Within the Frost of My Heart

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Summary

After rejecting King Thrym's advances for marriage one too many times, Loki is forced into marriage with a brutish outcast on their realm as punishment; the quarter-Aesir Thor Odinson.

Loki believes that the life that awaits him is a cruel one; one where his autonomy as a being is stripped away, and he is forced to live a life of pain and suffering.

Only... Thor is none of the things that he has been made out to be by their people.

And Loki couldn't help but slowly become enthralled by him.

Notes

Hello!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Here is a concept I've been working on for some time, ever since Marvel released the idea of having a Jotun Thor. This is my spin on it, and what it would be like. Before we begin, there's some vocabulary in here that you should be made aware of. I explain it when these words appear in the story of course, but I'm also putting it here in the notes.
Niouvi- What the intersex giants of Jötunheim are called.
Beberi- What mothers of Jötunheim are called
Deneri- What fathers of Jötunheim are called
Psemetri- Councilmen on Jötunheim
Jötun- Frost Giants
Cuetrati- The religious leaders of Jötunheim
Llugem- Horse-like animals on Jötunheim
Jetoni- "my love", an affectionate nickname that husbands are called
Aberi- "my love", an affectionate nickname that wives are called

ALSO

1. All of the words in here that are unfamiliar to you like "Niouvi" or "Jetoni" or "Beberi" are all made up lol. They're not words of Nordic origin in the slightest. I just use them for this story, as I feel it makes it interesting and more realistic or tangible in a way. That's why the tag of "fake words" is in the tags.

2. "Seidr" is the Nordic word for magic. I see it a lot in other fanfictions so originally I didn't explain what it was, but because it will be appearing a lot in later chapters, I wanted to explain what it was.

3. Thor and everyone else refers to Odin as Thor's "father" and not "Deneri" because Odin identifies as an Aesir in this story, and is viewed as an Aesir. Hope that's not too confusing. Just lmk in the comments and I'll explain further if need be.

See the end of the work for more notes
Chapter One

The only memory that Thor had of his father was accompanied by the scar on his chest.

It was a large scar; one that sprouted from the center of his chest and expanded outwards like a drop of paint upon a blank canvas.

And it had taken almost a century to recover from.

In the idle moments of Thor’s life -the ones where the days and the weeks and the months flew by in the blink of an eye, merging together into one long nightmare- horrid memories of his father and that dreadful day, returned to him.

Some days it felt as if these memories consumed him, drowning him in an ocean of darkness that he couldn't understand.

Other days -although they were rare- he managed lift his head above the surface of this dreadful existence that he was living, sucking in a large breath of light before he was dragged back down into the dark depths again.

But mornings like this, the ones where he was the only one awake in his home, and the feelings of yesterday washed over him, were difficult.

Thor didn’t know much about his father except for the fact that his name was Odin, that he was half Jötun, and was also the current ruler of Asgard.

One would think that being the son of the King of the Nine Realms would mean he would be living in the lap of luxury.

One would think that this meant that he would never want or need for a thing in his entire life. That he lived everyday like a god, with servants at his every beck and call.

But he didn’t.
Instead he lived as an outcast on his realm, the sorrows and grief from yesterday welling deep within his soul.

It was an indescribable and almost unbearable burden; a burden that he wouldn’t wish on his worst enemy.

He had been told by his mother that his father had been raised on Asgard, and that they met on one of Odin’s diplomatic trips to Jötunheim.

He had also been told that his father abandoned he and his mother for the throne of Asgard when Thor was a young child. He learned when he was older that his father had lied to his mother; spoke to her of a future where she would be his queen on Asgard. A future where Thor would be his heir.

He learned early on not to trust his father's empty promises.

He had been told so many stories, heard so many accounts, and witnessed first hand how cruel his father was, so Thor couldn’t understand for the life of him why his people still believed him to be loyal to his father.

The people of his village were kind; they loved him and respected him just like they would any other Jötun. Of course, he was forbidden to court them, and although heartbreaking, he understood it was because they didn’t want to sully their bloodlines with Aesir blood.

But outside of his small village, he was regarded as an Aesir. He was viewed as untrustworthy. He was viewed as an abomination; someone that shouldn’t even exist.

Jötnar outside of his village refused to touch him or speak to him unless absolutely necessary, and when he walked in the streets, giants grabbed their wives and hid their children.

Of course, becoming a mercenary didn’t help his reputation.

Because of his success as this, he was now known and regarded as a monster too.
Just like his father.

He shook his head to clear these unsavory thoughts from his mind, and stood up, leaving his room and heading to his family’s shared bathroom.

After his mother passed away, his aunt and uncle took him in, and raised him as their own. When he wasn’t away on an assignment, he oftentimes helped out on his family’s farm, delivering the produce to the market each week.

This week was no different.

He went through the motions of harvesting the particular crop section for the week, and packed it into the wooden carriage, hitching one of the Llugem to it. Llugem were large beasts that were used in Jötunheim that were akin to the horses on Asgard, and could accommodate the large size of Jötnar. Of course, they were also stronger and faster than the horses of Asgard too.

Thor found himself wondering if his life would always be resorted to menial tasks like this; only here to serve and protect others.

Nodding at the passing villagers politely, Thor made his way to the village’s market, and delivered the produce for the week, trying his best to ignore the foreboding feeling he had in his chest.

He felt as if today was a day that would change his life forever, and... he couldn’t shake the feeling that his menial life would no longer remain that way.

Thor’s fears were confirmed when he returned home from the market, and noticed that royal envoys were at his door.

He couldn’t ignore the distressed look on his uncle’s face as he approached their cottage, and frowned, urging the Llugem he was riding to a stop. “Uncle.”

Thor’s uncle sighed, beckoning for him to follow them. “Hello, Nephew. Our king has sent a message for you.”
Thor climbed off of the Llugem and approached the king’s envoys warily, trying to ignore the way they regarded him in contempt. “What is the king’s message?”

Seeing the king’s personal envoys so far out from the palace unnerved Thor, and put him on edge.

Whatever the king wanted, it wasn’t good.

One of the king’s envoy’s unrolled a long scroll with the king’s message on it, and began to relay it.

“King Thrym has searched far and wide for a suitable bride for one of the realm’s most… reliable mercenaries. And he is pleased to say that he has found a renowned Niouvi. King Thrym requests an audience tomorrow afternoon. Once you reach the palace you shall be escorted to the royal throne room, where you will be introduced to your Niouvi bride. Good day, Aesir.”

What?

Before Thor could ask any questions for clarification, the royal envoys directed their Llugem to depart, and he could only watch in confusion as he was left alone and behind.

His uncle seemed to be just as confused as he was, and the pair stared at the departing envoys for some time, utterly perplexed.

“Luiren? Thor? What did the king want?” An older giantess opened the door- Thor’s aunt- poking her head outside to see what all the commotion was.

Thor’s uncle sighed and shook his head, turning around and beckoning for Thor to follow him. “We’ll speak of this inside, Haela. This isn’t something the neighbors should know.”

Thor’s aunt looked worried, and tucked a section of her long copper hair behind her ear, holding open the door for them. “Hurry in, then. There’s already enough gossip as there is.”

The trio made their way to the dining room table and sat down, thankful that the young children were still asleep.
“The king has decided that I am to marry a “renowned” Niouvi, and has requested my presence in his throne room tomorrow.” Thor explained, once they had settled themselves at the table.

His aunt’s eyes widened in shock. “Norns have mercy… a Niouvi ?”

Niouvi made up about 25% of their population on Jötunheim and were usually born into wealthy families and the elite circles of society. The fact that the king had decided that Thor was to marry a Niouvi concerned Thor greatly. Their king was a terrible giant, and was known far and wide for his tyrannical tendencies.

There had to be a catch to this.

“This must be a punishment,” murmured Thor, beginning to feel sorry for the Niouvi that the king was forcing him to marry. “Anyone who marries me will be subjected to the same treatment… they’ll lose their status in the kingdom.”

Thor’s aunt and uncle shared a mournful look, knowing that Thor spoke the truth. No Jötun wanted their bloodlines to be sullied with… unsavory genetics. And because Thor was not a full-blooded Jötun, he’d accepted long ago that he would never marry, never have children, and never have a family to call his own.

