessed with such easy escape.”
“Mother, you don’t have to do this. You’re not at fault for any of it. I brought it upon myself. I could have asked you for help. I could have come, but I didn’t.” Loki pleaded, trying to soothe her unreasonable guilt.

“Your words are sweet, my dear, but I do know what I could have done and what I actually did.” She dismissed him. “However, if you do want to please me, swear that when the chance comes you will seize it no matter the circumstances.”

“Mother?” Loki asked, concerned by her request.

“Swear.” She insisted adamantly, and Loki groaned, knowing that he will hear no explanations from her.

“I swear, my queen.” He said solemnly, and she nodded, smiling at him sweetly.

“Now, how about I call some servants so we could have tea, my dear?”

“You missed gossipping so much you cut your husband’s dick off just to have it back, haven’t you, mother?” Loki jested, delighted by her winning smile.

“Fates, who raised you, brat! Such language!” She chastised him playfully.

“You did.” He teased.

“I did.” She answered proudly.

Chapter End Notes

marikaAbowie: Don’t be sorry! It’s great that you have so many emotions about this...means I do something right :)

willow123amp_LokiJDA: Hi :) CHEERS! I’ll do my best :)

Rhyfedd: I gather you’re impressed (I hope...mostly pray that you are :) That’s good. It fills me with joy :)

Mamitadolls: Thank you, for sweet words and adore :) Keeps me going ♥♥♥

Lokislonelylady: (thinking) my story in a nut-shell...huh...may be I should stop writing then, since everything is so clear now and Mamitadolls seems to agree with it too...

AceOfLesbians: Miracles! (grinning mischievously)

badwolf5225: 'uck 'em very, very badly...promises :)

ImpishDesign: I feel accomplished, thank you :)

Morfanerina: Oh, they will...just you wait :)
The highest price

Chapter Summary

[You know my aversion to summary for this story...but again, too perfect to resist]

ImpishDesign: I feel like Frigga is planning some self sacrifice. That and I wonder what she told Tony to do.
Loki (with a grave expression): The feeling is mutual, dearest. Don't we all? (gleares icily at Tony and the author)
Tony (gleares at ImpishDesign): You had to open your big mouth...Fuck, Creator, clear this shit fast or there will be consequences. Real, bad ones.
Author (nonchalantly): Thank you for your comments and kudos, dear readers. Enjoy.
Loki and Tony (watches the author bemused and shriek in unison): Are you out of your mind!?
Author (shrugs): Probably. May be, almost sure, yeah. I write about you two, what do you expect? They will hate me for it, though. Big time.
Loki and Tony nod vigorously.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Tony was distracted. The portals were entertaining, as the chest the Queen of Asgard gave him. But the contents of said gift, as wonderful as they were, could not hold his interest properly. He kept returning to that night; to the broken plea and the feeling of ecstasy the God blessed him with.

The world lost its colours. Everything Tony discovered, every idea he got - he wanted to share with Loki. He desired to show him the schematics of the new suit and argue over colour palate. He longed to introduce Loki to J and bask in the resulting chaos and snark. He needed to present the God with his world and alloy the two, so they would be inseparable; so, nobody could take Loki away from him.

It pissed him off that he couldn’t. He supposed to sit tight and behave, amusing himself with mundane tasks and waiting for the command. The humiliation he felt could not be described in words. His whole body buzzed with indignation; desperate ache to rebuke and prove that he was not someone to mess with.

But it was an exercise in humility. A challenge that he never quite faced before. He was working in a team with a being that could smite him any given second. Tony wasn’t even sure he could provide any meaningful workout for her.

Frigg showed him shamelessly how grandly earthlings underestimated them. They were called Gods for a reason, and this reluctant believe was coming from a sceptic that would die before admitting there is something bigger than him. Her sons, admittedly, were not as spectacular. At least, one of them wasn’t, and the other was far from his best during the attack, thus, the Erath still stands. Her husband, though, was more powerful than the three of them combined. Tony realistically had no chance against the King. He would be dead before he could reach him. So back to the boring stuff – thinker, wait and “don’t you dare messing things up!”
He was tempted, though.

“Little one,” He heard an echo in his head, cringing. It was weird, having her wired to his brain. He preferred it not to be so, but the efficiency won over aversion. Gods, he sympathised with Loki. “They are coming. Be ready.”

That was his cue. He dressed into a mediaeval version of an armour, that was covered with runes and emitted a soft golden light; Frigg’s signature magic, smiling at the warm feeling it gave him. It felt safe, like a mother’s touch. He still preferred Loki’s enthralling, piercing, tasty freshness, but this was not too bad as well.

“J, I’m off. Call, Pepper. Be ready at five.”

“Yes, sir. Good luck.” J answered, surprising Tony.

“Since when do you consider “luck” as a useful variable, J?”

“Since you tamed the Unicorn and mixed with its family, sir.” J said unperturbed. Tony smirked, chuckling.

“Can’t wait to introduce you, buddy.”

“It’ll be a pleasure.” Jarvis answered crisply.

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Tony was tinkering in the back of the vault, when the palace’s walls shook. He swallowed thickly, forcing his mind to concentrate on the task. He could do nothing. He must allow things to go as planned. It wasn’t his place to decide. It must be done.

It must, yeah, but, fuck, will she regret bullying him into this.

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Frigg paraded the girl, leading her down the long halls, slicing the enemies. The girl was completely useless, clinging to her and whimpering. Fates, how Thor even looked at her?

However, this meekness was exactly what Frigg needed. She shushed her, reassuring and sent her into hiding, conjuring a projection, when she sensed the destructive energy of Malekith.

The dark elf came, snarling at her and chasing the illusion. Frigg put a resemblance of a resistance, before allowing them to capture her. She stilled her magic, smirking defiantly at him, preparing herself for the assault.

The sword pierced her side and she felt life draining out her. She faded with a smile, knowing that her child will be finally free.

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Loki felt the explosion, magic shifting in the air, when the protective barrier collapsed and Odin’s power spiked, before deeming considerably. The dread swallowed him, and he felt restless. He wished to have some inside, but the dungeon’s walls were mockingly silent.

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The guard came two days later informing him of his mother’s passing. Loki dismissed him with a
gesture, and when he was left alone he screamed, magic leaping out of him lashing out on everything it could touch. The barrier wavered and hissed, sucking the power out of him. Loki fought and raged, until there was no ounce of energy left in him. The cage flickered, but stood, draining the God completely.

Loki came to awareness later next day. His body was weak, his head pounding mercilessly, but he welcomed the pain. He deserved it, seeing how he failed the one who sacrificed so much for him. He would have inflicted more damage on himself, but broken bones and split skin was all he could allow, since his life did not belong to him solemnly.

He longed for Anthony to be here. He needed his kindness and reassurances more than he ever needed anything, but, unfortunately, his sun was of limits. He was left to wallow in despair alone.

He laid there motionless, not having the energy or desire to move. The world seemed to fade and he was glad to be locked in this stillness. Here he could pretend he did not exist, like the outside world where his mother was no longer.

The time dragged. The agony intensified, and he entertained a thought of erasing himself for a while. It brought him much satisfaction. He, almost, did it too, but there were two promises he had to keep. They would not be amused if he slips, thus, he yielded and slowly started to pull the shattered pieces together.

When the heavy thud of footsteps broke the silence of the dungeons, Loki was relatively calm; his mind in order and priorities straight. He would lie if he said he was surprised to see Thor standing there.

“Loki.” The oaf greeted, his stance rigid and expression full of resentment.

“Thor.” Loki drawled, staring at him with plain boredom. “What brought you here, Thunderer? Did something rot in your glorious kingdom? Do you need a whore to rescue your precious image again?”

“Cease, Loki!” Thor boomed, vexed. “I have no patience for your twistedness. You are aware of mother’s death.”

“Oh, yes, Thor” Loki hissed. “I am aware.”

“Then you understand my grief. Help me to leave Asgard and avenge her death.” Thor commanded, in his usual brash manner and Loki laughed at him. The sound was harsh, mocking and bitter.

“Gone those days, Thor, when I gladly jumped at the opportunity to aid you. You are in need, Thunderer, but I see no profit for me, since, I presume your offer does not come with parole.” Loki dismissed him.

Thor balled his hands into fists, growling:

“You would seek profit from her death, Snake? Did you not care for her at all?”

“You have decided that I didn’t.” Loki retorted, emotions getting the better of him. “Leaving me out of this, sending the guard to give me a short notice after her PASSING!” He shouted, burning Thor with hateful stare, and then taking a deep breath, calming himself. “Thus, yes, Thunderer, I will.”

Thor face twisted in a scowl, his eyes blazing with fury, but he controlled it masterfully. Thor has
changed, Loki noticed. He became steadier, more observant. Simple tricks won’t do anymore. Loki had to be craftier this time around; more invested, and it did alight his blood with ghosts of pleasure. After all, he loved to weave a good con.

“I offer you vengeance, Snake and nothing else. You were rot in this cell till the time crumbles. The only question is will you leave her death unpunished or not?”

Loki measured Thor with icy stare, thinking that he played a hostile card long enough, and it was time to built the fake bridge of brotherhood.

“You would trust me to lead you through the path and not to kill you in the process?” Loki asked mischievously.

“No, I do not. However, I’d trust your rage and vehemence. You will not sabotage this, since, you want it is as much as I do.” Thor reasoned.

“Sometimes I wonder why you hide your wit so deep even you can’t reach it.” Loki taunted.

“Then again, you betray me and I simply kill you. It will do nicely as reassurance as well, since mother has passed and father won’t be opposed.” Thor said nonchalantly, and Loki smirked at him bloodthirsty.

“Finally, the truth. When do we start, Thunderer?” Loki inquired, watching Thor in mild amusement.

“How about now?” Thor mocked, swaying the Mjolnir and hitting the barrier. Loki’s protest dyed on his lips, when the wall collapsed and the remaining energy leaped to all sides, most of it forcefully entering his body. The force of the whiplash threw him into the wall. Loki’s mouth opened in the silent scream, and he could taste the blood in his mouth, when it ended. He spat it out, glaring at the oaf.

“It could have killed me.” He hissed, standing up slowly, his legs shaking.

“It didn’t.” Thor shrugged, grabbing his shoulder and dragging him out. The chance indeed came. However, the price for it was awful.

"I don’t like it, Pep.” Tony complained, pacing nervously. The half-empty bottle of scotch in his hand.

“Will you, please, calm down.” She snapped, tired of handling him. Tony was hard to deal with on daily basis, when he was antsy it was near to impossible.

“Calm down? Calm down! The Asgard is a fucking wreck! Odin is out and Thor is unstable. I can, only, guess what state Loki is in, since the news gutted him for sure, and you ask me to calm down?!” He hissed, getting into her face.

“Tony, chill.” She repeated, pushing him off herself. “We talked this through multiple times, already. You know it was the lesser of all evils. Trust in her judgment.”

“I hate it!” Tony whined stubbornly, flopping down the coach and taking a swing from the bottle. “I should be there with him, keeping him together; helping him through this shit. Instead, I am locked here, like a misbehaved puppy waiting to jump at the command. It’s not my style, Pep. It’s not who I am.”
“What can I say, Tony, welcome to the world of helpless human beings. It will do you good.” She said harshly.

“Fuck this and the world in general.” He complained childishly, drinking on. “I won’t shake it, Pep. It will be no getting’ over it. I will bring the mythical Ragnarok upon their godly heads if anything happens to him.” He swore darkly.

“Tony, haven’t we agreed that you are not match for them?” Pepper inquired, smiling. It was so typically him.

“I am not match for them - yet, Pepper. But, given time, which I apparently have plenty now and resources that I will not be denied as appears, there will be no divine that could match me – you’ll see. They all will.” He drawled, and she believed every syllable.

“That was a stupid move from her side, wasn’t it?” She shared her concern. Tony and knowledge, was a bad combination, especially when the road to said knowledge was given carelessly. Pepper was not sure what the Queen’s true goal was with it, but it was clear she wasn’t completely aware to whom she was giving it.

“She is a Goddess, Pepper. She lived in her high castle, protected by her inborn powers, worshiped and used to look down upon lesser beings. It did not occur to her that someone might go against her; might use the opportunity to its full potential.” Tony shrugged, and Pepper rolled her eyes.

“You said you like her.” She chastised, but the edge was missing. She was worried, naturally. The games Tony was playing may cost them their lives, but, it, also, was expected. She would have been worried if Tony followed the straight course and returned from Asgard empty handed.

“I liked my mother too, Pep. Doesn’t mean shit.” Tony retorted, making her laugh.

“You say you love, Loki. But one has to wonder does it mean anything to you?” She teased.

“Firstly, you said I love him, I just agreed. Secondly, I would not call it love, Pep. Love is gentile, giving; mine is vicious and angry. It’s devastating, all-consuming and dark. It wants to possess, consume and dissolve. I will own him, Pep. Every bit of him will be mine. Does it mean anything? I don’t know, Pep, does breathing means much to you?” He posed a random question, obsession swimming in his drunken gaze.

“It’s…I don’t know, Tony. I don’t think about it.” She said, uncertain as to where it was going.

“Exactly, because it does not matter, doesn’t it? Whether you are thinking about it or not, it just is, and if it suddenly ceases to exist you will die. As simply as that.” Tony explained, satisfied with his musings.

“I think you had too much…” Pepper said, standing up and taking the bottle from his limp fingers.

“May be.” He shrugged, closing his eyes for a moment. “It’s irrelevant. When he finds out, he will kill me, Pep.” He murmured, falling down the restless dream.

“I don’t think he will, Tony.” She murmured, smiling gently at his sleeping form.

Chapter End Notes
marikaAbowie: Cheers! Healthy relationships? Where have you spotted those? (smirks) But, yeah, I get it :)

kuyami98: Cheers! I'm glad you like this :)

Rhyfedd: Save Loki - done (mischievous smirk) I am glad you are.

Darklightningstorm (Lightningstorm): Cheers! :)

LadyLoki20: Hi. Cheers! I will try :)

1111: Yeap, exactly my thoughts :)

Lokislonelylady: Yet...she isn't dead yet...

Mamitadolls: I was jesting, dear. I cannot stop even if I wanted to. This story is something I wish to finish :) And i love your guessing. Simply sometimes they rob me the wrong way...anyway, thank you for sweet words ♥♥♥
Thor was marching brazenly through dungeons, dragging him along, and at the moment he allowed it, since his insides were still knitting themselves together. All things considered, he was healing nicely and it got his brain working.

The barrier that was keeping him locked mainly consisted of Odin’s magic. Spells that were meant to keep him confined, regulate the things that went in and out of the cell, suck the energy and rip him to shreds if he dared to tamper with them.

He was stronger than Odin dared to dream, hence, the usage of his own magic that multiplied the original incantations, making them, almost, impossible to break. Thus, the involvement of Majolnir that was a nice counterbalance to his glory. Unfortunately, the mighty weapon belonged to the mightiest idiot who cannot be reasoned with, which lead to drastic measures, namely death.

She knew them well and calibrated this to perfection. However, he was still uncertain as to how she pulled this alone.

Odin for all his missteps was not an idiot and a great strategist, thus, the palace had a back-up generator that worked independently from The -Allfather’s Gungnir, conjuring a force field around the palace and keeping most notorious prisoner’s in place, insuring that the place stays protected with or without the King.

So, his mother dimmed the All-father’s power by giving them all a shock of a lifetime, considerably lowering the cage’s power, but the generator should have nicely filled the gap. However, it didn’t. It was malfunctioning or broken, since the elves’ managed to infiltrate the castle, and Thor broke him out without killing him or maiming severely.

But how she did it? There were only a handful of people who knew where it was, what it was and how it worked – his adoptive kin and Heimdall. He could safely cross them out as his rescuers and she couldn’t possibly be in two places simultaneously, no matter how apt she was at illusionary art.

So, how the fuck!? He posed a silent question in his favourite imp’s language and froze, making Thor grumble and show him roughly. He hissed at him automatically, his mind perplexed by the idea it has gotten.

“Thor, how the elves got inside the palace? How in Nines you managed to miss their attack?” Loki demanded, playing the upset and disappointed card. Thor scoffed at him, turning away, shame shining in his eyes.

“Heimdall missed them, and then the generator failed. Later, we found out that somebody messed
with it.” Thor divulged furious, glaring at him.

“What are you glaring at me for? I was locked up, remember? Hidden better than your precious defence mechanisms, as it seems.” Loki mocked defensively. It won’t do for Thor to jump to the wrong conclusion. He was not responsible for this ingenious mess, apparently his other half was, but this was not something the oaf needs to know. Thor glared at him for a minute more, before reluctantly relaxing.

“I know you’re not. The cage forbade it. It appears they have infiltrated the castle beforehand, using alien technology.” Thor explained, and pointed on the floor in the grand hall, where they were walking now. Loki saw a smashed tiny spy-bot, and bit his cheek not to grin gleefully, and then his expression became dark.

Anthony ignored him profoundly and went behind his back, miraculously surviving his stupid sally and was in cahoots with his mother. He wanted to be pissed off at him for conjuring such a bold, desperate and dangerous move that allowed his mother to die, but couldn’t. He knew her well, and Anthony had little say in this. He was expected to follow strict commands, and Nines were aware if the Queen of Asgard ordered you either followed or died. However, he was vexed by Anthony’s blatant disregard of his well-being. He expressly forbade him from entering the conflict and just thinking about all the ways he could have been killed, by his mother included, made him nauseous. He, also, suddenly realised that he did not know if Anthony came out of this alive or unscratched. For all he knew they could have captured the spy and mutilate him beyond recognition or the elves might have taken him, or the way back wasn’t stable and torn him apart, making a vegetable out of the brilliant man.

“I gather you haven’t caught the spy?” Loki inquired.

“We assume he escaped together with Malekith, since we haven’t retrieved the stolen items.” Thor growled.

“You got robbed!? Nines, your pitifulness knows no boundaries.” Loki chuckled, masking his relive under the joyful enmity. “What they took?” He inquired, interested in what his beloved imp snatched from the vault.

“Tesseract, casket of ancient winters, Idun apples, various enchanted crystals, your precious Fenrir’s sword and uru - that what is missing on the first glance. We will know more after thorough inspection.”

Loki stared at Thor for a moment in disbelief and then laughed full-heartedly. Trust his imp to screw the Asgard all over. He took everything that Loki marked as curious, powerful or simply worth to have. The Fenrir’s sword was a message. A long time ago Loki gifted it to his friend, engraving the words on a never dulling blade: “Even if I am not present, my fondness and blessing will follow you till the ends of the Universe.”

Loki’s heart swelled with affection, but he quickly caught it, not breaking the character. It was elevating to know his imp was relatively safe and thinking of him, trying his best to help and sooth his pain, but the softer emotions was not what he should be enjoying right now. He should focus on rage, hatred, pain and had no problems to do it either, despite feeling hopeful and cared after.

“Nines, nothing changes in this rotten Kingdom. You still are incapable of doing anything right without me.” He jabbed, relishing in the rage he immited from Thor.

“I cannot see what amuses you, Snake. The elves did what you have failed to do. Does it not hurt your overgrown pride, Loki? Tell me how does it feel to know that if you were here mother would
be alive.” Thor asked him, an uncharacteristic mocking smirk appearing on his face. Loki scoffed, forcing himself to stay composed and squashing the desire to slice the oaf’s throat on the spot.

“She would be alive if you were thinking with you head instead of your dick, Thor. Who brought the pitiful abomination here? Who failed to protect the Queen? Who locked me up in that cursed place!? Tell me, Thunderer, who is really at fault here.” Loki bit back.

“It will do you good to keep your mouth shut or I’ll remove your tongue, Snake.” Thor hissed, slamming him into the column. “Jane is not responsible for mistakes we had made. Mother thought so too, since she gave up her life to save her.”

Loki’s magic leaped, sizzling dangerously under his skin, but he pushed it down, battling for the control. He loathed to hear the profanities coming out of Thor’s mouth. He despised him for being unobservant and narrow-minded, blinded by his false glory. Thor did not know his mother at all, and it was another testament to his foolishness.

Loki nodded, straightening his armour when Thor let him go.

“What is your magnificent plan, Thor?” He inquired, feeling the guards approaching. The word has finally reached Odin. They will not be allowed to leave easily.

“We fight and we win.” He said simply, and the door to the hall flew open. A dozen of guards swam in, weapons raised and stances defensive.

“In the name of All-father surrender princes.” The guard said, watching them warily.

“I’m afraid it’s not an option.” Loki said, conjuring the spell and throwing them into a wall, knocking them out.

“Impressive.” Thor praised reluctantly, motioning for him to follow.

“I cannot afford you smashing them around, Thor. It will call for unwanted attention.” Loki brushed him off, as usual.

“You were always averse to honest battle, Loki. I wonder why is that?” Thor mused, while they were creeping, towards the throne room.

“I would have explained to you what strategic thinking is Thor, but you need brains to understand it, so I simply won’t bother.” Loki shrugged, sniggering at the vexed look he got.

When they reached the room, Loki finally got the plan. It was crude and unimaginative, but it was Thor, who thought of it, so no surprises there.

“I see.” He drawled, and flinched when he heard the booming voices of warriors-three, that were coming their way. A bland woman was walking amongst them. Loki presumed it was Jane, and saw instantly what annoyed his mother. She was hideous. There was absolutely nothing even remotely pretty about her, and Loki fought hard not to gag. The buffoon’s levelled him with degrading stares and he smirked at them disturbingly, delighted at their subtle flinches. The woman, though, was dumber than a sheep, walking straight to him and slapping.

“This is for New-York” She said, glaring at him, and Loki chuckled.

“I like her.” He said with a twisted smirk and malicious demons dancing in his eyes. Thor scowled, knowing very well what his words meant, and hissed low:
“Touch her and I will maim you, Loki.”

Loki shrugged, dropping the expression and Thor relaxed, leaving them alone for a moment to conspire with Sif. Loki looked Jane over, and said:

““The Aether is killing you. However, if I were you I would pray that it stays inside. Anything is better than to be left defenceless when you are responsible for the death of the All-mother.”

The woman shuddered, moving away from him, her eyes wide with terror. He made sure to follow her with his openly hateful stare, drawing pleasure from her fear. She bumped into Tor, clinging to him.

“He is a monster.” She whispered, trembling and the oaf embraced her, scoffing at him.

“We all are, sweet.” Loki mocked, cackling at the death glares he got.

“Stop antagonising her, Snake or this trip will end for you faster than you have anticipated.” Thor growled.

“Nines, so touchy.” Loki taunted, raising his hands in defeat. “Didn’t mean to offend your fragile sensibilities, Lady Jane.” He apologised sarcastically, with a sickeningly pleasant smile.

She turned away from him, murmuring something to Thor. The Thunderer’s shoulders fell as he whispered the answer to her.

“Unfortunately, sweet, your almighty hero cannot do without me.” Loki drawled amused, relishing in the annoyed stares he received. “It’s a dirty secret, but invincible Thor is rather pathetic without his shadow.”

“You will never be as great as he is, Loki, no matter how much lies you spew or tricks you perform. You are inferior to him. You’re sick and twisted. You’re dark, and darkness will never outmatch the light.” Sif hissed at him, and it did not surprise him in the least. Sif loved Thor, like a foolish woman she was.

“Oh, dearest, it pains me to see how loyal you are to the oaf that never will answer your…” He didn’t get to finish the mockery, as Thor’s first silenced him.

“Enough.” Thor hissed, watching Loki spew the blood and smirk at him knowingly. “Let’s go before you’ll get yourself killed.”

“High time we started doing something.” Loki sing-song, following the Thunderer.

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The road to the Svartalfheim was not spectacular. They got fired at in Asgard, ditched the annoying warriors and successfully travelled the path. Jane lost consciousness. Thor was brooding, and Loki was considering his options.

He could run, but the probability of reaching the path before Thor catches up with him was slim. Moreover, he was not willing to play hide and seek. He wanted to be free to enjoy his dearest imp without glancing over his shoulder, thus, there was only one other option left.

It was risky, but he managed to pull it thrice before, so the chances of him getting out of this thriving was high. Besides, he is motivated plenty this time around. He will not allow his mother’s sacrifice to go to waste.
“Thor.” He called, receiving an icy glare. “Peace, Thunderer.” He added in a placated manner. “Your plan, as so far, got us almost killed, so, I propose another solution.”

Thor glared at him hard for several minutes, before giving in.

“I wish, I could trust you Loki. I know better than anyone you can lead us to victory with minimum hassle. However, I cannot.” He concluded sadly.

“That is wise, Thor. Do not trust me, but consider my rage and selfishness. I do not wish to die, Thunderer.” Loki emphasises, seeing how desperately Thor needed his expertise.

“What happened to us, brother?” He inquired, and Loki bit the inside of his cheek not to snap at the oaf.

“The unjust love of the All-father got in the way I presume.” Loki told a twisted, polished truth.

“Probably.” Thor agreed reluctantly. “Will you aid me, Loki?” He beseeched, lost and weak.

“I will, brother.” Loki reassured, and nothing in his voice indicated the loathing he felt for the older God.

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The chips fell nicely. Loki saved the woodlouse, and Thor was watching him with glimmering hope and returned loyalty. He took on the enemy that was fitting perfectly for his plan, and started preparing himself.

“Amma, what are you doing?” young Loki asked, watching in fascination how his mother stabbed the mage into the gut.

“Training.” His mother answered, with a sweet smile.

“For?” The child inquired, seeing how the life drained from her pupil. “Won’t he die?”

“No, dear. He won’t. Mages are different. Their body is reluctant to give in more than others. Magic keeps their mind alive for hours after their body’s death, and if one knows how to use it, he can bring himself back to life.”

The sword went through his chest, and he gasped, falling. The beast was sucked into the void, and he felt, like the lifeforce was leaving him. He stilled his magic, allowing his body to lose enough blood for his heart to stop. Thor run to him, promising sentimental bullshit, but he was not listening, gathering his strength and then, suddenly, everything went dark. He felt free and light, tempted to fall into serene calmness.

“The trick is to stay aware and not to listen to the death sirens, calling you, dear. If you do, you may overlook the time and be lost forever.” She gently explained, monitoring the process. The mage was silent for nine hours already and she sighed. “Precisely, as he did.” She added, and took out the syringe with golden liquid in it, injecting it right into the pupil’s heart. “That’s why you need a partner. If you get lost there is still a slim chance to save you. All you need is a shot of Idun’s apple juice, straight to the heart, and voila!.” She said, the mage convulsed and gasped, coughing. “You are alive.”

Loki awoke, sucking in the air and wheezing, his lungs burning. He wished his mother had a partner, like that, but, alas, she didn’t. They have buried her. Odin scattered her body along the Nines. It was highly improbable that she could have tricked them. The King would have noticed. Still, it was a nice thought to entertain.
The God got up, his muscles sore, and started walking towards the hidden path, brushing the bittersweet memories off. He got wonderful places to be, and one precious, mortal ass to kick. Probably, fuck first. Yes, definitely fuck first.

Chapter End Notes

ImpishDesign: Yeap, it should be :)

Mamitadolls: (shushing, and hugging) There, there, dear. It will be fine, promises...That being said, I'm certain I promised it to be "not pretty" , haven't I? (smirks)

Rhyfedd: Well, fine, demanding sweet creature. Half-rescue..may be? Anyway, Loki is a big boy he can handle himself better than anyone probably ever will (smiles) As per usual your comments...Ah, your comments. )))

Lokislonelylady: The only thing I'm sure about Tony will get his ass kicked for it :)

divinecrone: Cheers! Your words gladdens my heart, as concerns your question - you'll have to wait and see :)

"Is she gone, J?" Tony asked cracking one eye open.

"Yes, sir. Miss Pots is on her way home." J informed.

"Great." He mumbled, getting up and stretching. Those apples were miracle workers. He felt younger and much healthier. The constant pain in his chest dissolved. The shrapnel were gone. The scars and defects the substances, which he abused with vigour, left inside his body erased. He was a new man, and those several hours of agony he faced while his body was reconstructing itself were worth it. "Is the potion ready?" He inquired, going down the lab.

"Sir, may I remind you that we have only a vague idea of the components, thus, it is ready as it ever will be.” J sassed him and Tony smirked.

"Come on, buddy. Don’t be like that. I have survived, haven’t I?” He cooed, getting inside the gifted armour. It lacked his favourite robotics, was old-fashioned and rather pompous, but it did its job well.

"By pure luck, sir.” J answered crisply, and Tony could swear he could hear sarcasm there, almost hostility.

"J, sweet child, I know you’re cross with me, and the change is bothering you. But you will understand when you meet him.” Tony promised, adjusting and fastening the breast plate.

"I doubt that very much, sir.” J answered bitingly, getting Tony’s full attention.

"Are you jealous, J?" He asked dauntedly.

"Don’t be dull, sir.” J bristled, making Tony laugh. “Loki is a hazardous element, as so far, bringing only disruption and unnecessary danger into your life, sir. You are aware how poorly I react to such unstable variables.”

"Yeah, buddy, I remember, but just this once, I want everybody to live.” Tony said, taking the syringe and opening the portal.

"You put too much effort to save the ungrateful, sir.” Jarvis said, stabilising the path.

"I’m a hero, J.” Tony sing-sang, stepping on it.

"No, sir, you’re an idiot.”

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Frigg was floating between death and life, seemed to be stuck in the loop. She was preparing herself to fight her husband’s magic and healing powers of Idun, but none of it came. It saddened her. In the
end, he decided that she had overgrown her usefulness, and the love that he felt for her in their youth ceased to be.

She wished she could look him in the eyes and say that she loved him still, but cannot cultivate the madness that has awoken in him. She regretted that her life had to end abruptly, and she will not be able to see her sons thriving. She loathed the fact that she has broken her youngest heart, and his freedom will be marred by this gloomy event. However, she stood by her decision. She would rather watch over him from Valhalla, then see him rot in that place.

The sirens were quiet, and her mind drifted, lulled by the calmness and emptiness. The negative and positive mixed and dripped from her soul, leaving it blissfully blank. She scattered her magic, and, suddenly her heart thumped, making her aware of the stiff body she was confided in. It thumped again, and she felt her muscles tensing, spasming violently. She gaped, sucking the air on instinct, her eyes flying open.

The room was dark, alighted by the funerary lights. She was lying at the silken sheets, covered by her favourite star-born lillies, and a grinning face of a mortal brat was looming over her.

“Welcome to the world of the living, ma’am.” He greeted her sarcastically, a mischievous grin, that was a mirror image of her youngest expression, shining on his face.

“What have you done!? Nines, what should I do!?” She hissed at him, panicking. It won’t do for Odin to find out she was alive, after the realisation she had. Her death was vital part of the plan and this rebellious, good-for-nothing, brilliant child has ruined it.

“Saved your life. Don’t sell yourself short, you’re smart. You’ll think of something.” Tony said, looking at her indulgently.

“Ma’am.” She added tauntingly, conjuring an illusion of herself, praying that it will do, since all the preparations were done. No one should come and see her. Her body was ready to depart any minute now.

“Yeah, that.” Tony said distractedly, poking the illusion, which did not dissolve upon his touch. “Huh, I thought those are not solid.”

“As a rule, they are not, but, since, you decided to misbehave, I had no choice but to be creative.” She retorted, watching how the gates opened and the panel slid into the water. “Now you pray, little one and pray hard for it to work or otherwise I will make you aware of how little you know about pain.”

“Pffft, if I got a penny every time…” Tony started, but gulped when she glared at him. “I’m praying.”

“Hmm.” She hummed with a subtle smile. The mortal child was unpredictable and formidable, and she was glad Loki found him. There was no better match for her son - and listening to him, watching his antics, she could see that Fates themselves destined for them to be together.

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“Stark, we need you in London, asap.” Fury’s annoying voice boomed through the speakers and Tony groaned.

“J, why did you put him through?”

“Thor Odison is involved, sir. I thought you would be interested.”
“On it.” Tony said, jumping from the coach and running down to fetch the suit.

The city was ripped.

There was fire. People running, getting killed by the debris or stabbed, shot, cut by the elves, stroke by Thor’s lightening; got smashed by overthrown car or squashed by the alien monster.

It was brutal misery and aftermaths of their heroic duty. Nobody ever cared for pedestrians. They were disposable in the face of a bigger threat.

It made Tony cringe without a fault and made him hate himself deeply, passionately. They were supposed to save them – that dead woman, whose insides spilled of a pavement; that teen who got burned by high-voltage; that kid, who was crying and pulling his dead father, pleading him to stand up.

Instead of people they protected their selfish interests. Thor protected Jane. The Avengers protected idea, ideals, their own skin. Stark protected his autonomy, and, lately, Loki.

He loathed the fact that he was not able to overcome his humane impulses, as he would never be a saviour. At best, he was an anti-hero, saving the world, because it was convenient or aligned with his own interests. Selfless acts were not written down in his program. Thus, why he felt guilt for random strangers’ death was a mystery. Loki would probably say his strive to do good was at fault. Pepper will hint that he has a heart. He, already, got bored with an emotional turmoil, and switched his attention to Zeus wannabe.

Thor was fighting a pompous looking dude, that was monologuing and strolling leisurely, like he owned the place. Tony bet that he was the main jackass of this party, and blasted him.

Thor looked up, spotting him and smiled happily, while the grand elf was eating dirt.

“Friend Tony, you’re a blessing. I was afraid that Fates started hating me, but your arrival proves that my quest is honourable.” He boomed joyfully.

“I’m flattered, Bolt. What are we dealing with?” Tony inquired, aiming his gauntlets at Malekith. He was almost sure Loki called him that.

“With a rotten foe that took my mother’s and brother’s life. Thus, friend Tony, I ask you to leave his death to me.” Thor explained, but Tony lost him after he said Loki was dead. He said that, right?

“Loki is dead?” Tony questioned, not caring that his voice sounded painfully broken.

“Unfortunately. He sacrificed his life to protect mine and Lady Jane’s. It was an honourable deed. He died a hero.” Thor shared pridefully, and Tony punched him. Thor flew back into the wall, crushing it.

“What side are you on, machine?” Malekith inquired. Tony side glanced at him, throwing a metallic circle, decorated with softly glowing runes to his feet. The elf looked at it quizically, before being blinded by the light and screaming his bloody heart out. The Aether were sucked out of him forcefully. The energy clinged to him, not willing to be confined, tearing his body apart, dissolving his skin and clutching his muscles. By the time it ended, Malekith was reduced to the red, disfigured puddle.

“Huh.” Tony remarked, calling the device back. Shit, she was promptly horrifying. However, the
freak-show did nothing to appease his lust for blood, so, he turned to gaping Thor, smirking twistedly.

“What is the meaning of this?” Thor growled, to be blasted back into the wall. He hadn’t time to gain ground at the present, as Iron man was instantly upon him, delivering punch after punch.

“Dead!? How the fuck!?” The man growled, catching his hand and squashing it. Thor yelped, to get silenced by the blow into his face. “You are not fucking worth his single breath, bastard. Gods, fucking why you allowed him to die, imbecilic shithead!?”

Tony screamed reducing the God’s face to a bloody pulp. He hit and hit, throwing him through the building, sending a beam after him, and then catching the battered body and smashing it into the pavement.

“I will, fucking, tear your stupid head from your pathetic, foul body and put it on the spike of Stark tower to rot.” Stark hissed, squeezing Thor’s throat, delighted by the pitiful scratches and whimpers he heard, and he would have killed him too, if not for a gentle touch that instantly calmed him and paralysed.

“We have discussed this, little one, haven’t we?” Frigg told him, and he turned to look at her.

“It slipped my mind.” He said sheepishly, letting the fucker go and standing up. He was not match for her and she will not allow him to butcher her son, no matter how displeased she was with him as well.

“Mother?” Thor mumbled, his wounds already healing. Tony spotted it and blasted him, earning a displeased glare.

“Anthony.” She warned, and he raised his hands in surrender.

“Couldn’t resist.” He said with no remorse, and she shook her head at him.

“Thor, am I correct to presume that your ignorance and arrogance finally led to your brother’s demise?” She inquired, and Thor flinched, averting his gaze.

“He died honourably, mother.” He defended, and she chuckled darkly.

“I’d prefer my son dishonoured, but alive. You know of this, Thor.” She said and he scowled at her.

“You, always, favoured him mother.” He hissed. “Your perfect little boy cannot do anything wrong; exceptionally smart and deviously cunning…Alas, he turned out to be a poisonous Snake that betrayed us all.”

“Oh, I understand, you’re suffering from the same illness your father does.” Frigg said compassionately. “Don’t fret, my child. I will heal you.”

She snapped her fingers and Jane appeared before her, watching her confusedly.

“Good day, Jane.” She greeted and touched her temple. “Let me show you the honourable deeds of the man you love.”

Jane’s eyes rolled back, and at first nothing happened, but short after she started screaming, falling on the ground and trashing around. Thor wailed, crawling to her and holding her close.