But to hear that he was to be married -and to a Niouvi at that- did not make him happy. He knew it would be a loveless, strife-filled marriage, and would just add to the stressors of his life.

“Where will this Niouvi live? I’m certain that they’re used to more… finer things in life.” sighed his aunt, looking around their quaint cottage.

“Well they’ll have to get used to this type of life.” grunted his uncle. “I’m sure they did enough wrong to be deserving of this… misfortune .”

It hurt Thor to hear that being joined to him was a misfortune, but it was true. That’s exactly what this situation was.
He tried his best to finish helping around his family’s farm for the rest of the day, and retired to his room early, wanting to be alone with his thoughts.

He’d heard the stories that circulated around the realm about him; it was hard not to.

And over time he’d learned to develop a thick skin.

But he’d be lying if he said that the cruel words of his people didn’t hurt. And he’d be lying even more if he said that he didn’t wish he could live a normal life. One without the shame of being something that he could not control.

He oftentimes found himself wondering why his mother chose to deal the scrutiny that having a child with someone who wasn’t a full blooded Jötun brought.

Did she really love his father that much?

“Cousin Thor?”

A gentle smile spread across Thor’s face at the sound of his small cousin’s voice, thoughts of his heritage leaving his head.

“What is it, Tulla? You’re supposed to be asleep.” He scolded her.

Thor’s youngest cousin laughed and ran over to his bed, looking up at him. “I can’t sleep.”

Thor pretended to be annoyed with her and rolled his eyes. “Then I suppose you can sleep here. But only for tonight.”

Tulla cheered and climbed onto Thor’s bed, nestling under the covers and into his side. “Cousin Thor?”
“Yes, Tulla?”

“Beberi said that you have to speak to the king tomorrow.”

Thor frowned slightly at this. “Yes, Tulla.”

“How come?”

“Because… because the king has someone that he wants me to marry.”

Tulla perked up here, getting excited for Thor. “Who is she?” She gasped then, more excited for Thor than anyone. “Is she a princess?”

The naivety and innocence that his cousin still had hurt his heart. “No, Tulla. They’re a Niouvi.”

Tulla gasped loudly, sitting up in bed. “Does that mean you get to live in the castle?”

This was something that Thor hadn’t even considered. “I… am not sure, Tulla. Now go to sleep. You have your lessons in the morning.”

Tulla pouted but nestled against Thor’s warm side, trying to fall asleep. “I hope your new wife is really nice. Beberi said that I can’t have a new baby brother, but maybe I can have a new baby cousin?!”

It hurt Thor’s heart even more to hear this. It was a painful reminder that this marriage would just be a sham, existing only to punish the unlucky bastard who was to be married to him.

Although he didn’t believe that it would change anything about his situation, Thor sent a silent prayer off to the Norns before falling asleep.

He prayed at that moment that they’d grant him one wish, and… finally allow him to be happy.
Loki looked down at the old spell book on the podium before him, using seidr to turn to the correct page for the spell he was hoping to cast.

Transmutation had always been a simple spell for him, but the act of trying to turn an inanimate object into a living, breathing being—someone who was able to remain in that state indefinitely at that—was harder.

The longest he’d been able to keep this spell up for was a month, and he thought that he finally figured out what he’d done wrong this time.

Closing his eyes, Loki waved his hand and slowly began to chant, knowing that saying the words out loud until he got more comfortable with the spell would only help him.

Finally content with the seidr he’d built up within, he shot the cumulation of it at a cup, smiling proudly when the cup became a small calico kitten.

The kitten began to mew, so Loki walked over to it and picked it up, using seidr to do a quick scan of its body, making sure that every major organ system was there and functioning as it should.

Satisfied with his findings, Loki set the small kitten down at his feet and summoned some food for it, wondering if it’d be able to eat.

He made sure to record the findings of all of his experiments in one of his numerous journals, as he didn’t want to make the same mistake twice.

He hated wasting time.

Before he could record the findings of his research for this experiment, a sharp, abrupt knock on his central door interrupted him, and he frowned, using seidr to place his journal, inkwell and quill down on a nearby table and striding towards the door.
He let it be known to everyone in the palace that he did not want to be bothered on his years off from his political duties, so he couldn’t understand for the life of him why he was being bothered now.

Someone had better be dying.

He unlocked the doors of his vast suite in the castle, crossing his arms and staring up at the court envoy before him. “What?”

The envoy bowed low for Loki before explaining himself. “King Thrym requests your presence at once, Psemetri Loki.”

Loki frowned slightly and stepped outside, closing his doors and using seidr to lock them before following the envoy.

He had an idea about what King Thrym wanted from him, and was not looking forward to speaking to the king at all.

On their realm, there were three types of giants. Those who could carry life, those who could help create it, and those that could do both. The “giants” who could do both were oftentimes much smaller than the rest of their race, but few were as small and as beautiful as Loki. The “giants” who could carry life and also help create it were called Niouvi, and were often treasured and adored upon in their culture, found most often than not dressed in the finest of clothes and adorned in the rarest of jewels.

They were called many names -none of them derogatory- but litla fegurð was a common one. It translated to little beauty, and was often used to show adoration and appreciation to these smaller Jötnar.

Loki usually basked in all of the attention and privileges that being a Niouvi brought him, and used being a Niouvi to get to the position of Psemetri –councilman– that he was in today.

But there were also times –although rare– that Loki hated being a Niouvi. The king of the Jötnar was married to a few dozen Niouvi, and had even more children, but had recently set his sights on Loki during last century’s seidr exhibition, where all seidr users on their realm gathered to share spells, tips, and exhibit their skills.
He’d been amazed at how quick Loki was at learning and memorizing things, and immediately offered for Loki to become one of his Niouvi queens, in the hopes that they would bear strong and intelligent children, but Loki refused, saying that he was not ready to settle down in the slightest.

Loki did his best to politely reject the offers for marriage every time they were brought up, but he feared that one day his autonomy in the situation would be taken away, and he’d be forced to marry the king and bear his children.

The envoy walked Loki to the king’s court—Loki really could’ve teleported them, but he did not want to greet the king faster than necessary—and during their long walk, Loki made sure to mentally prepare himself for meeting the king yet again. He had a bad feeling that these last few minutes he had to himself would be his last moments of freedom, and he couldn’t erase the foreboding feeling that the day he feared most was upon him.

They made it to the king’s throne room after a few minutes of walking, and Loki was surprised to see that one of the king’s Niouvi queens were not at his side. He usually had at least three of them with him while he sat at the throne.

Bowing low, Loki sent a quick prayer up to the Norns, praying that they didn’t let the king strip away his freedom. “My King.”

King Thrym waved a flippant hand, signaling for the envoy and Loki to rise. He turned to look at the envoy, waving his hand dismissively. “You may go.”

He waited for the envoy to leave before looking down at Loki, a smug smile on his face. “It is to my understanding that you wish to not be troubled with on your years off?”

Loki refused to look the king in the eye. “Yes, My King.”

“Does the King of the Jotnar requesting your presence trouble you?”

Loki plastered a fake smile onto his face. “Never, My King.”

King Thrym laughed before standing up and walking over to Loki’s side. “You always know the
right thing to say, Loki.” He commented, gazing at him with a glimmer of fondness in his eye.

Loki looked away when the king reached out and took his face in his large, blistered hands.

“Look at me, Loki.”

Loki warily moved his eyes to his king, trying to not let his discontent be shown.

“You look at me with such disdain in your eyes.” The king chuckled softly. He let go of Loki’s face, and returned to his throne. “I grow weary of waiting for you to say yes to me, of your own volition.”

Loki was silent for a few seconds, quickly thinking of an answer that wouldn’t get him killed. “I am unsure of what to say, My King.”

The king sat back down, a cruel smile on his face. “I think a Niouvi like you needs to be put in their place. You’ve grown too confident and secure.”

Loki cocked his head. “...I beg your pardon, My King?”

King Thrym took a moment to regard Loki before laughing to himself.

Loki hated the way his king’s voice sounded. It was a cacophony of sound, sound that was like gravel upon a blade, like glass being scraped against metal, and Loki couldn’t stand it, always shuddering when the king spoke to him.

“You seem confused, Niouvi. Why?”

Loki’s nostrils flared in annoyance, and he tried his best to calm down. This was still his king, and as angry as he was, he still valued his life. “I... struggle to understand your decree, My King.”

King Thrym raised a pierced eyebrow at his subject. “Have I not made myself clear? You’re being punished.”
Loki widened his eyes in indignation, and it took everything in him to remain respectful. “...Punished, My Lord?”

King Thrym moved to rest his chin on his closed fist. “Yes.”

“I’ve done nothing but remain loyal and faithful to you, My King. I use my gift of seidr to better the kingdom and the crown, I am a dutiful Psemetri, and I wait on you hand and foot. What have I done?” Loki’s statements seemed to fall out of his mouth as he tried to defend himself to the king, and he hoped that at least one of these statements would help appease the king.

“You continue to reject my advances, Loki. And I grow tired of waiting. Your suffering will mean more to me than your love and affection.”

“My King! I-”

King Thrym growled low in his throat, heavily displeased that Loki was defying him. “You have the gall to raise your voice at me?”

Loki immediately averted his gaze and lowered his head. “...My apologies, My King.”

King Thrym grew displeased by Loki’s outburst, and he stood up to his full height, stalking towards the proud Niouvi again.

Without speaking he reached out with a strong hand and grabbed Loki’s face, forcing his face up towards him.

Loki continued to avert his gaze from the king, refusing to speak.

“I bet you’re wondering what I’m going to do to you.” The King said to him in a low tone, gripping his face tighter, his nails digging into Loki’s cheeks.

Loki continued to look away from his king still, not admitting to anything. Their king thrived on
inciting fear in others.

“I could demand that you marry me. And not give you a choice in the matter.”

Loki took in a sharp breath, finally looking at the king in horror. “I could force you to marry me, and bear me child after child. I could have you locked up in the dungeons. I could make it so that you were banished, or never able to practice seidr again. I could do anything I want to you, and no one would stand against me. No one.”

The king let out a long sigh then, looking down at Loki with minute pity. “I have waited- waited for the day to come that you would realize the gift of freedom that I have bestowed upon you. But it seems that my kindness has spoiled you rotten.”

The sunlight piercing through the many windows of the throne room blinded Loki’s vision as he tried to hold the king’s stare. “I can wait no longer, dear Loki. It is time that I rid you from my grasp and throw you into an even worse hell than being my bride. Maybe this will teach you to appreciate the freedom that I have given you as a Niouvi.”

When Loki remained quiet still, King Thrym let go of his face and turned back around, motioning with his head at a guard.

“Bring him in.”

Loki’s heart began to race when he realized that he had no idea what the king had planned for him, and he began to silently pray to the Norns that his smart mouth wouldn’t get him killed tonight.

To his complete and utter shock instead, a very infamous Jötun walked into the throne room instead.

One that he did not expect to see.

King Thrym shot a smug smile over at the pair, nodding again at the guards in the room. “You may go.”
Both guards nodded and left the throne room, leaving the three Jötun behind.

Loki took a moment to observe the Jötun next to him before the king spoke again.

Next to him was the fabled Thor, the bastard son of Odin. The Jötun was a quarter Aesir, hence his common moniker, “Aesir.”

The Jötun stood out not only because of his unique, golden blond hair, but because of his piercing blue eyes.

He was tall like a Jötun, and was built like one, but he didn’t seem to have the familial etchings that were found on the skin of a full-blooded Jötun.

Thor was very notorious amongst their people for being the son of Odin, and many Jötun didn’t trust him because of it.

So to see him today, right next to him, alarmed him. Loki had no idea what the king was planning.

Thor was known far and wide across the realm as a brute, one who was ruthless and infamous for killing hundreds in cold blood.

The giant had quite the infamous reputation.

Loki felt shivers travel down his spine as he began to recall countless stories he had heard of the murderous Jötun that stood next to him. It was as if someone had pricked his skin with needles the moment he heard Thor’s footsteps enter the room.

The giant’s footsteps were loud and foreboding to Loki. Each step had created a sound that reverberated throughout the room, and Loki hated to admit that the sound struck fear in his heart.

He swallowed nervously then, his nails beginning to tear into the palms of his hand. Loki didn’t fear much in his life, but… to know that this Aesir would play a role in his fate scared him.
King Thyrm watched the large Jötun cautiously, wondering briefly if having Loki marry this brute would be too cruel of a punishment. He smiled once he saw the coldness in Thor’s eyes though, and knew that this would be no mistake.

Yes.

This would be a fitting match for the disobedient Niouvi.

“You’ve called for me, My King?” murmured Thor, bowing low respectfully.

Loki shuddered at the sound of Thor’s voice.

It was deep.

And void of emotion.

Loki actually found himself wincing at the sound of Thor’s voice. He had never heard anything sound so… empty.

“Yes,” mused King Thrym. “I have.”

Thor then shifted his gaze over to Loki, examining the Jötun for a moment.

“Thor. I’d love to finally introduce you to your Niouvi bride; Loki Laufeyson.”

Both Thor and Loki balked at the pronouncement, staring at the king in disbelief.

“...I’m sorry?”

The king laughed, obviously pleased with himself. “I have decided that you two are to be joined together.”
Loki felt himself growing ill, and he didn’t know if he wanted to accept the king’s original offer, or beg for another punishment.

Loki didn’t want to get married.

Ever.

And he sure as hell didn’t want kids.

Being married to someone who wasn’t a full-blooded Jötun would tarnish Loki’s good name, it would soil his bloodline, it would ruin any chances that he had at maintaining the respect that he had worked so diligently for, and he wasn’t sure how to process all of this newfound information.

“When, My King?” Loki managed to ask, his voice trembling with thinly veiled horror.

King Thrym seemed delighted that Loki was even more bothered by this than he imagined.

His plan was working beautifully.

“In a decade’s time.”

Loki froze, beginning to break out in a cold sweat. “So soon, My King?”

The king seemed to be pleased with himself for making this decision, and his smile only grew, unnerving Loki to no end.

“I want every Psemetri in the realm in attendance for this undoubtedly grand event, so it can not be arranged to occur any sooner than that, unfortunately.” The king sent a mirthful smile Loki’s way. “It’ll be the wedding of the millennium.”

Loki tried to calculate how long it would take for him to up and leave the castle, and he wondered
if he could truly live a life on the run to avoid this impending marriage.

“If you flee, I will find you, Loki.”

Loki snapped his eyes up to the king, horrified.

Their king was the strongest user of seidr on their realm, and Loki knew without a shadow of a doubt that their king would not rest until he saw Loki suffer until his dying days.

Their king was a ruthless giant, one who cared for no one but himself, and he would stop at nothing to punish Loki for rejecting his advances.

So the fact that the king was marrying Loki off to a mindless brute like Thor, did not surprise him.

Loki could only imagine the life he would live now that he was to be married to Thor. Being beaten every morning, and raped every night, forced to produce child after child after child. He would be locked away in Thor’s cabin in the outskirts of the city in the forest, hidden from everyone, and not allowed to speak to anyone but him.

He’d be forced into a role of servitude and solitude until his dying days, and it was this realization that made Loki grow ill.

His freedom was gone.

“What do you think of this, Aesir?”

Thor had been silent ever since the King’s proclamation and Loki could not pinpoint any emotion coming from the giant.

Finally, an answer came, and it was one that sent a foreboding dread through Loki’s core. “Whatever you ask of me shall be done, My King.”

King Thrym chuckled to himself, his eyes shifting back to Loki. The Niouvi had gone gray, and
was barely holding himself together.

“I am sure that you’re aware your living arrangements will have to change.”

Loki snapped his head up towards the king, wondering what horrors the wretched giant had planned for him.

“You are no longer permitted to live within the castle, Psemetri Loki. From this day forward, you are required to reside with your betrothed.”