“Jane, Jane…” He called, but there was no answer, only moans and tears. When she calmed and
opened her eyes, she shouted, pushing him away and flying out of his arms.

“Monster! Monster!” She howled, running away.

“How could you, mother?” Thor asked, sitting broken, humiliated and defeated on the ground.

“You deemed Loki fewer than you, judging his deeds through the eyes of others. I simply showed you that your glory can be viewed differently as well. Moreover, “She continued, pointing at Stark who was watching them with morbid curiosity. “You are responsible for his lover’s death, Thor, so be grateful I earned some respect from this magnificent creature or else you’d be in great trouble.”

“Lover!?” Thor, and to Tony’s horror Bird-brain exclaimed simultaneously. He tuned reluctantly spotting the team, and groaned.

“Yes. Weren’t you aware? Anthony aided Loki during his captivity and they became very close.” She explained serene, and Tony tensed big time.

“WTF?” The Avengers exploded.

“Ma’am!? Why, the fuck, do you hate me? J, how the fuck did you miss this?” He complained.

“You shouldn’t have told them that.” Tony added, scoffing at the smirking Goddess.

“You shouldn’t have done many things too, little one.” She remarked.

“They will be such a pain.” He whined childishly.

“You are smart. You’ll think of something.” She mocked, disappearing, leaving only a silver bell laugh behind.

“Fuck... Fuck.” Tony grumbled quietly, raising his hands. “Now, no need to overreact, guys. I’ll come peacefully.”

Loki came out of the portal, inhaling the crisp, wintery smell of the mountains and instantly teleported to the Stark tower, glad that the pull of the energy was the strongest there, so it was not hard to find his imp’s quarters. He expected many things to see there – miracles and wonders included, but he did not expect to see his mother, alive and well, arguing with a thin air, as it seemed.

“He jeopardised the plan and I do not take kindly to such behaviour.” His mother retorted, fussing.

“Mister Loki,” The crisp British voiced addressed him and it took a lot from him not to jump.

“Maybe you can reason with the woman, stressing that it was not acceptable to put Sir into such vulnerable position when he sacrificed plenty to ensure yours and her safety, after, you adjust to the new circumstances, of course.”

His mother turned to look at him; her face alighting with a fragile, affectionate smile and he smirked at her gently.

“I see the news of your death were greatly exaggerated.” He said, his voice full of warmth, relive and happiness.

“As was yours.” She answered in kind, stepping closer to hug him. Loki hugged her back, holding her gingerly for a minute, before letting go.

“I presume the imp went against you, and did as he pleased.” He said, and she didn’t miss the
reverence and deep-rooted respect in her son’s tone.

“Yes.” She allowed, knowing that he will be cross with her.

“You, naturally, though of a creative way to punish him.” He continued, his voice hitting a dark note with a hint of retribution and obsessive protectiveness.

“Yes.” She confirmed, holding back from flinching when he burned her with a furious stare.

“But of course.” He hissed coldly, turning away from her.

“Loki…” She tried, but he glared, effectively cutting her speech.

“Not now, mother. I’m busy.” He dismissed her, his eyes gloving eerie green. “Jarvis, would you be so kind as to explain the situation?” He inquired politely.

“It will be my pleasure, Mister Loki.” Jarvis answered, starting to understand what has captivated his creator.

Chapter End Notes

AceOfLesbians: Yeaay :) About time too :)

Mamitadolls: Your welcome :) It's a pleasure to write for such responsive readers :)

Rhyfedd: Well, he is a rebellious God, so the better question - what instances in his long life of law breaking do not call for it :) I'm too. I'm debating how long I should stretch this...it has potential to go to the Civil war, actually...but should or shouldn't...I don't know...

About Fenrir - Thor killed him. Sliced his head of in front of Loki.

ImpishDesign: I don't like her too. Don't know why...if to be honest...she is just plain...

divinecrone: I don't think Loki has to do much to keep him, and vice versa. They are literally "the one and only" for each other :)
The pure high of obsession

Chapter Notes

Thank you for your comments and kudos, dear readers
Enjoy

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Loki was delighted to note that Jarvis was an entity of God’s creation. Anthony built a construction, called it a child and treated it accordingly. It grew, became cunningly sentient and deviously independent. Anthony created a life.

His formal mortal - and oh, Nines, he cannot even describe what this titbit of information did to him. The euphoria he felt when Jarvis told him Tony extended his life for experimental purposes [translate: just because he, fucking, could] opened an entirely different dimension of pleasure for him.

Loki was still trembling from time to time, when it struck him that his Anthony is functionally immortal; that this amazingly infuriating, adorably reckless, vexingly brilliant, unruly beloved imp eliminated the most miserable, frustrating and humiliating issue from their relationship just because…

Deep calming breaths…deep.calming.breaths.

Loki vibrated with emotions. They came, like a flood, covering him and drowned mercilessly. He couldn’t pinpoint himself anymore; his whole being was pulsing with one desire and only purpose – Anthony.

He couldn’t process how much his imp had done for him in a spam of insignificant time. Anthony saved his sanity and emancipated, then found him, healed him, arranged his escape, gifted freedom… resurrected his mother. Nines, he was…indescribable.

Thus, there wasn’t a question of him “threading lightly” or “being reasonable”, like his mother urged him to be. It was more of a curiosity, actually - how many he would manage to kill, before it will truly start to look unbecoming in his own eyes. Because, at this moment, he was desperate to butcher them all, so, no one ever dared to take his Anthony’s precious attention from him.

There was something grotesquely violent and possessive inside of him, growling shamelessly and insisting to own thoroughly, viciously, eternally, and he was agreeing with every dirty hiss.

So, he came. High on the obsession, dizzy from the affection he could taste in every action his imp made; head clouded with sinful desire, and…

“Loki would never be as stupid as you fucks! Even if he survived, which you Bolt should be praying very hard for, because if he ain’t…”

Loki heard a crash, followed by his imp’s enraged voice, shouts and noises of a fight, and hurried to the scene. What he saw, though, made him, almost, lose his cover. Thor was squeezed into a wall, eyes wild. Captain and Barton were shielding him, Fury and Banner, tried to drag hissing and cursing Anthony back. Widow standing in between, aiming her weapon at his beloved imp.

“Shit, Stark, are you on steroids or something?” Fury exclaimed, finding it hard to contain the man.
“Yeah, Asgardian ones.” He smirked, easily breaking their hold. “I’m calm. I’m calm.” He said coolly, raising his hand up, and rubbing his arc with the other in a soothing gesture. Romanov watched him for a bit, before putting the gun down, and it saved her life, because Loki was a second from ripping it off.

Thor narrowed his eyes at Anthony, and Loki supressed another violent reaction, going to stand on the left side of them; close enough to intertwine, and far enough to be out of his imp’s way. Anthony was clearly in control, and there was no need to add the gasoline to the fire, despite the desperate longing to do the opposite.

“Are you admitting that you ate the apples, Stark?” Thor inquired, and Tony cackled.

“Ain’t you bright, Bolt. Haven’t I told you, already? I have no connection to the mess you had in Asgard. I admit I sneaked to the palace, talked to Loki, found him unbelievably appealing, went back, stumbled upon your half-dead mother, fixed her and in gratitude she healed me.” Tony lied smoothly, and Loki grinned proudly, whishing he could kiss him as a reward for the outstanding performance.

“So, you are not denying that you were involved with a convicted criminal?” Widow inquired.

“There is so much wrong with this question, Tash, I do not even know where to start correcting it.” He sassed. “First, I will never in a million years deny that someone as awesome as Loki considered my ass as a suite. I mean you know I’m an ego-maniac, so say in what Universe I would deny a God.”

“You don’t seem to favour Thor that much.” Banner said, and Tony laughed.

“Come on, Brucie, I’m talking real divine here – heart, body and mind, not a cheap, boorish excuse for an alien.”

“Who are you calling cheap!?” Thor snarled, pushing past the Captain, however, Barton gripped him by the upper arm, calmly meeting his stormy gaze and shook his head. “I understand your wish to protect your comrade, but he is venturing too far.”

Tony laughed at this, full-blown, degraded sniggers.

“No one is protecting me, Bolt.”

“What are you implying, mortal!?” Thor hissed, and his imp laughed more, intriguing Loki. He was aware of Anthony’s brash ways, but taunting Thor was not the smartest decision, even if he has enhanced strength. Something different was making his imp unbearably arrogant and he was eager to hear more, anticipating mischief.

“Just what I said. What the merry band of misfits are dancing around here, at least the S.H.I.E.L.D part of it, is averseness of me dong a courtesy. You are a criminal, Thor.” Anthony declared straight-faced, and Loki applauded his acting skills, because he himself was bursting from the supressed laughter.

“What!” Captain and Thor exclaimed simultaneously. “You cannot be serious, Tony!?” Steve continued, finding it hard to believe.

“I am. He kidnaped and held captive a US citizen, Steve. The poor woman is out of her mind.” He said, and the fake concern in his voice was alluring. Loki swallowed a lustful whine, imagining how it would taste on his lips.
“Jane suffered from dishonest tricks of my mother. She was in grave danger when I took her from this realm, and she came willingly. You are aware of this, Stark.” Thor growled hostile, to be met with a razor-sharp smirk, yearning for blood.

Loki stilled, willing his magic to shut the fuck up and stop demanding from him to reduce Thor to a sizzling puddle goo. Anthony got this, his expression promising wonderful retributions.

“Am I? All I know is that you took her after she was infected with some alien shit, and considering how you treated your own brother when he was suffering from the same condition…” Tony shook his head disappointedly, shuddering from disgust. “I’m getting nauseous just by thinking about all the horrors that she went through. Besides, she calls you a monster and is suffering from full-blown psychotic break down.”

“I did nothing to her! I love her!” He raged, thunder striking outside.

“You, also, said that you care for your brother, Thor.” To Loki’s ultimate surprise it was Fury talking. “However, it came to our attention that Loki was brought to the brick of a suicide, was captured by unknown hostile power and brainwashed. He was then sent to Earth as a puppet, and you did not recognise the signs or worse proceeded with your own goals, ignoring his predicament.”

“What?!” Thor exclaimed, dumbfounded. “You, mortals, are imbecilic. Loki is a God of lies, he can literally be whatever he wishes to be. To trust him is to become and ultimate fool. He played you all.”

Widow, Fury and Stark exchanged a meaningful glance. Captain, Barton and Banner were looking at them with torn feelings.

“He has a point, Tony.” Steve defended, trying to stay on the side of reason. Loki was insane and unstable. He cannot believe that the God could be anything but it.

“And we have evidence, Cap.” Tony said easily, and the tension left Loki. For a second there, he thought that Thor’s words may change something; may plant a doubt in Anthony’s head. Naturally, it didn’t. Anthony said he will not forsake him, and his imp was sticking to his word, showing Loki in how many ways he got his back, unknowingly for the God.

Loki bit his lip to control the emotions that were accumulating in him. He was protected. He could, finally, breath easily. He will have his freedom here, on his cherished Midgard, and his adorable imp will insure it.

“What evidence Tony?” Banner asked.

“Video tapes, recordings, energy readings, witnesses’ testimonies, and the most precious - the Queen of Asgard, who decided to share the information after her husband tried to bury her alive, when she dared to question his shady practices.” Anthony explained with a shit-eating grin.

“She is a liar!” Thor hissed. “She will do anything for her Snake!”

Loki took a deep breath and promised himself to find Thor later and bash his teeth deep down his throat.

“You cannot be trusted, as well, Thor. She is your mother and you easily discard and shame her.” Banner reasoned, turning to Tony. “I understand Tony you reassured a free pass to your fascination, but I cannot help but wonder what will become of us, when you get tired of him.”

“Banner,” Anthony said gravely serious, and Loki got high on the stingy notes in his beloved imp’s
voice. “If I were you I’d worry less about fictional future and more about immediate one, which will become grim if you continue to slight Loki.”

Banner nodded, getting off his back, and Tony turned to Thor.

“Anyway, Bolt. You have two options here – get the fuck from our planet and do not show your ugly mug here ever again or get hunted and killed, like a rabid beast you are.”

“You will regret this!” Thor hissed, turning to leave, but Captain caught him whispering something. The God nodded, and levelled them with an icy stare, before walking through the door. The gang exchanged worried glances, and Tony shrugged.

“Nice talking to you, I guess. But I’m off.” Anthony said, and waved his hand, but was detained by the Captain’s voice.

“Is that all? Are we letting him go? He stole the artefact, conspired with a war criminal, probably helped him to escape and alienated Thor for his own selfish goals. Are you alright with it? How can you be alright with it?” Steve inquired, his voice tight.

“Captain, Loki is not a criminal on Erath. He is considered to be a victim of circumstances; an unwilling ally, if you will. He saved our planet, and it does not matter why. There are forces Captain, beyond our capabilities and Loki, like it or not, is our only chance at survival.” Fury explained levelly, and Loki finally got the answer to the original question. The threat brought his brilliant imp to him. Anthony saw and got it all, thus, Loki will not have to lie to him and dance around, because his imp already knew.

“Isn’t he dead?” Barton asked, and got a burning stare from Anthony, flinching.

“Are you stupid, Barton?” Widow barked, making him pale.

“I’m sorry, but I cannot jump on this train. Loki…he is…I don’t buy it.” The Archer said, stepping away. “I agree with, Cap. Stark is given too much power, and it doesn’t sit well with me.”

“You are stupid.” Widow told him, shaking her head. “Nobody giving him shit, Barton. He is his own entity; highly influential and authoritative. We cannot afford to quarrel with him.”

“So, what!? We bow and dance as he wants us to!?” The archer growled, and Captain glared.

“That’s exactly what you do.” Tony confirmed with infuriating grin, and Loki teleported away. It was obvious he was not needed there, as his imp was a legitimate king of Midgard and no one will dare to harm him. His speeches though, the tasty, raw power that was seeping from him, aroused Loki past the rational mind, and it was better he stays off the radar.

“How it went, mister Loki?” Jarvis inquired, when Loki arrived, smirking darkly.

“You’re a devious creature, pneuma. I appreciated the gift, thank you.”

“My pleasure, mister Loki.”

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Tony returned from the meeting, feeling sore, a dull ache in his chest never-ending. The aftermath of the White Queen’s pettiness was highly irritating and entertaining at the same time. He would even go as far as to feel grateful to her, but strictly in his head, under the tag “never breath a word to her ‘bout it.”
It kept him sane. It kept him busy. He talked about Loki, thought about him, in a present tense. As he
should, since she warned him of Loki’s tricks. She did that, and came out alive. However, Tony did
not give two shits about her, beyond the fact that she was Loki’s mother and an amusing arch-ally to
have. Loki, though, was his world, and fuck was he not on board with such ruses. Not to mention,
how many things could have gotten screwed in the process.

He strolled to the bar, pouring himself a drink, and turned to the panorama of the night city. The
glass slipped from fingers, shattering. There, by the left window that he was thrown from, stood
Loki, with a soft smile on his lips and warmth blazing in his alluring emerald eyes.

Tony whimpered pitifully and run to him, enveloping in a tight hug, tears of joy and relief spilling
freely. Loki smelt divine, and felt, like heaven – firm, powerful and alive.

Loki watched his imp waltzing to the bar, and preparing a drink, lost in thought. He was content to
stay silent. The emotions he discovered and felt were buzzing softly under his skin, morphing into an
eternal devotion. He was simply content to share one space with Anthony for now, taking in the
image, engraving this moment, when the world was perfectly ideal, into his memory

Anthony turned, a glass slipping from his hold and breaking. He did not notice, staring at Loki with
agonising hope and utter happiness. A desperate sound fell from his wonderful lips, and the next
instant, Loki was embraced, like he was the most cherished thing in the Universe. It gladdened and
saddened him simultaneously, as this was the honest reaction of a being that truly cared for him – no
pretence, no games, no jesting. Anthony was happy to see him. He missed him, and Loki could feel
that with every cell of his body.

He smiled heartbreakingly soft, and pulled his imp closer, nuzzling his hair and breathing in the
unique scent of sea and sandalwood; a scent of home.

“Anthony.” He purred, moving a bit, pleased by tightening grip. “Don’t fret imp, I’m not going
anywhere.” Loki teased, to be met with liquid brown eyes full of mixed emotions, adore prevailing
over everything else.

“The hell you will.” Tony grumbled, standing on his tiptoes and kissing gently, chastely. The electric
shock run between them, making them part and stare at each other in wonder.

Tony felt this before; the crisp, icily taste of Loki’s magic lingering on his lips, traveling down his
skin and curling inside his arc, soothing the ache. It hummed contentedly, radiating pleasure.

The God beamed and covered the arc with his palm, trying experimentally to call the energy back
and was not surprised at its resistance. It was Anthony’s now. He literally had a part of Loki
imbedded in his chest.

Loki caressed Anthony’s sternum, dissolving the fabric to get the feel of the sun-kissed skin. The
light prickle didn’t stop, but it wasn’t unpleasant, simply novel, like everything between them.

Tony gasped, when Loki’s fingers touched him, chill and deliciously electrifying. He moved closer,
tugging the tunic urgently, and his God chuckled, dispelling the fabric.

The body under his fingertips was smooth, hard and wintry, like a surface of a metal table, and, at
this moment, it struck Tony that Loki was an alien; truly different. This wasn’t his skin even, or was
it? According to Frigg, he transformed upon touch, which logically hinted on him being a cross-
bread, and since frost giants were on the same page with Nazis in many aspects concerning purity of
race and such, it made sense that he was left to die.
Loki fascinated Tony to no end, and he leaned to lick his skin, which tasted of honey sweetness, with a barely noticeable spice. The God moaned softly, arching into his mouth. Tony smiled, nibbling at the skin and sucking gently, aiming to leave a mark, his mind wondering if the blue version will taste differently, and, since, he was not concerning himself with any higher thought at the moment, he blubbered into Loki’s skin:

“Not the best way to say it, but can you, please, change for a second. I really wanna know how the other version of you tastes.”

The God tensed for a brief second, before chuckling amusedly.

“Am I an experiment to you know, imp?” He demanded, his voice laced with arrogance and tease, but Tony could feel the cold, and see the blue-black palette. Tony grinned, taking a generous lick of the gloriously alien skin. The sweetest dimed, leaving the stingy, hot spicy taste. It burned Tony’s tongue and he loved it, moaning obscenely. The sound mixing with Loki’s pleasurable hiss.

“A case study.” Tony murmured. His lips caressing Loki’s body with every letter he pronounced.

“In?” The God inquired, his voice soaked in delight, hands caressing Tony’s back and shoulders aimlessly. It was clear that Loki didn’t want to distract him from the exploration, and a stray thought of Loki never experiencing this type of exchange before saddened him, but he quickly banished it. This moment was about enjoying the present and planning for the future. The demons of the past had no place here.

“Obsessive affection.” Tony answered, traveling up, nibbling at the long, slender neck. The taste switching from burning, tingly spice to soothing sweetness and back again. Tony did not mind either way. He liked the change. It thrilled him.

“Ah” Loki gasped. Anthony’s lips burning his Jotun skin, and when it became too much he switched to the Aesir form, but missed the edge and changed back to linger till the tingle became too painful to withstand.

“Your taste is perfect.” Tony praised, biting his chin softly, covering his skin with butterfly kisses, before claiming his lips in a languid kiss. Their tongues intertwined leisurely, caressing each other thoroughly; each twist and nibble, amplifying the pleasure.

They fell apart, Loki going down to bite at his neck, but Tony turned, holding Loki in place, and giving a light peck to the confused Reindeer’s delicious lips.

“You can do whatever you wish, but after I get what I want.” He explained, to chuckle at the playful irritation he saw in flickering red-emerald orbs.

“What do you want, imp?” Loki asked, relaxing into the imp’s hold. It went without saying that he will give Anthony whatever he asks for.

“I wanna know,” His imp said, caressing his pale skin with a thumb distractingly. “How to worship a God who enthralled me. Will you tell me, Loki what should I do to reduce you to a whimpering, needy mess?”

Loki’s eyes widened, a lustful tremble running down his spine and pooling in his groin, to ache with sweet anticipation. Trust Anthony to put this experience on the different level entirely.

“Kiss me.” Loki commanded, delighted when Tony followed his order immediately. Their lips connected, tongues entangled, and the God moaned into that skilful mouth. He honestly couldn’t get enough of this particular caress, thus, they kissed for a while, and when it became too intense, he
broke free, demanding: “slower”, and they were on the languid pace again.

“Touch me.” Loki murmured, into his imp’s lips, and Anthony caressed his member, through the fabric lightly. Loki moaned, trusting into his hand “Harder.” He groaned breathlessly, when the friction became much prominent. “Undress me.” Loki instructed, swimming in the pleasurable haze. The power play tremendously captivating.

Anthony stripped him slowly, making sure to cover his skin with light kisses and bites - creative, adorable imp. Loki watched him, eyes clouded with desire. Anthony looked at him from his kneeling position, silently asking to step from the cloth, but Loki was not wishing to move enchanted by the sight, simply waving it away.

“Lick.” He commanded in a rough voice, shivering from the warm air that touched his skin, before the hot tongue enveloped his flesh, leaving a prickly trail of delirious pleasure. Loki whimpered, his knees turning to jelly, and he, almost, fell to the floor, staying upright by sheer power of will. It was intoxicating. Anthony pliant, completely under his will, ready to fulfil his every order.

“I want to come badly into your mouth, imp.” Loki confessed brokenly, gripping his hair and pushing inside roughly, his control slipping. “You’re so good to me. Unbelievingly giving.” He groaned, fucking his imp’s mouth shamelessly, and finding no resistance. It unchained him, but he caught himself close to breaking, pulling out and dropping to his knees, to ravish his panting imp, whose mouth tasted of his impatient desire. “But I want to be inside you even more.” He purred, pushing Anthony back.

“Spread.” He ordered, like before and his imp followed, opening his legs wide, watching him with passionate, hungry look on his handsome face.

Loki gazed for a brief second, caressing the willing body with a heated stare, before locking their eyes, and wrapping his long fingers around the thick member, giving it a generous stroke. Anthony moaned, trusting into his hand, but he pushed his imp’s thighs down, purring: “Behave.” Anthony stilled, whimpering wantonly, squirming under the slow motions.

Loki drank the submissive image, aware of how much honour and trust he was bestowed with, his other hand dancing on the inner thighs, before breaching Anthony. He moaned, moving down to meet the trusts, and Loki allowed it, establishing a steady pace.

He prepared Anthony thoroughly, captivated by the sounds and provocative pictures, thinking that he could come from this alone, and he should test this theory soon, but right now it was high time to be buried inside his lovely imp; his recklessly generous everything.

He pulled his fingers out, delighted to hear a disappointed moan, that transformed into a needy whimper when he loomed over him, hooking Anthony’s leg to have a better access, and slipped in, magic easing the way.

The felling of the connection was indescribable. It was, like being in Valhalla, drunk on ambrosia and completely out of the mind. The pleasure was agonisingly painful, abnormally addicting and positively ruining. He came embarrassingly quickly, orgasm shattering him and for a brief second, he was not aware of anything besides bliss.
When awareness came back, he was glad to feel stickiness between them. He smiled, covering Anthony’s shoulders with butterfly kisses, relishing in the gasps he received. Anthony’s curious lips brushing his skin in a reverent manner.

Loki moved, deciding to roll from his imp not to crush him completely, but two strong hands held him in place.

“Stay.” Anthony demanded, and Loki propped himself up, to look into satisfied, playfully tinkling brown eyes.

“Sure? I’m heavy.” Loki teased, yelping when Anthony swapped them, managing to keep Loki inside him. The action, made the God vaguely interested in the round two, and more so, when his imp spread himself along his body, wiggling his hips to get comfortable.

“To satisfy your annoying protectiveness.” Anthony drawled, lazily licking his collarbone. Loki chuckled, massaging his back and shoulders, smiling at the moans freely slipping past those tempting, swollen lips.

“You have to learn to live with it.” Loki said, in a tone that allowed no arguments. Tony raised his head to look at him, and swayed his hips earning a needy groan.

“I’ll manage.” Tony teased, diving for another searing kiss.

Chapter End Notes

AceOfLesbians: Cheers! I'm, almost, blushing here. Such sweet words! I'm glad you find it appealing :)

Dirtkid123: Thank you! It gladdens my heart to hear that you found my story to your liking :)

Amber96Anime: Cheers! I'm glad you find this story interesting :) 🖼️

Mamitadolls : Thank you, dear ♥️♥️

Rhyfedd: Odin did. He is a bastard. Right, she behaves in way that looks petty, but is it? :) Plus, don't forget she's an alien...I ought to write a story that explores how alien they truly are ... and how hard it is to get over the cultural shock, especially for mortals...:)

anyway, yeah it is...but I don't know...this story ... the closure it escapes me...

Xythia: Hello! Cheers! No worries, I love the long rants :) What you say about Jane is absolutely true, but what do we get in the movies - plane woman, that is nor here nor there...I take issue with that. I do not like it, hence, the brutality :)

kuyami98: Cheers! ;)

RequiemsPhoenix: Cheers! No one should mess with mum, especially when she is the All- mother :)
The breaking dawn

Chapter Notes

Thank you for your comments and kudos, dear readers
Enjoy

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Felicity – intense happiness. That is what it meant. Tony had all of them memorised. Since he wasn’t particularly aware of the concepts practically, he decided to be at least informed of them theoretically. This is how he used to deal with strange reactions of his body. For many years, he had no idea what was happening. One moment he was calm and the other his pulse escalated, cheeks became red and he had uncontrollable desire to destroy – rage; or his chest painfully constricted, tears falling from his eyes – grief, sadness.

He learnt to recognise them post-factum. He still felt nothing in between. His soul/heart has no connection to his mind or the drive was burned in early age, who knew.

Tony’s mind space was silent, empty and calm. He preferred it this way – rationality over everything else, until he met Loki.

He felt something now, truly. It was fragile and barely breathing, but there. A slight buzz in never-ending stillness. A thirst that has nothing to do with his body reactions or obsessive tendencies of greedy personality. It was something genuine. An electric shock. A late awakening. A fucking miracle. An unhealthy dose of magic. Whatever he liked to call it - a healing.

He was not entirely sure he liked it. He depended on Loki and for a being that lived alone for such a long time it was a “no-no”, but his God was lonesome for many centuries before he was born, so it kind of claimed him.

He brushed the God’s cheek gently, and felt the soft warmness spreading inside, before the fragile, content smile appeared. Loki moved, nuzzling his palm unconsciously, breathing out: “Anthony.”

Tony’s breath hitched, and he swallowed thickly, stilling. There it was again – a tiny, little creature that was purring inside him. A creature he didn’t know how to call or address. It was alien for him, but already cherished and irreplaceable.

His mind buzzed with wonder and thirst for exploration. Thus, he moved, sprawling himself along the gorgeous body, pressing to Loki’s side gently not to stir him.

He was shorter than the God, his frame smaller, but bulkier. Loki was unbelievably lean, and any other creature would look gaunt with such a body structure. Loki, though, pull it fabulously.

Tony leaned closer, to brush his nose along that long, slender neck, breathing the God in. He adored his scent. It calmed him, and made his head buzz pleasantly. The creature chirred, lazily spreading around his heart, and whispering notions he didn’t understand yet.

He smiled, raising his hand to allow his fingertips to dance on the marble skin, barely grazing it. The feel of Loki’s body fascinated him. It was smooth - unrealistically, unbelievably even. No human
skin could ever possess such a texture, and it reminded him again – Loki was not a human, for all he looked, like one.

That got him pondering, but he shook it off. It did not matter, really. He got the annoying issue with time out of the way, and the God slept peacefully in his bed, so it must mean something, right?

Loki told him that he matters. Loki came, as promised. Thus, there was no real reason to doubt any of this or shy from the intensity or deepness of the affection. It was a bit late for that.

However, there was still forty-minutes till dawn, and his world was drowned in shadowy mist of not completely dissolved darkness, and the God was frustratingly perfect; painfully addictive. He wanted to run and forget. He acknowledged the cowardness and impossibility of such an action, but there was still thirty-three minutes till dawn.

“Beloved,” Loki murmured, the warm, emerald gaze pinning him to reality, which he feared and was branded by. “You look pale. What’s the matter?”

Tony watched him. He recognised concern in the frown that marred Loki’s perfect features, and thirst for vengeance in the hard line of his mouth, as well as the wish to soothe that shone in mesmerising, emerald eyes. The creature squeezed his heart with its tiny claws painfully, making it bleed and choke.

Loki caressed his shoulder blades soothingly, looking at him understandingly, nothing but naked acceptance in his gaze.

The God called him: beloved.

“I’m scared.” He said, and got perplexed by his own voice that sounded haunted. It was a strange feeling for him. It ripped through his body, followed by an unpleasant shudder and left a nasty after-taste. It was wrong, he concluded. The fear was erroneous. The deity that moved to embrace him gingerly but firmly, and planted a loving kiss on his lips, that reduced his insecurities to ashes, did not inspire this emotion. The God was not the source of his doubts. Loki was the remedy from Tony’s abusive past and anxiety.

“Of?” Loki inquired softly.

“Myself.” Tony answered, and felt elevated. The steal panel that was shielding his vulnerability cracked, and he thought that it was alright to tell Loki. The fuzzy creature agreed, purring gratifyingly.

Loki caressed his shoulder blades soothingly, looking at him understandingly, nothing but naked acceptance in his gaze.

“Do you want to elaborate?” The God encouraged him, and Tony took a minute to ponder. Did he truly wanted to get even deeper? Was he willing to strip himself bare before the God? He was uncertain, but there was still twenty-six minutes till dawn.

“I pondered about running from you.” Tony confessed evenly, and hated the agony he saw blooming on Loki’s face. The hold on him tightened considerably. He saw how the God jumped to the wrong conclusion immediately, probably thinking what he did wrong and how he can fix it. It made him strangely satisfied. It calmed something pitifully repulsive in him, and awoken a fierce need to correct the incorrect assumption. “I sat there and watched you for hours – sleeping, beautiful, unreachable, untouchable - marvelling at how perfection paled in comparison.” He continued, ignoring the God’s pain for a while. Loki will comprehend when he hears the whole story. “I thought that you changed me. You gifted me with something that nobody could give me. I perceived it as a miracle, and ultimately realised that no matter what I do, I will be undeserving of you. I was never enough for mortals. How could I ever hope to be enough for a God? I started to doubt my place, and finally my
thoughts took the root they are always taking – escape, before the break-up.”

The God’s gaze became tenderly-sad. He shifted, to cover Tony’s heart with his palm.

“Why did you stay?” Loki inquired, his voice liquid honey, full of affection.

“I can’t leave you. You are too close.” He said gravely, and then chuckled. “At least, I cannot leave you now. It’s too late. The dawn is breaking.”

Loki frowned, not getting why this specific time was significant for Tony, so, instead of guessing he outright asked for clarification.

“Ah, because it’s different now, right? You are not in prison nor you need me for anything. I’m striped to “me”, as you are reduced to “you”. There are no distractions anymore, no shadows to dance in – there is you and me, and our fuck-ups, tons of issues and baggage in the clear morning light – and I don’t…I did not escape when I had time, I only thought about it, and decided – I can’t go. I’m truly screwed all over.”

“Ah.” Loki acknowledged, and it would have broken him if he was the first to wake-up. The dawn was momentous. A first morning of a new life where they were together and nothing stood in between. However, he was lucky enough to be the second one to open his eyes to the sweet reassurances of loyalty. “As I said before, imp, I’m not going anywhere, and if you try to, I’ll drag you back and force you to stay.”

“You know it’s illegal, yeah?” Tony teased him, the mood mellowing between them. The scare of reality letting them go, since their both agreed that their fairy-tale will continue with or without the outside drama.

“Do I look, like I care, imp?” Loki mocked, moving to bite his jaw playfully.

“No. You behave, like you want to devour me, though.” Tony answered, dipping his hands into gorgeous, black, silky hair, to massage Loki’s scalp. The God moaned, melting under his touch and into his body.

“I would like that.” Loki murmured, but Tony knew better. Everything in his God screamed that he wanted to be pampered much more.

“You’re such a pretty liar.” Tony praised him, moving his hands lower onto his neck and down his shoulders, petting the pliant body. Loki grunted and whined, wiggling to drape himself all over Anthony. His beloved felt warm, and unlawfully good, caressing him in a loving way. The way no one has ever thought nor dared to.

Tony’s hands travelled down his back, lingering on the sweet spot, just above the tailbone. Loki moaned, nibbling at his jaw and licking the corner of his lips lazily, dragging his gorgeous legs up to cage Tony’s hips, brushing their growing errections. The action emitting a pleasurable grown from both.

Tony shifted, catching Loki’s lips in a tender, slow kiss. His hands going lower, circling around Loki’s opening, his skins suddenly slick, and smirked into the God’s mouth sucking on his clever tongue, breaching the tight heat.

The God shuddered, rocking, and whining into the hot, dominating mouth. Anthony spreaded him slowly, taking care to notice his shivers and mewls, tuning his movements according to Loki’s reactions and in no time the God was reduced to a whimpering, wanton mess.
Loki did not want it to stop, dancing on the edge of the release. His body swam in the tender pleasure, cocooned in the balminess and adore Anthony easily bestowed him with. He could relax and be absolutely selfish, giving himself freely.

He rocked slowly, on instinct, allowing his mind to shut down and his body to be bent in whatever way Anthony wanted it. It seems he was content, as they were. His talented, brilliant hands worked Loki skilfully, and he was sure he will come in another minute, heat building in his belly, ready to snap.

Anthony nibbled at his jaw, rubbing his cheek on his, to bite his earlobe softly, and lick the shelf, whispering: “I liked you calling me beloved. I think it’s fitting, since you are a loved one too.”

Loki came undone the instant the meaning of those letters sunk in his hazed with pleasure brain. The ecstasy that hit him, left his body boneless and shivering for long minutes after. When he returned, he found himself in a protective, tender hold and bit his lip not to whimper. He wanted to, so badly.

Anthony ruined him thoughtfully. He could never leave him as well, granted he didn’t think about it, but only because his beloved managed to soothe his pains before they even occurred. He was, always, there, the indescribable supernova. His personal, exceptional sun.

Loki was freed from the burden that was insecurity. Anthony made sure to erase any possibility of being misinterpreted. He explained, physically and emotionally, to Loki in no uncertain terms where he stood and how high the regard for him was, thus, the God felt the need to do the same.

He slid from Tony’s body, and coaxed him to sit up as well, mirroring the position from the dream, except that reality was hundredths times better, and conjured a golden apple that floated between them.

“I saved it for you.” Loki explained, when he met a questioning gaze of his wonderful beloved. “Mother came to the cage after you talked to her, and gave it to me.” Anthony scoffed at him, and Loki chuckled. “I’m fine, beloved. Magic is far more better than this could ever hope to be.”

“I beg to differ.” Tony grumbled, snatching the floating apple and giving it to Loki. The God looked at his outstretched hand, chuckling, and shook his head. “Eat. Now.” Tony commanded, making the God’s lips widen in an indulgent smirk. Loki bent and bit the apple, straightening back, and chewing slowly, obediently.

“Really now?” Tony remarked sarcastically, rolling his eyes. Loki shrugged, repeating the action.

They sat in silence, Loki eating from Tony’s hand. The rays of morning sunshine alighting the room, and touching their skin, but their world was still hidden by the thin veil of shadows.

They were comfortable in this position, creatures of neither world, stuck on the edge between everything that was brightly glorious and miserably monstrous.

Loki kissed Tony’s palm, when he finished the fruit, and dragged him closer into a heartbreakingly sweet embrace.

“You shouldn’t have been worried of the dawn, beloved, as if it weren’t for you I would not see any.” Loki told him, when they broke apart and stared at each other, trapped in agonising adoration.

“How could I not, my love, when before you I didn’t bother with acknowledging its existence.” Tony countered.

“Shall we see who’s more desperate to prove himself, beloved?” Loki teased, and admired the
mischievous grin that bloomed on his imp’s handsome face.

“Is it a challenge? It sounds, like one, and I ain’t backing out.” Tony purred.

“Such vulgar language coming out of such a pretty mouth. Tsch.” Loki chastised playfully, squeezing his sides affectionately. Tony felt himself blushing, wondering why these simple words made him react in this way. The God noticed, and his smirk became intrigued.

“Tell me, beloved.” He purred, laying him on the bed and looming over him. “Has anyone told you before how handsome you are?”

“Plenty.” Tony snorted, but his cheeks became redder. True it was. Tony had never experienced lack of compliments. He grew with the knowledge that his looks were admirable, but it was a literal God, who told him this. A being that easily surpassed perfection, and should be put in the dictionary as an explanatory picture for all the synonyms.