Loki felt as if his entire life was falling apart around him when their king said this. Everything that he had worked so hard for, his name, his titles, his sovereignty, was gone.

Everything he ever knew and love, everything that he could ever call his own, was being ripped from his grasp in a matter of seconds, and he hated the fact that the king was reveling in his suffering.

“And Thor?”

Thor sent a steady gaze towards their king. “Yes, My King?”

“Loki is to obey every word from your lips. Every command, every order, every request, is to be honored by Loki. If he disobeys you even once, please report it to me, and he will be punished accordingly.”

Thor was silent for a moment, which only put Loki more on edge.

Finally, Thor let out a gruff breath, and answered their king. “Yes, My King.”

King Thrym seemed satisfied with Thor’s answer, and waved his hand flippantly. “There is nothing left to discuss. You’re both dismissed.”

Loki found himself needing a moment to process everything, and because he didn’t know exactly
where Thor lived, he couldn’t just teleport away.

Instead, he snapped his fingers quickly, using seidr to teleport him and Thor to his personal suite in the castle.

Thor seemed confused for a few seconds but remained silent, looking around Loki’s suite. It was quite impressive. He expected nothing less from the King’s favored Niouvi.

Loki’s living room had to be at least twice the size of Thor’s family’s cottage, and he looked around a bit more, trying to get a sense of who his betrothed was through the designs in his suite, and the objects it held.

Without speaking, Loki stalked over to one of his couches in his living room and collapsed upon it, unable to stop the tears that were threatening to spill from his eyes. He let out a shuddered breath then, raking fingers throughout his long, silken black hair, and trying to process the events that had just unfolded.

An hour ago, he had been free. He had been free, and was doing what he loved most. And now…

Now he had nothing.

He felt the tears in his eyes begin to spill over the rims of his eyelids, and he took in a shaky breath, trying his best to force those tears away. But no matter how hard he tried, the tears streamed down his face.

The last thing he wanted to do was cry in front of Thor. The giant would most likely exploit his weakness, his fears, and this was the last thing Loki wanted.

He felt his chest begin to cave in and a matter of seconds he felt his shoulders heave.

Everything in him wanted to cry in his bed, and he wanted to scream and sob and throw things, smash all his windows, but he knew he couldn’t.

He didn’t want to do anything that would make his new life even worse. And although he didn’t
know much about Thor, what he did know about him he didn’t like.

He’d heard that the giant was a man of few words.

He knew that people hid their wives, their children, their families, from him when he walked the city streets. And he knew that he was notorious as a mercenary in their realm.

He also had heard that Thor had quite the temper, and it was this that terrified him the most. He had never been taken advantage of or had his consent taken away from him in his entire life, so to know that tonight could end with that happening… it terrified him.

Loki decided right then and there that he refused to be subservient. And he refused to just sit by and let himself be violated and abused. He was a powerful seidr user, and if push came to shove, he would defend himself.

He remembered King Thrym’s cruel words then, and realized that something even worse than being raped or beaten could be in store for him if he disobeyed what Thor commanded him to do, and lost all hope in his situation.

There would be pain and suffering no matter what decision he made.

“I’m not sure that all of your things will fit in my cottage, Niouvi.”

Loki snapped his gaze over to Thor, hearing the deep gravel of his voice, and trying his best to not let his fear become apparent.

“Okay.”

When Thor didn’t reply for some time, Loki looked away, wondering what was going through his head.

It seemed like they stayed in Loki’s suite for hours, neither of them speaking, and this only scared Loki more and more, Thor’s inaction causing thoughts and fears to run rampant through his mind.
Finally when the sun began to set, Thor moved to sit across from Loki on the opposite couch, sighing.

“Would you like to pack enough things to get through the night and the morning? We can return tomorrow and determine what to do with your belongings, Niouvi.”

Loki closed his eyes and shuddered, nodding fervently. “Okay.”

He didn’t know how he did it, but he managed to stand up and wave his hand, using seidr to pack enough things to get him through the night and the morning.

Once everything was packed, he forced himself to look up at Thor. “I am ready.”

Thor nodded, standing up and walking over to Loki’s front door, attempting to open it. When it didn’t move, Loki waved his hand, using seidr to unlock it.

He wasn’t sure where to go, so he followed Thor throughout the castle with his head down, unable to look at anyone.

He could feel the pity from the eyes of the others, and knew that if he happened to make eye contact, he would break down.

He felt numb inside, and it wasn’t until Thor led him to the Llugem stables that he began to sweat nervously in anticipation.

The stable keeper gave Loki a confused onceover, but remained quiet, minding his business. He instead followed Thor’s instructions to fetch his Llugem, and handed the reins to the Jötun.

“Do you need help?”

Loki wished he could run away at this moment. But he knew that Thrym was serious about his threat.
“No.” he murmured, his voice barely audible.

He managed to climb onto the large beast, and tried his best not to shudder when Thor climbed on after and sat behind him, grabbing the reins. He wasn't expecting Thor to sit this close to him, much less, ride on the same Llugem. Loki felt his heart begin to beat faster in his chest, and his sweaty palms held onto the reins for dear life.

Thor’s village was only an hour away from the capital city of Central, and by then Loki had accepted that he would be violated tonight in some way, shape, or form.

Because Niouvi could control when they ovulated, Loki wondered briefly if he should do this before reaching Thor’s home. He had no idea what Thor wanted from him, and found a single tear falling from his eye.

He quickly wiped it away, and bit a lower lip, trying to prevent more.

Thor didn’t speak to Loki the entire ride home, and once they arrived at Thor’s small cottage, it was already nightfall.

Loki was so numb by this point that every action was him going through the motions, unable to feel anything.

Thor climbed off of the Llugem first, and began to take Loki’s bags off from around the beast. “Can you get down on your own?”

Loki nodded almost mechanically, beginning to climb off of the beast. He was a bit surprised that Thor would ask about his well being, though.

Thor led him inside the cottage, and Loki was surprised to see that the cottage seemed so warm and… like a home.

“Cousin Thor!”
Loki saw a young child run from around the corner then, and latch onto Thor’s legs, grinning up at him with love. “You’re home!”

Loki watched as Thor moved all of his bags to one arm so that he could pat his cousin’s back. “Tulla… isn’t it time for you to be in bed?” He said softly, a laugh sparking the end of his statement.

“I wanted to meet your wife!” grinned the child, brimming with excitement. “Where are they?”

Loki wasn’t too sure how he felt about there being a child in the house. He wasn’t very fond of children, but he still didn’t want this innocent child to be in what would undoubtedly become a strained and toxic environment.

“Tulla, he is very tired. You can meet him in the morning.” Thor continued.

The child pouted, looking over and finally noticing Loki. “Whoa!”

Before Thor could stop her, she ran over to Loki, grinning up at him. “Hi! I’m Tulla!”

Loki wasn’t sure if he was supposed to speak to her or not, but decided that he would try his best to be polite. He didn’t know if Thor would punish him if he remained silent.

“Hello, Tulla.”

“Tulla! Leave the poor Niouvi alone!” reprimanded a giantess, coming into the room.

The young child frowned and stomped her foot. “But Beberi! He’s so pretty! I want to be his friend!”

“Now, Tulla.”

“Fine…” she grumbled, dragging her feet back over to her mother.
“Thor… why don’t you show him to your room? I can cook something for him if he’s hungry.” The giantess suggested, leading the small Tulla back to her room.

Thor nodded, gesturing for Loki to follow him. Loki nodded politely at Thor’s female relative, and followed him upstairs to his room, his heart beating outside of his chest.

So far, the infamous Jötun he had imagined and heard of… wasn’t that frightening at all, and neither was his family.

Loki was surprised to see that Thor’s room was so small, and void of decoration. He couldn’t find it within himself to look around and study the room though, and he jumped slightly when Thor shut the door, trying to stifle the sob that was threatening to leave his throat.

“I’ll be sleeping on the couch until I can save up enough to build our own cottage, so… use this room however you see fit, Niouvi. It is now yours.” He heard Thor say.

This was the most Thor had said to him all day, and he stared at the giant in disbelief, unable to articulate himself in this moment.

“… Are you hungry?” Thor pressed.