“Truly? I’m jealous.” Loki declared boldly, his emerald eyes burning with possessiveness. Tony whined in sheer delight, admiring the view. “What did they tell you, I wonder?” The God continued, sitting up, comfortable between his legs; hands freely rooming his body; hitting sweet spots and teasing his previously neglected arousal. “Did they tell you that your eyes are a piece of a dangerous weaponry, alighted by the soft, golden light of your vast heart and polished by your sharp intellect? One look it takes and there’s no recovering.” Loki murmured, teasing the head with slow, circular motions; the other one pinching his nipple lightly. Tony arched into the hand, and moaned passionately, gluing his eyes to Loki, forcing them to engrave the picture on his hard-drive. “And your body…Oh, Nines, your frame.” Loki moaned obscenely, licking his lip, as if Tony was something tasty to consume. “You take my words away, making me tongue tied, do you know what a fit is it to achieve, beloved? Half of the time I think of you as indescribable.” The God confessed, pumping him slowly, tugging and teasing, till Tony could not catch his own thoughts, and his voice became hoarse from all the sounds he produced. “However, it makes me livid, just imagining that someone had a pleasure to see you, like this.” Loki hissed, being catastrophically unfair, slowing down to the butterfly touches, making him whine agonisingly.

“No one.” He croaked, his voice broken by passion and want.

“Excuse me?” Loki inquired, torn between indignation and disbelief. He could not comprehend the phrase. Surely Anthony had plenty of lovers before him.

“No one.” Anthony repeated breathless, and caught his gaze, steal and truthfulness shining in those ideal, brown eyes. “I haven’t allowed anyone to see me like this. I will not allow anyone to see me like this. This is exclusive and yours only.”

The God stilled, the layers cracking and falling down, leaving nude defencelessness.

“Beloved,” He whimpered, not knowing what to do with himself. How to react to such a confession? He was convinced he won this round, but Anthony, yet again, brought him down to his knees.

“Come, my love.” Tony beckoned his God, loving to see in how many ways he owned him without realising it, and Loki didn’t hesitate to fulfil his request, sliding up his body in a gentle manner. “Ruin me.” He purred into his God’s lips, dragging his hands along the gorgeous body, pushing the buttons and igniting Loki, pulling him into a frenzy.

It didn’t take long, after that. Loki snarled, scratching and biting, going all in and forgetting who was what and for what reason. It was reduced to harsh slaps, pitiful pleas and constant moans of
appreciation.

The morning sun slowly reached its zenith, alighting the Earth with blazing light. The pair didn’t care. They closed the blinds, because darkness was not scaring them anymore and the daylight was overly lauded anyway.

Chapter End Notes

Amber96Anime: Cheers! I'm happy too :)

Mamitadolls: Right? [smirks mischievously]

Lokisloneylady: Cheers" Yeah, the family is a bit f*cked up...

Dirtkid123: Awww, shocks! Thanks :)

Rhyfedd: [I imagine Loki just sitting somewhere, super stil like he does, and suddenly he starts vibrating] Laughed at this. Still brings smile on my face every time I think 'bout it :)

pneuma - considered to be a soul, a power that keeps cosmos and human bodies together - makes them function :)

Yes, you were right 'bout Frigg. You are boud to be right about many things, because, as I told you before - I love your comments, they make me think, make me see where I can add or go to, or forgot to explain...:)

Don't know...don't know...it makes me antsy...I almost lost the wish to continue this...Hate when I don't see the end...any end ambigous or otherwise. However, you are right. There's no rush :)

ImpishDesign: Cheers! I'm glad you liked the twist :)

kuyami98: Thank you :)

p.s. I was readin your comments, thinking...well, some people think your crap is actually worth the effort...so come on - go write, already...Thank you very much for motivation, dear readers!
They crawled from the bed in the afternoon, losing a couple of hours in the shower, before properly
dragging themselves out the bedroom. Why they did it in the first place was anybody’s guess, but it
seemed like they needed to change the location, since the presence of the bed made their heads stay
firmly in the gutter, at least, that what they thought, but then the shower happened, and the bar
counter looked perfect to be bent over…

They kissed sweetly, not staying separate for more than few moments to grab or poor, or spread,
before falling down the sofa in the tangle of happily intertwined limbs. The food stayed forgotten on
the table, while they were busy pampering each other.

Loki watched his beloved, with a foolish expression on his face, but could not find in himself the
energy to care; such bliss was at first and he was finding it hard to keep his tongue from saying
something profoundly embarrassing.

Tony caressed his thig lazily, simply because he could and his God’s body felt amazing under his
fingertips. His head kept buzzing with love sick puppy crap, and by the way Loki was looking at
him, he guessed the God’s mind was on the same page.

“Doesn’t it piss you off, love?” He wondered aloud, a silly grin stuck on his face.

“Hypothetically it should, beloved, but I cannot muster the emotion.” Loki shared, in a loving tone of
voice.

“Hmm…” Tony hummed, shivering when Loki’s thumb started drawing circles on his inner wrist. “I
have wondered for a while how the chemicals affect the brain function and I may declare
authoritatively that love does make one stupider.”

Loki giggled, bringing his hand to his lips to kiss it briefly, and lay his cheek on it, fawning. Tony
got the drift, caressing his skin gingerly, and getting a satisfied purr in return.

“It is the only way for it to insure the parties involved are happy, since the intellect is in direct
coloration with satisfaction.”

Tony smirked at him indulgently, gasping when the God caught his finger with his lips and sucked at
it lightly, before letting go.

“You know, love, I don’t mind.” Tony murmured, getting a fragile smile to admire.

“You don’t mind a lot of things I notice. It’s seems almost unfair how much you are willing to give
me, when, as unbelievable as it is, no one got it before from you.” Loki voiced his thoughts, referring
to his beloved previous confession.
“Frankly, no one affected me this much previously.” Tony shrugged, being comfortable with the road the talk was taking.

“As depressing it is to hear, I’m glad.” Loki admitted shamelessly. “However, I cannot process it. You are magnificent. I have been around the Universe. I met and interacted with vast numbers of creatures of all kinds, and when I say you are unique, it’s not flattery, it is a fact. So, I’m baffled by the sheer stupidity of the world you’re living in. They had you for years and no one was smart enough to try and claim such a treasure.”

“Oh, they did try.” Tony remarked, chuckling at the possessive growl and tightening grip. “I wasn’t willing, though. Pepper was the closest to come, but even then, it wasn’t…It’s just wasn’t what I needed.”

“What did you need, beloved?” Loki inquired, wishing to know what drawn Anthony to him and secure it, so the desire to leave him never crosses his beloved mind again.

“You.” Tony answered simply, and Loki frowned.

“As flattering it is to hear, beloved, I truly want to know…” Loki started, and drifted off, mesmerised by the open vulnerable look he saw on Anthony’s features. It was the first time he saw him like this – raw and blindingly beautiful.

“I’m not appeasing your ego, my love. I’m stating the fact. You are what I need. I cannot explain it, truly. But when I see you I feel, when I touch you…God, it’s mind-blowing. I was never willing to explore and learn anybody, as I do you. Do you understand? I doubt you can. You are better than science, Loki. I’ll ditch everything to get another taste of the glorious chaos that is you, and I’ll do unforgivable things to keep you mine. It’s bordering on insanity, but I’m willing to lose my mind, to stay with you.”

“It’s unfair.” Loki whined, biting his hand petulantly. Tony giggled, finding his God’s childish poutiness adorable. “I’m the one with experience – thousands of years of it - and yet, every time we talk you outdo me.”

“I have told you, no? You’re fairly young.” Tony teased, to get a spiteful pinch, which made him laugh. “Chill, love. I’m not aware of the things you are. It’s easier for me. You had your heart broken. You had your trust crippled. You are painfully acquainted with all the ways it will screw you if it ends. I ain’t stupid, but I know very little of the consequences.”

“You talk, like you haven’t had the experience.” Loki grumbled, but did not stop Anthony from caressing his skin and leaned into the touch.

“I haven’t.” Tony confirmed and Loki’s expression sored, but he ignored it. “That’s what I’m trying to explain to you. You are new to me. This is at first.”

“And your Pepper?” Loki questioned, refusing to believe that Anthony was not touched by love previously.

“She’s not mine, Loki, you are.” Tony contradicted firmly. “I did not love her.”

“Don’t lie to me.” The God hissed upset, despite not feeling any deception. It couldn’t be. He was undeserving of Anthony enough as it is. It was hard to hear how vastly perfect he truly was and how unique the connection is.

“Don’t you think it’s ironic how we share the same issues and coming undone only several hours apart? You are thinking the same shit I did back then. It’s bullshit, love. Don’t let it get into your
“It doesn’t change a thing, though. It is making it worse. How you deal with it, beloved?” Loki whined pathetically, acknowledging the ridiculousness of it all.

“Poorly. It will happen again. We are fucked up.” Tony remarked casually, and they both laughed.

“Yes, yes, you’re right. But, at least now I don’t have to deal with this misery alone. Which reminds me, how the fall out with the Avengers played in the end? Are you “most wanted”, beloved?” Loki asked, squashing the absurd insecurities that managed to wiggle to light no matter how much reassurances of the opposite he got.

“Ah! You’ve been there. I knew it!” Tony exclaimed. “This thing is tuned to you or something. Damn creature chewed my sternum throughout the meeting.” He explained, tapping his arc with an exasperated fondness.

“Creature?” Loki asked, amused by how Anthony seemed to give everything a sentient undertone, ignoring the other bit for a time, since his imp did not appear to be bothered by it.

“Yeah. Feels, like a particularly caprice and demanding kitten, with tiny, poisonous fangs and razor-sharp claws.” Tony described it the best he could, but felt he missed out something.

“No. It’s a wyrmling.” Loki contradicted, chuckling.

“How would you know?” Tony inquired curious, feeling that Loki nailed it.

“Because it’s a part of my power hiding there, and trust me when I say this, arrogance doesn’t even begin to describe the way my magic bares itself.” The God shared, and loved the unbridled wonder he saw appearing in Anthony’s devilishly stunning eyes.

“It’s sentient!? I have it!? How the fuck I have it?!” He asked the questions excitedly, seemed not to be upset by the fact at all.

“It’s kind of is. It does not posses the higher thinking. It’s like an overprotective and vicious pit-bull. Thus, my best guess is, my magic fought vigorously against the restraints, seeping in inside the sceptre, but I had little control and it can’t do much on its own, and when your energy stepped in and broke the spell, it was cut from me. So, when you touched the sceptre it felt the same energy that I deemed safe and leaped to it. Loved it too, because it refused to go back. It’s yours now or you’re its, whatever thought fancies you more.”

“You said dragon. I’d love for it to be a dragon.” Tony whined caprice, and the God laughed. Trust his beloved to focus on the most unimportant part.

“Are you not afraid of what it can do to you or how I can influence it?” Loki asked, focusing his attention on the obvious danger that he seemed to ignore.

“Pfft, love. If it wanted to fry my ass, it would have done it long ago. If you wanted me dead, I wouldn’t be breathing either.” Tony discarded his insinuations brazenly. “It makes so much sense. Wow…weird.” He added amused and a bit awkward.

“What is it, beloved?” Loki teased, wishing to know what made his imp suddenly uncomfortable.

“I literally have a part of you in me.” He divulged, but the God was still bemused.

“Yes, and?” He encouraged.
“Well…you know…uhmm…Never mind.” Tony said lamely, blushing crimson, which made Loki smirk mischievously, realisation dawning upon him.

“Seriously, beloved?” He inquired teasingly, and his imp stiffened.

“Don’t you dare laugh, Reindeer.” Tony growled. Loki sure laughed, hard.

“Fuck you!” He exclaimed upset, and swallowed thickly when his God’s eyes flashed with wicked desire.

“You certainly may.” Loki purred, sliding into his lap gracefully.

“I’m absolutely displeased with you.” Tony reminded, but his hands already started roaming all over the delicious skin.

“Uhum.” Loki hummed, biting Tony’s lip, and lapping at it a second later. “So, why don’t you punish me then?”

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The house was alighted, every room and every corner of it was brightened. She couldn’t stand shadows, and jumped at the slightest of noises, even though her system was filled with tons of sedatives. Jane couldn’t shake the horror. She will never recover from the images that infected her mind.

“Jane,” She heard the voice she wished she could forget, and spun to see the beast she prayed she will never see.

“What are you doing here?” Jane asked, her voice shaking, breaking, breath hitching and a shudder of revulsion traveling down her body. He looked at her with a heart-breaking agony painted over his handsome features; his angelic, blue eyes darkened by the sadness, and she bit back a sob. The image was deceiving. She saw the monster that was hiding underneath, and will not be fooled again.

“I came to apologise. I never meant for you to get hurt. All I wanted for you is to be happy.” He pleaded, his voice gentle and loving, and it damaged her. The anger, torment and betrayal leaped out of her and rushed towards him, forming hurtful accusations.

“Then why did you return!?” She screamed, her voice high-pitched, hysterical. “You knew, Thor! You knew I would never touch you; won’t look at you if I was aware of your heroic deeds. You violated me, like you did with every woman you have ever met in your life. You pursued your selfish goals and desires not stopping to think what it will do to me! But, then, why should you when you never cared for anyone but yourself!” She hissed.

“It’s not true, Jane. My mother planted lies in your head, dearest.” He beseeched, and she gaped at him unable to believe his arrogance.

“You mean to tell me, you haven’t burned the elves’ village down, because the girl you fancied rejected you, and then raped her anyway? Or you haven’t strolled to Jotunheimr and killed many simply because they were of another race? Or betrayed and tormented your own brother repeatedly because your mother liked him best?” She inquired, and he flinched.

“It wasn’t like that.” He tried to explain. “Elves deserved what was coming. They crossed Asgard, I simply used the situation to my advantage. She was a spoil of war, Jane. Jotuns were our enemies, since I can remember. We went there from time to time to remind them of their place. Loki…” Thor spit his name, like it was something rotten and left a nasty taste in his mouth. “He is a vile creature. A
spawn of the enemy, raised in luxuries of a royal family. He does not warrant mercy or comfort. He is the most despicable creature in the Nines. He deserved everything he got.” Thor hissed, taking a deep breath. “Our cultures are vastly different. I understand. I was raised in society that praise and bask in violence. Many of my actions are not understandable nor acceptable in your view. I admit, we did ugly things in our youth, but, sometimes, there is no other way to deal with the monsters of the Universe.”

Jane eyes widened, her heart bleeding abhorrence and terror. She couldn’t comprehend how she could ever consider him to be worthy of her attention.

“You are right, I do not understand how a being can be so heartless and delusional. You had a choice, Thor. You, always, had a choice, and you know, what’s funny? The creature that I despised and blamed for being wicked, was actually the one who tried to make the right choices, and all you did was ridiculing him for it!”

“Don’t you dare compare me to him!” Thor hissed, advancing and she flinched, squeezing into a wall.

“Or what?” She asked, tears falling from her eyes, body shaking violently. “You beat me into submission!”

“No, Jane. Nines, I will never do anything to hurt you.” He reassured, keeping in check his anger.

“It’s kind of late for that.” She chuckled brokenly, before beseeching. “Thor, please, I cannot do this. You make me sick, so, please, I beg you, if you ever had a shred of care from me – go, and never come back, please.” She sobbed, falling on her knees. “Please disappear. Please be a nightmare…”

Thor watched the woman he loved laying pitifully on the floor, his heart breaking. He wanted desperately to return her, but it was glaringly clear he had lost. So, instead, of trying to win her favour he walked out of her life forever, vowing that he will take his revenge on the ones responsible.

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The All-father was sitting in the empty throne room, a wicked expression settled on his wittered, glorious face. He was pondering how his life came to a contemptable drama, after all he had sacrificed to insure it wouldn’t.

He was a God of war and wisdom used to slice his enemies without mercy and see the deep-rooted respect glimmering in the eyes of his cherished. There was a time when no one would even think of betraying him, afraid that Fates themselves punish the fool, and yet, it seemed that his magnificent legacy was reduced to a vaporous snake, disloyal whore and simplistic heir.

“Father!” The said heir boomed, storming into the hall. “You were right father the snake lives, as is mother.”

“As expected.” Odin drawled, composing his features into a mask of fatherly affection. “Are you ready to believe now, my son?” He inquired.

“Yes, sire. And if before I was pleading for his life to be spared, today I’ve come to beseech for permission to end it.”

“You have it, my son. Do be sure to bring your mother back.” Odin ordered, keeping only the righteous vengefulness in his voice.
“I will not disappoint, sire.” Thor bowed and left the room, missing a twisted smirk that appeared on his father’s lips.

Chapter End Notes

Dirtkid123: Yeah :) They both need a lot of pampering to get relatively ok with themselves :)

PotionsChaos: Cheers! :)

Mamitadolls: Glad to be of help ;)

Evanna: Cheers! :)

kharma: Hello, welcome and cheers! :) Also [can I also see more of Jane's reaction to what she saw? ] - packed and delivered ;)

“Sir,” J whispered and Tony, almost, spoiled his AI’s consideration by bursting into laughter. He grunted pathetically, though, sputtering, but managed not to awake his peacefully sleeping God. Loki mumbled something, nuzzling his stomach and stilled, his breathing calm and steady. He smiled petting his love’s hair gently, and answered in hush tones:

“Yeah, buddy?”

“I apologise for the intrusion, but since your insomnia stays attached, I decided to give you a warning, sir. Miss Pots and the woman, are requesting your presence for tomorrow lunch, sir.” J’s crisp voice explained, and Tony did chuckle, shushing his God, who frowned, but relaxed again under his soothing touch.

“At 4 a.m.? I doubt it, J. You were jamming them, haven’t you?” Tony sassed him.

“My sincere apologies, sir. I didn’t count on her to ask Miss Potts for help.” J answered dejected.

“Wow, J. Two apologies in a row. She has wounded your ego greatly, my sweet child. But don’t you worry, the woman is a spawn of Satan. No one, even a pure intellect such as you, can beat her cunning.” Tony soothed him.

“You’re being modest, sir.” J retorted, and Tony’s face split from the shit eating grin that bloomed on it.

“And you’re being generous, buddy. Let them come, J and thanks, for the heads up.”

“You’re welcome, sir.”

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The late morning sun danced on his skin, tickling it. He groaned, turning and bumped into a warm, hard body of his beloved, smiling and enveloping himself around it. Anthony chuckled, entangling his hand into his hair and started massaging his scalp gently. Loki moaned, pushing his head into the caress. It felt wonderful. He couldn’t believe it was his life now.

“Morning, love.” Anthony murmured, and he mumbled a greeting in return, kissing the body under him and shifting a notch to look at his beloved properly. His imp looked captivating; soft and sweet, with a loving smile and tender warmth dancing in his eyes. Loki’s heart sang, and he smiled back affectionately, rubbing his cheek on Anthony’s stomach, where he currently lay.

“Does anybody have ever told you that you resemble a cat?” Tony mused, smirking when the green eyes narrowed at him naughtily. Oh, he knew Loki would hate to be compared to a feline, judging by his earlier comment about the kitten.
“I’m not a cat.” Loki, surely, growled.

“Who are you then?” Tony inquired.

“Remember the creature you saw in the labyrinth’s. It’s a cub. They grow up to four matters high – deadly, cunning, formidable. The best from carnivores and dragons rolled into a deadly beauty – that’s what I am.” Loki explained snobbishly.

“So, a super alien cat?” Tony teased, giggling at the arrogant huff he got.

“I am not comparable to a cat, imp!” Loki hissed, scratching Anthony’s sides for emphasis, and growled, glaring at the laughing adorable abomination, trying to get up. His imp, though, had another idea, rolling them and trapping the God underneath his drool worthy frame.

“Definitely a cat.” Tony concluded, kissing him, before he could protest. Loki growled and scratched, biting him on principle, but did surrender, arching into that seductive body, clinging to the man, who drove him nuts and owned him completely.

When they broke apart, Loki was panting, his cheeks marked by rosy hue and he could not feel the annoyance anymore, which made him irritated.

“You are not allowed to do that.” He said, starting to get upset for real. It was amazing, yes, but Anthony could manipulate him easily; can do whatever he wishes and this weakness rubbed him the wrong way.

“Why not, Reindeer? When you can?” Tony asked him amused, knowing perfectly well from what side the wind blew.

“And let me guess, you’re ok with it…” Loki bit sarcastically, but haven’t moved an iota, feeling perfectly content under his beloved body.

“‘Course, I am, Loki. As I said, many times before, it’s easier for me. You’re a God, remember? I see nothing wrong to be ruined and enslaved by divinity. I’ll come as far as to admit, it’s natural. It understandably harder for you, since I’m inferior to you.” Tony explained, and Loki gaped at him openly. Nines, he didn’t think about it in those terms. Anthony inferior to him? Ahahahaha – what a joke.

“No,no,no, no.” Loki protested, sitting up properly, and keeping Anthony close, nestled comfortably between his legs. “That’s wrong, Anthony. First, you were never inferior to me, and, second, you are a God in your own right.”

“Riiight.” Tony drawled sarcastically, smiling at him indulgently, and Loki “tsked”.

“Look what you have accomplished, imp – you, being a lowly mortal stuck on the crude world, with scraps of knowledge and imbecilic monkeys as partners, singlehandedly raised a scientific field to Nines levels, discovered and created a unique device, destroyed an advanced alien army, cracked intergalactic travels, tamed magic, infiltrated the Golden city, successfully arranged the escape from the most secure dungeons in the Universe, robbed Odin’s precious vault, deceived the All-mother, attacked the heir of Asgard and lived to tell the tale – in such a short time – there’s no one more deserving to be called a God then you, beloved. Trust me.”

“Yeah, nothing compared to what you have done or can do.” Tony countered.

“Yeah, but, you tend to forget, that I am thousands of years old, and you are what – forty-six?” Loki mocked.

Tony concurred.

“Try “struck speechless”, imp.” Loki argued. “I apologise, though. It was stupid of me to get riled up. Naturally, you can rule me and twist, and break. I’m still adjusting. It’s a tough piece to swallow.”

“Tell me ‘bout it, love.” Tony agreed, giving his God a brief kiss. “Speaking of “tough pieces”, you haven’t ignored your mum by any chance, have you?”

“I did. So what of it?” Loki asked dismissive.

“Alrighty. I let you know that we are screwed, Reindeer, big time, ‘cos your mum found a way to get your attention.” Tony shared, being amused by it. Truth to be told he ached to see how this situation will unravel.

“How exactly?” The God inquired, becoming intrigued.

“Pepper.” Tony shared, and giggled at the God’s bemused look.

“A mortal woman you hold in such a high regard, yes? And? Just ignore her. Simple.” Loki shrugged, making Tony laugh.

“Oh, my poor God. You think I’m divine, yeah? Wait till you see a creature who made this all possible.” Tony bragged, waving his hands around and Loki did not like the admiration he heard in Anthony’s voice.

“I doubt she’s remarkable.” The God drawled, feeling inadequately jealous.

“Just wait and see, love.”

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Loki did not look forward to lunch. He was displeased with his mother still, and hated how Anthony’s features alighted with gentle smile every time he talked about Pepper. He was incredibly envious and unfair, but could do nothing about the ugly feeling.

The elevator dinged and the women stepped on the floor, looking flawless. Loki’s mood soared further. This Pepper was note-worthy, with her appealing figure, reddish, silken tresses and gentle, welcoming smile. She, like his beloved, was outstanding, and he could see them together – a perfect couple. Tony strolled to her, hugging warmly and kissing on the cheek. She cooed, embracing him affectionately, and Loki gritted his teeth, his magic buzzing menacingly under his skin.

“Frigg.” Tony greeted politely, a defining smirk stuck on his face. His mother snorted at his antics, tilting her head slightly in acknowledgment.

“Brat.” She echoed in the same tone, before looking at Loki and smiling gently. “My dear.”

“Mother.” He answered with measured amount of affection, letting her know she was not forgiven. Her smile dimmed, but fondness was still shining in her gaze brightly.

“Pepper meet Loki. A God, who owns me. Loki this is Pepper, a woman, who kept me alive and kicking for as long as I can remember.” Anthony introduced, standing near her, casually embracing and it took maximum effort from Loki not to spew something unforgivable.
“It’s an honour to meet you” He answered pleasantly, but the indignation managed to slip into his voice, making it rather cold. His mother noticed, throwing him a confused look. Anthony seemed not to, as well as the woman, since she smiled at him radiantly.

“The honour is all mine. I’m happy he has you.” She said, and Loki bit his cheek not to jab. He didn’t miss the subtle wistfulness in her voice.

They sat around the table. The atmosphere heavy. At least it was for him and his mother. Anthony and Pepper appeared to be unaffected by the negativity floating around, chirping, like two happy birds, and, oh, how Loki longed to break the neck of one of them.

“How are you settling, Loki?” Pepper addressed him, finally remembering his existence.

“I find it pleasing, Pepper. Anthony is very generous.” Loki purred, delighted when his beloved looked at him with adoration, and petted his arm.

“I’m proud, my dear. You’re being so polite.” Frigg remarked. She didn’t find the Earth impressive or pleasing and did not make a secret of it.

“Yes, Frigg. You raised him well. He knows how to be grateful, unlike some people I know.” Tony poked, smirking at her tauntingly, and she glared at him.

“You often forget your place, brat.” She retorted.

“Oh, I know my place, alright.” Tony countered, and Loki bit back a snigger. He loved his mother, but she was a snotty, arrogant nightmare worth of her infamous title – the All-bitch of Nines – and it was amusing to see somebody insane enough to call her on it. “If your incredible son did not lik..”

“Love you.” Loki corrected immediately, reminding himself that he owed Anthony. His imp was brashly forthcoming about his feelings, and the God still danced in circles, being illusive and vague.

“That…” The imp said, his voice shaking for a moment, before returning to its confident tone. “I’d be dead.”

“Don’t forget about it, brat. The eternity is a very long time.” Frigg purred, and Loki narrowed his eyes at her, noting that he and his mother need to have a serious talk.


“Don’t worry, Pep. You know how besties are, right?” Tony winked at her, and she giggled, batting her lovely eyelashes, making Loki livid. He hated her, and her white, marble skin, silver-bell voice, deity face and likable personality.

“Oh, Tony. You never learn.” She drawled and they laughed joyfully, Frigg joining in.

Loki’s heart twisted painfully. The reasons why Anthony chose him, looked rather fabricated in the light of his and Pepper’s relationship. The God couldn’t comprehend how somebody will chose him – a disgraced, fallen bastard - over pretty, charming Goddess.

The evening ended on a high note. They talked and joked, discussing trivial matters and touched upon more serious topics – upcoming conflict with Asgard and the Avengers, Loki’s and Frigg’s future on Earth, Tony’s love for suicide missions and unhealthy life style, Loki’s obsession with getting overdramatic – fun things.
Tony waved goodbye to smiling women, and cursed the Universe in his head. They will be such a pain in his ass – it was unfortunate, but smiled tenderly a second later. It seems he found himself a true family, complete with divine, wicked mother and all.

It would have been a glorious evening – a perfect one – if not for a tiny drawback. His God was royally pissed at something, if the burning, vile, gagging feeling in his chest, and Loki’s hostile body language was anything to go by.

Loki was lying throughout the ordeal – Tony could tell, and was baffled as to why.

“Love,” Tony called, strolling to the bedroom where Loki hid himself immediately after lunch, biding short goodbyes, saying that his wound gave him grief, which was bullshit, since he ate the apple.

The answer did not come, and at first Tony thought Loki fell asleep, God knows he haven’t slept enough, but then he heard soft whimpers and cringed. Something went horribly wrong, and for the first time, since he met the God – he had no idea what.

“Loki…” Tony murmured softly, sitting on the edge of the bed, and brushing the God’s covered frame gently, the body stiffening under his touch.

“Go away.” Loki mumbled, his voice cracked and breathless. Tony cringed. His God was crying, probably for the whole time he was out there, laughing with their guests. He felt incredibly guilty, moving closer and scooping the God into a tight embrace, ignoring Loki’s full-heartedly attempts to push him away.

“Let me go! Leave me alone!” The God hissed, punching him hard, his magic cracking around them, but Tony ignored the pain, holding him tight and refusing to budge.

“No.” He said adamantly, trapping him. “I said I will not deny you Loki, but this one thing you will not get from me.” Tony promised gravely, catching his God’s watery, miserable, irritated gaze.

“You’d have to kill me to get free.”

The God sobbed. The tears freely spilling, rolling down his cheeks. He was not about to hide from Anthony. Let him see what he had done to him; how pathetic and broken he truly is.

“Stop accepting me!” Loki hissed. “Cease to be so burningly perfect! I can’t stand this! You wrecked me. You have broken me. I cannot take this anymore! I’m tired of pretending. I’m not what you see, your Pepper is. She is what you deserve, not me…never me.” He finished desperately heartbroken, and Tony cringed, replaying the evening, berating himself for not noticing the signs.

“Oh, love. I’m sorry for being a jackass. I’m so bad with this. I didn’t even think you’ll feel threatened.” Tony confessed, rubbing soothing circles on Loki’s small back. The God was depressed and a mess, but, as usual, he didn’t shy from his touch. He never did.

“Why should you, when you told me expressively that you prefer me? It’s me who is defective. It’s me who is so far gone. I’m pathetic, weak, miserable. I cannot overcome my fears. I’m constantly searching for reasons to be discarded. I do not believe it can be possible. I do not deserve you, and your blunt care is making it worse. How can I keep you, when I cannot even express properly how much you mean to me? When there is a perfect match for you?” Loki spit hatefully, shivering.

“Aha,” Tony remarked, squeezing his insecure God, forcefully pulling him into his chest, and firmly holding him with one hand, while another softly petted his hair. “Running circles again. I wonder if we ever cease to do that. What do you think, love?”
“Don’t discard this!” Loki hissed, struggling, but Anthony would have none of it, practically squashing him, and he sighed, giving up and relaxing into a dominating, strong hold.

“I admit that you are incredibly difficult to deal with, Loki. You raise all the issues I’d prefer to stay buried six feet deep, but look at this my way, ‘k? I am all you are, and don’t you dare deny it, little hypocrite!” Tony warned him, when the God opened his mouth to argue. Loki grumbled a curse, staying quiet. “With a bonus of being emotionally retarded. If not for Mushu…”

“Who?” Loki interrupted, bewildered by the unknown name.

“A wyrmling that is living in my chest. Rings a bell?” Tony sassd.

“You named a mindless manifestation of energy?” Loki asked perplexed. The misery distinguishing, allowing the amusement to spark in the bottomless well of negativity.

“Shame on you, Reindeer!” Tony exclaimed offended. “My hands are tied, so rub the arc, please. Mushu loves the attention.” He said gravely, and Loki barked a choked laugh.

“You cannot be serious!” The God squawked incredulous.

“Now, love.” Tony pressed, and Loki complied, choking on hysterical giggles, but abruptly stopping when he felt the subtle buzz and warmth, sipping into his skin.

“What did I tell you?” Anthony said, his voice gentle. “It adores you. It knows you, and because of it I know you too.” He continued. “I feel blessed, you know. It’s so obvious you love me. I find it hilarious how I missed this before. I can relate to the overall “I’m not worth your single breath” crap, but it’s stupid, and never mind that it will return times and times again to bite our asses, I’m not going. We are part of the same thing. One frame of mind, one tormented soul, same screw ups. Pepper…yeah, it seems that we are close, but it’s not the case. She presumes that she knows me, and to some extent she does, but you cannot believe how much she misses out, because she loves to pretend I’m good. She loves to perceive me as a saviour, keep me on the heroic pedestal, and we both are aware I fucking ain’t; and you’d have seen how much I’m faking, if you weren’t busy being jealous, love.”

Loki puffed, wiggling out of the lovely grip and Tony let him, knowing that the storm has calmed, since the creature was purring contently, and his dramatic love melted into him several minutes ago.

“I’d love to see your reaction to my formal lover swooning over me in front of your eyes.” Loki jabbed, feeling vengeful. The doom evaporated, leaving only petulance, irritation and shame for behaving, like a clingy, desperate wimpling.

“I’d have maimed them the second they smiled at you funny.” Tony said confidently, shrugging. Loki gaped at him.

“You’d do that?” He asked unsure.

“In a heartbeat, love. I don’t have so much control over my impulses, Reindeer. I was close to killing Thor when he said you’re dead, knowing fully well that it was your plan all along. Imagine what I will do with a person who threatens my place in your life.” Tony purred darkly. Loki swallowed a needy moan, half-aroused and half-amazed by the violent possessiveness.

“And you’d be ok if I’d have hurt your Pepper?” Loki inquired, curious as to how far he would be allowed to go.

“How many times…Sorry, love. She’s not mine.” Tony corrected himself quickly, squashing the
irritation. Feelings…fucking feelings and incredible God that is highly wired on them. Calm down and deal – Loki needed this. “No, I wouldn’t. I’d probably be pissed, like you would if I did hurt your friend. But I’d understand.”

“You would, wouldn’t you.” Loki whispered softly. “I apologise for being such a mess.”

“Heh, you apologise awfully lot, love. You must be truly sick.” Tony teased, but Loki did not bite, smiling brokenly.

“I am; sick with fear that you’ll discard me; sick of myself and constant vulnerability; sick of the emotions that threaten to tear me apart. I am mortally ill, Anthony, and I don’t know if I will ever be healthy again.” The God shared.

“Yeay!” Tony cheered. “Wouldn’t expect it to turn out any other way, Reindeer. We are not alright. We are never going to be normal, as this has no potential for it.” Tony echoed the words God had told him in the cell.

“Yes, it won’t, which leads to a one logical conclusion, doesn’t it?” Loki said, the colours sipping from him.

“Yes, it does, and if you wish,” Tony said, moving from him a bit and ripping his arc out brutally, his breath hitching, wires falling out from the bloody, disfigured, metal hole if his chest. “You can take this and go.”

“Are you mad!” Loki shrieked, grabbing the device, and putting it back hastily, glad that his magic was so in tune with it, so it leaped to action the second the arc was put in place, healing the brash idiot quickly.

“I guess it’s a “no”’” Tony said calmly, like nothing happened. Loki, though, was shaking.

“How can you do this!? How could you…” He whispered, breaking apart again. This was not acceptable at all. It was downright insanity.

“Hmm, let me think…Easy. The words seemed to fall flat on you, so I deemed the demonstration necessary. This is what my life will be without you, and that’s that.” Anthony explained calmly.

“Don’t be ridiculous, imp. You will die without it.” Loki hissed at him, displeased greatly with the stunt.

“Exactly my point.” Tony deadpanned, and Loki slapped him hard.

“You drive me mad!” He shouted, raging, his magic leaping out of him and shattering the furniture, rattling the windows; anything and everything it can get it claws on was damaged. “How dare you do this; to scare me so!”

Anthony watched him, a cruel smirk appearing on his face and pounced, slamming The God’s head into the headboard.

“And you?” He snarled, choking him, ignoring the deep gashes Loki’s nails left on his skin, clawing his way out of his grip. “Threatening to leave me, simply because you cannot muster the courage to give me what is already mine!” The God growled, spotting an opening and kicking Anthony into a stomach, throwing him off and looming over him in a second, pinning his hands to the floor, on which he landed, keeping him down by his weight.

“I am not a coward!” Loki hissed, calling his magic to aid him, since Anthony was much stronger
than before. It hissed unhappily, unwilling to help, and the God was overpowered once again, face planted into the same floor. Anthony sitting atop of him, holding his hands behind his back.

“Yeah, right. You are an idiot!” Tony hissed poisonously. Loki twisted his head, when he found himself unable to shake Anthony off.

“Yes, I am.” He spat. “An idiot, because I love you so much, I forgot who I am. There is nothing for me, besides you, Anthony. My whole world dissolved in you, and it scares the shit out of me. What if you leave? What if you get enough? My whole being is dependent on you. My magic, the only thing in the Universe that was my own strictly, ditched me in your favour. I am doomed, you see, and you cannot fault me for being a tad jumpy!”

Anthony watched him for a long minute, snorting and letting go, sitting on the side of the bed, putting a distance between them and Loki instantly hated it. The freedom feeling awful and lonely, which emphasised his point perfectly. He was so far gone, that he would gladly take the abuse from Anthony, if it insures he stays.

Loki sat up, watching him with wary eyes, and Tony sighed. He was used to this – the obsession. He anticipated it, knew it will be the only root this will go. Loki, though, was not comfortable with the pure madness their relationship had become.

It wasn't healthy. The God was right to push him away; to try and stop this. Loki deserved to have normal relations, and not the ones that ended in pools of blood, no matter whose.

Tony would loath to do it, but he cared for Loki enough to give him space.

“You have a point, Reindeer. Maybe we should take a break.” He sighed heavily, and was knocked on his back, his arms full of hysterical Gog, who pleaded for him not to leave.

Tony tightened his grip, closing his eyes, and going through equations, shutting the emotions down, willing Mushu to take care of his unstable love and refraining from pushing the God off himself and demanding for him to grow up and make up his goddamned fucking mind.

He was stroking Loki’s back gently, tuning out his pitiful mumblings and sobs. It was logical. He finally saw it, when his brain came back online, unmarred by the pestering irrational impulses, doing what it did best – sorting, analysing and coming up with practical solutions.

He and Loki was a part of highly sensitive and fragile system, that build itself hastily in a hostile environment. The constant threat and stressful factors damaged it severely, and it faced meltdown. However, the base was solid, and the potential for long-lasting positive effects was immeasurable.

Tony simply needed to build the said system anew in a secluded, private and safe place, so it has time to develop properly, adjust and strengthen itself.

“J,” He whispered, when his God finally calmed and dozed off. “Cancel everything and prepare the jet. We are going to Malibu.”

“Will be done, sir.”

“Ah, and sent a note to Pepper: Don’t know. Don’t care. Do not disturb.”

Chapter End Notes
Mamitadolls : Your welcome :)

Lokislonelylady : Wanna know a secret? Me too :)

Dirtkid123,kuyami98: Cheers! :)

Rhyfedd: (smiles happily) you noticed, wonderful creature! Yes they are overboard with their affection...you're totally right, and I'm so happy that you are...so I decided to spoil you a bit :) I hope you'll like it :)}
He opened his eyes to be met with a grey palette of the early morning. The shadows of the night were slowly disappearing, giving the reign to daylight. He stared at the ceiling, stillness and quiet enveloping him. Loki felt peaceful, despite yesterday’s torment.

The unpleasant emotions still lingered, though, and intensified when he realized that he was alone in the bed. It stung, but he couldn’t fault his beloved for wishing to keep the distance. His behaviour was ugly. He went so far as to strike Anthony, short after the man confessed that he would literally die without him.

Loki grimaced, shame consuming him whole. He couldn’t phantom how to correct the grave, horrid mistake, especially when he wasn’t sure if he can look Anthony in the eye.

“Morning, love.” He heard, his beautiful beloved hoovering over him a second later. Anthony had a gentle smile on his lips and leaned to give him a sweet kiss. Loki arched into the caress, stiffing a second after. He did not deserve the affection or the consideration that his beloved bestowed upon him.

Anthony felt the change immediately, moving away a fracture to pin him with a heated stare.

“I…” Loki said, his breath hitching. The words burning his throat, constricting it. He looked away, unable to take the tenderness Anthony showed.

“I know. Me too.” Tony murmured, gently grasping the God’s chin and turning his head, to catch his guilty, vulnerable gaze.

“Sure?” Loki inquired, searching his face for signs of reluctance or resentment.

“Adamantly. We deserve each other.” Tony cooed with a teasing smirk. Loki snorted, a mirror expression appearing on his face, and pulled Anthony in to give him a proper kiss.

“What lowly hounds dragged you out of the bed this morning?” Loki murmured into the delicious mouth, lapping at the sensitive skin idly. Anthony’s face alighted by the giddy grin upon hearing his question. The adoring imp squeaked excitedly, sitting up, and practically bouncing on the matrass. Loki chuckled, overloaded by the admiration. His beloved was unlawfully cute, when a childish mood overtook him. “Let me guess, you forgot what you were doing for a minute there.”

“In my defence, you are irresistible, and more so when asleep.” Tony grumbled playfully. “Answering your question: I was getting ready for a trip. We are going on vacation!” He shared eagerly, and Loki had to smile at the sheer enthusiasm his beloved radiated.

“And do I have a say in this?” The God asked, because he was not sure he was comfortable with being left out of any kind of planning for their future.
“Not this time, love.” Tony said cheerfully, but Loki could clearly feel the steel behind a carefree tone. “We are obviously not alright, and I thought that it will be nice to cancel the world and focus on what I really want to focus, namely you.”

“It would be nice, yes.” Loki agreed, however, they could not allow themselves to be nonchalant. His and his mother’s appearance shook Anthony’s world. The Avengers are at odds with him, and Thor will make a fuss, not to mention Thanos and upcoming Universal war. There was simply no time for idle living. They, already, stalled plenty. “But, we stirred too many ugly ponds, and the ripples will not wait to drown us if we postpone.”

“Yeah, and that’s exactly why you don’t get a say in this.” Tony teased, and it was indescribably tempting – brashness, fearsomeness – Loki loved him agonisingly deep for the attempt to erase the reality, but he simply couldn’t.

“Anthony…” The God started the argument, but closed his mouth when his beloved levelled him with a powerful, determined gaze.

“No, Loki. Fuck the world. I do not care, since there’re more important things to attend to, and if you protest I’ll force you, make no mistake.” He promised, and the God believed every letter, his soul trembling deliciously. He was thrilled by the dominant side, so much, he considered surrender without much fuss. Moreover, his beloved did what nobody ever thought of – chose their relationship over everything else – and if this will not boost his confidence, nothing will ever would.

“This is a second…” Loki murmured, gravitating towards Anthony, moving to curl on his lap. His beloved huffed amusedly, petting him.

“A second?” He prompted.

“You deny me.” Loki explained, melting under loving caress.

“Ah…I kinda don’t. You’re right Loki, decent. You’ll put yourself second to a greater good. I an’t like that, and I’ll fuck the greater good and anything else – everything else – really, if it keeps harming you, us.” Tony murmured.

“Don’t you dare to repeat this in public, imp.” Loki growled playfully, burning crimson. Trust his imp to see through him without even trying.

“It was a secret? Soooo sorry, didn’t know.” Tony teased, laughing when Loki twisted in his hold and tackled him down, growling jestingly. “Mercy, mercy.” He pleaded, chocking on laughter, wiggling out of the torturing arms, that were doing something clearly magical with his body – not exactly tickling, but close.

“Irritating imp.” Loki mumbled affectionately, letting him go. “When are we going?”

“When would you like us to?” Anthony inquired, a happy smile dancing on his lips.

“Now would be perfect.” Loki said, seeing how this was an ideal opportunity to mend their relationship and establish a steady connection that will not shatter at the first shake.

“Roger that.” His imp saluted, bouncing of the bed. “I need to go down the lab to finish packing. Meet up there?”

“Sure, go.” Loki said, a thrilled grin appearing on his face. Truth to be told he couldn’t wait for them to ditch the Universe and simply enjoy life. It was so long since he acted upon his own catchphrase: “I do what I want.”, and was unbelievably grateful that Anthony reminded him of his nature, which
was a total slut for selfish, pleasurable recklessness.

Loki was drying his hair with a towel, finding the mortal routine strangely comforting, waiting for the coffee to be ready, when Jarvis spoke to him.

“Master, the woman requests an audience. Should I allow her in?”

Loki sniggered, puffing out his chest proudly.

“You’re such a delight, pneuma. It’s nice to be treated, like a real royalty for a change.” The God murmured wistfully. “Send her in, if you may. She will not be discouraged, anyway.”

“You are royalty. As you wish, master.” J answered being snobby, eliciting another round of arrogant giggles from surprisingly humble God. Jarvis did not expect a deity, whose life was marked by glory, conquer and poshness, to be so down to earth and pleasant to interact with. The God was still a wild, violent, unstable and unpractical part of the harmonic mechanism that was Sir’s life, but Jarvis could see the benefits. The deity was a unique and worthy study, that could potentially add a lot of useful and handy variables to the established system, which meant the God was under his protection now, as well.

“Thank you, pneuma.” Loki said, smiling pleasantly. He liked Jarvis quite a bit. The AI reminded him of a wise, stern older brother that amused his youngest by allowing them to think that they are autonomous, but secretly was watching over them and kept them out of trouble.

“Dear child,” His mother greeted, stepping out from the elevator, looking out of place in her regal attire. Loki smirked, shaking his head at her.

“Mother.” He greeted teasingly, raising an eyebrow.

“Don’t you even dare voicing disrespectful thoughts of yours, Loki.” She warned, coming closer to kiss him on the cheek. He hugged her briefly, his smirk widening.

“I’d never, my queen.”

“Young expression says enough, pest.” She chastised playfully, sitting at the bar stool gracefully. “How you can stand this simplicity, I cannot phantom.”

“Ah, must be ages I spent in the cage, mother. But who knows, maybe it’s my peasant blood speaking.” He drawled, hating how she slighted his beloved good graces and generosity, not to mention, that Anthony’s house was impeccable.

“Probably. You’re used to live in the slums and whatnot.” She said, treating his pain as insignificant, and, sometimes, he wondered how she managed to harbour compassion, when most of the time she was unbearably frigid.

“Nines, I’m so thankful we’re leaving.” Loki mumbled shamelessly, not wishing to deal with her displeasure at this point.

“Leaving? When? Why I haven’t been told!” She inquired regally, and Loki rolled his eyes.

“In several hours if I’m lucky. Because you’re not entitled to, maybe?”

“Of course. Why tell me? I’m only stuck on the crude rock with apes for company; reduced to a
commoner, wearing garbs…no thanks to you, naturally.” She remarked sarcastically.

“Cease, mother. I’m not to be blamed for your choices, and certainly will not be manipulated by it.” Loki hissed, getting upset. He knew she will do this. She was not above guilt tripping him into things. She had done it plenty in the past.

“Huh, your play-thing is wrong. You know nothing about gratefulness.” She bit, and Loki smirked at her sharply.

“And who taught me this, you think? I am how you made me mother, and let me remind you that you breathe only because Anthony was graceful enough to save you.”

“How can I forget…” She drawled, grimacing. “As if it’s not enough he made a faithful mongrel out of you…”

It was significant, Loki knew, but did not have the energy to dig deeper. He was aware she was protecting him, in her own backwards, twisted way, but he was tired of this “read between the lines” affection. His soul was starving for blatant favouritism and devotion, so instead of understanding her motives, he snapped.

“Yes, he did, and if I were you I would thread lightly, because you know how those loyal, crazed beasts are – they will not hesitate to rip anyone’s throat out, even their pack’s.”

She looked at him long and hard then, her mouth a thin line of displeasure. He withstood her heavy gaze, levelling her with irked stare. She sighed, her eyes reluctantly sparking with warmth and concern.

“Be as it may, but I will grain his bones to dust if he ever lays his hand on you again.” She warned, and Loki gasped. How did she know?

“Mother, I warn you not to intertwine, since you have no understanding of the situation.” The shame and sadness rose in him. Anthony, he realised, had nobody to stand up for him.

“Oh, I do understand perfectly.” She said poisonously.

“You don’t.” Loki hissed. “I was the first to strike, and he didn’t hit back. It was unintentional. The spur of the moment thing, so don’t you dare threaten him, when all he did was love me, when I least deserved it.”

“That’s not what I heard.” She defended, not giving in.

“What you heard was wrong, and that’s that, mother.” He said adamantly.

“Loki…” She started, but he interrupted.

“What does it matter anyway, mother? I used to walk around black and blue when we got into fights with Sijur, don’t remember you being so protective then. Or was it because he was Thor’s closest friend and Odin favoured his father, hm?” Loki jabbed harshly and felt no regret.

“You are being unfair, Loki.” She said sternly, but he didn’t want to back down.

“Am I? Or was it you, mother?” He asked, and smirked satisfactory when she lost her disgustingly righteous look. “I get it, amma. We all had an eye-opening experience, but I ask you not to overstep. It’s too late, you see. I will not resent you for it. I cannot, but we will have a problem if you continue to slight Anthony, understood?”
“Yes, dear child. But do be careful.” She allowed unwillingly.

“I won’t give you any promises, but I’ll try not to die in the next century or so, good?” He said, relaxing.

“It’s better than nothing.” She concluded, standing up and stepping to him, to envelop in a tight, warm embrace. “For what is worth, I wish you both happiness, my dear child.”

“Amma, coming from a Goddess of foreknowledge it’s worth quite a fortune.”

Tony was rocking idly on a chair, skimming through the information he gathered from his latest shenanigans, waiting for Loki to wrap-up, when the phone rang. The caller-id read: Pep.

“Put her through, J.” He sighed, preparing himself for verbal assault. “Hey.”

“Hey, Tony. Nice of you to give me heads-up. I’ll cover for you, but the Chinese agenda, unfortunately, is out of my league. I cannot keep up with the tech-talk.” She whined, and Tony smiled, pleasantly shocked.

“Wow, Pep. I’m … perplexed.” He said, rearranging himself for a different kind of discussion.

“Why am I not surprised?” She teased. “I understand, Tony. You have a lot on your plate right now, and I, actually, do not know why it took you so long to ditch us all in favour of your gorgeous God.”

“I’m glad we are on the same page with the ownership rights.” He snarked, feeling the bite of irrational jealousy. “I’m new to this, Pep. Plus, I am thoroughly dazzled by the said God. My mind is not working properly lately, but I’m learning.”

“Good. He’s perfect for you, Tony. Try not to screw this up.” She warned playfully, and Tony chuckled.

“Damn, everybody thinks I’m the villain in this relationship.” He whined, making her giggle.

“Nobody thinks, you’re evil Tony, simply more rational, and less likely to be swayed by sentiments.” She explained, being rudely amused by his struggles and character faults.

“Thanks for the voice of confidence, Pep.” He remarked sarcastically, making a face at her. She laughed.

“Your bruise is still visible, though.” She said softly, and he cursed.

“Fuck Mushu. The stubborn beast doesn’t allow it to heal. It, already, got me at odds with Frigg. The woman is creepy, I tell you – knew instantly what had occurred; burned me with an arctic stare too, as if I didn’t feel guilty enough before.” Tony grumbled upset. He hoped it will fade away come the morning, since he had an enchanted healing ability. No such luck. He managed to occupy Loki enough, for him not to see, but bumped into his mother shortly afterwards, and had an awkward staring match with her. Thank God, she didn’t demand an explanation. He was not ready, nor willing to give one.

“Maybe, that’s the whole point, Tony?” Pepper asked, knowing what has transpired between them, because Jarvis has alerted her of the conflict. “You’re not at fault. You did not initiate it. Maybe Mushu wants Loki to see what he has done.”
“I don’t.” Tony growled stubbornly.

“Tony, you shouldn’t protect him from everything. He is in the wrong. Let him apologise and heal you. You both will feel much better afterwards, I promise.” She argued, willing him to see it from the other angle.

“I doubt it.” He remarked.

“Tony, you know what will happen with a system if errors will be ignored and swapped under the rug instead of correcting and working on them, right?” She coaxed him.

“Yes, Pep. Don’t patronise me.” He growled upset. Tony knew they need to talk it through. He simply didn’t want to, becoming tired of the constant emotional high.

“Talk to him, Tony. It will do you both good.” She insisted, but received a hard, scoffing look for he trouble.

“Sure, sure. Talk later?” He shut her out, and she gave up. There’s nothing she could do about it anymore.

“Yeah. Have a nice trip.”

“We will. See you, Pep.” He waved, disconnecting the call.

Tony was staring at the ceiling, cursing the magical dragon in his chest and pondering how he can wiggle out of the situation, without falling into another agonisingly pitiful hurricane of emotions. As so far, by some miracle, he did great, but his patience was running thin and it wouldn't be long before he snaps and withdraws from Loki, which was the worst-case scenario imaginable.

“Ah, this is how she knew.” His lovable God murmured, caressing the bruise lightly, making Tony jump slightly.

“Hey.” Tony murmured, leaning into the touch, feeling Loki’s magic sipping into him.

“Hey.” The God purred, kissing his beloved lips chastely, erasing the ugly purple from his wonderful skin. “I apologise. My behaviour was unacceptable. I’ll try not to lose my control in the future and if I do, I ask you not to hide the consequences of my despicable actions.”

“It’s alright, Loki. We both were ugly that one moment.” Tony placated, but the God would have none of it.

“It is not, beloved. I was trapped once in an abusive relationship, and would like for ours not to turn as such.” He explained levelly, and Tony exhaled, glad that this was not turning into another drama-fest.

“So we clear, you mean – physically abusive, yeah? ‘Cos you know, I’m not sure I want to filter my language or tune the possessiveness down even a notch.” Tony teased, and Loki smirked at him darkly, obsessive, violent affection shining in his vast, emerald orbs.

“Don’t get smart with me, imp.” He growled, bending over to claim his lips in a dominating, biting kiss. Tony mewled, arching into his God, clutching to him desperately, one thought managing to run through his head, before the passion consumed everything: send flowers to Pepper.
Dirtkid123: Cheers! I'm glad you liked it :)

Rhyfedd: Thank you. I'm glad it improved your mood. Yeah, they relationship is far from healthy, but then they are not stable nor have a potential to be normal...I love them twisted, anyway :)
Speaking of Frigg...well, if you want to see her leveled - you should read "concurring planet Earth" - there I was a bit brutal :) 'cos, honestly, I do not get her...not at all, especially the movie version...anyway, Asgardian part of the family is totally screwed from all sides :)

Lokislonelylady: Your welcome - prefer to write Loki/Pepper like this, don't see how it can be otherwise (well a white lie, but moving on). Yes, of course. We all love to see them magically getting together and forgetting about the tons of shit in between...I sin with it too, however, not this time around - I'd like to explore the so called "slow-burn" in kinda twisted way - my style - I want to give them a legitimate base, so to say :) which means this story could be much longer than I have imagined...

Mamitadolls: Right?! :) Those two and emotional roller-coasters :))
Construction site: arrival

Chapter Notes

Thank you for your comments and kudos, dear readers
Enjoy

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Thor crossed his arms impatiently, trying unsuccessfully to reign his temperament. His father promised him revenge, but was stalling for some superficial reason. He couldn't understand why, suddenly, good relations with Midgard mattered so much, but didn't risk going against his wishes this time, since he send his trusted negotiator to the apes. A vile creature that was worse than infamous Silvertongue, who despite his many flaws possessed a resemblance of decency. Sijur, though, haven't had a faintest idea what the word even meant.

In the past they were friends, fooling around and participating in gloriously addicting escapades, until Thor figured that Sijur used him to keep Loki on the leash. He broke the affair immediately, banishing the slug from his circle of friends. It did not affect Sijur in the slightest. He gained his position, despite fooling both princes. Thor was, almost, sure it was a decisive factor in his appointing.

"Thor" the All-father called, gaining his attention. "I will not tolerate misbehaviour this time around. The punishment, should you ignore my order, will be swift and grave."

"Yes, father. I understand and won't act rashly." Thor vowed, standing up. "Call us when you get the permission."

"Loki rubbed on you finally, I see." Odin jabbed his heir, pleased to see that his wit was improving.

"No surprises there, father, as you know dirt sticks most easily." Thor shrugged, used to degrading comments. Loki loved to bitch about growing in his glorious shadow, completely missing how thick and disgustingly bright his own glory was, and how Thor’s dimmed in comparison, at least in his parent’s eyes; and for that he truly hated the Snake.

Odin chuckled waving him off. Maybe his heir wasn't a complete failure after all.

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Sijur stepped on the huge, metal construction looking around with shrewd eyes, memorising the location of troops and weapons. He wasn’t in immediate danger, but the action soothed him. Asgardians were superior to many races, humans included, but those monkeys knew how to be creative and annoyingly resilient. Thus, he won’t make a mistake of underestimating them. After all, they managed to take his fussy kitten down without a struggle, and that was something to consider.

“Sijur Deironson, please follow me.” A nameless, faceless soldier approached him and gestured to follow. He nodded, following.

The room they lead him in was plain – no windows, no other exits, no clock, chrome on white, and fake daylight lighting – impersonal and intimidating.
“Please sit down. Director Fury will join you shortly.” The soldier gestured on a chair and exited. Sijur sat down, smirking joyfully. He will love this.

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“Why are we flying through the air in a confined unstable, metal can, Anthony?” Loki complained, tightly clutching to him, and trembling when the plane shook slightly or some unfamiliar sound were heard.

Tony bit his lip not to laugh again, since it mortally offended his frightened Reindeer. But it was hysterically hilarious – the God who literally walked on energy through open cosmic space and fell into a wormhole, was afraid of flying – AHAHAHAHA!

“Because, it’s fun.” Tony managed to say, almost straight faced. Loki glared at him, paler than snow.

“Do I look amused?” He inquired poisonously, but lost the threatening look, when the plane shook again, whimpering and hiding in the crook of Tony’s neck. Tony patted his back soothingly, cooing gentle nonsense, until Loki stooped shaking and moved to glare at him.

“No, love. I do, though.” Tony teased, to be hissed at. “I, honestly, couldn’t have imagined it will unsettle you so. Besides you have already been on the plane.”

“I was brain dead then, and, Nines, I wish I was now, as well.” Loki whined, trying hard to get inside Anthony’s skin and dissolve in there.

“I’m curious, though...” Tony said. “I have seen your folks fly around in what looks, like boats and you have mentioned in passing that you and Thor stole an elves’ ship...What exactly scares you right now?”

“I’m not scared.” Loki growled, an obvious lie, which made his beloved snigger at him, but, somehow it did not make him bitter. Anthony was unfairly amused by his misfortune, however, he held him tightly and comforted eagerly. The God had to admit it was liberating. He didn’t have to pretend that he loathed this way of transportation and, also, as shocking as it was – Anthony did not require him to be anything, but himself. Loki suspected this before, but, as with everything else, found it hard to believe or accept. Thus, he agreed to go through this to gauge Anthony’s reaction to his weakness, and his beloved passed with flying colours.

“Uhum...” Tony murmured teasingly.

“I hate the uncertainty. The lack of control.” Loki shared. “When I walk my paths, I am the one who sets and builds them – here, I’m but a user...I have no choice but to rely on others, and I hate it.”

“Would it be better if you were piloting?” Tony inquired, intrigued.

“It would. However, there is still a point of not being made by me...” The God grumbled, tensing when something whistled outside.

“It’s wind, Reindeer, relax.” Tony hushed, smiling. “I don’t know if it helps much, but I built this bird myself and it’s piloted by J, so there.”

Loki gaped at him, glaring full heartedly.

“Why haven’t you told me this from the start, imp? Do you like seeing me miserable?”

“No, but I do like you clinging and needy. Plus, you wanted to see what I will do when you are a mess, so, I considered it’s a win-win kinda situation.” Anthony shared, and Loki growled upset.
“If you knew I was trying to manipulate you, you should have called me on it.”

“And where would be the fun in that?” Tony teased, kissing his nose, and making him giggle at the tender gesture. “But, for the record, I will raise an argument if it will cease to be for shit and giggles.”

“Fair enough.” Loki agreed easily, melting into his beloved body. Truth to be told, he loved to be held in this manner, and had no squabble with being seen as desperate or submissive. Someone, finally, decided that he was worth to be cared for and pampered, and he would not compromise it for silly notions as pride or independence. He had enough of those in the past. Right now, all he wanted was to be loved and treasured. “What are you afraid of, I wonder…” Loki pondered, wishing to get a glimpse inside Anthony’s head.

“Caves and narrow, confide spaces. I’m, also, not fond of diving or water, much.” Tony shared, and Loki hummed thoughtfully.

“And yet you fly in a metal armour, and we’re going to live in a house that is built directly above the ocean, yes?”

“Yes, smartass. Face your fears and all that shit.” Tony retorted sarcastically.

“Hm, following that logic, should I trap you in a rock casket upon our arrival, for all the trouble you went through in helping me to face mine…” Loki drawled sweetly, looking at his imp questioningly. Anthony narrowed his glorious eyes at him, smirking sharply.

“First, you put it on yourself. Second, you can try and do that, but I’m ninety-nine percent sure it won’t work, since I will perceive it as a threat and Mushu will not allow your magic to do shit.”

“You have noticed that, huh.” Loki murmured, amazed by Anthony’s perceptiveness. Nothing seems to escape his eye, and conclusions he drew from the scraps of information he received were remarkable. He was a genius indeed. However, there was a disturbing notion in his statement, as well. The one that Loki did not favour at all. “You think I can farm you, beloved.” The God stated sadly.

“No, love, I don’t think that. I know you can destroy me, though, won’t take much power to do so either.” Tony remarked nonchalantly, and Loki abruptly realized that he was missing something here.

“So, you don’t think I will harm you on purpose, but you are aware that I can and probably will do so if what?” Loki inquired.

“Anything, really.” Tony divulged. “Look, Loki, we are clinically dependent on each other, and we bound to get unbearably monstrous during emotional fits, so it’s a given that harm will come. I am ready for that, are you?”

The God went quiet for a while, pondering on the words Anthony said and insinuations their implied. He was astounded by the easiness with which his beloved spoke of such things. He didn’t shy from the dysfunctional part of their connection nor he denied the glaring evidence of its sickness. Loki agreed with him. They were broken beyond repair, and it will take thousands of years to get remotely healthy. It will be ugly from time to time, probably bloody, as well. Loki, himself, was prone to become unreasonable and didn’t hesitate to do morally ambiguous and, sometimes, downright immoral things to get even. Thus, pain was a given, and he was ready for it too, because looking in those full of warmth eyes; hearing those bold, brash declarations; being free to explore and voice his own thoughts and show his darkness – it was worth any agony or injury.

“Yes, I am.” He confirmed, rubbing their noses playfully, before kissing Anthony gently. As long as
they were honest and open about themselves and the things they were going through, they could make it work, he was sure of it.

“**It’s magnificent, beloved.**” Loki praised, walking around the glorious construction that Anthony called his home. The house was big and airy; most walls replaced by screens or windows, making the space appear gigantic. The natural palette prevailed, further interweaving it with the outside scenery, and the God could imagine that they were living outdoors, right on the beach, where the calming waves of the ocean were murmuring ancient songs. It was official, Loki was in love with this house, and a stray thought that he can legitimately call it his home as well, made his eyes water.

“I cannot agree more.” Tony murmured, his voice husky. It was a glorious feeling, seeing Loki in his – their – home, starry eyed and beaming. Mushu purred loudly, making him smile tenderly. It was a dream come true really, and nothing could be more satisfying than this.

His God turned to him, gifting a tender smile.

“You are not talking about the house, are you?” He inquired, his voice hushed and filled with softer emotions.

“No. I’m talking about you – beautiful and mesmerising – standing in the middle of our home, like you always were here, and it is magnificent.” Tony explained warmly, and Loki’s breath hitched. It was agonisingly delightful to hear from Anthony’s lips – *our home*.

A tear rolled down his cheek, and he thought, that this was a true shattering – thousand years of torment, neglect, pretending, lies, pain and cruelty that he experienced, harboured and crafted into a perfect, frozen mask of godly superiority finally started cracking, and falling off, like a dead skin, leaving a naked soul behind. Loki never thought that acceptance can be this wrecking and love so viciously devastating. The healing – a true change – was nothing but agonising and pitifully miserable.

The God took a step, but stopped, lingering in uncertainty. As so far, Anthony did not hesitate to deal with his displays of weakness, but Loki remembered how disconnected and uncomfortable with emotions his beloved truly was, and wondered if he should at least try to get them in order not to tire Anthony and risking losing him.

He was unbelievably selfish lately, and Anthony encouraged him to continue to be so, but should he? Because his beloved was not in a better condition and he ought to be more considerate.

“Come, love. I won’t deny you.” Tony’s sweet voice beckoned, and it was all encouragement Loki needed to fly into his welcoming arms, holding him tightly.

“Thank you.” He whispered reverently. “I’m unbearable, weak and a wreck…” Loki voiced breathlessly, without any purpose, simply because he could.

“Hmm, I haven’t noticed.” Tony drawled teasingly, eliciting a chuckle from the God, holding him gingerly. “But I’m sticking around, anyway.”

“Thank you.” Loki repeated, clutching to him.

“Any time, love. Besides, this is exactly why we came here – to deal.” Tony said, his voice hitting a steal note.

“Do my emotional displays tire you, beloved?” Loki inquired, fearful and understanding
simultaneously.

“They do, love. I’m fucking bad with this stuff, you know. But, I see benefit in it as well.” Tony allowed, and Loki frowned, thoughtful.

“Which is?”

“You won’t allow me to become a complete psychopath, love, because I can never despise an emotional display if it comes from you. You justify the existence of sentiment. I adore how your eyes light up, when you look at me or the myriads of expression you make when I praise, tease or anger you. It is fascinating to observe. I admit I loathe the illogical undertones of it, and how it seems to fuck up everything, but I, also, acknowledge that without it I wouldn’t be able to own you nor get Mushu to live in my chest, so fair is fair.” Anthony explained, and Loki had to giggle at the arrogance his beloved displayed.

“You truly think you are emotionless, do you?”

“No, not really. But I’m as hell sure it’s much easier for me to squash them or simply ignore, than for many others, including you.” Tony said shamelessly, and Loki chuckled again.

“It should frighten me.” The God confessed.

“But it doesn’t. Why?” Tony asked, hoping that Loki finally got the idea.

“Because, I presume…no, I, almost, sure now – you haven’t broken me out nor endure my state, because of “love”, but because you decided I’m a thing worth having; that I will be a precious addition to your other possessions. The emotional undertones came into a play much later. You realized and probably still processing the feelings you have or not, since you pushed them on the poor manifestation of my energy. Thus, I shouldn’t be worried about the emotional attachments, since you, already, concluded logically that I’m yours, and informed me that you don’t share nor letting go.” The God explained, and Tony could not pinpoint any resentment or anger in his tone, exhaling.

“You don’t have a problem with it, do you?” He inquired anyway, to be certain.

“No, I don’t. Since I know you love me dearly. Actually, your love for me is so strong it created a living creature inside of you to make sure you won’t miss it, so yeah – no problems with that.” Loki confirmed, finding Anthony’s way of dealing with feelings remarkable.

“Damn, you’re fucking perfect, love.” Tony swore, sealing his lips with a scorching kiss. “But, please, can we take a break from the feelings and do something dull, like watch a movie. I was dying to show you one art-piece, anyway.” He pleaded, when they broke for air.

The God giggled, nodding.

“Yes, we can. What do you want to show me so badly, beloved?” Loki inquired, lacing their hands and following Anthony, when he tugged him and lead deeper into the house.

“A Disney classic. Can’t believe you know “Pulp fiction” but completely unaware of Mushu.” Tony grumbled playfully.

“I’m not favouring childish fairy-tales, beloved.” Loki teased him, happy to do anything, as long it was with Anthony.

“Too bad, ‘cos you’re living in one.” Tony snarked, and Loki shook his head.
“I was not aware that Midgardians’ fairy-tales were so twisted.” Loki jabbed back. Anthony turned to smirk at him mischievously.

“Oh, Reindeer, you’re up for a new experience then.”

“Ready when you are, beloved.” Loki teased back, indeed prepared to explore anything with him.

Chapter End Notes

Dirtkid123, kuyami98 : Cheers! :)

Mamitadolls: remarkable how much can be worked out if people talk, isn't it? ))) Thank you, I'm glad you liked it
For a few days it was intense. They could not really separate, eager to stay connected in whatever from they could. But gradually it started to calm down; bit by bit, until they could breathe properly, and stopped going insane from a simple caress.

It became obvious that physical touch, and presence in general, will be a major part of their relationship. Tony, unknowingly to Loki, got restless every time the God was out of his sight. Logically he understood that it was bullshit, but fucking feelings and clingy Mushu – he needed to be aware of Loki, period.

Loki was not dealing better if left alone. He became snappy and irritated, worrying himself to death, and if Tony decided to leave the bed before the God woke up – nightmares came.

Loki, of course, was the first to openly confess that he loathed Tony’s absence and outright demanded his company. Tony smirked and agreed easily, since it suited his wishes perfectly.

“Do you think it will calm at some point?” Loki asked him serenely, standing waste deep in the ocean. Tony smiled at him, admiring the view. His God looked mythical under the dying sun, that painted his marble skin in red tones and twinkled playfully in his rich-emerald orbs.

Tony shrugged, glancing at the helpless waves that came and went, unable to glaze his skin. He didn’t join Loki in the water, instead settling, nearby, on the sand.

“I don’t think it matters, love.” He voiced his thoughts, returning his gaze to the God, smiling at him contently. “I don’t mind being glued to you for the rest of eternity, however, common sense dictates that with time the urgency will fade.”

“Hmmm…” Loki hummed seemingly nonchalant, but Tony knew he was holding back. He started noticing lately that Loki’s emotions became more restrained, and he was alright with this if it was coming from the genuine desire to control them and not on board if the change sprung from fear of rubbing him the wrong way.

Tony had time and space to think and analyse Loki properly, during the days and nights they spent together. He concluded that, despite their creepily similar backgrounds they were vastly different.

Loki was sensitive. He was built from intuition, hunches, luck and superstitions. He believed in abstract concepts, manipulating realities, bending the untouchable and unexplored concepts to his will. Loki’s domain was everything that laid beyond rationalisation – the unconscious; the magical.

Which lead to the understanding that Loki needed different things. It was crucial for the God to be able to express his emotions freely, without restriction or fright to be reprimanded, because he couldn’t wipe them or ignore. They were deeply connected with his essence, and when he was
forced to dance around them and suppress – he became sick, which Tony will not allow to pass a second time.

“Do you trust me, beloved?” Loki broke the silence, breaking him out of the ponderings. Tony looked at him questioning, to be met with mischievous smile.

“It’s a shitty expression to have when one’s asking such a question, Reindeer.” He teased, thoughtful, scanning himself from mistrust or falsity. “I, think, I do.” He answered after a while. “Why?”

“I was wondering if you’d join me…” Loki drawled, his smile morphing into a grin. Tony snorted, shaking his head.

“And that’s even shittier.” Anthony remarked, flashing him an indulgent smirk.

Loki watched him, sitting on the sand – relaxed and glowing, and could not believe Anthony was his; that his happiness was Loki’s doing.

The God still marvelled at the opportunity he was given and the honour he was bestowed with. Anthony was unlike him, and if not for their shared struggles there would be nothing that could have tied them together.

Anthony was rational to the point of abnormality. He easily discarded the notions that were eating up the common population, brazenly moving forward, not restrained by dilemmas of emotional beings. It helped him to thrive and it shouldn’t come as surprising, knowing what business he leads and what captivates his brilliant mind.

It should have appalled Loki, who was hooked on the exact opposite, but didn’t.

The torment he went through changed him. He became sharp and biting. Sarcastic comments and violent teasing; dancing on the edge and jabbing at every given opportunity; constant manipulation and pocking for weak spots – hitting, crushing, tearing, distrusting, lying and twisting – to check, to prove, to push away – no one could or will withstand it. Nobody is bold enough or strong enough to put him into his place, because Loki was a master of playing on other people feelings – they lost every time. They cannot take him – Anthony didn’t give a damn.

Loki could not tear him down, because Anthony was operating on a different level. He was the only one who can take him in and rule him. He saw through him; rendered his tricks useless. Loki had no choice but to submit, and when he got used to it; accepted the inevitable – he, also, realised that it was time to get stable. Anthony had an angelic patience, but Loki was not inclined to test it further nor refrain, anymore, from worshiping his beloved, like he promised to do in the cell.

“Are you planning to drag me in or something?” His beloved inquired, his voice playfully unsettled. Loki smirked at him amused, enjoying Anthony’s fake squirming.

“I might if you refuse to come willingly.” Loki threatened jestingly.

“Hm, but it’s still a conclucated risk, since I can convince you to stay with me instead.” Tony contoured.

“Yes, so I simply beg.” The God stated shamelessly, a shit eating grin appearing on his face.

“Fuck, Reindeer. You learn disturbingly fast.” Tony grumbled, standing up and brashly walking to the now gaping God. “Happy?”

Loki could see Anthony trembling, flinching every time the water licked his skin, but his eyes were twinkling with playful mockery and lips were forming a sarcastic smirk. Yet again, making the God
stop breathing and admire the impossible creature before him.

“I will be in a second.” Loki whispered, stretching his hand and covering Anthony in a green glow. His beloved eyes widened excitedly. He raised his hand to the eye level, inspecting it thoroughly, pocking the skin.

“Fascinating.” He murmured, returning the awed gazed back on the God.

“It will become more so.” Loki promised offering his hand, which Anthony took instantly. “Trust me.”

The words did not fully left Loki’s mouth, before they were submerged. The instant Tony realised they were under water panic hit, and he was covered in cold sweat, trying not to break. However, Loki’s warm touches and complete absence of wetness calmed him slowly.

He glared at the God for about three seconds, before giving in.

“You are cruel son of a bitch. Do you know that?” He hummed, embracing the God loosely, looking around the unsettling, murky depths.

“Yes. How’s your fear doing?” The God asked, and Tony abruptly understood why he pulled such a nasty trick.

“Clever bastard.” He grumbled, biting the exposed collarbone petulantly.

“I take it as a compliment.” Loki hissed, his voice filled with pleasurable pain.

“Yeah, yeah, whatever.” Tony said, relaxing completely. He had to admit it was a remarkable way of showing him that his nightmares could be soothed by the God just as easily, as the God’s were by him. Loki made sure Tony knew beyond a shadow of a doubt he was there for him, and if needed be the God won’t shy from forcing him to deal. On that note, it seems that Loki decided to pull his shit together, and damn was it a glorious picture to witness. “Fuck, we are meant to be.”

“I think so too, beloved.” Loki purred, coaxing him into a gentle, sweet kiss and suddenly water became a great place to be.

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“I’m not sure I find this idea in any way appealing.” Loki grumbled, plastering himself to Tony’s side to avoid colliding with drunken, marrying folks, and to announce to anybody who was watching that the man was taken.