Loki found himself shaking his head no, and bit his lower lip, trying not to cry.

“Then… I’ll see you in the morning. Goodnight.” Just as quickly as they had entered, Thor left the room, gently shutting the door behind him.

Once Loki was left alone and the door was closed, he let out a garbled cry, collapsing to the floor.

He allowed himself to cry here for a few hours before removing the kohl from his eyes and the piercings in his skin and along his body. He then changed into a sleeping gown, and pulled his pillows and blankets from one of his numerous bags, placing them on Thor’s bed before crawling under the covers.
He didn’t do this often, and he felt very undeserving of it, but Loki found himself reaching out to the Norns and praying. He couldn't remember the last time he had prayed to them.

Or rather, actually felt the need to.

He just… he wanted everything to be okay.

Thor trekked downstairs to his family’s kitchen after saying goodnight to Loki, meeting his aunt and uncle at the dining room table.

He felt terrible for the Niouvi, and was stressed about the situation he was now in.

“Is he hungry, Thor?” His aunt asked once he entered the kitchen.

Thor shook his head. “No. The king told me that the Niouvi is to obey any command, request, or demand that I have. He’s scared out of his mind that I’ll hurt him right now, so… food is the least of his worries.”

His aunt tutted sadly. “Norns have mercy… what did he do to deserve something like that?”

“I don’t know,” sighed Thor. “I… I told him that until I can save up enough money to build a cottage for us, I would let him use my room.”

Thor’s aunt tutted again. “I’ll have Amon help me clean out the spare room. He can use that.”

Running a large hand through his hair, Thor sighed again. “About that… he has a suite 10 times the size of our cottage. I have no idea what I will do about all of his things.”

“I’m sure the Niouvi has more than enough money saved up to afford to have an ample sized home built for you both,” grunted his uncle. Thor tried to ignore that comment.
“He’s probably scared out of his mind, Thor. Have you tried to speak to him at all?” interjected his aunt, frowning at her husband.

“I… I have not. I just don’t know what to say.”

“Well start by giving him some space, Thor. He’s probably terrified of you.”

Thor found himself nodding in agreement, running a hand through his beard.

Today had been a long day for everyone.

And all he wanted to do was get some rest. He’d check in on the Niovi in the morning.

After discussing what to do with his aunt and uncle a bit longer, Thor retired to the living room couch, setting up his pillows and blankets.

He didn’t think it would change anything, but once again, he prayed to the Norns, and… asked for everything to turn out alright.

This was a confusing situation for both of them, and… and they’d need a miracle for everything to turn out okay.
Loki didn’t sleep at all that night.

Instead, he remained curled up in bed in a fetal position, absolutely terrified that Thor would come into the room, and drag him from his slumber.

It wasn’t until the sun began to peak its way over the crests of the mountain tops that he began to calm down, and rationalize his thoughts, feelings, and emotions about the situation he had been placed in.

He decided then that he would handle this as logically as he could, and weigh all of his options, choosing the best one.

He could lash out at Thor, and be put on the receiving end of whatever punishment King Thrym had for him.

He could be subservient to his betrothed and try his best to ensure that nothing ever happened to him.

He could also do his very best to stay back and observe his environment, and determine the best way to survive in this outlandish situation he’d been placed in.

He was nothing short of a brilliant tactician, and… he’d been placed in worse situations before.

If he could survive being a poor orphaned Niouvi on the streets of the capital city, then he could survive being placed in this situation too.

He would be okay.

More than okay.

He would be great.
A loud knock at the door to the bedroom he was in quickly drained away all of Loki’s confidence, and he drew up his knees to his chest, his throat constricting in fear.

The knock sounded again before Loki could compose himself, becoming more insistent. “Loki? Are you awake?”

Loki finally found the strength to reply, fearful of what would happen to him if he didn’t answer back quickly. “I-I’m awake.”

Thor was silent for a few seconds then. “... May I come in?”

Loki couldn’t understand for the life of him why Thor was asking him for permission.

This was Thor’s home, this was Thor’s room, he was Thor’s property now, and... and he didn’t know if the giant was trying to gain his trust, in the hopes that he would be able to turn on the Niouvi and use it against him.

He didn’t want to risk being punished if he said no, so he took in a steadying breath and pulled one of his blankets closer around him in a poor attempt to protect himself from harm. “...Come in.”

The door to Thor’s bedroom opened up carefully, the large giant taking a seemingly uncertain step into the room.

He stared at Loki for a few seconds before running a hand through his golden hair, and averting his gaze. “My aunt would like to speak to us, together. She’s made breakfast.”

Loki really didn't want to leave the safety and protection of this bed, and he really didn’t want to follow Thor downstairs and into the kitchen, but... the only other option was Thor reporting his insolence to the king, and... and he couldn't have that.

Nodding to himself slowly, Loki warily climbed out of bed, wishing at that moment that he wasn’t so vain. He’d had all of his nightshirts crafted to be form-fitting, and while he was a free man, he enjoyed putting his lithe form on display for his partners of the night.
But now that he was to be a prisoner, held captive and bred against his own will, he felt differently.

Crossing his arms over his chest nervously, Loki followed Thor out of his room and down the cottage stairs, making sure to mark the location of every window and every door, in the case that he truly had to escape.

Thor led him to the small dining room of the cottage, where Thor’s aunt was sitting down, breakfast spread before her.

A gentle smile graced her face when she noticed Loki enter the room, and she stood up, walking over to the Niouvi. “Good morning, Niouvi.”

Loki eyed her warily, unsure of how to react. He decided then that he would play along, and do whatever was asked of him until he could figure out the next best plan of action.

“Good morning…”

Thor’s aunt gestured for them all to sit then and reached over to pour Loki something to drink. “You must be starving. Please, please eat.”

Loki found himself looking over at Thor for permission, and he hated that, knowing that every basic action would now need the giant’s approval.

The quarter Aesir nodded at him, and Loki picked up on the fact that this seemed to make Thor uncomfortable.

Maybe… maybe he was feeling just as confused and upset about this situation too.

Loki was even more surprised when Thor fixed his plate for him, setting it down in front of the startled Niouvi.

Thor averted his gaze again, and Loki couldn’t believe that it seemed that the brute was nervous.
What did he have to be nervous about? He now had a bride that would do nothing for the rest of his life but bear him strong sons, and look after the house and home, bending to his every will and whim and command.

A flash of anger went through Loki at this revelation, and he managed to stifle it down, not wanting to lash out.

Just because Thor seemed nervous didn’t mean that he wouldn’t hurt him for disobeying him.

He still knew nothing about the giant.

Instead, he nodded his thanks, picking up a utensil and cutting off a portion of the meat. “Thank you, betrothed.”

Thor didn’t reply, and instead fixed his own plate, beginning to eat as well.

His aunt seemed slightly miffed by Thor’s poor attitude and shot him a stern look before turning to gaze softly at Loki.

“Niouvi… what shall we call you? I’m certain you’ve got a name…”

Loki continued to eat very carefully, thinking about how he wanted to reply.

“Psemetri is my title. And… and my name is Loki Laufeyson.”

Both Thor and his aunt widened their eyes in surprise, shocked that Loki was such a high ranking official.

“Then… forgive us, Psemetri. We… we had no idea.”

Loki shook his head, dismissing their sentiments. “Please do not ask for my forgiveness. I…”
believe that I am no longer able to demand respect. The king has seen to that.”

Thor’s aunt’s face fell at this, and she tutted, shaking her head. “Norns have mercy… Psemetri Loki… please do not speak like that. No one expected either of you to be in this situation, but… there is nothing that can be done now.”

Loki’s face darkened, and his chewing slowed even further, his lips pursed in a frown.

“Psemetri Loki… I wasn’t there in the throne room with our king when this decision was made. But… I do know this. My nephew will not touch a hair on your head without your permission. You have both been forced into this situation, and now all that can be done is to make the most of it.”

Loki didn’t seem convinced by Thor’s aunt’s words, and Thor picked up on this, figuring that he needed to speak for himself and assure Loki.

Clearing his throat, Thor caught Loki’s attention, holding the Niouvi’s gaze.