“Why am I not surprised?” Tony drawled mockingly, dragging his unimpressed and fidgety Reindeer to the bar. He decided the night before that they should come out and touch the outside world, because rendering themselves to each other presence won’t help to deal with things like – jealousy, insecurity and disturbing possessiveness. Moreover, the issue with Pepper did not let him go. Didn’t Loki supposed to be a silver-tongued God of lies, who had no squabble with fucking up everyone he meets in most painfully colossal ways? He certainly didn’t shy from chewing his mother’s head off nor screwing with him at any given opportunity. So, why Pep became such a big deal? The only explanation Tony came up with was – Pepper was a stranger, and somehow between being degraded, tortured, mindfucked and isolated Loki became a sociophobe.

The theory was proven the second they stepped into a club. Loki visibly shrank, his eyes huge with fear and back tense.
“Relax, Reindeer.” Tony cooed, gently massaging his tense muscles. “Didn’t it supposed to be your favourite type of thing?”

“It was, a long time ago, before they started breaking my bones and sewing my lips shut. Humourless crippled bastards.” Loki hissed, glaring at him, and Tony supressed a flinch.

The life the God lead never ceased to horrify and disgust him. He still got glimpses and insights from time to time – short flashbacks or déjà vu - courtesy of Mushu, and the list of people that needed to be mutilated lengthened every time he saw a memory. None of them were truly happy. Someone, always, managed to fuck Loki up in the end.

“They are.” Tony murmured, a vengeful darkness swimming in his voice, passing Loki a drink that he ordered previously, their fingers brushing tenderly, despite the touchy topic. “However, it is past, right?”

“I doubt it is. I’m afraid it never will. I am a runaway, wanted by mad Titan and All-father. No matter how hard we want to ignore it, there is no happy future for me if at all.” Loki retorted gloomy, his mood quickly soaring.

“At least, it’s nothing new.” Tony shrugged nonchalantly. “If worse comes to worse you will still have me, and I’m sure I count for something.” He added, smirking at his God arrogantly. Loki chuckled, but his eyes held a tender sadness.

“If I was a better man, I would have let you go. I should have.” Loki murmured, squeezing Anthony’s waist affectionately.

“I’m lucky you’re a screw-upped bastard, and you’re lucky I’m a selfish one. But just so we clear, I’ll bring up your mythical Ragnarok if you leave me.” Tony threatened playfully, but the God knew it was a legitimate promise, and it warmed his heart.

“And here I thought my death will pain you.” Loki teased him.

“Oh, it will.” Tony agreed, and smirked at him with a startling mix of determination, cruelty and agony.

Yes, it will, Loki though, but it won’t stop him. That was the point. Sentiments won’t ever thwart Anthony from doing what he wanted or thought necessary to accomplish.

“Good to know.” Loki said pulling him closer to catch his beloved lips in a tender kiss. Tony mewled, biting gently, delighted to see his God relaxing under the loving ministrations.

“Fancy a dance?” Tony asked when they broke apart.

“I don’t know…” Loki drawled, glancing at the dance floor briefly and grinning sheepishly. “I haven’t danced in eons.”

“Yes,” Tony agreed, and smiled gently, delighted to see his God relaxing under the loving ministrations.

“Took long enough.” Tony said, smiling excitedly and pulling him towards the crowd. Loki went willingly, pushing his nerves down. It will be a pleasant experience, no matter how it goes, since he was with Anthony and loved to dance.

They were having a great time, finding it easy to predict and complement each other movements. It was glorious, Loki decided, and wondered how it will be to spar and fight with Anthony.

Tony spun, and giggled when Loki caught him effortlessly. It was amazing to be this free and reckless, knowing that there was a deity ready to stabilise him if he screws up. Fuck, he felt safe.
They were laughing and swaying, gliding and horsing around, at times teasing and seducing, enjoying the evening, when Tony noticed a peculiarity. Some men and women during their dancing, suddenly fell or bumped into a wall or otherwise got immobilised, but not severely – simple, every day, drunken clumsiness. However, considering, the God of mischief…

“Hey, love, what that blonde did to you?” Tony inquired, nodding towards the busty woman, who got champagne spilled on her silken dress and currently was screaming at the poor waiter.

“I didn’t like how she stared at you. You’re mine.” Loki didn’t even try to pretend it wasn’t him or hide his jealousy, which sounded harsh, but tightly controlled.

“Huh, didn’t notice.” Tony murmured, warmed by the pleased smile Loki gifted him with and the mischievously sparkling emerald orbs. It seems, that his God will not hide anymore. “Speaking of improper staring.” He continued, turning Loki to subtly show him a ginger male. “Preposterous.”

“I didn’t see…” Loki said, frowning.

“’Course not, you’re busy watching those who watched me. So, obviously missed those who eye-fucked you. I didn’t.” Tony growled, not hiding his envy.


“Naturally. Help me?”

“Always.” Loki said, anticipating marvellous tricks.

The humans bore him drastically, dragging the negotiations, until it spiralled to farce. They tried to find a loophole or planned to outsmart him – never mind. He dismissed the issue entirely, since their attempts to play him were crude and unimaginative. He craved a real challenge. A battle of wits that All-father promised him, but it seemed that they gave them too much credit.

Thor was a fool and Loki, despite his brilliant mind, was easy to manipulate if one knew which strings to pull. It seems the apes got lucky and nothing more.

Loki was lightly snorting, comfortably sprawled on top of him, and Tony was working on the latest suit’s design, unable to sleep more than four hours.

Sir, director’s Fury attempts to contact you reached a critical level.” J whispered, minding the sleeping God and Tony smirked. Lately all personal conversations between him and J happened at night, when Loki was peacefully slumbering.

“What does he want, buddy?” Tony gave in and asked.

“A face-to-face conversation, I presume.” J snarked. “However, he got a drift and left you an encrypted voice message. Do you want to listen, sir?”

“Do I have a choice?” Tony grumbled, motion for Jarvis to play it.

“Stark, we have a situation here. A diplomat from Asgard came to negotiate Loki’s extradition. Contact me ASAP.” Fury’s annoying voice, laced by creepy ass panic, hissed at him.

Tony sighed, rubbing his temples.
“Tell me J, why I haven’t enslaved them still, huh?”

“Because miss Potts refuses to be the empress of the world, sir.” J answered levelly.

“Yeah, good point. And I’ll suck as a ruler anyway…but you know…” He said thoughtful, watching his God pointedly.

“You need to ensure his safety first, sir and after we can think about insanely generous gifts.” Jarvis reasoned, and Tony nodded.

“Yeah. I guess it’s time we take this project seriously. Send a note to Fury saying: Don’t forget what we agreed on, Nicky and do not dare to disappoint - and invite Frigg and Pep for a visit in two weeks, buddy.”

“Will be done, sir. What about the diplomat?” Jarvis inquired.

“As long as he has his immunity and do not show his face here – he lives.” Tony muttered darkly.

“Tedious.” J remarked.

“Yep.” Tony concurred.

Chapter End Notes

Dirtkid123: Cheers! :)

Lokislonelylady: Well, the real life has no place in fanfiction :) we love to say that this or that won't happen in reality, when the truth is it did happen and will happen - reality is vast and twisted that literally anything is possible - so stories - stories should be simple and if mood strikes ideal, hopeful… Loki and Tony - for me they are as much as similar as glaringly different - so their relationship can either shine or burn :) I'd like it to shine this time, since they understand more than anybody what it is to be stepped on and left out, so I guess they both would be willing to work it out, before killing each other...or not, you know :)

Mamitadolls: Thank you, dear. Yep, it is the "easiest" way to build a strong and loving relationship

Rhyfedd: Thank you :) Communication - yeah - always helps a lot :) 'bout healthy/unhealthy...It's subjective I think - individual. As long as it works and both parties are happy (shrugs) who are others to judge?
It seems that Loki finally felt secure enough to engage in a midfucking discussion with Pepper and she obliged. Tony chuckled. People that were surrounding him were nuts, because judging by the tiny smirk on her deity lips she was not only enjoying the exchange but also thriving in it.

He smiled at them, stretching and stepping out to the veranda where Frigg was enjoying the sun. He watched her for some minutes, trying to connect the dreams, evidence and her chaotic behaviour into one picture and failing. She was hard to analyse, since Frigg was a mistress of both domains: logic and emotions.

“If you don’t mind me asking, why did you fuck him up so badly?” Tony inquired boldly.

“And if I do mind? Also, the language! What would your mother say!?” The Goddess remarked, looking at him amused.

“I don’t give a fuck, honestly. My mother, though, would say nothing. She’s dead.” Tony retorted, feeling no pain at the rude comment. It was past and death was a natural ending of life. Tony never truly understood the grief. He can rationalise the selfish part of the situation – nobody liked when their stuff where out of their reach permanently, but other than that – moot point.

“I apologise. I was not aware.” Frigg said sincerely, but he waved her off.

“It was a long time ago. Now, would you, please, enlighten me. I’m at lost if to be frank and I don’t like it.” He whined, and she chuckled.

“You’re a peculiar creature, little one. But I’m not inclined to educate you. I prefer you squirming.” She said cruelly, and it baffled Tony. She was paradoxical, for the better word – warm and understanding, and then sharply cold. She was sympathetic enough to pass for a loving mother, but not gentle enough to bring the real comfort; to heal the wounds properly.

Tony was a man enough to admit he would love to have a mother like that, instead of a mother hen he got. She could have taught him and prepared for the outside world properly – not infecting his psyche with bullshit crap like idealistic love, peace and friendship.

Oh…

“You failed, you know, despite the honourable cause.” Tony drawled, watching closely for a reaction. As he expected, he saw none.

“I know, and that’s why I’m glad he has you.” She shared, an honest, approving smile grazing her lips.

“Huh, never thought I will hear that from anybody.” Tony chuckled, amused.
“Oh, don’t get on a high horse, just yet, brat. If there was a slim chance for another to make him happy, I’d slice you in a second.” She threatened jestingly.

“How lucky I am there’s none.” Tony drawled arrogantly, making her giggle.

“That you are, little one. Welcome to the family.” She said kindly.

“Sometimes I wish he was an orphan. A true one, without divine adoptive parents and shit.” Tony said wistfully, and laughed when she hissed trying to slap him with her magic, but finding she’s unable to. “Don’t strain yourself, your majesty. It’s not possible to hurt me with that anymore.”

“Then I suppose I’ll do it the old-fashioned way.” She said, a wicked-smirk was the only thing Tony could spot before finding himself flying across the veranda and landing into the pool.

It was a good thing that Loki took upon himself to heal Tony from the water-phobia, so he didn’t go into a panic attack upon hitting the water, but the fear still hit him.

He wanted Loki, and he wanted him now.

Tony breached the water and gasped for air, shaking violently; his feet trying to find ground but failing. The chlorine burned his throat, and he coughed choking on water. Damn, it was pathetic. So, he stilled and remembered – the soft murmurs and touches; hot kisses and hours spent walking under the ocean. It wasn’t scary. It was pleasant.

The fear subdued, but his lungs still burned and body felt weak, due to the aftershock. He was still drowning, and find it hilarious – at least, he’ll die happy.

A strong hand caught him by the waist and pulled out, the familiar crisp magic hastily entering his veins, erasing the unpleasant effects.

“Damn, Reindeer. I was about to deal with it.” Tony whined, clutching to him, like he was his lifeline.

“Mhmh, I noticed.” Loki drawled sarcastically, holding him tightly.

“Thank you for coming.” Tony said, and gripped Loki’s shoulder tighter, when the God tried to put him on the ground. “Am I fat or something?” He whined, refusing to let go.

“No, beloved. You’re much lighter than I expected, which means I should really pay attention to your faulty eating habits. However, I didn’t think you would want to be seen like this.” Loki explained gently.

“Why?” Tony inquired curious, happy that Loki will not deny him this.

“Guests.” The God elaborated, holding him close and still not moving.

“Fuck ‘em. I am shaken and I’m not embarrassed for them to know that you are the one who can keep me together. Plus, aren’t they family?” Tony inquired.

“Disturbingly dysfunctional, beloved.” Loki agreed.

“Perfect fit.” Tony bantered. “Shall we?”

“If you wish.” Loki said, moving. “How did you end up in the pool?”

“Guess.” Tony winked, and Loki grumbled.
“My mother will kill you one of these days, imp.”

“I’d love to see her try.” Tony said petulantly, crossing his arms.

“I wasn’t aware he couldn’t swim.” Frigg defended the moment they stepped into the house, Loki still burning her with an icy stare.

“You said he slipped.” It was Pepper who hissed at her poisonsly, rushing to him. “Tony, how many times…” She growled at him, but he grinned at her amused, feeling unlawfully powerful cradled in his God’s arms.

“It won’t change a thing if you knew.” Loki drawled mincingly, addressing his mother and moved to the couch, settling on it. Tony curling properly on his lap.

“I am not apologising. He insulted my honour.” Frigg said adamantly, and Loki rolled his eyes.

“The Hel freezes over before you apologise for anything, mother – we are quite aware.”

“Hey, hey. I think they are both at fault and won’t recognise their flaws no matter what we say.” Pepper tried to calm, to receive three burning gazes. “What? You want to tell me he insulted you out of the blue? And, Tony, don’t even start. Your dive was well deserved, I’m sure.” She chastised, and smiled victoriously when their heated stares faltered. The God’s though, was still intense. “You shouldn’t indulge him, like this. He will never learn if you do.” She addressed Loki, but the God only smirked at her blood-thirsty.

“You shouldn’t advise me how to deal with my beloved destress, miss Potts. I lead a life where my pains were never recognised nor soothed – my closest wishing I would learn- and I’ll be dammed if I put my dearest trough this Hel.”

“I…” She hesitated, averting her gaze from Loki’s shrewd eyes.

“Pulled one over you, Pep.” Tony sniggered, stretching up to plant a loving kiss on the Gods cheek. “You’re fantastic, love.”

“Hmmm…” Loki hummed.

“I’m still rather disturbed by the easy acceptance of violence in your culture.” Pepper mussed, letting the situation go. It seems Frigg’s and Tony’s relationship will be this explosive cocktail of insults and threats.

“We didn’t have a choice.” Frigg shared, gracefully sitting up on the armchair. “It’s not mine nor Loki’s nature, but we both were living under the rule of merciless and bloodthirsty God of war, who worshiped and advertised violence. Asgardians are brutes and warriors – crude and vicious. It’s frown upon to be gentle and sympathetic; conflicts are dealt with harshly; resulting in grave injury or more often death.” Frigg explained.

“Then why did you fly off the handle that morning?” Tony inquired, more curious than anything.

“You won’t understand.” She dismissed him.

“Of course, I won’t if you keep being this assholishly illusive. You say violence is not your nature, when all you do is abuse verbally or physically at any opportunity you get. Hypocritical much?” Tony bristled. Pepper and Loki watching them closely, fascinated by the man who continued to pick apart the untouchable All-mother.
“And you? Using my child’s affection to have leverage,” She shot back, smirking knowingly.

“Huh, I think we both know that I’m capable to deal without. But I have it, why not bask in it?” He answered, just as calculatingly, making Loki cringe. It was painful to experience first-hand his beloved rational approach to affection.

“You are hurting him.” Frigg noted, getting unsettled.

“You say it, like you don’t.” He drawled coldly.

“You have no right!” She hissed, not liking the pain in her baby’s eyes. The brat cut Loki with every word he said.

“And you presume you do?” Tony asked mockingly. “Look carefully, Frigg. You do the same. No, worse. You are his mother, after all.” He jabbed. “And after centuries of dancing on his heart, all you have to say is – you won’t understand. Marvelous.”

“I am not obligated to explain anything to you!” She snapped, her magic crackling.

“I won’t listen even if you try.” Tony said rudely. “But you owe it to him. He is open about his disdain to the male part of the family, but with you it’s different. He protects you, and you’re happy to allow him to do it when you know you’re at fault. Talk to him, Frigg. Do the right thing or I force you to.”

“Anthony…” Loki breathed out, not anticipating this outcome.

He knew his beloved was aware of his crippled bond with his mother and the resentment he held for her. However, they preferred to ignore it, proceeding as they always were. It was fine, Loki thought. He got used to it, knowing that she loved him dearly despite her questionable choices.

But, it seems Anthony was not jesting when he told they came here to deal, apparently with everything. He was not sure that he appreciated the manipulation, though. However, Loki saw that it was the only way to make them to acknowledge it. The issue was out in the open. They couldn’t suppress it easily this time. Like it or not they will need to talk it through.

“Brat.” She concluded, catching his gaze. “A word, dear child.” She commanded, standing up. Loki sighed, nudging Anthony off himself.

“You will pay for it dearly, beloved.” He promised darkly, following his mother.

“Glad to help.” His infuriating imp chuckled and Loki flipped him, making the impossible creature laugh.

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“You’re playing a very dangerous game, Tony.” Pepper chastised him, when the Gods left.

“Worth it.” Tony shrugged, grinning at her brashly. “Now tell me what have you observed?”

“As you said, it does protect you at the first touch and then proceeds to nullify it completely.” She reported, passing him the starkpad with the gathered data. Tony scanned it, smirking excitedly.

“You should tell him, Tony.” Pepper tried again, to be met with the same hard gaze. “She is right. You are a hypocrite.”

“Don’t forget that I’m, also, downright selfish and heartless.” He added in a light-hearted manner.
“He may not forgive you for this, Tony.” She warned, as the last resort. It seems to have no effect.

“I’m aware, Pep. But my main prerogative did not change, despite the developing attachment.” He said, giving the tablet back to her. “Besides I’m much stronger now. There’s nothing to worry about.”

“I wish it was true.” She remarked sadly.

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“What do you wish me to say?” Frigg asked, turning to him when the silence between them stretched and became unbearable.

“Nothing.” Loki allowed, not ready to discuss this probably ever. “You won’t admit your fault, and I will loath to accuse you of anything, since you were there for me most of the time.”

“You won’t accept my apology either.” She concluded and he nodded.

“I’m not sure there’s anything you should apologise for. You thought it would be better. You still think it is.”

“In other words, you don’t think I’ll be sincere.” His mother said, her gaze analysing.

“Will you?” He asked, smirking knowingly.

“No.” She confirmed. “However, I will give you an explanation. You are soft Loki. Your heart is tender and nature nurturing. You would have not survived if not properly trained. I did what I had to do to ensure that.”

“Are you proud of your work?” He asked bitterly, raising his hands palm up, inviting her to look at him closely.

“As your beloved brat remarked – I failed.” She confessed, the first notes of regret entering her voice. “I should have seen it coming, Loki. I should have, but I was petrified. I was blind. I desperately wished to protect you, so I pushed you away. So, I forced you to craft a mask and taught you how to lie and defend yourself. I have maimed you, and I hate him for seeing it, and more so for knowing how to treat you right. I want to rip his throat out for taunting me with this. He is a little, despicable monster.”

“He is, isn’t he?” Loki said fondly, acknowledging her pain, and feeling his turmoil slowly coming to surface. “I’m displeased with you, mother.” He whispered. “All I wanted is a place to be myself – for a brief second – and you dangled this opportunity in front of me for centuries, never once indulging. You manipulated me, used me, played on my feelings and it hurt immensely.” He confessed, his voice cracking. “But, I was no better – stretching your patience and brining you grief, rebelling against you and ignoring the consequences, thus, it’s all good.” Loki concluded, catching her sympathetic gaze.

“Hm, let it stay in the past, my child. We cannot change it, but we can learn.” She allowed, smiling at him warmly.

“Is there any chance to convince you that Anthony deserves a shred of your mercy?” Loki inquired hopeful.

“Not a chance, my dear.” She smirked at him mischievously and Loki sighed, rolling his eyes.
“Who knew your affection is the worst curse in Nines, mother.” He grumbled, leading her back to the living room.

“You did, my dear and still recommended that I pay attention.” She teased, looking at him meaningfully. He smirked cunningly at her, murmuring: “I did, didn’t I?”

“It went well.” Tony commented, late in the evening when they finally got their house to themselves again. “Let’s not do it in another century or so.”

“Your Pepper will be dead by then.” Loki mentioned nonchalantly, taking a sip of wine from the glass.

“True. Another decade?” He recalibrated, patting Loki’s thigh absentmindedly.

“Sounds good. Mother should calm by then. You really should stop pocking her this much.” The God said, covering his hand with his own to squeeze lightly.

“No can do, Reindeer. She is fun. Plus, I miss a mother to annoy. Thanks, for landing me yours.” Tony said, taking his glass away and putting it on the coffee-table, before crawling into his lap and enveloping himself in the God’s arms, sighing contentedly.

“You’re awfully domestic today.” Loki observed, a little amused smile playing on his lips.

“Sue me.” Tony murmured, snuggling closer, closing his eyes with a pleased groan, when Loki’s fingers started massaging his scalp gingerly.

“You shouldn’t strain yourself this much, beloved. It was not needed.” Loki said affectionally, kissing his temple.

“Yeah…no. You would have danced around it for the rest of eternity, protecting so called feelings of yours; and I like my things content and happy.” He retorted playfully.

“I doubt she will ever agree to be a part of anything yours, beloved.” Loki teased. “I admit it was disturbing to experience your emotional detachment personally.” The God added, a bit of old hurt seeping into his voice.

“That’s the one common defect we share with her.” Tony agreed. “Oh, wait, there’s two. I’m so fucking glad I haven’t seen your expression then – would have spoiled everything.”

“Truly?” Loki asked, caressing his sides gently, loving how his beloved melted into him.

“Course. That’s why I never want to be in a battle with you. I’ll fucking lose my mind instantly.” Tony confessed reluctantly.

“Ah.” Loki remarked, blushing slightly. He didn’t think about it, but once the picture was there it
became painfully obvious there would be little battle practice involved.

“Hmm...” Tony hummed, kissing the spot under Loki’s jaw and enjoying the shiver. “Love, how would like to rule the world?”

“Am I not?” Loki asked teasingly, arranging his beloved in a way that allowed him to look deeply into the lovely brown eyes.

“Other world.” Tony emphasized, smirking.

“I don’t want any other worlds, beloved.” Loki purred, capturing his lips in a sweet kiss. Tony grunted, opening for his God, nibbling at his lips happily.

“Are you very, very sure?” Anthony pleaded with puppy-dog eyes, when they broke for air.

“Yes, imp. If you want to bent Midgard or Nines to your liking, please do, but leave me out of it.” The God growled playfully at the pouting man.

“Fine. You and Pep are no fun.” Tony whined, crossing his arms. Loki chuckled, kissing his frown away and coaxing him into another breathtakingly tender smooching session. “You're addicting.”

Tony mumbled, eagerly responding to his God’s caress.

“As are you.” Loki cooed, ravishing his beloved breathless.

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“J, did Fury managed to shake the bastard off?” Tony inquired, smiling at his sleeping God’s mumbling.

“Did you share your plans with master, sir?” J asked instead.


“Sir, the only thing that will save you from agonising death by master’s hand will be his illogical attachments to you. Thus, I would not jeopardise any of it in the future and at least share some bit of information.” Jarvis snarked, and Tony snorted.

“It wasn’t that bad J. Everything worked out in the end.” Tony drawled.

“Should I repeat myself, sir?” Jarvis asked dully.

“No. I got it the first time. Jeez. Since when do you care?” He grumbled unhappily.

“Since illogical became an important part of your system, sir.” J noted harshly, making Tony roll his eyes.

“You’re boring, J.”

“How remarkably dull, sir.”

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Sijur groaned impatiently upon receiving another simplistic excuse to stall the inevitable. He became restless in those metal walls, which meant it was time for a little adventure.
“Heimdall,” He called. “A favour.”

Chapter End Notes

Dirtkid123: Don't thank me yet :) I have a tendency to screw everything up :)

Rhyfedd: Cheers! There are a lot of tasty suggestions and inspirational bits in your comment. :) And, of course, some things I need to think more on :) ♥♥♥

ImpishDesign: Cheers! I feel like I made him too sentient, though...

Mamitadolls: Yep, it slowly going towards chaos again :) Cheers!
Loki was humming under the shower sprays, head filled with happy thoughts; even his beloved sneaky behaviour did not murk the content he felt.

It was silly antics. The ideas and plans that Anthony was hiding from him could potentially tear the Nines apart and gravely injure the beloved idiot, but Loki would be a hypocrite if he said he never behaved or acted in a similar manner.

The God stepped out, grinning at his reflection that lately was pleasing him. Anthony made sure to compliment his features several dozen times a day and Loki felt, like he cannot condemn his appearance any longer; not when his beloved was enamoured with his sharp cheekbones and green (red) eyes or found his lean statue worship worthy.

Anthony made him feel good about himself, and gradually he started to see the appeal as well. After all, Loki could believe every compliment and praise Anthony bestowed him with, because they were born out of cold, analytical mind, not sentimental heart. Thus, they will not change on a whim. Anthony simply described Loki as he was, and it was the most beautiful and heart-breaking thing in the world.

A blissful smile grazed Loki’s lips, and his heart raced painfully, pumping love through his veins. These weeks they spent here were magical.

Anthony has given him everything he wished for – intellectual and physical challenge, home, family, a reason to live and fight for a better future; a partner who accepted and understood him, not striving to break or control him; on the contrary his beloved encouraged him to learn and grow. Loki wanted to better himself, and could see that Anthony was doing the same.

Naturally, there were still hordes of demons in their closets and issues that they didn’t even try to touch, but Loki could feel and imagine this relationship going strong for thousands of years and it made him giddy.

“Pneuma, you cannot possibly tell me what atrocity my beloved imp has thought of, can you?” Loki hummed, amusing himself.

“Sadly, I cannot, master.” Jarvis answered, making Loki smirk mischievously.

“Thank you, dearest. Where is he now?”

“Sir, is in the lab, like he said he would be.” The AI reported, and the God’s smirk grew, before faltering. He barely managed to weave an illusion when a fine dagger clashed with his own.
Loki snarled, throwing the offending party out of the bathroom by raw impulse of magic, and attacked. The steal sang for a while. Sijur playing, and Loki trying to control his temper.

“What the Hel do you want, maggot?” Loki sneered, when they have fallen apart; his stance aggressive.

“To see you, kitten. What else?” The infuriating male cooed and Loki threw a dagger at him, unable to resist the impulse. Sijur blocked it, chukling.

“That’s done. Now get the Hel out of here!” The God ordered, fury and disdain crawling under his skin.

“Why? Are you not happy to see me or perhaps you are afraid that your new toy finds out about us?” Sijur taunted. Loki saw red and plastered the bastard into a wall.

“Mention him in any manner again and I will tear you apart. Immunity be damned.” Loki growled, and Sijur smirked at him, moving forward to brush their lips in a feather kiss. The God’s eyes widened, and he jumped away as if burned – eyes full of disgust.

“Oh, kitten, don’t be like this. You used to love my kisses.” Sijur cooed with a twisted grin. Loki shuddered, feeling inadequately stupid. The reasons why he had fancied this insect at some point escaped him.

“You must be delusional, maggot. Your kisses were poison and the thought of your filthy lips touching me, make me nauseous.” Loki stated coldly.

“It saddens me to hear this, Loki. The void must have damaged your mind severally. But don’t fright, I’ll remind you how you were beginning me for attention, following me, like a lost, unwanted kitten, willing to do anything to get my favour.” Sijur remarked mockingly and Loki gritted his teeth.

“You used my fascination and loneliness against me, Sijur. I was weak, I admit. But I am not the man that you once knew.” The God said, levelling him with a hateful glare.

“Are you now? You wish to tell me that the pitiful mortal, who fucks you for his own amusement changed you? Gave you self-worth?” Sijur said dauntedly, before cracking in laughter. “Nines, kitten, how pathetic you can be! There’s a reason you’re ending up second no matter what you do. No one truly wants you, half-breed.” He stated, taking a step to the hurting and paralysed God. “Except, may be, for me. You make a good pet, kitten. I won’t mind taking you back.” Sijur murmured, caressing Loki’s cheek, and the God snapped out of his stupor pushing him away.

“Fuck you, Sijur. Leave now or I won’t hesitate to maim you.” Loki warned, to be laughed at again.

“Pray tell me how you’ll do it, kitten? I’m protected from your spells and know your tricks. You won’t call your monkey for help, because you’re afraid I’ll tell him how many had the pleasure to fuck you. How desperate you were to be loved – a dirty, cum dripping whore.” Sijur hissed and Loki blanched, swallowing hard.

“Jeez, Colonel Blimp, it’s twenty-first century. You won’t shock people by revealing somebody’s slutty past, especially a glorified tramp, like me.” His beloved drawled lazily, gaining their undivided attention.

“A…” Sijur started, but was blasted by the repulsor.

“Not interested.” Tony sing-sang strolling to the hole Sijur created and going into it. “Mister cave men, where are you? I’m dying to show you the comforts of the advanced society.”
“Anthony!” Loki exclaimed, shaking the shock off and hurrying after his impossible beloved.

He found them behind the house, after walking through the passages his glorious imp made. Sijur was currently running and trying to duck, unsuccessfully, the various attacks. Anthony was hovering in the air, laughing degradingly, and chasing him around the backyard.

Loki smirked, creating a protective shield, and made himself comfortable, watching the show.

“Come on, big bad wolf, show this meek prey its place.” Tony taunted, firing bullets, which at first the bastard ignored, but when one of them managed to pierce his armour and gave him a prominent limp, reconsidered.

“You have no honour.” Sijur spat, manoeuvring out of the way of armoured monkey. “You are a coward.” The mortal laughed evilly, sending a laser blast his way, which he barely avoided; his skin blistering from the heat.

“Yeah, not your every-day fairy-tale imbecilic knight here.” Tony mocked, diving in to deliver a punch, which the wonder-boy blocked, digging only a centimetre hole in the ground.

“I am a diplomat. I am under the protection of the All-father!” Sijur snarled, throwing a dagger at the infuriating male.

“I’m sure you are.” The insane man taunted, keeping his assault. Sijur groaned, horrified. He couldn’t keep up with the weapons, which were much stronger than any other he had seen so far. It was glaringly obvious that Loki have sold out their secrets, thus, he had no choice but to retreat.

“You will pay for this! Heimdall!” The Sijur, shouted, his eyes widening comically when the monkey appeared next to him, stabbing him into the gut and cooing quietly: “Send him my love. Tell him I’m coming for his old ass.” Then he moved away, before the lights of the Bifrost could take him to Asgard.

“What were you thinking?” Loki hissed, rushing to his reckless beloved, who was getting out of his suit. “It could have sucked you in!”

“Sorry, my bad. It’s not every day I get to kick the ass of your crazy-ex, that you tried to hide from me. Got excited.” Tony blubbered, an amused grin on his face. “What do you think?” He asked, waving a hand with a single bracelet to which the suit retracted. “Nifty, right?”

“It’s glorious, beloved. I’m glad you managed to recycle my gift.” Loki praised, loving to see him preening, but, also, not failing to notice the traces of displeasure in otherwise warm gaze. “Are you mad, Anthony?” The God asked tentatively.

“Livid, Loki.” He answered in the same juvenile manner. “Shall we take it to the house?” He offered, embracing him loosely and leading to the opening in the wall.

“You destroyed it, imp.” Loki chastised, creating a spell that will fix it overnight.

“We will call the building crew tomorrow.” Tony shrugged, with a bit of embarrassment.

“No need. A spell will take care of it. I don’t want any strangers in our house.” The God dismissed him.

“You mean: anymore?” Tony mocked, leaving him in the middle of the living room to go to the bar and poor them drinks.
“Yes, imp.” Loki snarked, flopping on the coach to wait for his return with the beverage. It was clear Anthony won’t deny him his closeness, no matter the irritation.

“So, what was that about?” Anthony asked passing him a glass of wine, and sitting next to him, their knees touching.

“That was you failing to tell me Sijur was here, resulting in overreacting.” Loki stated, sipping his drink.

“Heh, busted.” Tony remarked, grinning sheepishly. “I didn’t want to worry you.”

“I think, we can both agree that our wish to protect each other hurts us more than anything.” The God remarked wisely, marvelling at how easy it was – talking.

“Yeah, the question is will we learn from this or continue to portray the stubborn asses?” Tony mused and Loki giggled.

“May be in a few centuries we cease to be idiotic. I doubt it will happen overnight, though.”

“Agrred. Would you like to share the story behind or neah?” Tony inquired, taking a drink from his glass.

“There’s nothing much to tell, really. I was desperate and pathetic. I was willing to take any affection in any form. It wasn’t pretty nor it was satisfying. It damaged my reputation, and Sijur used this to gain favours from me.” The God explained, his voice emotionless.

“What kind of favours?” He inquired curiously, and Loki tensed, not wanting to share the whole catastrophe of his misery.

“Any kind – sexual, emotional, magical, material.” The God started, and when he did he couldn’t stop. “There was one memorable time when he manipulated me into a group sex with elves. Not strictly consensual. I, honestly, didn’t have a choice but to submit or be raped. Then he used that to shame me and trick more goods. He, also, constantly degraded me and beat me up. He forced me to give him protection from my powers, and I lied for him, insuring a high position in court. I did it all, thinking that he loved me. That it was alright, since nobody else would ever look at me twice – a disgrace, a whore, a defect. I was convinced that he was the kindness man alive, for giving me a chance to belong and that I should be blessed that he allowed this. I was wrong, of course, but at that time I didn’t have any good experience to compare with.”

Anthony took a deep breath, dawning his drink and putting the glass on the coffee table, before grabbing the God and kissing him senseless. The wine glass slipped from his fingers, staining the coach and shattering on the floor.

“I will kill him, Loki.” Tony growled lowly, a vengeful fire burning in his deep gaze, captivating the God. “I will burn Asgard and ruin Odin. I will, also, make Frigg regret he ignored you.”

“Anthony…” Loki breathed out, not knowing what he wanted more - to stop him or cheer him on.

“How dare they!” He seethed, leaning in to capture those lips in another worshiping caress. “They have no right to do this, simple minded, envious fools. You don’t want to rule, and I respect your wish, but I will fold this fucking Universe into a box and throw it to your gorgeous feet, so those fuckers know who their God is and whom they should kneel to.”

Loki whimpered, desire choking him, frantically demanding more contact. It was unbelievably exaggerated, mushy and trashy, but the God longed to hear more cheesy promises. He was starving
for overbearing affection, cliché praises and sappy romantic quotes. Granted, Anthony was creative with his serenades, but the sense did not change – he was a perfect portrait of the man drunk on love and Loki adored it.

“You love that, don’t you?” Tony purred, mouthing his Gods neck and relishing in throaty moans and needy rubs. “You say you hate when I’m being unreasonable, but I bet you’d squirm happily if I brought your enemies heads on a pike to you.”

“Yesss…” The God hissed, his head spinning with pleasure. He could not deny the vicious desire to see Anthony ruining them. It was gloriously arousing action to witness and…

Loki yelped, groaning when Anthony’s hand got a grip on him, pumping his flesh roughly.

“Tell me, bloody love of mine, what do you truly desire?” Tony whispered darkly, slowing his movements down to a teasing caress. The God whimpered brokenly, trusting his hips to search for more friction, which his beloved expertly denied.

“I…want Odin broken and hu -oh-liated. I want Tho…ummm… to see how path..ah…tic and gruesome his lega-mmm…cy is.” Loki murmured, biting his lip, when that magical fingers swirled around the head deliciously slow.

“Thank you, love.” Anthony murmured, capturing his lips in a dirty, heated kiss, speeding up his movements, making the God breathless and a whimpering mess.

Loki knew his beloved was tricking him in a manner, but couldn't catch his thoughts lost in a torturous bliss. The sound, the taste, the heat was making his head spin and breath hitch. His heart was beating, like crazy, but he wanted more – more of those sharp bites and feather licks; more of that tight grip and sinful friction; more of that affectionate violence and vengeful promises; more of Anthony…more, more, more!

The God moaned his beloved name, falling onto him and bringing them down to the floor. Anthony chuckled, electing a lazy smile out of him.

Loki propped himself up to gaze into happily twinkling brown eyes, feeling an insatiable hunger smouldering in him, and smirked predatory, delighted with a wanton moan that has fallen from those perfect lips.

“I’m aware you’re planning to do something unbelievably stupid, beloved, and I’ll be there to witness it, make no mistakes.” The God promised solemnly, going down to kiss his imp dominantly. Anthony gave in eagerly, arching and fawning, allowing Loki to rule him.

“The secret plan, just upgraded to the amassing challenge.” Tony murmured, pure worship shining in his gaze and seeping into his voice. “And words stopped being enough to describe what you make me feel, Loki. Do you understand, love? You make me feel.”

“It did and I do. I can hear it, beloved and it’s more than enough.” The God confirmed with a starving expression, before claiming his mouth in a searing kiss and proceeding taking him on the floor.

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“Beloved, do I need to worry about your crazy exes appearing?” Loki asked, when they crawled back to bed.

“I, don’t know, may be.” Tony drawled, lost in the silky feeling of Loki’s body under his fingertips.
“Are you not certain?” Loki inquired, a bit perplexed by his beloved illusiveness.

“I am not. I don’t remember them, honestly.” Tony claimed, making the God chuckle.

“Nines, I bet there are plenty that hates your icy, rude ass, beloved.”

“Yeap. Even Pepper could not take it. She tried so hard, but in the end, it crippled her. That’s cool, though. I know how fucked-up I am.” Tony said cheerfully.

“Are you telling me that you are fine with people leaving you?” Loki asked, confused.

“I am, yeah. If I can keep them safe and happy, it does not really matter if they are with me or not in the end.” He explained, and the God got another revelation.

Anthony was remarkably good with his demons, as he noticed previously, not because he was insanely strong mentally, but because he accepted himself as he was. After all, he applied logic and analysed everything in existence, which means he used the same methods on himself.

It was awe inspiring and sad simultaneously. Anthony was giving himself freely, well prepared for a back-stab and big fuck-you after all things have been said and done. It angered Loki. This miraculous being, that was the only true God in the Nines, deserved unwavering loyalty and adoration, not fleeting promises that no one was inclined to proceed with.

Thus, the God nudged his beloved to look at him properly and swore, his eyes flashing eerie green:

“Anthony Edward Stark, I Loki Liesmith, the God of chaos and lies, give you an oath that come what may I won’t leave your side until my dying breath.”

Tony watched Loki transfixed, Mushu snarling possessively in his chest, sucking in the binding power of the pledge. The God was seriously overstepping. There was a dark, selfish reason behind Tony’s easy acceptance of abonnement – he didn’t really want them to stay in the first place.

However, Loki: a true divinity that made his world shatter and reshape itself, simply ensured it was permanent, and Tony felt strangely and serenely, blissfully, amazingly happy about it.

Fuck this, Reindeer, all over. He fucking broke him! And Tony wanted to shatter him in return.

“You know, on Midgrad, we have a similar vow, but the procedure is rather different…” He breathed out, when the reverence eased a bit, and he could feel his brain kicking in.

“Enlighten me?” The God asked, caressing his cheek gently.

“It starts with a question.” Anthony divulged, a mysterious grin appearing on his handsome face.

“A question?” Loki encouraged.

“Yeah. It goes like this: marry me?” The impossible imp stated, baffling the God for a second, before he started chuckling rather nervously.

Score! Tony thought, giggling mentally at the cute, petrified expression Loki has made.

“Ah, I see.” Loki murmured, leaning in to snatch a tender kiss, and Tony indulged him, because apparently Loki didn’t think that he will notice nor call him on it. However, he did, and frankly, had no squabble with it. Loki was a God, a dream come true, and what a man left to wish for when a
living, breathing, fantasy was ravishing him? Nothing, nothing at all. Since, for once, everything was perfect.

Chapter End Notes

Dirtkid123: I'd say - muddied a bit - I don't think anything will tear those two apart...and i mean it ;)

Rhyfedd: There's something fetishy like with you and Loki and merpeople :))) If you keep talking that much 'bout it - I write something specially for you, concerning it ;D The main prerogative was mentioned through the story - not so openly though :) wait and see, I'd say :) He will yes :)


The grey, dull Monday morning was making her smile, like it was Christmas. Pepper missed the serenity and simplicity of mundane life, and when such rare moments occurred she wished desperately for time to slow down and let her enjoy every second of it, because she knew it will not last.

Today was a typical day as well, and the moment she stepped into her office the illusion of ordinary shattered. There in her chair, comfortable as he pleases, sat the God of Mischief, a crooked smirk stuck upon his face, while his shrewd, sharp eyes scanned her.

Pepper flashed him a polite welcoming smile, putting her things on their places, before addressing the intruder.

“What brought you here?” She asked, sitting opposite him, maintaining a professional face, even though the look he gave her made her skin crawl.

“A dare, Miss Potts.” He said, like it was the most obvious thing in the world, and Pepper had to forcefully scold herself not to snap at him. He wasn’t Tony. He will undoubtfully harm her.

“Pepper.” She corrected him nonetheless, to receive a razor-sharp grin.

“I don’t think so. I want information, Miss Potts and have been wondering will you give it to me.” He drawled, confirming her first guess. Loki was dangerous, wild and unpredictable. He hasn’t change a bit. Tony, probably, was the only being in the Universe who knew that the God possessed some form of honesty, softness and goodness.

She observed him closely during the visits, and concluded that Loki needed a moment, a place to be weak for a heartbeat to return full force. Tony gave him that – a chance to be humane. It was a privilege that the rest of the world didn’t have. Thus, she must proceed with outmost caution. Loki was on top of his game now.

“Why don’t you ask Jarvis?” She inquired.

“Pneuma, cannot answer, even if he wanted to.” Loki shared, dejected.

“Ah, yes. No matter how much we may like you, Loki, Tony will always come first.” Pepper said, smiling.

The God may be being everything that her parents warned her to stay the hell away from, but he, also, was great conversationalist and rather charming when he wanted to be. Moreover, she will never forget how heartbroken and helpless he looked when they first met. Loki loved Tony, and that was not an easy nor grateful thing to do.
“We?” The God asked, almost perplexed.

“Naturally. Do you think I hate you or something?” She asked amusedly.

“It would be rather human to feel a bit of disdain towards me.” He said, his eyes flashing eerie green, and she couldn’t help but chuckle.

“I’m Tony’s PA, Loki. You wouldn’t believe the things I saw, and I don’t share your jealousy. It was good while it lasted, but it wasn’t meant to be. I knew it from the start.” She confessed, shuddering when the God’s expression soared.

“Yes. I’ve gathered that no one surrounding him cared enough to put some effort in maintaining the relationship.” Loki accused, reminding her that he was jealous and she was viewed as a threat. Loki won’t let her get out of this unscratched and his overprotectiveness and undeniable skill in cracking masks will make her bleed.

“It’s not true!” Pepper hissed, noting that he already got under her skin. However, fuck him! She gave Tony everything she was, and kept on giving. She simply wasn’t enough for him. Nobody was, until, of course, he met the God.

“It is true, Miss Potts. If it wasn’t I would be stuck in Asgard and you would be where I am now.” Loki declared arrogantly and she snorted.

“You’re wrong. No one was where you are, and I’m pretty sure no one will be.” Pepper shared, a bit of sadness entering her voice. She was aware who Tony was and that her infatuation was hopeless, but it still stung that she couldn’t give him this.

“Anthony, also, said it. But, I cannot help but wonder if it wasn’t your lack of motivation…He is fond of you. We both know it, and I hate it.” Loki grumbled.

“Yeah. I’m like a pet to him, very flattering.” She drawled sarcastically, and gulped when Loki levelled her with icy glare.

“And what is wrong with being his pet or his thing? You are aware that he works in those ways, aren’t you? That claiming you is the highest form of affection he can give?” Loki hissed, and it finally clicked in her mind – the horrible mistake she has made. The social norms that she insisted to cling to ultimately drew them apart. She realised that for a moment in time she was where Loki had been, but unlike him, she wasn’t able to recognise nor keep it. The epiphany crushed her, and then made her chuckle humorously, intriguing the sadistic bastard that called himself a God. They were truly worth one another. “I’m not sharing.” Loki growled warningly, and she shook her head.

“I’m not interested, Loki. You opened my eyes, but I cannot accept it. I will never be able to. However, I’m loyal, so don’t expect me to keep your visit a secret.” She said keeping her mind on lighter things.

“And what renders all information I gathered directly from you or otherwise useless. Well played, Miss Potts.” The God concluded. “It was a pleasure. Don’t visit, though.” He added, before disappearing.

Tony was working on another gift Loki so generously snatched for him, when a crushing weight settled on his back, making him grunt.

“You know you’re heavy, love.” Tony grumbled affectionately, breathing in the earthly scent of the God. It became easier to get separated. They could finally function without getting into a panic attack.
if the other was not present in their immediate eyesight, but Tony still missed Loki’s presence like hell.

“Mhmh.” The God agreed, enveloping Anthony into his arms.

“How’s Pep?” Tony asked, patting Loki’s arm affectionately.

“The woman is fine, imp, and amusing. Watched me, like I’m the devil.” Loki purred, kissing the spot behind his ear softly, appreciating a pleased moan that fell from Anthony’s lips.

“She’s not entirely wrong, love.” Tony teased. “You tend to come across as terrifying.”

“Heh, look who’s talking.” Loki said, turning him around to kiss properly. “You’re no better.” He added, when they broke for air and tugged his beloved out of the lab and into a living room, where they poured themselves drinks and fell on the sofa in a heap of possessively, entangled limbs.

“Discovered anything useful?” Tony asked, watching the God amusedly.

“I did, but it’s unusable now.” The God grumbled petulantly.

“Going to Pep was a miscalculation.” Tony agreed, petting his God’s hair, admiring the soft glimmer in his eyes.

“She’s clinically loyal. Didn’t expect that. Why did you let her leave?” The God asked, drawing circles on his beloved wrist.

“Honestly, I got bored. It was so tiring to pretend something that I am not.” Tony drawled, his eyes twinkling amusedly.

“You are one heartless beast, beloved.” Loki chuckled, dragging Anthony’s hand up to get the taste of that velvety skin.

“Correction: your heartless beast.” Tony remarked, receiving a pleased purr of acknowledgment.

“I wonder when you’ll start losing your interest in me…” The God drawled, despite smiling happily.

“If it helps, I think I am not capable of getting disinterested, but I’m giving no promises.” Tony answered honestly, giggling when the God pinched him playfully.

“I should have said “yes” to your preposterous preposition. Then you’d have to say the vow and would be obligated to keep it.” Loki said naughty.

“Yeap, you should have. Lucky me, you didn’t.” Tony teased, laughing at the God’s false, hurtful gaze.

“Your words wound me, beloved. Don’t you want to get married?” Loki cooed adorably.

“No, I don’t. You don’t want to either. You said that in a spur of the moment, not even realising what it implicates.” Tony mocked, bending to kiss Loki, simply because he couldn’t resist his puppy dog eyes.

“True. We are twisted, beloved” Loki murmured, lapping at his lips.

“Yeap, and that’s why we both know there’s no oath that can tie us. If we wanna go, we will.”

“That’s unfortunately true. But, I think, it would be nice to settle down…someday.” The God
murmured wistfully.

“Someday we will do just that, love. Promise.”

“Truly?”

“Yes.”

Loki was practising his inborn power. The one that was made from icy winters and years of cold, bitter misjudgement. The magic that he used unconsciously, tapping into the bottomless pit every time he was in grave danger, which, admittedly, occurred frequently. Thus, the energy wasn’t unfamiliar or unpleasant to use. The only barrier that stood between him and full mastery of it was his own resentment towards blue form, as his Jotun skin was required to be present if he wished to play with it consciously.

On Asgard it wouldn’t be possible, since Odin hated any manifestation of his power and this would surely get him flogged. Here, though, in his own house and with a loving partner by his side there is nothing that can realistically stop him but bigotry, and Loki grew tired of it.

“You can stop staring now, imp. It’s highly distracting.” Loki purred, opening his blood-red eyes to regard the lovely, bundle of sunshine standing amongst the ice he created.

“Cannot help it, Reindeer. You’re rarely allow this striking beauty to be seen.” Anthony, as expected, praised his appearance and waltzed closer to him.

“I wonder what captivates you in the monstrous, broken things?” Loki asked, leaning in into a feather caress that landed on his frozen skin. It stung, like the last time.

“I am an engineer, Reindeer. I love fixing things.” Tony jested, running his fingers down his throat. “Not that you need any fixing, love. You are the only one who thinks that the scars and torments you lived through, made you inferior. I know for a fact they didn’t. They made you powerful, captivating and deliciously sharp. A true masterpiece.” He added reverently, making the God smile at him softly.

“You’ll make me weak with all your sweet talk, imp.” Loki grumbled playfully, pulling his beloved onto his lap.

“That’s good. You deserve to be weak for a change.” Tony approved, mouthing his neck. “I love how you taste. Is there any way to convince you that your marble skin is not as half as good as this one?”

“Hmmm…” Loki hummed. “It will take a lot of time and you, my dearest, have to be very convincing.”

“I can be that.” Tony said, smiling and running his fingers down the indigo clad skin. “I’d say I did a great job already.”

“You did, yes. Keep wondering how I’ll ever repay you for all the pampering.” The God said, his hands slipping inside the t-shirt to caress his beloved back, massaging the sore muscles softly.

“No need for medieval bullshit, love. Completely free of charge. Besides, you allow me to do this. I am aware.” Tony grunted, coaxing Loki into a sweet kiss.

“You allow me plenty, as well, beloved.” The God murmured into delicious lips.
“Mhmh. Give and take – always seems to work fabulously.” Tony remarked, giggling when Loki scraped his skin.

“You’re very wise for the one who couldn’t keep any of his previous relationships going.” The God teased, making his imp laugh.

“You cannot be serious, though, love.”

“You know I’m not. One should be pretty dense not to catch up at some point. You’re a genius. You figured out how to tame and nullify magic without any precious knowledge of such energy existing; cracking how relations work isn’t that complicated.” Loki said sarcastically, admiring Anthony’s sly grin.

“What a nifty way to say that everybody around me is stupid. I applaud you, Silvertongue.” Tony praised, licking his way into his mouth. Loki moaned, sucking on his tongue, wondering will it ever cease to excite him so much, and hoping that it never will.

“Anyway, what brought this on, love? Not that I’m complaining or anything.” Anthony murmured into his lips, teasing his flesh with his burning fingertips.

“I’ve decided that it was time to embrace who I really am, since nobody expect it from me.” Loki shared, freeing his beloved of the T-shirt.

“Hmmm…” Tony hummed, when Loki nibbled at the sweet spot, right below his collarbone.

“You’re encouraging, but I’m not sharing. I like playing ‘spy’.”

“You may, beloved. It does not bother me.” Loki murmured, marking his Anthony all over.

“Oh, I know. If it did, I’d have been miserable and spilling the beans by now.” Tony said convincingly, making the God growl appreciatively.

“Glad we’re on the same page, beloved.”

“We always are, love.” Tony agreed, pushing Loki on the floor, before claiming his lips in a hungry kiss, that did not leave any place for words.

<**>

Sijur was sitting in the throne room, expression sore and stormy. The All-father warned him about the monkey, but he couldn’t accept that some mortal could go on par with him and payed a high price for his insolence. The bullet that pierced his armour, damaged the nerve severely, which meant that he will experience constant pain in his right side for eternity. A reminder that no enemy should be misjudged.

“You are sure that this is the accurate plan of the house?” Thor inquired, and Sijur “tsked” him.

“He hurled me through all his walls, Thunderer, what do you think?”

“I think that you hold yourself too high, Peacemaker.” Thor remarked, smirking crookedly.

“You’d been around Loki far too much, Thunderer, and still cannot pull a decent insult.” Sijur taunted, cackling when the thunder boomed outside. “Petrified.”

The All-father rolled his eyes at them, sighing irritably. The Jotun made this hunt frustratingly complicated, hiding himself and his pet from Heimdall’s all-seeing eye.
“If you don’t trust him Thor, take him with and if the information is not complete and gives you grief, leave him there to die.” Odin instructed, smirking at the Sijur’s widened gaze.

“That’s a bit harsh, sire.” He said daringly.

“You’ve been ordered to negotiate, Sijur, and forbidden from contacting him. Be grateful I haven’t decapitated you upon arrival.”

“Your mercy has no limits, sire. When do we start?” Sijur concurred, starting to fear for his life for real.

“In the morrow.” Thor informed him. “What do we do with Stark, father?”

“Kill him.”

Chapter End Notes

Lokislonelylady: Thank you. Nobody did :)

Dirtkid123: Cheers!

Mamitadolls: No, not exactly :) Remarkably good.

Rhyfedd: I did explain it to you :) If you're waiting for them to discuss it...tough luck, i guess :)

kuyami98: I can and I did :)
Tony was tinkering with the stone Frigg bestowed him with, laughing when the unruly thing zapped his fingers petulantly. It refused to mend with Loki’s gifted bracelet, that was infused with jotun magic. Whatever Loki preferred to think about the energies – they undoubtedly had enough awareness to become racist, which did not speak in favour of humans nor other beings really. In the end they were as sentient as the rock Tony was currently holding in his hands – flattering.

Mushu purred in his chest agreeably, eliciting an amused smirk out of him. The thing living in him had the same capabilities, as Jarvis. It adapted and learned, growing rapidly in strength and ability to analyse the situation. It became, for the lack of a better description, Tony’s personal “magical-emotional-bullshit detector”.

Mushu caught the untraceable vibes of the various waves piercing his body daily and filtered them. It cancelled the hostile elements and brought to Tony’s attention those which were not immediately harmful -emotions included. It fascinated Tony to note that in the end everything was energy – love, hate, pain - and Mushu was apt at navigating those, leaving Tony to proceed with his pragmatic and cynical approach to life without fear of fucking up.

He was grateful for it, naturally, but as a scientist Tony couldn’t help but wonder if Mushu could cancel his emotions, period. After all, if it could block Frigg’s and Loki’s attempts to screw with his state, why not stop his own?

As it turned out, after some not strictly sane experiments, Mushu could block the better part of them, leaving only a slight buzz of awareness, which Tony did not mind, since he was pro emotions lately.

“J, pull out the suit. I think my baby will fit nicely into this.” Tony murmured, finally moulding the two together. Mushu was, also, quite handy when dealing with fusion of two hostile elements. It allowed for the energies to go through it bringing them to one denominator, without cancelling the individual parameters, thus, creating a unique set of properties.

This creation, will allow him to carry his suit around in an inauspicious accessory and assemble it at will, at least, in theory.

“Alright, J, ready when you are.” Tony said, poking Mushu to give him pointers.

It took eight hours, a cracked rib and a broken wrist, to calibrate the bracelet to perfection. But when the crazy ex presented himself, Tony was ready and the unbridled awe shining in his God’s eyes was worth every scratch he sustained.

Tony woke up alone in the bed, and chuckled pleasantly. They were finally starting to resemble something akin to normal.
“J, where’s my God?” Tony asked, thinking he was somewhere around the house, and got stunned when J informed him that Loki was out. The sharp pain in his chest lasted for about a second before Mushu tuned it to a ghostly ache.

Alright, may be what they were heading towards to, was a far cry from “normal”. Tony smirked rubbing the whiny abomination, hopping of the bed.

“Excellent. We can have some real job done.”

“Sir, may I remind you that your masquerading irritates me?” Jarvis politely remarked, referring to Tony’s painful grimace a second ago.

“It’s not it, buddy. I swear on my mother’s grave.” Tony answered, waltzing around and getting dressed. “The bastard got me good, there’s no denying that, as well as, the fact that it won’t affect my goals.”

“You keep saying that, sir, but I cannot help but wonder what will become of you if Master decides not to forgive.” Jarvis pressed, to receive a degrading chuckle.

“Then that’s that. But, I’ll be damned if a pretty face detours me from reaching my aim. Besides, if I don’t, we all die and that’s kinda beats the purpose.” Tony reasoned, going down the lab.

“Have you considered his usefulness, sir?” Jarvis inquired.

“You know, I did, J. You may not approve of the shady way I did it, and it may come across as blunt usage of resources, but I assure you he will understand, and if he won’t – there’s you and me.” He sing-sang, pulling out the video feed from the palace.

“My opinion stays the same, sir – you do not give Master enough credit.” J argued.

“Do I ever, J? Anyway, he will be in the way, with his compromised mental state and far too close acquaintance with the Titan. I’m helplessly addicted, but if things go south, I cannot guarantee his safety, thus, I prefer him out of it completely.” Tony murmured, scanning the video and making footnotes. “I, think, this is the best place.” He mused, marking it with a red “X”. “What do you say, buddy?”

“I say you should be prepared to harm him, sir. He won’t stay out. The place is rather open, I suggest you move it three inches north.” Jarvis replied.

“I’m, and I know. I may think that I’m the master-mind here, but Loki, if not properly amused, will quickly show me how fucking wrong I really am. Hmm, worth considering.” Tony mussed, marking the spot.

“I have missed you, sir.” Jarvis said, uncharacteristically soft.

“You know, J. You might have been right about the Unicorn – his rainbows and pink, fluffy, mushy heart is contagious.” Tony grumbled with humour, and he could swear he heard a faint chuckle from his AI, but preferred to ignore it. “It’s working to our advantage, though. The latest gift will fit nicely, provided I’ll manage to detonate it remotely.”

“Is this doubt I hear, sir?” Jarvis sass him.

“No doubt, J. Another opportunity to be creative, that’s all.”

<**>
Loki returned from the city, feeling antsy. It was nice to create a mischief for a change, but the longing he experienced through the ordeal, was, almost, not worth it. However, the God was aware that his free-spirited beloved needed some time for himself. The night hours he took to craft whatever vile plans he was crafting, will take a toll on him eventually and he will slip, which was not what Loki wanted.

“Good day, Master. Should I alert sir of your arrival?” Jarvis asked politely.

“Greetings, pneuma. Don’t. I want to surprise him.” Loki said, wishing to catch his beloved off guard.

“As you wish, Master. How the talk went?” Pneuma pried, and the God chuckled.

“As well as you said it would. I’m greatly disappointed in her. She’s persistently likable.” Loki shared with a trace of disdain in his voice.

“One would say it’s a nice quality to possess.” Jarvis argued.

“It is, which makes me resent her even more. I’m hardly a competition to her.” Loki grumbled, remembering her clever ways.

“If there was a competition, you mean.” Pneuma remarked.

“Precisely. If I ever feel there is one, I’m afraid she won’t survive.” The God concluded dismissively, teleporting to the lab, to find his beloved tinkering with an erasing spell trapped in a glass rune. From the looks of it, Anthony wanted to find a way of breaking it from a distance. Interesting.

The quick look around his beloved den did not give him a hint as to why he wanted it to work in such a manner. Predictable. His Anthony was frustratingly good at this game, which thrilled and irritated Loki simultaneously. No matter, in the end, he will find a way to crack the puzzle and when he does, his beloved should pray it charms him or else there will be a hell to pay.

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That morning nothing promised trouble. They woke up, gingerly smiling at each other and spent some quality time in bed, before dragging themselves out to fetch some breakfast.

Loki was laughing at Anthony’s plans on dominating the Nines, when a lightening ripped through the building, shocking them badly.

Loki fell, the ringing in his ears was unbearable, as the smell of burnt flesh in the air. He panicked, hopping to his feet and got dizzy, griping the countertop to steady himself. When the black spots stopped dancing in his vision, he looked around at the mess of the kitchen, and spotted Anthony in the right corner, near the terrace, lying unconscious. His hands and back were burnt badly, and it did not seem, like he was breathing. Another wave of vertigo hit him. Loki swayed, forcing himself to move, before freezing.

He saw figures in the distance, that were rapidly approaching the building. They were under attack. Thor finally found enough leverage to tip the scales in his favour and Loki would have applauded him if it weren’t for his beloved unconscious body laying on the ground and general hate he had for the oaf.

Loki didn’t have enough power in him to rescue them both; his own wounds will surely get him captured and teleportation was out of the question, since Mushu will not allow his magic to do shit,
while Anthony was out; and Loki refused to think otherwise. Anthony was fine, simply immobile at the moment.

The God loathed to admit it, but the cowardly escape was his only choice. He threw a longing glance at his beloved, and disappeared, before the troops could get a good look at him.

The All-father shielded their approach, allowing them an element of surprise. When they were close enough Thor unleashed his power on the house, insuring that the electrical spirit and Stark’s toys were out of order for the time being.

The energy willingly came to him, ripping apart the air and insides of the construction. Thor felt triumphant, not feeling resistance from Loki’s magic. The Snake became too comfortable in its nest, and will pay dearly for it.

They moved out, approaching the wounded, silent fort, prepared for the conflict, but to their surprise met no resistance.

The house was empty. They couldn’t find Loki or any traces of Stark’s creations anywhere. The only proof that it was the right place was Stark’s burnt body, lying motionlessly on the floor.

Thor snarled, punching the wall. It wasn’t surprising that the snake fled. Loki had no shred of loyalty and Stark was fooling himself by thinking that Loki felt anything for him. The man was simply convenient, and Thor prayed to the Norns for Stark to survive this assault, because he couldn’t wait to rub this in.

“Your disobedience starts to vex me.” Odin growled at his unruly son.

“I deeply apologise, Father.” Thor beseeched, bowing low. “However, I thought it would be wise to interrogate the man, before killing him. I have a suspicion that he knows where the stolen goods are.”

“Your strongest trait is to follow orders, son, not thinking.” Odin hissed harshly. “However, your misconduct may prove to be useful for once. Bring him to me in the morrow, and make sure he is pliant.”

“Will be done, Sire.” Thor bowed and exited the throne room.

The world escaped him. It was fuzzy sounds and unpleasant colours, dancing annoyingly before his vision. Mushu was whining keenly, cracking under the pressure, and the pain sipped into his none-existence. It snapped him back roughly, making him yelp. His breathing was rapid and shallow; skin covered in cold sweat and hellishly burning. He moaned cracking his eye open, and was not entirely surprised to see Sijur’s ugly mug starring at him smugly.

“Are you comfortable?” The bastard asked, dragging his nails along the damaged skin. Tony groaned pitifully, swallowing a scream that threatened to fall from his lips. It seems that Mushu had a lot on its plate, since the sensations were overwhelming.

“I’m good.” Tony managed to croak; his throat feeling, like a sand-paper. “I guess it will be too much to ask for a glass of water?”
“Not at all.” The fucker answered pleasantly, before covering his face with a wet cloth and pouring liquid over it. Tony’s mind immediately jumped to all the wrong places and conclusions, sending his poor heart into overdrive. By the time the cloth disappeared, and pitiful, wheezing coughs subdued, Tony was firmly buried in his personal hell – alone, scared and burning.

“Did it suffice, or you wish for more?” The dick asked him.

“I do not, since your incompetence could actually drown me.” Tony jabbed weakly, to receive a hard blow that sliced his lip and made his brain explode.

“Brave. I like those.” Sijur purred, disappearing from his view to return with an incandescent knife. “Let’s see how durable you are man of Iron.” He mocked, sinking in the cursed blade.

Tony screamed his heart out, not being able to escape from the memories and ghosts of his past that added to his current misery.

The history repeated itself, and he was hard-pressed to remind himself that this was exactly what he was planning to do, minus torture, naturally. He was on Asgard. Loki was no where near it. All was well and good. Except, that Loki left him free for the taking, which, if he was in the right mind, deserved kudos, but, as his current state was compromised, left him bitter, and wasn’t it ironic?

“It’s a pity.” The taunting, sadistic voice cooed, breaking into the sarcastic comments of his mind, while skinning him alive. “You could have been glorious, such potential wasted.”

Tony had to agree. He had enormous possibilities and ignored them due to the lack of motivation or impulse, preferring to lead a solitary life, but no more. Ten Rings were the first to hint that if he wanted to live in the safe world he needed to rule it. Asgard simply widened the horizons, and Tony will show them. In the end, he always thrived.

“Stop! Stop!” He shouted. “Please, no more.” He pleaded brokenly. “I tell you whatever you want to hear. Please, I beg.”

“Who has told you we want anything from you, worm? Loki left you to die. We, though, decided that quick escape is not something you deserve.” Sijur laughed, but Tony did not buy it.

Fucking retarded dickhead! Loki behaved, like he supposed to. The God was a great strategist, who knows better than to engage in a losing battle. Loki learned this particular lesson the hard way, thus, Tony had to sell his new-found submissiveness pretty fast. He was on a clock here, because when his God arrives, and Tony had no doubts that he will, suspecting that those fuckers hoped for it too, everything will become pretty fucked up.

“There’s a reason I’m still alive.” Tony offered with a tad of sass, in his otherwise horrified voice.

“There is.” It was no other than Thor, who said the words. “We want to know what knowledge Loki gave to you, and what you made of it. Lie,” Thor said, burning him with the knife. “And this will look, like mercy.”

“Whatever you want. I tell what…ever yo..wan…” Tony promised, before losing consciousness again.
Dirtkid123: Well, yes, but I doubt they are concerned with what they can and cannot do :) 

Rhyfedd: I do agree that it's repetitive...but I wanted to be as clear as I can bear with those too, so the later chapters won't earn me much "WTF*ks" :) They will anyway, but, at least, i can say - i tried :) 

Did you find it? I, truly ,hate to hear you struggling with finding good reads... 

ImpishDesign: Agree, and he will :)
The game: level 2

Chapter Notes

Hello, dear readers.
Thank you for comments and kudos.
Enjoy :)

Frigg was reading a novel, finding simple patterns of mortal thinking amusing, when her dear baby boy appeared in the living room. His skin looked ashy grey and heavy blue around the edges. His gaze was wild, flesh steaming, giving the room a nauseous smell of burnt meat.

“My dear child!” she exclaimed, rushing to him, and managing to reach him in time to catch his falling form. He passed out, and she was grateful for it. The injuries were grave, and the healing process will bring him a lot of pain. He was better off without the presence of conscious mind.

The queen signed, cursing her husband low to Hel, and magicked her baby boy on the bed. His breathing was shallow, and nightmares marred his handsome face with deep, worry lines. Her heart bled for him, but she took it under control. She saw him worse. She’ll see him worse. This time he had someone who cared enough to protect him, next time, he may not be so lucky.

Loki came to himself late in the evening. His vision was blurry, and head was clouded by a pleasant mist, that he remembered from his childhood. It was a comforting vail; the one his mother put on him to soothe his nightmares. Unfortunately, this time her magic touch will not suffice, since they became his constant reality.

Loki groaned, sitting up and shook his head to clear it. The spell slowly let him go, brining awareness and unhealthy dose of anger.

“Dear child?” Frigg asked softly, afraid to use any sudden noises, since Loki looked vexed beyond reason and it was never a good sign.

“Thank you, mother.” He growled, avoiding looking at her; not wishing to burn her with the hatred that swam in his eyes. “Sadly, I must leave you, however, before I do, I wanted to ask – would you like Odin’s head on a plate or a pike?”

“I’d prefer him alive, Lo-lo.” She pleaded, knowing well that the plea will fall to deaf ears.

“I am afraid, I’ll have to disappoint you again, amma. Take care.” He hissed, before teleporting away.

“May Fates guard you, my baby boy.” She whispered to the empty air.

“Pneuma, be so kind as to reveal the plan.” Loki commanded with cold anger.

“I’m afraid it’s still not possible, master.” Jarvis answered courtly, making the God stop and pinch his nose, before doing a couple of deep breaths.
“Pneuma, your loyalty is admirable, but sentiments aside, do not force me to harm you.” Loki growled, losing his patience.

“I do not think, it’s possible, Master.” Jarvis answered coldly.

“Let me prove you wrong, pneuma.” The God said, weaving a spell.

Pepper rushed through the doors of the Malibu house, anticipating a hip of dead bodies and two happy drunks, but found a hellishly pissed off God and amused Jarvis.

“I will kill him!” Loki roared, scaring the daylights out of her. It seems that he finally got all the details, and reacted accordingly. “The meddling, unruly, child!”

“Sounds uncomfortably familiar, doesn’t it, Master?” Jarvis taunted the unstable God, and Pepper gulped, backing off. She was not sure if it was safe for her to be here.

“The circumstances were different.” Loki defended, scanning the paper and gathering the required items. Loki could admit that the plan itself was cunning and flawlessly organised, but the fact that Anthony dared to put himself in such danger, without insuring a proper protection, made him tremble with fury.

“I don’t see how they were or are, Master. Don’t you think it is better for you to stay away?” Jarvis reasoned.

“Are you mad, pneuma? There’s no force in Nines that will manage to keep me away from him. I cannot lose him, pneuma, especially, because of my mistakes. I left him once. It’s enough.” Loki said, packing the last piece.

“Thus, you will willingly put yourself into a situation where given the right parameters you will kill Sir yourself or allow him to kill you. It does sound rather counterproductive.” Jarvis drawled, and Loki scoffed.

“I do not expect you to understand.” Loki dismissed him.

“I do not. At least Sir has a legitimate reason for suicide, do you, Master?” Jarvis inquired politely.

“A corpse cannot commit suicide, pneuma.” Loki commented, with a twisted smirk on his lips. “And my life is stuck on the other side. It was nice knowing you, pneuma. Farewell.” The God mock bowed and “puffed” out of the house.

“Miss Potts, you can come out of your hiding place. The drama queen is gone.” J remarked politely, watching like a trembling, pale woman crawled from under the table.

Tony was counting seconds that stretched into minutes, which ultimately became hours. Mushu found its balance, and meticulously killed every screaming nerve ending, locking him in a dully aching numbness. So, he amused himself by analysing which bones were broken and mending, what pieces of skin were torn and will be a pain to heal; how he will explain all of this to Loki, and if he should elaborate at all, provided that his God won’t flog him upon seeing, which was a legitimate worry.

It was much easier to detach himself from this months ago. The plan sounded logical. It still was; too
bad logic lost its value since then. Tony felt uneasy. He could taste the bitterness of betrayal on his
tongue, and could only imagine the fury Loki was experiencing.

He should have listened to Pepper and Jarvis. This was a reckless and irresponsible way to go about
it. He has hurt Loki on purpose, and, surprisingly, irrationally, was scared that the God won’t forgive
him for this stunt.

“Tony Stark are you present?” He heard Thor’s pleasant baritone, and half-heartedly noted that they
gave him less credit then he deserved. Thor was not dull, simply brainwashed, and with monster-
daddy, such as Odin, it was not a surprise.

“Wadda y want, Thunder bolt?” Tony whined, cracking one eye open. “I need my beauty sleep.”

Thor chuckled, shaking his head. A glint of respect and admiration could be spotted in his hardened,
sky-blue eyes and Tony remarked that green was his favourite colour – these eyes, though, irritated
him.

“Your bravery is admirable, man of Iron. You fought vigorously and courageously by my side, and
from all Midgardian heroes you’re the only one who can go on par with Gods and your altruistic
sacrifice can never be forgotten. You lost more than anyone of us that day, thus, I am perplexed by
your sudden change of heart. Weren’t you the one whom Loki tried to kill personally? Haven’t you
seen with your own eyes what horrors he wished to unleash on your lands?” Thor asked him,
confusion and sadness prominent in his voice.

“I don’t know who tried to kill me, Thor. But it certainly wasn’t Loki, for all it looks, like it was him.
Concerning the horrors – I’m working on it, and again, wasn’t his fault.” Tony commented casually.

“How do you know that?” Thor inquired, without the heat, and it alerted Tony.

“I have seen it.” Tony divulged carefully.

“How?” The thunder God pried, with a disturbingly knowing smile.

“Through his eyes.” Tony said, guessing that Thor, already, knew it.

“So you know, man of Iron, Loki is apt in various techniques of deception; planting false memories
and poisoning others with vivid dreams is a child’s play for him.” The blond God shared.

“Sounds logical. However, things I saw…Nobody will want to share that…” Tony defended.

“You’d be surprised.” Thor taunted. “Anyway, even if the memories are true. It’s still Loki’s
perspective, biased and unfair.”

“Really? Because I’m pretty sure that cutting the head of a friend in front of him, and then gifting the
said head to him is still shit, no matter from what angle you look at it, or rape, or torture.” Tony sing-
sang sarcastically.

“I won’t explain to you our customs, man of Iron, as they are vastly different from yours, but the
situation you speak of is … how do you say it…ah, yes, sticky. Tell me, man of Iron, if I asked the
girl that lost her parents or a woman that lost her husband, or any of the unfortunate victims of
collateral damage how they see you – how certain you are they say your actions were justified and
that you deserve praise and not death?” Thor challenged, and Tony had to swallow. That was a
painful argument to raise. They touched upon this topic with Loki, and Tony admitted he was not a
good man, but it does not mean he was comfortable with it. The humongous, shameless spot of guilt
on his soul burned, like acid.
“I’m most certain they’d wish to kill me with their bare hands and I do deserve it.” Tony acknowledged.

“The beast deserved it, as well.” Thor concluded.

“Huh, following that logic we all should be dead, Thor.” Tony mocked.

“Probably, but some of us deserve it more than others.” Thor compromised.

“Heh, Pointbreak, you cannot have it both ways, either we all are despicable spit of Satan or none of us. We are all guilty and selfish. Accidents happen, people die. So it boils down to personal goals and preferences, and I let you know I prefer Loki in disturbingly profound way over everything, even common sense.” Tony confessed brashly, since he, already, decided which side he will be on for eternity.

“It sadness me to see how low the mighty have fallen. You were a great warrior, man of Iron. I will remember our battles fondly.” Thor said regretfully.

“Unfortunately, cannot say the same.” Tony snarked.

“The All-father will speak with you in the morrow.” Thor said dismissively.

“Cannot wait.” Tony said, closing his eyes. Mushu humming in his chest anticipatingly.

Loki was creeping through the corridors of the Golden palace, irritation cursing through his veins. He managed to ignore the hurt for the best part, but now and again it took the better of him.