“Loki… you are safe here. I would never dream of violating you in any way. I will do my best to provide for you as your husband, and… I need you to know that I am not expecting anything from you. I’m not expecting children, I’m not expecting love, and… I’m not expecting companionship. So… if you’re needing something from me, please ask, and I will give it. Other than that… you are free to come and go as you please. You do not need my permission to do something.”

Loki wasn’t so sure what to make of this.

This was the most that Thor had spoken to him since he’d met the giant, and he’d held his gaze the entire time, not looking away like he usually did when he spoke to the Niouvi.

It unnerved him greatly.

It was obvious to everyone that Loki still didn’t believe him, and Thor wasn’t sure how to convince him otherwise.

Rather than discuss the topic of their sham marriage further, Thor decided to change the subject,
trying his best to make this strange situation as normal as possible.

Taking an absent-minded bite of his meal, Thor exhaled softly, looking over at Loki again. “I understand that our home is not the vast palace that you’re accustomed to living in. But… I will do my best to save up enough money for you to have a space to call your own.”

Loki frowned slightly, his mind running a thousand miles a minute. If he allowed Thor to do this, it could take him decades, centuries even, before he had enough saved up to build them a home of their own that was to Loki’s liking.

He knew Thor had his pride as a man, but… Loki had his as well.

“That… that isn’t necessary. I have saved up enough during my life to afford to have builders skilled in the art of seidr build us a home to my liking.”

This answer seemed to unsettle Thor, but Loki didn’t care.

He was upset and untrusting, and absolutely terrified, and… he didn’t know what else to do, or how else to process these feelings that were swirling around inside of him.

After seemingly settling an internal debate within himself, Thor finally gave a small nod in Loki’s direction. “If you would like to do this, then… I will not stand in your way.”

Loki relaxed some but knew that he would not be completely settled until he had a space to call his own again.

The trio continued to eat breakfast in silence then, with Thor’s aunt Haela asking Loki questions every once and awhile.

It seemed that she was trying to make the Niouvi more comfortable, but… it wasn’t working. Loki still couldn’t trust her, couldn’t trust anyone, and… he needed to continue to observe the situation to the best of his ability.

After breakfast, Thor asked Loki to take a bath and get dressed, as they would be heading to the
capital city of Jötunheim to find a seidr builder, and to retrieve the rest of Loki’s things.

Loki could do nothing but nod his head, and began to get ready to enter the capital city.

He tried his best to prepare himself in the small bathroom, but it was nowhere near as grand or luxurious as what he was used to.

He didn’t want to primp himself up too much, as he knew that this would not be what the king was expecting to see.

The king and his dutiful officials wanted to see Loki broken.

They wanted to see him suffering, filled with pain and anguish over the situation he was forced into, and… in order to survive, he had to play along.

For the first time since he had gotten off of the streets of the capital city, Loki dressed down.

Used to exuberant colors adorned in jewels, Loki now covered himself in an undecorated monochrome outfit.

Instead of kohl lining his eyes, his eyes were left bare.

Piercings did not adorn his skin or stomach like usual, and instead of silken robes, he wore a gray cloak.

His hair, usually long and lustrous, was now limp and lifeless.

He couldn’t bear to look at himself in the mirror and see the haggard look in his eyes.

A careful knock at the bathroom door caused him to jump, and he clutched his hand to his chest, trying to calm down.
“... Loki? Are you ready to go?”

It took a few seconds for the words to leave his mouth, but finally, he found them, speaking out loud enough for Thor to hear.

“I-I’m ready.”

He resented the fact that he faltered while replying to Thor, and frowned, forcing himself to be the confident individual that he knew he was, who he had molded himself to be.

He opened the door to the small bathroom then, and looked up at Thor, finally taking notice at just how large the giant was.

Male giants of their realm generally stood no taller than seven and a half feet tall, their women often no taller than six and a half feet.

Niouvi though were oftentimes small, and... very few of them grew to be taller than the average height of a giantess.

Loki himself was quite small for a Niouvi, standing at just 5’11.

Thor though stood at 6’8, and was broader than Loki could ever even dream of being.

His heart began to race when he stared up at Thor, realizing then that they had never been this close before.

He wondered briefly if Thor felt the same, for the giant took a quick step back, giving Loki a wide berth of space.

“... I will be ready in a moment, Loki.”

Loki continued to stare at Thor for some time, the fear that he felt last night washing over him again.
He finally found it within himself to nod, and did so quickly, stepping past Thor and rushing up the stairs to the giant’s room.

He folded last night’s sleep shirt neatly before packing it away, and smoothed over the clothes on his body, walking out of the room, and sitting down in the living area of the cottage, looking around.

The cottage was simple, but was lived in, and spoke of *home*.

It spoke of love, of life, and this surprised Loki greatly.

This cottage was a stark contrast to who Loki believed Thor was, and he just *couldn’t* imagine the brutish giant that he was being forced to marry, as a kind and loving man.

Granted, he *was* surprised that Thor hadn’t touched him yet, but… there was no telling what the giant would do when they were alone in their new home.

And it was *that* that kept Loki on his toes.

After Thor finished getting ready, he said goodbye to his aunt, and led Loki out of their home, saddling up his Llugem, and helping Loki onto it.

The Niouvi was silent and pliant the entire ride to the capital city, and didn’t object when Thor moved to guard him protectively from peering eyes.

Thor wasn’t too sure if Loki knew why he was doing this, and acting this way, but… the Niouvi was smart.

He would catch on and understand soon enough.
Thor knew that if he let Loki roam free, and speak and act of his own volition in public, the people would talk.

Word would undoubtedly get back to their king, and… Thor was certain that King Thrym would concoct a worse punishment for this Niouvi.

Thor didn’t particularly feel a certain way about Loki, but he didn’t want him to suffer any more than he already had. He’d narrowly escaped being wed to their tyrant king, and Thor had no way of knowing Loki’s upbringing, but nevertheless… he couldn’t sit by and not play his role while they were in public.

He would never forgive himself if Loki ended up receiving a worse off punishment because of him.

He frowned when he felt Loki stiffen in his arms, and dismissed his thoughts, noting that they were finally at the stables of the city.

Giants were whispering and staring at them as they passed by, and it only got worse when they placed Thor’s llugem in the stables.

Loki kept his head down the entire time, his face pinched into a frown.

Thor, in contrast, kept his head up, and reached out, trying his best to gently grab Loki’s arm to pull him in front of him.

The Niouvi felt so small in his touch, and he frowned slightly, removing his hand from Loki’s arm, and pressing a large hand against the small of his back to guide him through the city streets.

And together the pair walked through the vast city, off to find a master builder that was skilled in the art of seidr, to build their new home.
Loki wasn’t bothered by Thor’s touch.

He felt **angry** that he had to play along and act as if he were now a subservient slave, and he was annoyed that people who would usually bow at him in passing were now looking at him in pity.

It upset him even more that he and Thor had been rejected by over a dozen master seidr builders that day, and it wasn’t until nightfall before a builder finally took pity on them, and decided to help.

With Thor’s permission, Loki teleported them all back to the plot of land that Thor’s family owned in their village, and decided to build their home a bit down the road, on their own plot of land.

Their home was a spacious one, one full of numerous rooms that could accommodate all of Loki’s things.

Loki even asked the builder to add in enough room for future children, when Thor was away at his family’s home.

Thor had told him earlier that he wouldn’t expect children or love or even companionship, but… Loki knew that was a lie.

No giant would leave their bride untouched and barren.

It was only a matter of time before Thor went back on his word, and until then, Loki had to do everything in his power to prepare himself for that moment.

After their home was built, Thor stayed away.

Loki barely saw him in the decade leading up to their wedding, and he found that he didn’t mind, opting to stay holed up in his study practicing seidr, or out in the newly planted garden,
encouraging the plants to grow.

Thor’s aunt and younger cousins made sure to visit them at least once a month, and although their company was a nice change of pace, he still felt that he couldn’t trust them.

The night before he and Thor were to be wed was spent in guest rooms in the palace, and their tyrannical king forced Thor and Loki to be locked in the same room.

Their king seemed to be ecstatic about Loki’s miserable state, and left the pair alone for the night, servants letting them know that their wedding would be held per tradition, at the morning’s light.

Sleep was out of the question for both of them, Loki too scared to let his guard down -this would be the first night since he’d known Thor, that they’d be sharing a bed- and Thor not wanting to scare Loki or make him feel uncomfortable.

They remained in the plush bed in the palace till dawn, backs faced towards each other, each too nervous to say a word.

Before the sun had a chance to begin to peak over the crests of the mountains, servants entered their room to let Loki know it was time for him to get ready.

He jumped at the chance to leave Thor’s side -if only for a few hours- and followed the servants out of the room and down the hall, thankful that the king was at least allowing him to have a proper bath.

He thought about his predicament then, as the servants scrubbed at his skin, and exfoliated it.

He knew he would be expected to sleep with Thor tonight.

He didn’t know if the king would want to see proof of their consummation, but in that moment, he didn’t put it past him.

He found himself debating about whether or not he should allow himself to ovulate, as something all giants wanted was children.
It was a symbol of good luck, if their brides were able to conceive on their wedding night, and any child born around the first anniversary of their parents was viewed as a sign of good luck and fertility; a blessing from the Norns.

Loki knew that Thor had told him that he didn’t want children, but… Loki still didn’t believe that.

It was his duty, at the very least, to do what Thor told him to.

And who was he to deny Thor a right as simple as this?

His life was no longer his own.

“Please stand, Psemetri Loki.”

Loki stood silently, letting the servants dry him off so that they could apply moisturizer to his skin.

The servants painted his nails black and began to dress him in the customary wear of Niouvi brides.

Purple was the color that Niouvi brides often wore on their wedding days, and King Thrym wanted no different.

He wanted Loki looking every last bit of a Niouvi bride, and the servants saw to it that he did.

He wore sheer fabric that encased his legs, the fabric connected to golden anklets.

His stomach was bare, and adorned with a very intricate piercing, one that had a deep, amethyst gem in its center, that was surrounded by gold.

His upper chest had nipple piercings that were connected by a golden link to his shoulders, which were also covered in a sheer fabric that made its way down his arms, and were connected to golden snake wristlets.
Dark kohl lined his eyes in the traditional style of Niouvi brides, a large golden nose ring connected by a golden link to a smaller golden eyebrow piercing.

His lips had been colored with a deep black paint, his hair holding many braids and gems and beads of gold within its strands.

The king’s servants showed him to a mirror so that he could look at himself, and his heart fell when he saw what he looked like.

He was beautiful.

And he didn’t want to be.

This wasn’t an event he wanted, he wasn’t marrying the love of his life, his soul partner, the one who he cared about more than anything on their realm.

He was marrying a brute, and after their wedding, he’d be raped, and torn to shreds.

He wasn’t any different than a sacrifice.

He refused to cry though, turning sharply from the mirror. “Take me to the temple.”

The king’s servants nodded, escorting Loki to the temple where he was to marry Thor at.

The quicker he got this over with, the quicker Thor would take him, and then Thor would leave, and he’d finally be left alone again.

He’d figure out what he’d do, then, once he was alone.
Thor wasn’t surprised that Loki practically ran out of the room to get ready that morning.

He would be scared to get married to someone like him, too.

Jötun grooms didn’t have too much getting ready to do traditionally, so Thor took his time bathing and getting dressed, dressing in the armor that had been provided to him by the king.

The anger that he felt in his heart towards this situation was unparalleled, and the fact that he would spend the next few hours being mocked and ridiculed by the general public was infuriating.

They all viewed him as a dumb and foolish brute, one that could not think for himself, and one that could not see reason.

This wedding, this event, was a joke.

And a cruel one at that.

“Thor?”

Thor turned when the king’s servants entered the room he was in, remaining silent.

“The king has called for you. The ceremony is to begin.”

Thor nodded roughly, following the servants to the temple in the palace where this “wedding” would be taking place.

The armor he was wearing made him feel like he was playing dress up, wearing clothing that was never meant for him.

He made his way to the temple, annoyed to see that the king had been serious when he said he wanted every Psemetri in the realm to attend this wedding.
There were at least two hundred giants in the temple, muttering amongst themselves and pointing at Loki, all of them feeling pity for their fellow Psemetri.

It honestly broke Thor’s heart to see Loki adorned so beautifully, and he could now see why their king was so fond of the Niouvi.

Loki was breathtakingly stunning, and seeing him at his physical best took his breath away.

The guilt he felt for burdening this beautiful Niouvi only intensified then, and Thor promised himself that he would do whatever it took to ease the burden of Loki’s life.

Their king would be the one officiating this wedding, and he smiled darkly when he set his eyes upon Thor, clearing his throat so that everyone present knew the wedding was to begin.

Loki couldn’t even look him in the eyes while the king spoke, and Thor didn’t hold it against him one bit.

This was most likely the worst day of Loki’s life, so Thor tried his best to not look at Loki either during the entire ceremony.

It was only when their brutish king rang the bell of unity that Thor realized there was no backing out of this now.

What was done was done.

The pair were now joined forever as one.

After their wedding, Thor left.
The king had declared that Loki had been stripped of his title of Psemetri after he concluded he and Thor’s wedding, and sent Thor and Loki off to their new life shortly afterward, wishing them nothing but the best.

Thor didn’t waste any time leaving once Loki teleported them back to their home after the wedding, stripping off his armor, and pulling on regular garments, roughly packing his bags.

He left without so much as saying a single word, slamming their front door shut, and leaving Loki alone.

The Niouvi was surprised that Thor hadn’t taken him on their wedding night, as he expected, and wasn’t sure if Thor would come back in and take him while he slept.

He didn’t relax until a few days later, when he realized that Thor had still not come home.

And it wasn’t until a month after Thor left, that Loki built up the courage to visit Thor’s family, wanting to know what was going on.

In the entire short decade that they’d known each other, Thor had never been gone longer than a month.

And he always let Loki know that he would be leaving.

Loki sighed softly at his predicament as he locked the door to their home, teleporting down the road and knocking tentatively a few times on the front door to the cottage of Thor’s aunt and uncle.

Thor’s aunt opened her front door after a few seconds, smiling when she saw Loki. “Nephew! Welcome, welcome. Please, come in.”

Loki nodded respectfully at her, and entered their cottage, seeing Thor’s youngest cousin Tulla eating breakfast.

Tulla’s eyes lit up when she saw Loki, and she grinned, beginning to bounce in her seat. “Cousin Loki! Did you come to play with me?”
Loki wasn’t too sure how he felt about Thor’s cousin.

The young girl was a bubbly, bright personality, and she seemed to have cemented herself to Loki’s side.

At first, Loki felt uncomfortable with the child, and would silently beg her mother to lead her away when they came over to visit on their monthly trips.

Now though… he believed that he was beginning to warm up to her.

She was an innocent child in all of this madness and didn’t deserve to be treated with revulsion or distaste.

“Good morning, Tulla. I’ve actually come to speak to your beberi today.”

Tulla pouted, begrudgingly taking another bite of her meal.

This put a small smile on his face, and he followed Thor’s aunt to the dining room table, gratefully taking the plate of food that she prepared for him once he sat down.

“Once you finish your lessons for the week, we can relax in the garden, and I’ll read to you under your favorite tree.”

Tulla smiled brightly at Loki, brimming with happiness again. “Okay!”

Thor’s aunt shot him a grateful look. “Thank you, Loki.”

Loki nodded, beginning to eat his meal. “Dear Aunt… where is my husband?”

“He… is working. He’s off in the Southernmost region of our realm right now.”
Loki frowned slightly at this. He was still bothered that Thor didn’t tell him he was leaving, and where he was going or when he’d be back. “Did… he say when he would return?”

Haela nodded, taking a sip of her tea. “In a decade’s time. It is a short trip.”

Before Loki could comment on her statement, insistent knocking sounded at the cottage front door, a panicked voice calling out to them.

“Loki! The town’s healer needs you!”

Loki and Thor’s aunt shared a panicked look before rising up quickly, rushing to the cottage front door and pulling it open.