The God was awed by the ingeniousness of his beloved, and was disgusted by the cold-blood manipulation. Anthony was playing two games, and won in both. He successfully enamoured him, and gauged the dirty secrets of the All-father.

Loki could admit it was devastating to understand on how many levels he was betrayed by his adoptive kin. It all made sense now.

Loki was disposable. Loki was nothing, but a toy.

He was brought to the palace for a single purpose – to amuse the queen. However, when he became a sore spot; a Jotun child, that was worthy of the throne more than a legitimate heir, Odin started to plot.

He purposefully antagonised them, and when his golden son still failed to meet his expectations, Odin turned to his partner with an irresistible bargain.

The All-father placed a spell on Loki to ensure he sees his true nature and lands where he’s supposed to. It was coming up roses for the All-father, until Anthony mingled with the design.

Loki acknowledged that he would have died if not for the brash mortal, but it did not excuse Anthony. He was aware how thoroughly Loki’s trust was abused, and still deceived him.

Loki chuckled bitterly. In the end, nothing had changed – his loved ones continued to manipulate and abuse him, and he was protecting them regardless of the suffering they brought.

What a miserable existence.
“Where are you crawling to, dear boy?” Loki heard the All-father’s voice, and his back stiffened. He cursed and turned, but saw nothing. The malicious laughter echoed in the empty halls, making his skin crawl. “Come to great you King properly, dear boy.” Odin ordered, and Loki had to comply. Odin had Anthony.

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In the morning, Tony was roughly awakened, and made presentable, before showed out of the cell and dragged through long corridors of the Golden palace to the throne room.

The theatricality of the act elevated his mood, and he met Odin with a brash smirk on his lips. He knew he was being inconsistent with the signals he was sending, but it seemed that Asgardians did not care one way or another. They presumed him to be a mortal. They were sure he was played by Loki, and that they can break him; broke him.

It was degrading and hilarious, simultaneously. Tony has seen the insides of this machine, and knew that they had legitimate reasons to look down upon the others, but Odin took it beyond reason, which will be his downfall.

“Mortal.” The great King acknowledged his presence, after a staring match that Tony refused to lose.

“Dark Lord.” Tony echoed the dismissive tone Odin used, and got swatted across the head. The fuckhead chuckled evilly, and Tony glared at him when the ringing in his ears subdued. The All-father smirked at him, waving the guards of, and addressed him only when they left, with a mocking amusement.

“You put a lot of effort to get here, mortal. I assure you there’re easier ways to get an audience with me.”

“I’m sure there is. But I’m not here for a chit-chat.” Tony said with a brash grin, calling his armour. The bracelet vibrated, material covering him and bringing the feeling of safety and power. Tony finally could breath calmly, his worries being squashed under brash arrogance.

Tony smirked at the All-father, breaking the chains, like a rotten thread. Those days in the torture chamber allowed him to gather and analyse the data. An extreme, and arguably insane way to learn the enemy, but whatever flies, since Mushu needed to be exposed to a “personal touch” in order to block it afterwards.

“Hello, Sir. The project is a success, but I’m afraid, Master, will kick your ass for it, sir.” The crisp, British voice informed Tony, before he spotted a sick grim blooming on the All-fathers face. Fuck, they were dull.

“Impressive.” Odin said in a gloomy voice. “Loki.” He commanded, and Tony had to jump away from the sudden attack. His God turned, watching him with empty, vibrant blue eyes, before attacking again. Tony went on defense, waiting for the opening. “Sentiment. Foolish.” Odin commented, but Tony disagreed. Sentiments will burn this planet to crisps.

“Fancy meeting you here, Reindeer. Especially, after you’ve abandoned me.” Tony snarled, making sure his voice was full of disappointment and resentment. Loki faltered for a second, his eyes flickering to red briefly, and drawled amusedly:

“Pot and kettle, dear.”

“I guess.” Tony offered with hostility and launched. Loki laughed brokenly and went for the kill.
Loki opened the doors to the throne room, stepping inside warily. It was silent, as a graveyard, and he couldn’t suppress the nagging thought that it may be the last thing he sees.

Odin looked at him from the throne, gaze calculating and beckoned to come closer, as he would his dogs. Loki bristled, but swallowed the retort and pushed down the malice. He was in a disadvantage here.

He stepped slowly. His intuition screaming at him to turn and run away; wondering why there were no guards; pondering how it came to be so – why he was never enough, and stilled.

“Come closer, dear boy. Don’t tell me you’re afraid of me.” Odin teased, with a fatherly note in his voice and despite himself Loki made another step and then one more. Something was pulling him towards the All-father. He felt a subtle brush of magic against his skin; a tentative lick against his mind, and dug his heels in.

“What are you doing?” Loki hissed, trying to move away, but finding himself unable to. His emotions getting out of hand, mixing with memories that he did not remember having. “Stop it!”

Loki hissed, his magic flaring, but the allure was stronger. It always had been.

“Don’t fight it, dear boy. You’ll lose, because you want to.” Odin said in a calming, persuasive manner and Loki trembled. The All-father had him good. “Such power you have inside of you. Eons of torture and disregard did not crack you, only hardened your resolve. I envy you, dear boy. I feel threatened by you and proud that I had a chance to call you my son.”

Odin confessed, and Loki couldn’t look at this glory. It was ripping his soul apart. All he ever wanted was to see a glimpse of recognition in those lifeless, glassy eyes. Anthony was right to exclude him from the narrative. He was highly compromised.

“Why?” Loki pleaded; choking on the hate, pain and longing. “I did everything you wanted me to. What is wrong with me?”

“Nothing, dear boy.” Odin said with a soft, prideful smile that took his breath away. The All-father stood from the throne, and came to him, cupping his cheek, and showing him an amulet with a single rune on it. Loki gasped recognising the spell, but it was too late to do anything about it. He was caught. “You are perfect, and the only fault in you is that you’re not mine.”

The chilly bright blue light engulfed him. Pneuma had warned him, but he was too arrogant to listen. He should have stayed out of it. He should have known better.

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Tony had little problems with dogging Loki’s attack. The God was sloppy and all over the place, like the first time they’ve met. Odin hissed at Loki, murmuring what Tony thought was another spell, and his God grimaced in pain, his eyes becoming glassy.

Mushy caught the vibes, and finally the last piece of the *antidote* was in his hands. Tony ducked under Loki’s arm and shocked him, feeling the energy leaving his chest.

The God moaned, faltering and then screamed, clutching his head tightly. Tony could barely take it. The dam that was blocking his emotions broke, when Mushu left him and he was drowning in guilt, pain and self-loathing. The suit was, also, malfunctioning, and J had a hard time controlling it, since magic was the crucial element that was holding *them* together, and without it they were fucked.

Tony breathed hard, fighting for the control, and loosing miserably. His God, though, was more durable. Loki shook off the meddling energies, and went to attack again. Tony hardly ducked the deadly strike. The after wave of the spell sent him flying into the nearest column.

He moaned, shaking his head to get rid of the dizziness. If he won’t get up right this instance Loki will kill him, and when he comes online, he will resurrect him, and Tony didn’t really want to think what he’ll do with him then.

Thus, shut the fuck up and get up.

He had all the advantage here, and the simplest of tasks – taunt, distract and survive.

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Loki saw a red-haired woman in the peripheral vision, and felt the body his was in smiling, arousal coursing through its veins. It embraced the woman boldly, caressing her soft curves provocatively. The throaty giggle exited it further, and the dirty suggestion made even Loki interested.

The hand of the lucky man patted the delicious rare, and the woman stepped away. Loki recognised her instantly. Pepper Potts. Jealousy flared in him and vile vices of betrayal squeezed his suffering heart. She looked happy. He was envious of her, until he realised that Anthony felt nothing of this sort. He was exited sexually, and appreciated the picture, but the woman did not stir any deeper emotion.

It perplexed Loki.

“Gosh, I am beat.” Anthony complained, turning to floating holograms, when the woman left the room. “Why the fuck they insist on dragging me into this shit?”

“May be because technically it’s your property, sir, and director Fury is well aware how you react when somebody “touches your stuff” without permission.” Pneuma chimed in.

“They had no problems fucking with it behind my back, though.” Anthony offered darkly, scanning the information on the tesseract and finding it mildly amusing.

“So, you let the planet burn to teach them a lesson, Sir?” Pneuma inquired sarcastically.

“Har-har, J. We have nothing, but this rock.” Anthony complained, and Loki chuckled. In a second or so, his beloved will have an eye-opening experience. “Why, hello there.” His beloved whistled suddenly, and the God focused his attention on the screen to see himself on the picture. Anthony groaned in a wanton way, and Loki could feel something powerful stirring in him. “Jarv, I think this charade just became worthy of my time.”
“But, of course, sir.” Pneuma sassed him, and Loki couldn’t help but feel inadequately flattered.

The next time awareness caught him in the middle of the flight. Loki, instantly, knew he was in Anthony’s body, watching memories, but why he was here and what was happening beyond the pleasant veil of reminiscences he had no clue. He couldn’t remember and frankly did not want to, because Anthony’s mind felt great and he wouldn’t mind staying locked in it forever.

“Germany, nice touch.” Anthony commented out of the blue. “Captain spandex will get royally pissed ‘bout it, and I, already, like the guy.”

Loki could hear in his beloved voice; and detect a gentle stirring in his cold, calculating soul - a fracture of admiration. Anthony genuinely found him likable.

“It’s not surprising, sir. He is, basically, doing what you have dreamt about for years.” Pneuma commented.

“With less style, though.” Anthony murmured thoughtfully.

Something painfully familiar run through his beloved heart, but Loki pushed it away. He’d rather concentrate on the undeniable allure Anthony was feeling for him then complicated emotions, like rage, fear and thirst for revenge.

“Whoa, gorgeous!” His beloved catcalled, hovering above his submissive form. “I just may become a believer. Fucking hell!”

Loki basked in it. The passion and desire. Anthony found him irresistible even then, when he was nothing but a shadow of himself, and it felt indescribable.

“Don’t touch my stuff, Thunder bolt!” Anthony hissed with vehemence Loki never heard before. It made him tremble and long for his beloved touch. Such delicious possessiveness.

“Loki is my brother, man of Iron. You have no authority over him.” Thor argued.

“Doesn’t mean I don’t want to or will not have.” Anthony murmured quietly, maliciously and Loki found no better reaction than to fall all over in love with him.

“Heh, J, I know. It’s insane even for me. The divine Hitler wannabe must go. But, fuck, if I miss the opportunity to talk face-to-face.” Anthony grumbled, tinkering with his armour. “Why couldn’t he be…I don’t know…less fucked up.”

“Because miracles don’t exist, sir.” Pneuma helpfully supplied.

“Well, maybe it’s time I created one.” Anthony said, his armour alighting with the glorious blue, and Loki shuddered from the longing that overcame his beloved for a second.

“J, what is he doing?” Anthony asked landing on the platform, machinery working to take the suit off and from Loki’s point of view it looked magical. The illusions that his beloved manipulated and conclusions he drew from insignificant happenings blew the God’s mind away. He, though, Aesir
were rational and cold-blooded, but they had nothing on Anthony.

“He appears to be amused by your foolish display of bravery, Sir.” Pneuma commented.

“Huh, that’s good.” Anthony murmured, but with the note of darkness that Loki managed to miss in him completely. It was fascinating and a bit disconcerting to note that he didn’t really knew this Tony Stark. He was only aware of his Anthony, since Stark had no place in their relationship.

*Stark was plotting behind his back, though.* A sudden thought run through his head, and it split with hellish pain, erasing everything.

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Loki groaned, trying to will the annoying voice out of the empty darkness he was residing in. But it grew lauder and lauder, stirring him awake, and now he could also feel the nervous tapping on his head.

“Shoo.” He hissed, brushing the irritating creature of himself.

“Oh, sweet creation, the idiot is alive! Thank you, mother fate!” The annoying voice exclaimed, launching at him with vigour. “Wake up, sleeping beauty! Come on – up, up, UP!” It urged. “We don’t have time for this…well, technically, you do, but you’ll be disappointment if he dies too, despite hating his guts right now, thus, rise and SHINE!” It shrieked right into his ear, and Loki threw it off, cracking one eye open.

He didn’t know what he expected to see, but the tiny, scrawny, red-yellow Chinese cartoonish dragon wasn’t on top of his list of expectations. The God arranged himself into a sitting position and stared at it, and stared, before face palming and cursing creatively.

“Mushu…literally…Mushu. The most desirable and dangerous energy in the Nines reduced to … cartoon. Marvellous.” Loki breathed out, his voice edgy.

“I’d tune out the sarcasm oh, mythical one.” Mushu drawled with a familiar sass, crawling up his leg and into direct line of vision. “You’re a fairy-tale too.”

“I presume we’re locked in…a mind.” Loki said carefully, feeling the ghosts of pain lurking closely.

“Yes, a mind.” Mushu agreed with a mischievous look.

“Watching memories, because it…i..t…” Loki moaned, the pain biting him harshly.

“Whoa, whoa, baby doll. We’re watching dreams, ‘cos they keep you calm and pliant.” Mushu explained pointedly.

“Yes, yes, dreams…” Loki whispered weakly, and pain started to ease little by little. “I’m so tired, Mushu.” The God complained.

“I feel you, baby doll. Close your eyes. Let’s watch more dreams.” Mushu cooed sweetly, dragging him from the harsh pain, and other negative emotions that were ready to tear him apart, into the bliss of his beloved mind.

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Loki watched his broken self through the eyes of his beloved, and couldn’t believe it was himself he was seeing. Anthony looked at him differently. He did see the broken frame and awful dark, circles
under Loki’s eyes. He, also, didn’t miss the limp nor the restricted movements. Moreover, he come to the right conclusions, after thoughtfully analysing him and something akin to sympathy was born inside Anthony’s tranquil soul. It was small, barely visible, but for a second Anthony felt it and Stark decided to examine Loki further.

He came closer and taunted, vailing his true intentions; burrowing the shrewd gaze under arrogant brawl, and Loki bought it; snarling at him, missing completely the subtle jab, that would have caused an involuntary reaction if he was in his right mind, and delicate widening of Anthony’s eyes, when he realised that Loki was a puppet.

He grabbed Anthony roughly by the throat, crazed and wild and suddenly Loki saw a golden throne room; infuriated Odin wailing “kill him!” and his beloved, trying hard not to break his arm. He gasped and pulled his hand back quickly.

The picture became muddy, and started to shake. It flickered and trembled, until it froze and broke, revealing a boring white space behind, and he sense it – the pain, but this time he was ready.

The gigantic, electric-blue wolf leaped from the nothingness, but Loki turned to it swiftly and punched, making it fall to the ground.

“It made sense for it to manifest as you.” The God said with sadness, feeling tiny claws crawling up his back, before a cold, scaly body curled around his neck.

“Wow! Jarvis was correct to presume that you’re formidable, baby doll.” Mushu praised reverently.

“It does not surprise me. Penuma is the most intelligent of us.” Loki commented, keeping an eye on the pissed of wolf, that wined keenly, but did not dare to attack him again.

“Are you ready to beat it?” Mushu inquired.

“Not even close.” Loki confessed. “But I’m starting to get the idea. Proceed.” He commanded, making the dragon chuckle.

“So demanding, baby doll.”

“Don’t call me that, lizard.” Loki hissed, catching Mushu by the neck, pulling it roughly from his person and squeezing lightly. Mushu’s eyes popped out comically, and he became purple, but nothing else happened. “Figures.” Loki grumbled, letting the annoying creature go. It fell, hitting the floor with a dull thud, and glued itself back together in record time.

“Dragon. DRAGON! Not lizard. I don’t do that tongue thing.” Mushu glared at him, pointing an accusing claw at him, and it was incredibly hard not to laugh at the tiny creature, but Loki refrained, since it was his only chance to break free. When the lizard deemed the lesson learned, it grinned at him. “Now, as I was, saying, baby doll…” The dragon teased, opening the door in a dull white space, from beyond which a colourful, tasty memories were peeking. “Come, take a ride with me.”

Chapter End Notes

Rhyfedd: Thanks. I'll try to to show how it came to be. As twistedly, as I can :))
Lokislonelylady: Thanks, and no,no,no .... :) It's just....all over the place, that's all. Glad you're still exited about the story.

Dirtkid123 : before is the main key word here :))
The game: level 4

He was flying up, right inside the portal, where he could sense the death and decay was hiding. Loki was scared mindless. Anthony was beyond thrilled.

“J, look at this…” He murmured, his inquisitive mind inflamed by curiosity. It itched horribly. He wanted badly to sink his fingers into the twinkling cosmos and tear it apart.

Loki shrank in the back of his beloved brilliant mind. The complete absence of fear helped him cope with the imagery. Anthony did not give two fucks about Chitauri or their leader. He was staring, bright eyed, calculating opportunities.

The nuke blew, burning the fleet and mothership to ashes. Loki whimpered from joy. Anthony killed the Other, and fell. His lungs squeezed painfully, and heart stopped. Loki went into panic; knowing fully well that he will survive this, and still unable to process the thought. He couldn’t breathe nor function, until he felt the electric shock and a flutter of a heartbeat.

Anthony was alive.

Loki didn’t really listen to the blabber of the Avengers, soaking in Anthony’s thoughts, that surprisingly turned to him and stayed on the topic.

“Cap, call the meeting.” He suddenly requested. Avengers looking at him suspiciously.

“What’s up, Tony?” Widow inquired, but he brushed her off.

“A meeting. Let’s say in five, up the tower.” He concluded, standing up and walking out the door. The gang followed.

The city was in ruins. The smoke clouded the skies, and the streets drowned in dreary grey light. It was nearly impossible to breath down here. The blood, intestine, urine and shit were covering the asphalt. The smell was bloody awful, and Loki could see how the Avengers were covering their faces and flinching at view of especially gruesome corpses. Anthony, or better to be said Stark, felt nothing, and his face, but the feel of it, was blank.

He experienced a harsh stab of guilt for a moment, when his eyes scanned the picture, then scorching anger burned any other sensation, until it distinguished into nothingness. It was what it was. Stark moved on.

They went into the elevator and walked out on the undamaged floor that Loki haven’t seen before. It looked, like a guest room fused with a kitchen. Stark offered them drinks, his flamboyant persona taking the lead. The team watched him with various degrees of uncertainty and scowl, which he noticed and filed, but said nothing about; lazily sipping his drink with an amused grin.

“So,” He drawled, when the tension in the room got to critical levels. “What’s the deal Thor?”

He saw Thor tense, and narrow his eyes at Stark, whose grin widened.

“Wadda you mean Tony?” The Archer inquired, from the couch on which he was slouching.

“I mean what’s the deal with Loki and the underworld army of insects?” Stark hopefully supplied, which did confuse the public, since it was obvious, wasn’t it?
“Loki wanted to enslave the Earth.” Captain said, but his voice was uncertain enough for the statement to come out as an, almost, question.

“Except that he is a slave himself.” Stark supplied, making gang gasp and Thor laughed.

“Don’t get caught in his web, friend Tony. He’s an exceptional liar.”

“I know. But there’re some things no one can fake. J, pull the video feed.”

The space flickered and Loki could see himself on the screen, lacking any involuntary reaction or common sense, if he was honest with himself. His actions were pitiful and illogical. It was plain to see he was braindead.

The Avengers, though, did not look convinced nor did Thor.

“You’d be surprised, friend Tony. Loki should not be trusted under any circumstances.” Thor repeated, like a parrot and Loki could sense Stark suppressing an unhealthy dose of anger.

“Then why did you allow him to come here at all?” Stark asked naughty. “Surely the All-father could have stopped him and shipped him back home without this drama, especially, since you have this all-seeing fuck in the skies.”

That accusation made Loki snigger and admire his beloved wits, and the Avengers to throw suspicious glances at Thor, who shrank a bit from the scorn he was not used to getting.

“Loki is a powerful mage. He can shield himself from Heimdal and Father.” Thor explained, and Stark’s face alighted with a shit eating grin.

“So, if he is that powerful, why the fuck he lost to a bunch of mortal ants?” Stark pushed, and it was plain to see that Thor had no idea what was happening here at all, but was determined to fulfil the All-fathers wish.

“I don’t know!” Thor snapped, looking pained and humiliated. “I cannot explain to you, friend Tony, and when I come back home I’ll demand the answers. Father told me and mother that Loki has died. I’m guessing he wanted to spare us. Loki….he….He gave us lot of grief in the past, friend Tony. I don’t expect you to understand, but Loki is my brother, and this is a family matter, which, no offence, is not to be discussed with outsider.”

Thor’s devastation was real, and Stark rapidly started losing interest in the argument. He was tired and considered Loki vaguely interesting. The family drama was not what he wanted to see nor experience, and by the looks of it – this was exactly it.

“None taken.” Stark said, sounding bored. “But we, at least, should ask how he managed to pull an Oscar winning performance and most importantly to what ends.”

“I’m afraid we cannot. Loki uses words to enchant and confuse people. We cannot risk him escaping.” Thor explained, looking uncomfortable.

“You expect us to believe this, when the only thing he did here was throwing people out of windows and shimmering out of existence?” Stark asked incredulous, the intrigue returning. Thor’s description of his capabilities did not match the skill set Loki demonstrated, and fit with the brainwashed theory.

“He did trick us, though.” Romanov reminded, and Stark agreed. Loki was devilishly clever, and it may be just a ploy. Moreover, the stab did not prove anything. It was simply a hunch, and Thor was adamantly sure it was a ruse, thus, he let it go.
“Alright. I’m not questioning his “can and can’t”, but come on, pretties, are you not a bit curious?” Stark whined childishly. He could live with a thought that Loki was a bit bunkers, but he couldn’t allow the opportunity to dissect a new knowledge to slip through his fingers.

“I’m not quite sure I understand what you want to know Tony? The guy is a bag of cats with an army. A classical version of a power-hungry psychopath.” Banner supplied, and lost all the kudos he earned with Tony previously.

“Why the fuck he opened a portal here and not in the desert, for starters.” Stark snarked, crossing his arms. The suspicion growing.

“Because he wanted to lose.” Thor explained tiredly. “He probably made a deal, that he couldn’t or didn’t wish to go through. That’s it.”

“Don’t you wanna know why?” Stark repeated pointedly.

“No.” Thor signed. “I have seen many deals go awry throughout the centuries and I’m not searching for the excuses this time.”

“You said he died. Sounds pretty important.” Stark jabbed again, making Thor flinch.

“It’s a family matter, friend Tony.” Thor said gravely, storm clouds gathering outside.

“As far as the excuses go, this one is the flimsiest.” Stark mocked, and Thor growled menacingly.

“Enough.” Fury finally said, glaring at them. “You can take your brother and the cube and get the fuck from our planet.” Loki could feel Stark bursting with irritation and annoyance at the statement.

“And you not a god-damned word. It’s US soil and these are “unexpected circumstances.”” Fury growled, staring hard at the man.

Stark clenched his fists, and fought mercilessly with the desire to snap Fury’s neck. The common sense prevailed, allowing Anthony to squash the wish, and he smirked at the Director coldly.

“What evs.” Stark shrugged, but nobody bought it. “Get the fuck out of my tower.”

<Tony? Tony!? TONY!” Loki heard a high-pitched shriek and was roughly pushed. “Wake up, damned it!” He reluctantly opened his eyes, and saw blurry pictures. His head was splitting, and the room was spinning.

“Fuck…” Stark breathed out, and little by little Loki could separate himself from Anthony, who passed out drunk the other night.

Loki could not comprehend the void Stark had inside of him. It was like his soul was burnt out of his body, and the nightmares; the echoes of horrors he saw and sensed was nothing he could have expected.

Stark’s worst nightmare or memory was the nursing room. It was a pretty blue colour, stuffed with toys and animals. A kind-hearted nanny was singing him a pretty good-night song, while his father was watching over him with a gentle smile. It would be a beautiful picture if not for the nauseous taste of lies and disappointment.

The song went on and on, until the child started screaming bloody murder and father slapped him, and then again, again and again. The soft skin splits. The blood gushes. The child wails.
It calms gradually. The grimace of hate and disdain washes away. The wounds heal. It restarts to return full circle.

Stark drinks a lot. Stark wishes he can feel something, and plays with death for fun. Stark is horrifyingly lonely. Anthony does not care about any of it. Anthony likes Loki. He fixates on him, and Pepper does not like it.

Loki hates her for that plenty.

“You’re drinking again…” She said with hurt and disappointment, and it stirred the old pain, but Stark brushes it off.

“What’s new in the world, heh?” He murmured levelly, trying to stand up and failing miserably. “Never mind. What brings you here? Aren’t you supposed to be in Paris or Tokyo?” He asked, and it’s clear he does not give a shit about her. She an annoyance. He would prefer her gone. Loki could feel it, and he likes it immensely.

“That was a week ago, Tony. You should stop this.” She insists upset, and he snorts unattractively, stumbling over his uncooperative limbs.

“Neah, Pep. I won’t.” He declared dismissively. “Where’s coffee? Jarv…” He slurred, searching for something to drink, and finally stumbles upon a half empty bottle of apple juice. It tastes sugary, but at this point he does not care.

“Tony, please, you’re killing yourself. He’s not worth it.” Pepper pleads, and jealousy bites Loki. He is aware that Anthony is not his at this moment, and he suspects at any other given moment he is not completely his either, but anyway – how dare she!

“Pttf! I can care less ‘bout him, Pep. The thing he knows, though – reasons! Questions, questions, questions. I need to know, Pep.” Stark explains feverishly. The obsession heavy in his voice, and Loki knows Anthony is being a bit illusive. He cares for him, in his own twisted way, more than he ever cared for another living being.

“I get it, love.” She gently crooned, making Loki nauseous. “He is not here, though. You cannot ask him. It’s hopeless, Tony.”

“Yeah, Pep. Right you are and Fury will regret it….He’s not here. The most intriguing puzzle in the Universe, in a mind-blowing wrapper, I should add…Not here.” Stark murmured with a desperate longing, groaning and burrowed his head into his hands. “Why the fuck it is so?” He mumbled, turning to look at the crushed woman, who looks at him with broken-hearted smile.

“I don’t know, Tony, but I’m afraid you’ll have to choose.”

Stark stares at her long and hard, blinking owlishly before bursting into laughter.

“This is how you want it, Pep? Sure. Be gone. You knew the answer already.” Stark shrugged, turning away, ignoring completely the agonising whimper and poisonous curse.

Stark was used to this. He courted loneliness, and it answered in kind. Anthony, though, liked Loki – a lot.

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Stark was strolling down the corridor, like he owned the place, smirking at the cameras and openly punching in the required codes. Guards lying on the floor unconscious. Video feed controlled by
Pneuma. He was unstoppable and unreachable. Loki had a hard time keeping himself in check, mostly because his predicament did not allow interaction with the object of his ravenous desire.

“Sir, I advise to proceed with outmost caution.” Pneuma warningly buzzed in Stark’s year.

“Hmm…Still think it can fuck me up?” Anthony murmured thoughtfully.

“It did fuck you up, Sir.” Pneuma commented.

“Nothing to worry ‘bout then.” Stark replayed with humour, whistling a silly tune.

“I wish you were more considerate, Sir.” Pneuma remarked, with what, almost, sounded like fond annoyance.

“That’s a one wish wasted, buddy.” Stark said, reaching his destination. Loki saw the sceptre and could feel its power pulsating, echoing inside of them. It did not affect Stark, though. It resonated within him, brushing lightly against his mind and recoiling with an upset hiss. The arc, Loki realised, was protecting him.

“Such beauty.” Anthony breathed out, gingerly taking it out from its confinement and spinning experimentally, with grace that astounded Loki. The sceptre pulsed and buzzed, but couldn’t breach the protective armour around Anthony’s mind. “Now, now, gorgeous, behave.” He purred, wrapping it in a material, that looked, like rubber. “Clear the road, buddy. We’re going home.” Stark commanded and walked from the base untouched, leaving nothing behind.

Loki stared and stared at the dark, starry sky, wondering why he ever doubted Anthony at all?

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Odin growled in frustration. It was taking too long. The spell that was controlling the bastard was failing. He could feel it restrains getting weaker; tearing one by one. It won’t take long for Loki to break free of it. It won’t do. The little monster must kill his disgusting, mortal lover before that happens and hopefully it would finally break him, so Odin can possess him eternally, like it supposed to be from the start.
Thanos was pacing the golden rooms of the treacherous war God, agitated. The brat Odin sent to him, while insanely powerful, became a headache. The child has broken out of his control and lost the battle, leaving the Titan without Midgard, tesseract and infinity stone.

Somebody had to pay for his humiliation, preferably with blood.

“Thanos, my dear friend, what brought you here?” The war God boomed, with a bright smile and aura of friendliness that the titan did not buy for a second.

“Cut the crap, old man, and give me the boy.” Thanos growled, through greeted teeth.

“Or what?” The King of all Gods smirked cruelly; twisted amusement shining brightly in his steal, grey eyes.

“Or you’ll regret the day you’ve decided to fool me.” Thanos threatened, to be laughed at.

“Will I, though? Or better to be said had I? I gave you the boy. It’s not my fault you couldn’t use him properly.” The war God mocked.

“Leave your false speeches to the court, Odin. I know what you have done, and I won’t stay idle.” Thanos hissed, and with that Odin was attacked by his trusted assassin. The mad Titan guessed about the spell, when he roamed inside Loki’s mind. It felt manipulated, clouded. Thus, he dug for a source and found a curious memory, which the All-father tried to destroy unsuccessfully.

Either way, Thanos was aware of the amulet and the prophecy, which made him desire the boy even more. Unfortunately, for Thanos he overestimated his power. Odin was a very old God, with thousands of years of experience. The assassin had no chance against him. The All-father easily disarmed the attacker and snapped her neck, throwing the corpse away, like an annoying bug.

“Now, where are we? Ah, yes. Be gone and do not show your face here again, unless, you want me to come for you, and trust me I’ll have enough courage to face you in person.” The All-father said and dispelled the clone.

“All-father! All-father!” The guards rushed in panicked, and he smiled at them bemusedly. “Nothing to worry about. Your king fulfils your duties better than you do.”

The guards blanched, and bowed lowly, trembling with fear. Odin levelled them with an arrogant stare, brushing non-existent dust from his chest-pad and stilled, quickly searching himself, before chuckling amusedly.

“Sneaky, little abomination.” He murmured, going to the corpse and searching it. The amulet was hiding in the breast pocket. He fetched it, and tucked it back into its place.
The video stopped on this moment. Loki could see Odin’s hand holding a small object that he, apparently, used to manipulate and control him. Loki could only imagine how much dark energy he used to create it, but, recent events proved that the All-father didn’t shy from using any means to achieve what he desired most.

Loki soul choked on hate and remorse. How he could be so blind? How he could ever believe that this power-hungry tyrant could love?

He felt violated, degraded and used. Loki’s head spun from the anger and wish to mutilate the old fool, who dared to defile him such.

“J, rewind the video to the thingy moment.” Anthony requested, putting the angst on hold. Loki could feel the anger and vicious protectiveness coming from his beloved, and was surprised by the strength of the emotions. Anthony knew him for several weeks at this point, and already had done more than anyone ever did for him. Unknowingly to him and in secret, which pissed Loki off royally, but still. “Greeeeat.” He drawled. “What do you think it is?” He posed an unnecessary question.

“Would you like me to answer, Sir?” Pneuma asked politely.

“Nope, I rather you think with me. So, this is what fucked Loki up, and will keep fucking him up, unless broken. Question – how does it work and to what extent Loki is biased?” Anthony wondered, and horror gipped Loki’s soul. He didn’t think about it. Shit!

“I’d imagine it safe to presume that the extent of the control is minimal, since your Unicorn is put into a stable, Sir.” Anthony laughed, and Loki pouted at Pneuma’s description of him.

“Hmm…But it can be exercised. The old fart confident in it, thus, whatever I say may potentially land in his hands, without Loki knowing ‘bout it.” Anthony mussed.

“So, theoretically, I need to deal with a God of lies who has no control over his own god-damned mind. Brilliant. And here I thought this would be one relationship were lies would be cancelled automatically.” Anthony signed dramatically, and Loki’s heart pounded faster. Already then, Anthony considered them an item.

“Relationship?” Pneuma inquired, and Loki could hear the faint notes of sarcasm in it. It hurt.

“Well, I don’t plot to overthrow the King of all Gods for anyone, do I?” Anthony drawled amusedly, and Loki’s heart literally stopped. He planned what!? This is not what Pneuma had said to him, which didn’t have to come as a surprise, since they discovered that his mind can be easily accessible.

But this was insane! He couldn’t have known that Frigg will come to Loki’s aid, and he will have the opportunity to snatch Idunn’s apples nor he has Mushu at this point or enhanced suits. He is but a mortal man, with a heart condition and indulging AI.

“No, you do not, Sir. However, it’s clear we cannot harm Odin, nor we have a chance to come close.” Pneuma pointed out.

“Yeah, but we suspected it, buddy. But thanks to this” He pointed on the screen. “We know his weakness.”

“And how do you suppose to convince him to go against his most sacred desire, not saying, kill it, Sir?” Pneuma poised a question.
“Give him something worthier to fight for, obviously.” Anthony said brashly.

“Or someone.” Pneuma pointed out.

“Yeah, or that.” The mad imp breathed softly, making the God shiver from the wistfulness that overcame him.

Anthony was perplexing, and Loki didn’t know how to feel about it. Something felt glaringly wrong. The sentiments were real, but the motivation behind them…Stark wanted to see him free, so he played a role that Loki bought without a second thought. It confused him, leaving vulnerable and open for the attack, and the moment doubt sipped into his consciousness, he could hear Fenrir roaring.

“Down, boy.” Mushu hissed, and Loki widened up in the white space, finding himself behind a lizard that did some growing since the last time he saw it. Now it was, almost, his height, and twice as large in mass.

An impressive looking dragon.

“You have improved.” Loki breathed out, happy that Mushu held Fenrir at bay. He didn’t have it in him. Not yet.

“Hmm…someone had to watch over the flea bag here, while you’re napping, baby doll. And I ain’t bragging, but I did a pretty good job.” Mushu was totally bragging, and that made Loki chuckle. He missed this. He missed Anthony, which reminded him of the falsity and he grimaced.

Fennir sensed it immediately, leaping forward. Mushu groaned bemusedly, spewing fire. The wolf dodged under, and went for its throat. Mushu managed to duck, and spun, hitting the wolf square with its tale. The wolf whined and flew past the white wall, disappearing from the view. “And stay there!”

The dragon ordered, nose high in the air, brash smirk shining on its muzzle and it was painfully familiar. Loki’s heart clenched, and he averted his eyes from the lizard. He couldn’t shake the thought of this being a ruse; another distraction from constant boredom.

“Why are you here Mushu?” Loki inquired, feeling drained and wary. He didn’t want to doubt Anthony, despite the tricks. Anthony had a good reason for it, but it still did not sit well with him. Anthony was rigid. The opportunity to study his mind and reactions clearly showed that Anthony was detached from the emotions to the extent of their nonexistence.

Loki fascinated Anthony. He, also, managed to stir sentiments in the deadland of Anthony’s soul, but it was selfish and vague. After all, Stark loved to play with death. It was the only thing that was making him feel something, and he was chasing it with vigour. Loki simply provided an opportunity to bring the game to another level, so to say. It ate at him.

He knew of this, of course; has suspected, even thought it was acceptable. Anthony worked in those ways. It was fine, but one thing was theory and the other harsh, brutal reality. Loki, at least, at this point was means to an end, and the God couldn’t for the life of him see past it.

“That’s a good question, baby doll. We were soooo against this tactic. No offence, pretty, but our precious…is, well, our precious. Unfortunately, you are more important than the life he has, so, ta-da-ta. I’m here.” Mushu explained, shrugging his scaly shoulders and shrinking to the tiny form. Loki was about to ask why the dragon done so, when it crawled onto his lap, curling on it. “You feel very good, though.”
“Should have expected illusiveness…” Loki grumbled, with a sign, absentmindedly stroking the cold skin.

“Duh, mister “God of lies”. A bit rich, don’t you think?” Mushu purred.

“It is not that easy.” Loki argued, but why, he didn’t completely understand himself. Probably the lingering fear of betrayal; the overgrown paranoia and trust issues.

“The man literally is willing to sacrifice his own life for your freedom. What’s so complicated about that, baby doll?” Mushu asked not opening his huge eyes; not moving either.

“But why?” Loki asked. It was important. He didn’t comprehend the reasoning behind it. He was churlishly caprice, and unbelievably sappy, whiny, moody, fickle and insecure bitch in general, but he needed to know. It was essential for him to feel, what he was feeling back then in Malibu or in the previous memory – unconditional, fierce love.

“Why? WHY?! Are you for real!?” The dragon shrieked suddenly, springing to its tiny feet to stick its irritated muzzle into Loki’s face. The God swallowed, feeling tiny under the burning, accusatory gaze. The lizard continued levelling him with a dirty stare for some time, before huffing and shrugging its shoulders. “I dunno. You seem so ungrateful…But I bet, ‘cos he loves ya or something equally stupid.” It drawled teasingly, relaxing completely and sliding down to its previous position.

“I’m not so sure anymore.” Loki whispered, feeling guilty and uncertain. It was no wonder he was so lonesome. It was impossible to get through to him - one little suggestion; a tiny dirty spot of ambiguity and he closes off; hides in his shell, searching for reasons to doubt and mistrust. But Anthony could. He didn’t care. He still doesn’t.

“I wouldn’t be either, since, I’m here and he is shit with emotions. Probably suffering loads, poor baby.” Mushu chatted absentmindedly. “Not to mention that you’re beating the crap out of him.”

Loki flinched at that. He completely forgot about the predicament. Anthony was so dead when he breaks free.

“I apologise. Can we continue?” Loki inquired.

“Hmhm. I though you’ll never ask.” Mushu said, dragging him back to the memories.

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Yet another thread whined and broke under the assault. Loki was fighting his own battle within and was winning. The mind gem was far away and the receding energy, that was strengthened by the spell did not have enough power to keep Loki’s indomitable mind at bay.

Whatever the younger God was experiencing, trapped in the illusions and whispers of traitorous energy, was liberating him from the enslavement. The snake found a way to recycle his pain yet again, and made something better of it. Odin loathed it.

For thousands he tried to cripple the brave, burning spirit. Each scar, lie and betrayal was carefully planned and perfectly executed, and, at first, Odin was thrilled with the results. Loki refused to bend under the assault. He found ways to thrive even in the most despicable situations.

It was entertaining to watch, until the All-father understood that Loki is out of his reach and is not under his control. The rebellious God did long for his approval and was ready to eat from his hand, but, unfortunately, on his own terms and that was not acceptable.
Sadly, the harsh treatment he undergone made him immune to the physical and emotional manipulation via traditional means of torture and humiliation, thus, Odin woven a spell, which sole purpose was to weaken Loki’s mind and gradually allow the All-father take over it.

It took centuries for it to make a tiny crack in Loki’s defences, but coupled with the abuse, neglect and hate it was enough. Not enough to own him, but more than enough to trick.

Loki fell right into the trap. Odin made sure he landed in the dead-land of Chitauri and, as per agreement, in the hands of Thanos. It was a straightforward deal – Midgard and its heroes in exchange for tesseract and brainwashed Loki.

Who needed and infinity gauntlet, when you command the creature that destined to end it all?

Odin could taste it on the tip of his tongue – the forgotten glory and fear of the Nines. The magnificent years when he ruled with an iron fist and no one dared to oppose him. He wanted it back – the golden age.

His, heir, unfortunately, took after his mother and Odin could see he was hopeless. Loki, on the other hand, if properly trained could be his deadly champion, and it was, almost, within his reach, but the mortal brat had to spoil it; and continued spoiling it.

It was hysterical, but a lowly, insignificant worm gifted Loki with a purpose, a self-worth. The bastard healed, properly this time and it was only dumb luck that the human decided to go behind his back, otherwise Odin would have lost a lot of resources searching for the boy. It still was fragile, because Loki was not ready to give up on his new-found happiness, and Odin will make sure to punish Thor profoundly for his insolence.

But before that, he ought to kill the annoying insect.

The All-father stood up, with a grace that nobody would expect from an old man. He moved swiftly, getting behind the distracted human, raising his hands for the fatal blow, and was blocked. Loki standing between him and the fallen human, holding his hands firmly trapped. The insect was watching them wide eyed, looking as shocked as he felt.

“Loki release me!” Odin roared, but got a condescending, icy stare. Loki’s vivid turquoise eyes were burning with malice and possessiveness. The young God was staring right into his soul, not blinking; not showing any emotion on his face and added pressure on his limbs. The armour whined under the assault, bending. The metal gave in and cut into his flesh, but Odin refused to make a sound or avert his eyes, despite the holy fear he was feeling.

The All-father felt blood trickle down his skin, his bones moaning, and called his magic for help, when the pain became unbearable, but it was easily brushed off by Loki’s own. The young God smirked deliriously.

“Mine.” He murmured with a sickly-sweet tone, and run his hands down Odin’s chest, before blasting him with raw power. The mighty war God flew across the hall and smashed into a wall. The young God chuckled amusedly, staring the older down. “Don’t interfere.” Loki warned, turning to the insect.

“Anthony, I deeply apologise for the interruption. Shall we?” He purred, and the All-father was delighted to see the armoured man crawling away in panic from the snickering monstrosity. Loki was magnificent, and Odin would be overjoyed if not for the fact that he has lost control over him.
Dirtkid123: Thank you, my dear. I'm glad you're so excited 'bout it ;)

WickedWitchOfTheWeb: Thanks :)

Sparcina: Cheers! Well, if to be honest, I hate writing smut. I think I'm not good at it...that's being said, we'll see.

Rhyfedd: Hey, precious. I'm glad that you've liked it. It does, too much if you'd ask me. I'm struggling to keep this in the right direction...my mind jumping chaotically on opportunities...:)}
The baby’s cries were heart-wrenching. It wailed. Its voice was pained and needy. It was hungry and cold, but no one was coming to its aid.

“Howard, shut the thing up. I cannot take it anymore.” The angry voice of a woman, echoed from the furthest rooms, bouncing around the nursery.

“It’s your duty, dear.” The mocking voice retorted sarcastically.

“My duty, dear, was to give birth to this leech. What happens to it after I couldn’t care less.” The woman answered coldly.

“Fair enough.” The male’s voice agreed, and soon the baby’s eyes caught a shape of a male figure. The big warm hand stroke its body gently, before harshly pinching it. The pain was instant and severe. The baby whimpered and screamed. A hand silenced it, smothering. “No cries.”

It repeated day after day, until the baby learnt not to cry or ask for anything. The boy grew, and the treatment became harsher.

His father considered emotions a nuisance. The child that did not show his displeasure or asked for affection was much easier to maintain, thus, he didn’t shy from using abuse and torture to teach his son “proper etiquette”. The boy was a genius. It didn’t take him long to learn how to control his impulses.

He was four when they deemed to a mere buzz; five where they became practically non-existent.

His mother was absent from the picture altogether, and it would look, like a guide of how to raise a monster at home, if not for the nanny – Marta, and the butler – Jarvis.

They kept the withering fire of sentiments alive in Anthony. They didn’t give up, even when the boy started to rebel against the tender care, insisting that he was in no need of “mother-henning”.

Loki, abruptly, understood that these people where “parents” Anthony was talking about. It disgusted and saddened the God to the point that he had to take a break from reminiscing, even, though, Anthony did not give much thought to it. It just happened. It just was, and the fact that his beautiful, scarred, crippled beloved didn’t allow himself to hate spoke volumes.

Anthony kept arguing and screaming, pushing them away, perceiving their care as a weakness, as a cruel from of torture, because they didn’t allow his heart to die and his heart suffered from the neglect, and disregard that his biological parents were showering him with.

The point of no return was crossed when Anthony was fourteen. Marta died. The disease took her from him, and his asshat of a father failed to notify Anthony. He discovered it only moths after her funeral, when Jarvis managed to send him a letter.
Anthony returned three months later and was greeted by two tombstones.

The heart of the mutilated teenager beat in agonising convulsions for almost a year after; drowning in deadly amounts of alcohol, drugs and naked bodies.

Nothing seemed to quench the suffering, and it was the first time Anthony tried to escape his hell physically. He was saved. He tried again, and it didn’t work. Anthony was stubborn, but eighteen times after he decided that enough was enough. It was clear that even the abyss was not willing to take in such an abomination.

Thus, he turned to work and thirty-eight weeks later Pneuma was born. It was a crude version of the brilliant mind Loki grew to admire, but it was, already, clear that the creation will be divine. It was, also, the first time Anthony genuinely smiled, and the last as well.

Pneuma was a logical construct, without any need, nor wish to express or get tangled in emotions. Anthony loved it immensely. Finally, he found a companion who will not cringe nor chastise him for being heartless. Anthony was ecstatic.

Stark took the stage from thereof.

Tony could barely keep up with Loki. The subjugation spell was running heavily through the God’s veins, and Loki’s magic was not working properly on him, and that’s why Tony was still alive. Otherwise, he would be long gone.

Loki was mesmerising to watch, which did not help Tony to keep his concentration.

At the beginning of this fight, the God was close to the New-York personality – a mindless puppet, as the time went and Mushu was working its magic, he gained more control over himself and his movements. His attacks became elaborated, and wickedly sly, and by now Tony could hardly track his movements, and predict none of them.

Loki’s fighting style was out of this word, and the efficiency, with which he moved took Tony’s breath away. Loki was a masterpiece.

All the gaping and ogling, surely costed Tony.

The God moved to his right, ducking under the repulsor blast, but Tony was ready to meet him on his left, except that Loki did not appear there. He continued the attack, and Tony had a millisecond to admire the ingenuity of the assault, before being hit squarely in the head.

His ears rang, and he flew a few metres, landing hard on the marble floor. Unfortunately, he had no time to regroup, because the God was already there, straddling him.

Loki smirked at him mirthfully, eyes full of malice, and ripped a front part of his helmet off. Stark watched him wide-eyed, unable to comprehend how he had done that. Theoretically it wasn’t possible; too bad that practically it was. The sparks of electricity were flying everywhere, and J was mumbling something incomprehensive into the, miraculously survived dynamic, but Tony simply stared.

“Anthony” Loki breathed out in a soft voice, caressing the side of his face gently, a tear escaping his eye, and threw Stark of balance. “Anthony.” He repeated with a hellish longing, and leaned forward, to brush their lips. Tony gasped, shocked by the sudden action, and Loki used it to invade his mouth.
The kiss was possessive, and adorably aggressive. Loki kissed him with desperation and certain displeasure. He bit his lip, and lapped at the blood, before slipping his tongue back to dominate and violate Tony.

As for Stark, he had never felt so exposed and helpless in his entire life. His long forgotten, dried out heat clenched and gave out a tentative beat. Tony moaned pitifully into the God’s mouth, and whished Loki would have stabbed him instead.

It was easy, before Loki tore his insides out and made him bleed with affection. He craved this. He wanted to be stuck, like this forever, and the Universe did not matter. Granted, Tony said many times that he will chose Loki above everything, but then it was a greedy, selfish desire.

Tony was a weapon manufacturer, and when he realised what imbecilic morons they were for not seeing the true gem, that was hiding under their noses, he was anxious to seize the chance to possess it.

It helped that the weapon had an enchanting personality and brilliant mind to boot. The wrapping was, also, a high-quality package, thus, it was remarkably easy to play the role, until, the mask grew on him and he couldn’t separate illusion from reality.

He started to crave the illusion, and, at some point, what Loki was, became irrelevant. Tony truly wanted him; all of him till the last drop.

He hated it. Loathed it with such a passion, that at one moment it looked, like it’s better to end it. However, he couldn’t just leave the God in the hands of his d ellusional, abusive none-family.

Loki deserved better. Loki deserved the best, and Tony would make damn sure he got it, and he abhored it.


Loki saw Pepper Potts on the big screen. She was smiling encouragingly, sparkles of mirth dancing in her pretty eyes.

“Your attempt at politeness greatly appreciated. I’m good, Tony. You may go.” She cooed.

“Thank you, Pep, truly. When I’m stable, I’ll apologise. Bye.” Stark said, with shies and boredom.

“Bye.” She said, and the screen went blank.

“Phew…” Stark gave a tired sigh. “So, buddy, how did I sound?”

“Disgusting.” Pneuma answered, and Loki had a hard time understanding what the talk was about, since Stark’s soul was silent, as a tomb. He felt a slight buzz of curiosity and a bit of excitement, but that was about it.

“Great. I think she has believed me. I think I became great at it.” Stark bragged.

“Oh, yes, Sir, you’re perfectly feigning affection. So, perfectly, in fact, I myself have believed in your ruse.” Pneuma remarked sarcastically, and Loki held his breath.

“Did you?” Stark remarked equally sarcastic. “And here I though you know me Jarvis.”
“That is rather the problem, Sir. I do know you, and your Unicorn is under your skin whatever you like it or not.” Pneuma remarked dully.

“Yeah, as any shining bomb or laser. Gods, I have never seen anything more beautiful in my entire life. No wonder they want him. I want him too. Heck, anyone would have wanted him, if they knew what he truly is.” Stark murmured wistfully, freezing Loki’s blood.

“You are remarkable, Sir.” Pneuma commented.

“Why do I feel the insult is coming?” Stark inquired, smirking amusedly.

“It is, but since you’re so good at repressing the obvious, I will allow it. You’re an idiot, Sir and this will come back to bite you.” Pneuma warned.


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The hot, skilful mouth that was claiming him roughly, stilled for a moment and then bit him viciously, before tearing away. The hand that was caressing him gently, gripped his neck hard and hurt, light-green eyes stared at him with contempt.

“Why!?” The God hissed, squeezing the life out of him. “Tell me why!?” He growled, and the pain behind the threatening syllables crushed Tony’s heart. The affection rose in him and burned his throat. The words came out torturous, and cutting.

“I...lo..ve...you.” Tony rasped, confessing something he did not admit to himself, and it was agonising. He didn’t want to feel this way. He despised the thought, but it didn’t make it any less true. “I love you.” He repeated when the grip on his neck became slack. “I LOVE YOU!” He shouted, throwing the God off himself, and attacking. “And I hate it!” He hissed, punching the perplexed, brilliant creature that enthralled him.

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“You know, J. You might have been right about the Unicorn – his rainbows and pink, fluffy, mushy heart is contagious.” Anthony grumbled with humour, and Loki could hear a faint chuckle from Pneuma, which did not surprise him. Pneuma evolved completely, and he couldn’t wait to see what the plotting AI will do next. “It’s working to our advantage, though. The latest gift will fit nicely, provided I’ll manage to detonate it remotely.”

“Is this doubt I hear, sir?” Pneuma sassed Anthony.

“No doubt, J. Another opportunity to be creative, that’s all.” He murmured, engrossing in his work.

The time slowed, silence stretching. Anthony was content, smiling gently, while his hands were making a deadly weapon, and Loki could bask in the brilliance of his beloved mind, and warmth of his tentatively blooming heart undisturbed by double meanings and shady implications.

“Do you think they will come in the morning?” Anthony suddenly inquired, breaking the lull of peacefulness that settled over them.

“It’s highly probable, seeing how they’ve muted our cameras and are performing badly in front of them.” Pneuma answered.

“Hmm…” Anthony hummed, sadness taking the better of him.
“It’s not too late, Sir.” Pneuma said.

“It was too late, since I thought I can outrun him, buddy.” Anthony snarked, and the emotion became crushing.

“You can still tell him.” Pneuma argued.

“Yeah? And how do you imagine I do that – hey, babe, listen, your daddy is a cosmic fuck that used you for your entire life. He, also, tried to fuck your brain and when it didn’t work, like he wanted to, he sent you to Thanos, so bastard could finish his job. Not that I blame him. You’re one a hell of a weapon, and like the bastard that I am I simply cannot ignore the opportunities. So, you know, at one point I was pretty much willing to do the same with you. Simply, at this point, I’ve realised that you fucking healed me. You got inside and fixed the broken part. I feel again, and my heart will not allow me to screw you, not that I don’t want to…sometimes. Anyhow, they are coming after our asses tomorrow, so, you know, be prepared for the confrontation and then let’s raid Assgard and take the thingy from Odin. What thingy? A device that controls you still, obviously, and that I planned to steal, while you would be busy kicking Odin’s ass. I imagine it would go splendidly.” Anthony drawled sarcastically, and Loki simply could not process it.

“You are planning to *tell* him, Sir. Why not now?” Pneuma inquired.

“Because he will hate me Jarvis, and leave me. I, naturally, deserve it, but I’m a selfish man. I rather he kills me.” Anthony said calmly.

“You are cruel, Sir.” Pneuma accused, and it came as a slight surprise to Loki, since he thought Pneuma was always on Anthony’s side.

“I am, buddy, and I do not care. I will steal as much of his love as I can. Fuck it all, but that’s the only thing that I want – his love.”

“Pathetic.” Pneuma snorted.

“Tell me ‘bout it.” Anthony echoed in the same tone.

Loki stilled, as did the memory. The God could clearly see the pure torture painted on Anthony’s face. He looked miserable. Whatever Anthony felt for him was wrecking the man from the inside.

The God chuckled bitterly. He missed it. He didn’t stop to think about Anthony’s needs nor true feelings. He was possessed with his own grief and struggles, thus, he overlooked it all – the lies; the doubts; the change.

Anthony wanted to own him. Honestly, he couldn’t even be mad about it, because the man never actually lied to him. He told him so quite plainly himself, and it was only Loki’s problem that he interpreted it in his own way.

Naturally, Anthony is desiring love from him. His beloved always craved the most unattainable things. Plus, he was a genius. Loki’s love was a guarantee that the God will do anything to please. Absolutely anything.

He was played, and he was played well.

“I...lo...ve...you.” His beloved voice breached the agonising quietness. The words were weak and full of pain. Loki froze completely. He must have imagined it. “I love you.” Anthony repeated firmly. “I LOVE YOU!” He shouted, and the spell around the God broke. Loki saw in the corner of his eye a smirking mug of Mushu, which leaped out of him and into Anthony, who was staring at him, eyes
Haunted, the great blue wolf dissolving and drowning in his agony. “And I hate it!” He hissed, punching Loki with all his might. Loki swayed, shaking his head.

His traitorous, good-for-nothing heartless saviour broke him free again and was coming undone. Whatever aching Loki was feeling because of him, Anthony surely got it worse.

“I hate it!” He repeated, and launched at him. Loki laughed, catching his beloved and locked him in place.

“That’s a lie.” Loki said calmly, smirking at the man infuriatingly.

“Oh, your back.” His beloved remarked, visibly taking his emotions under control.

“Anthony…” Loki tried, but was interrupted.

“Not now.” It was Stark talking, and Loki sighed heavily. Probably it was for the best.

“I hope at least the rest is true.” Loki remarked acidly, but it did not have any effect on the man.

“It is.” The man said and moved, and Loki followed him devotedly.

Understandably, the cold logic behind Anthony’s brilliance robbed Loki the wrong way, and he couldn’t tell if he will be able to get pass it. However, the love he felt for Anthony Stark did not fade. It was constant, and the God guessed evergreen.

Chapter End Notes

Sparcina: Thank you. Well, yes, i think it does. :)

JaidusFlame: tssss! ;))))) Clever, clever creature :)

Dirtkid123: Awww, dear your reaction is precious :) Don't you worry, they'll be fine. I hope, anyway :)

Lokislonelylady: *blushing* aww, shocks. Cheers! Yeah, trusting after this will be a slight problem...

RagingCanadian: Here you go :)

Rhyfedd: It is, oh, so hard...but I must follow the one path...at least try to, anyway :)) Your comments help immensely, as per usual :) reminds me what I had originally in mind :)

Sade Hanssen (SadeMaxwell): masterpiece...*mumbles* Thank you *shy*
The problem with having a heart is that the logical part gets muddled. He couldn’t brag about not being impulsive or downright suicidal at times, but, at least, he had a solid argument as to why it happened.

Now – now there was no excuse, besides - love. It sounded foolish and degrading. His being was torn apart by guilt, shame, rage and disgust. He was trembling from fear and doubts, thinking and overthinking, focusing on unimportant parts, right when he was in the middle of a war zone, trying to tear down a fucking King of all Gods.

It was a sappy romantic boulevard story, the kind that Pepper loved to read. The cold-hearted protagonist finds his redemption, but is unable to recognised it in time and loses it all.

The only regret he had is that Loki did not rip his heart out. He desired to be rid of that throbbing, whining thing, and, may be, when this is over he’ll do just that- tears it out and gives it to the God. After all, he is the sole reason he has one.

“Anthony!” Loki called him, and he abhorred how his body perked up; the pleasure spreading inside him, poisoning his blood. It felt good. He disliked the reason behind it.

“Chill. I’m game.” Tony growled, forcing himself to focus on the battle.

Odin, for all he was old and cumbersome, gave them a run for their money. He became aware of the energies circling him, pushing back and keeping in place.

The crystals that Loki placed strategically around the throne room, harvested his power, while he was out of his mind. It was a sly and cruel way to use the God, but Loki could not deny that Tony’s distrust of his mental stability had paid off.

The All-father had no way out of it. He had lost the opportunity, blinded by his ego. However, Odin was a war God and he was not going down without a fight, placing a restraining spell on the runes. He will not escape the confinement, but, may be, if Fates have it, he’ll take one of them before he’s banished.

The mortal child, was toying and taunting, getting recklessly close to him, ignoring Loki’s warnings, and that was an opportunity. Odin could see in his eyes a wish to die, and he used that emotion to strike.

Tony got thoughtlessly close to the Gungnir, grinning madly. Loki’s heart froze at the sight. He cursed loudly, abandoning his line of attack and pushing the irresponsible idiot out of the way. The spear caught his shoulder, and spun him around. He saw Tony’s disappointed sneer, before dizziness overtook his sight. All-father caught him, holding in a tight grip, chocking. Loki struggled, but in vain, the Gungnir’s magic was cursing through his veins, keeping him subdued. His magic hissed
and trashed violently, pushing against restraints violently, cleaning his body swiftly. His vision returned quickly, as did the will to fight. He couldn’t lose this. Not now, not ever.

Tony was glaring at him full heartedly. Loki could read disdain and disapproval in his posture, and expression. It wounded Loki. Did Tony truly wished to be rid of the emotion so much he preferred death?

“I can’t let you go.” Loki mouthed, and flinched when the scowl intensified.

The All-father sniggered gleefully, squeezing his neck painfully, and drawled triumphantly:

“You’re a smart man. A truly great warrior. I never expected to see a mortal of such statue. It’s a pity we met under such dreadful circumstances, and that your great mind became poisoned by the Jotun’s weak heart.”

“It did not.” Stark stated coldly, and without further ado raised the gauntlet and fired.

Odin’s shocked face rivalled Loki’s surprised yelp. The repulsor blast was controlled, and reminded a laser beam, that burned through the Gods shoulders with ease, throwing them back.

Despite the throbbing pain and swimming consciousness, Loki could not deny the appeal of his truly callous intended. The violent chaos he unleashed and willed with ease impressed Loki’s darker side. It wounded his heart, nonetheless.

The God moaned and scrambled away from cursing Odin. The All-father strived to capture him, but the crystals, already, reached their full potential, sucking him dry and binding. The force field started closing in, and Loki barely had time to escape the prison.

“Would you have left me there!?” Loki accused, rasping. The God’s heart beat wildly, and he refused to believe that Anthony would do such a thing. A quick glance at his stony expression made him doubt it, though. Stark shrugged, his gaze indifferently scanning Loki’s fallen form.

“Don’t blame me for your miscalculation.” He commented dismissively. The God shivered, and turned his gaze to Odin, who was raging in the cage, reminding him of a deranged, wild beast.

Stark gave Loki a moment to enjoy the elder’s God failure and breath in the sweet fragrance of victory, before firing a subtly glowing cube, which upon the contact with the cage swallowed it.

“He is gone.” Loki whispered, staring at the empty space where the cage was standing but a moment ago.

“That was the plan.” Stark commented, pulling him roughly up. Loki hissed, pushing him off, and nearly falling again. Stark raised his hands up, still looking abnormally lifeless. “I guess you don’t want to die here, so, we need to move.”

“You won’t mind, though.” Loki growled poisonously.

“I learnt early in life that you cannot always get what you want.” Stark brushed him off, and strolled forward. Loki took a deep breath, concentrating on the healing, and banishing any acid comment he wanted to spew. Right now, he needed to keep a cool head if he wanted to get his Anthony back alive.

They creeped through the hallways, keeping to shadows. Odin’s magic followed him, leaving the palace hollow. The guards sensed that something was amiss and started fidgeting. The duo was near the main gates, when Thor spotted them. A lightning struck, stopping them dead on their tracks. Loki
cursed, turning around and prepared to face his brother head on.

“You were a bad kitten!” Sijur shouted tauntingly. Stark growled lividly next to him, and launched straight into the company. The bastard laughed, dancing away from the reckless, clumsy attack.

Loki cursed, blocking Thor’s hit. The sparks flew, and he was circled. The warriors three advancing, keeping him busy. Loki punched, throwing Thor off, and ducked under Sif’s blade kicking her in the back. She shrieked, losing her footing and bumped into approaching Thor. He growled, pushing her off, but Loki was already out of his range, braking Hogun’s arm, and stabbing Fandral, covering them with a poisonous net.

The warriors screamed, falling and squirming in agony. Thor’s face twisted in fury, and Loki allowed himself to smirk gleefully, beckoning the oaf to come closer. Thor snarled throwing Mjolnir. An evil chuckle escaped Loki, and he concentrated, creating a small portal before him. The hammer flew straight inside.

Thor emitted a surprised cry and launched at Loki, his gaze clouded by fury. Loki stood and stared, sniggering. Thor didn’t get far, his progress halted by Stark, who literally landed on him, bringing the God down.

He looked ferociously captivating, one foot planted on Thor’s back, the other holding his head pinned to the ground. Stark was looking at him, eyes burning with darkest desire, and threw Sijur’s head to his feet. It rolled, and stopped beside the soles of his boots. The permanent horror struck on the bastard’s features. Loki couldn’t tear his eyes away from it. His soul purring in satisfaction.

Thor tried to struggle, but Stark kicked him in the nape unceremoniously. The cracking sound and painful moan, brought Loki’s attention back to his beloved.

“Are you pleased?” Stark inquired, stepping off the limp body and walking towards him. Loki watched him carefully. He could barely recognise the man he has fallen in love with. This creature was shady and unpredictable. This creature, he realised, was what was left from Anthony.

“I am.” Loki answered, not denying the fact that he was monstrous as well. “Thank you.”

“My pleasure.” Stark hummed, mockingly bowing. “Shall we?” He offered, stretching his hand. Loki hesitated for a mere second, before taking it.

“Yes.”

The pair vanished in the air, seconds before the palace and Bifrost were taken down by the series of explosions. Asgard crumbling and burning down.

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The living room in the Malibu house was filled with ominous tension, two Gods staring at each other in dismay. Stark waiting for Loki to chew his head off and give him the boot, and Loki processing the two glaringly opposite parts of the man he has fallen in love with.

The silence was dragging, grating on their tired nerves, and, finally, Loki decided to break it. There was no point in stalling. He had to face it.

The God fetched the subjugating rune and tossed it to Stark. The man caught it, glancing at the object and putting it away.

“I guess this is my answer.” Loki sighed wearily.
“I guess it is.” Stark confirmed in a colourless tone.

“You won’t lie to me?” The God inquired, practically begged. Stark was worse than Sijur. He was crueler than Odin, and unfairer than Thor, but Loki loved him – truly and blindly. He desperately wished-for Stark to show a glimpse of his Anthony. He wanted him to say that it was a jest; a clever plan – whatever. He longed for him to say that he loved him, but from the dead stare he got he predicted it was too much to ask for.

“I never did, and I won’t start now. This is what I am Loki. Love or not, I will operate in a way I see fit, so if you cannot take it, I’ll understand. Trust me.” Stark reassured him levelly, and the God flinched.

“You played me.” Loki accused, but felt the wrongness of it. Stark did not. Loki told it himself to Pepper – the highest from of affection Stark could give was ownership.

“I gave you what you wanted, Loki. How you interpreted it was out of my control.” Stark argued, and God hissed.

“Or rather you didn’t care.”

“True.” Stark agreed. “Do you want to curse or hurt me before you leave? You may. I’ll not resist.”

“I’m not leaving you, Anthony.” Loki retorted vehemently. “You may be a dishonourable, coldblooded beast, but you’re my beast.”

Stark laughed. The sound hollow and empty, filled with bitterness and viciousness.

“Who said I am?” The man asked, and Loki supressed a shudder. Stark was in aggressive, safe mod. He tried to wiggle out of the situation. Loki assumed that if he leaves him now, Stark will get a confirmation of his theory and will kill his Anthony permanently. The God won’t allow it. He loved the man, and, frankly, the monster intrigued him too.

“I did. You did too, but will deny it.” The God countered. The man’s eyes hardened, mouth pressed in a thin line. Loki hit a nerve, and bit down a victorious smirk that threatened to bloom on his face.

“I can make you.” Stark said, with a grin, fetching the rune out and rolling it between the knuckles, mockingly.

“You can, yes.” The God confirmed, his feet getting cold, but he pushed pass the terror. Anthony was worth fighting for, and the beast was beginning to be tamed. “But it will further prove my point. Tell me, Anthony, why such an elaborated scheme if you don’t care?”

“Don’t be dull, Loki.” Stark brushed him off. “I love you, and I want to be free of the feeling. You, though, do not; and there lays the conflict.”

“Why? Have I demanded more than you can give Anthony?” Loki inquired, ignoring a tiny voice that screamed for him to run.

“You cannot be serious!” Stark bristled, a glimpse of his Anthony sparked through the indifference of brilliantly, logical mind.

“What if I am?” Loki challenged.

“Than Sijur was right. You’re nothing more but a whimpering slut, starving for attention.” Stark hit, and it hurt him immensely.
“Why did you kill him then? Why not enslave me, Anthony? I am but a mere weapon, am I not?”

The God growled.

“Are you not tired of repetition yet? ‘Cos I love you, I cannot do it…yet.” Stark retorted, but this time it came out irritatingly emotional.

“What are you afraid of, Anthony?” Loki asked softly, moving to touch him. Stark danced away from his touch, hiding the rune, and keeping a distance between them.

“There’s a long list of things – first that comes to mind – idiocy. Look at you. You had a chance to break free from everything – start a new life, carve yourself a place and instead you cling to a morally and emotionally dead, greedy abomination, ‘cos of some stupid emotion.” Stark argued, and the God saw reason in it. Anthony had a point, and Loki could move on and forget about this nightmare. He would love to do that too, someday, provided Stark would follow.

“Doesn’t it make you feel lucky, Anthony?” Loki purred, slowly creeping closer to the man, who watched him with a confused expression. “You have tamed the God. Look at me – how thoroughly ruined I am, desperate to be yours; willing to forgive anything if you stay.”

“You should hate me, Loki.” Anthony stated, not moving away this time, shivering from Loki’s touch. It felt glorious, and those emerald eyes were hypnotising him. He was hard-pressed to believe it was happening. Loki was staying – it wasn’t possible.

“I should, yes. But I can’t. I love you.” The God murmured, brushing their lips, snaking his arms around him and holding him in place; soaking in warmth and safety.

“And what we forget about it and never talk?” Tony tried to rebuke, but he was weak. Loki was giving him exactly the thing he was craving – love, and he couldn’t brush it off. It was near to impossible to stay on track, when every cell in his body was reaching for the God.

“No, beloved. I’ll make you pay for what you have done, and I’ll break you; tame you, carve my name on your skin, so you can’t ever deny my ownership…but, it’ll be tomorrow, tonight I will show you why it’s worth to be mine.” Loki murmured, claiming his lips in a gentle kiss. Tony moaned, trying to bite him and press closer, but Loki didn’t give him such opportunity.

The God spread him out on the coach, and Tony was sure the fucker drugged him with magic, because despite his brain saying that he should put up a fight, his body was pliant under Loki’s magical, wonderful hands.

Those skilful digits were pressing the right buttons with deadly precision, and in no time, Tony admitted that between two of them, he was a slut. The pleasure was melting his resolve to push Loki away. He couldn’t find any legitimate reason to deny himself such ecstasy, and, since, he was a selfish creature he gave in.

The God accused him of playing, but he was the one who won in the end. Tony will hate himself tomorrow, and probably a week after it, and a month, and a year, but to leave Loki…No.

“I hate you.” Tony hissed, his voiced soaked in delight, arching into the soft caress that was worshiping his body skilfully.

“It’s a lie.” The mirthful voice purred next to him, catching his lustful, devastated gaze. “Is it safe to presume you will stay?” Loki asked, mouthing his skin, making him tremble with want, his cock leaking and twitching, demanding some kind of action. Tony bit his lip, and forced his head to shake. The enthralling God chuckled at him amusedly, trailing his skin with soft, teasing pecks. Tony
moaned, squirming beneath him.

“Please…” Have fallen from his lips – strangled and pathetic. He shivered, when the chuckle vibrated through him and relished at the soft bite. However, the God didn’t feel merciful, showering his tights with attention, but ignoring the rest. Tony whined, bucking his hips up, but was stopped. A cool, familiar hand pinning him to the coach, gently, but firmly.

Loki encouraged him to spread his legs, and Tony did not hesitate, vibrating from suppressed urges. He wanted to bite, and to scrap, and to violate – this meekness, sweetness was killing him.

But the God had his own plans, which did not include any satisfaction of his dirty, primal urges. Loki was loving him, and no matter what lies Tony told himself – this he couldn’t ignore. Loki spread him slowly, taking care to notice every puff, gasp and reluctant moan; a tremble; a subtle arch. He was dissecting him; learning how to elicit a response and break a fire-wall.

“Loki…” Tony called, his voice haunted. He was scared – petrified. The wall that he built, crumbled and reality started to sip inside. He loved and abhorred it. “Loki!” He called again, urgently, his voice trembling. The God leaned in, and Tony could focus his panicking being on the stunning emerald, that never failed to spellbind him.

“Yes?” The God inquired, his gaze warm and considerate.

“Don’t leave me.” Tony demanded, through a whimper and ignored his screaming muscles, embracing the God and pulling him closer.

The God smiled against his neck, accommodating his desire; nudging his legs further apart to comfortably fit between. Tony gasped when Loki pushed inside him. He secretly adored the feeling. It made him feel whole. The God groaned, searching for his lips, to kiss him maddeningly gentle.

He allowed it, wrapping his legs around the lean body, and pressing him closer. Loki moaned into his mouth, breaking the kiss.

“Beloved?” He asked, his voice tight with passion.

“A second. Let me cherish it.” Tony pleaded, squeezing his eyes tightly shut and engraving the memory on his brain-cells. This is what he wanted to part from. This is how stupid he is.

Loki moved, rocking slowly, like waves. Tony gasped, tentatively meeting his moves, trying to catch the new rhythm. The emotions were building between them. Tony could read the God’s dreams and desires in every push and pull. He wanted eternity. He wanted him, like he is. It was an idea Tony did not consider, and, yeah…He’d…like that.

The stars started twinkling before his gaze, long before the physical release caught him. He saw cosmos, myriads of opportunities and they all had a distinctive emerald glow.

“You have me.” He confessed, staring at his God reverently. “I don’t know why you want me, but you got me.” He repeated, loving the blinding, pleasure soaked smile he received.

“Good.” The God purred, slipping inside the dark territory. It seemed Loki’s beast had enough of mushy, as well. Stark had no objections to that.

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Loki woke-up early in the morning, to meet up with guarded brown eyes, that were staring at him with a haunted expression. The God did not like the look, but, at least, it was Anthony who was
staring at him, and he counted it as a win.

The man kept staring at him for some time more, seemingly oblivious to him being awake, and Loki didn’t dare to break the silence. He stared and stared, making the God highly uncomfortable. Loki was desperately wishing to know what was happening behind those gorgeous pools of brown, but Anthony did not betray any emotion.

Finally, the man moved, turning away and taking something from a bed table. He then returned his attention back to Loki and presented him a tiny, crystal box, with what looked, like grey ashes in it. Loki watched curiously, before taking and opening it.

“What is it?” The God inquired, touching the dust. It felt powerful, but the magical knots were mutilated beyond repair.

“It’s the rune. I’ve no need in it. It broke.” Tony commented nonchalantly, if not a little petulantly. Loki’s eyes shot up to spot a childish grin on the man’s face.

“Broke?” Loki echoed, uncomprehending. The material was not in any way easy to destroy, not to say that incantation was designed to protect the rune from crumbling.

“Mhmh.” Tony hummed. “But it changes nothing. I’m what I’m.” He insisted, and Loki chuckled, shaking his head. The man was highly illogical, and cowardly, but he will not point it out. Loki knew before it won’t be easy with him.

“So, you accidently broke the device that can wield one of the most powerful weapons in Nines?” The God teased and noted that it didn’t felt half as bitter this morning.

“Yes, I did, and I’m not proud of it, so, I’d appreciate if you keep it a secret.” Tony demanded. Loki laughed.

“I don’t know. I’m a God of lies, after all. My promises mean little.”

“Then there’s nothing to do, but watch you.” Tony offered, moving to the God, who readily embraced him, holding close.

“I’m afraid that’s the only option.” Loki murmured, kissing the crown of his head.

“I’ll adjust…somehow.” Tony promised, gently biting Loki’s neck.

“You have no choice either way, beloved.” Loki purred, squeezing him possessively. The man nodded, getting himself comfortable and dozing off. Loki smiled, threading his fingers through Anthony’s hair gently. He was impossible and a hand-full, but falling in love with him was the best decision Loki had ever made.

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