Outside was the assistant to the town’s healer, a hysterical look on her face.

“Loki, Loki please teleport us to the healer! They need your help!”

Loki nodded and snapped his fingers without a moment’s hesitation, transporting himself and the assistant to the healer’s cottage.

He noticed the healer muttering fervently over two bodies once he arrived in the center of the room, green seidr spilling from his palms.

Loki didn’t ask any questions and immediately got down on his knees, sending out a pulse of seidr to see which giant needed the most healing.

The giantess on the right seemed to be in a terrible state, so Loki focused his attention on her, pouring enough seidr into her being in the hopes that this would save her.

The healer was able to focus their efforts of saving the other being while Loki worked on the giantess, and for 3 days and 3 nights they worked tirelessly, trying to repair the damage that had already been done to their bodies.
On the 4th morning, the giantess that Loki was healing began to weaken, and no matter how hard he tried, there was nothing he could do to stall the influx of death from taking over.

He found himself studying her face for some time after her passing, feeling a pang in his chest that wouldn’t go away.

She had pushed her body to the brink of exhaustion, it seemed, and… by the time Loki had gotten to her, it was too late.

There was no saving her.

He was shocked to find that the second giant was but a child though, no older than three centuries.

The healer seemed to have managed to get them stabilized, and after doing a quick scan with seidr, Loki was relieved to find that the child would live.

The child’s mother was given a proper burial in their town a few hours later, and afterward, Loki returned to the healer’s cottage, warmly accepting the cup of tea that was presented to him upon sitting down at the dining room table.

“The mother of this child believed that if she could be blessed by our Cuetrati… her child would suffer no longer.”

Loki hummed softly. “What did they suffer from?”

“I wasn’t able to glean much information from her, but… I can tell you what I know, if you’re willing to listen.”

“Please.”

The town’s healer cleared his throat, and began to recite what he had been told. “The child is the bastard son of a noble. And his mother is his ex-consort.”
Hearing this brought Loki back to the more unpleasant times of his life, and he stared down at his mug, a faraway look in his eyes.

“The wife of the noble had a powerful curse placed on this child… and… and the mother knew that the only way her child could live is if a Cuetrati prayed over the child, and healed him.”

Loki sighed softly, his eyes shifting over to the sleeping child. He had not woken up in over a week, and it concerned him greatly. A quick scan using seidr showed him that the child was fine, and just sleeping, so Loki relaxed, turning back to the healer.

“They traveled far… traveled for almost a century on foot. Her body could not take the strain and the burden that had been placed upon it, and she collapsed in our village, unable to make it to the capital.”

“What will happen to the child?”

Now it was the healer’s turn to sigh. “I will care for him until he has made a full recovery. And if no one in our village is willing to take him in… he will be taken to the orphanage in the capital city.”

Loki found himself protesting before he knew what was happening. “No. That won’t be necessary. Thor and I will take him in.”

The town’s healer seemed shocked, and observed Loki for a moment. “Are you certain? Please do not feel obligated to-”

“I don’t.” interrupted Loki. He realized how rude he was being then, and looked away, apologizing. “Forgive me. But… the orphanage of the capital city is no place for children.”

The healer was silent for some time, so Loki took it upon himself to explain.

“I… was not always a prized Niouvi, healer. I… lost my parents, when I was young. And I was raised in the capital city’s orphanage. I would not wish that life upon anyone.”
The town’s healer stared at Loki with kind and gentle eyes then, nodding slowly. “The child’s name is Adras. I was told this before the mother’s state weakened.”

Loki felt that hearing the child’s name struck a chord within him, and he looked back over at the child, wanting them to know that just like their name said, they were worthy.

He saw himself in this child, and… he saw his salvation in him as well. He saw that this child could be his saving grace, a new purpose, and… he hoped that Thor would not be upset with him for choosing to take in this orphan.

Setting down his mug of tea, Loki stood up and made his way over to the small cot that the child lied on, crouching down and running his hands through his short rosewood hair.

Freckles were quite uncommon on their realm, but they weren’t nonexistent, and Loki was surprised to see that the young child had a splatter of them across the bridge of his nose.

Loki was also surprised to see how small this child was, and he reached out, caressing his cheek with a gentle finger. “Is he a Niouvi? He’s so small…”

The healer made a soft sound. “No… the child is just malnourished. They both were.”

Loki hummed in reply, turning back to the child. “When will he wake up?”

The healer stared over at the child, using seidr to make sure that he was okay. “Soon. I sense that he is mostly recovered.”

Loki nodded, continuing to stare at Adras. The child slept so innocently, so blissfully unaware of the hardships and cruelty of life.

The pair watched over the child for a few hours, and once the sun began to creep across the sky and rise, the child made a soft sound, beginning to hiccup and cry as he woke up.
Loki shushed him gently, reaching over to pluck him from the bed, and hold him in his arms.

Adras protested for a bit, not feeling comfortable in the arms of a stranger, and wanting his mother.

Loki continued to shush him softly though, patting at the young toddler’s back, and humming.

The sound of Loki’s hum seemed to calm Adras down, and the young child sniffed, looking up at Loki with tears in his bright rouge eyes.

“Hush, little one. You’re okay… you’re safe now.”

Adras continued to stare up at Loki in wonder, and reached out with his small hand, beginning to laugh when Loki grabbed it and pressed kisses into his palm.

Hearing Adras’ giggle lit a spark within Loki, and he smiled genuinely for the first time since he discovered he was going to be wed to Thor. This child, this beautiful, innocent child, had become his light in a world of darkness and despair, and he knew then that he would do whatever it took to protect him.

Loki thought he would never want kids, and he could never understand how those of his kind willingly reproduced. Children were always a nuisance for him, and… until now, he was perfectly fine with not ever having children of his own.

But Adras was perfect in every way, and his innocence healed parts of Loki that he didn’t know he needed to be tended to.

The healer seemed pleased that Loki and the child were getting along so well, and stood, patting at Loki’s shoulder. “He is well enough to be taken home, if you are to be by his side at all times.”

Loki nodded, pressing another kiss against the toddler’s palm. “I will. Thor’s family lives nearby, so I will not be alone. If I should need help, I will reach out, healer.”

The town’s healer nodded, and began to mutter a prayer over Loki and the child before helping Loki pack up, and leave.
Because Adras had slept for so many days, the toddler was wide awake in Loki’s arms, and shrieked in surprise when Loki teleported them to the front door of Thor’s family’s cottage.

“Hush, child,” cooed Loki, pressing a warm kiss against the crown of Adras’ head. He knocked on their door, and smiled politely when Thor’s aunt Haela opened the door.

She seemed surprised to see that he was holding such a young child, and stepped back, hurriedly ushering them in.

Thankfully, Tulla was in school, so it was just Loki and Thor’s aunt.

“Are you hungry?”

Loki shook his head, and sent out a pulse of seidr, checking on Adras. “He is though.”

Haela nodded, walking over to their kitchen and beginning to prepare a small meal for the child.

He seemed fascinated by everything around him, and kept looking around, his eyes wide in wonder.

“So who is the little one, Loki?”

Loki looked up from Adras for a moment. “When I was called away so suddenly a few days ago, it was because this child and his mother were dying. This child… is the bastard son of a noble from the other end of the realm. And a terrible curse was placed on him by the wife of that noble. The child’s mother believed that the only way to cure him was to have him prayed over and blessed by a Cuetrati of the capital city. So she trekked across the land for a century, in the hopes that she would reach the capital. And she passed before she could get there.”

Thor’s aunt tutted, shaking her head sadly. “And the child? Has he been healed?”

Loki nodded, gratefully taking the plate of food that she handed to him, and beginning to help
Adras eat. “He has been healed. But he no longer has anywhere to go, and no one to care for him, so I have taken him in.”

Haela widened her eyes slightly then. “Norns have mercy… how long will you watch over him?”

“I… I grew up as an orphan, Aunt Haela. And my life was never easy. I was not born with a silver spoon in my mouth, and I did not grow up surrounded by jewels and servants. The city’s orphanage is nowhere for a child to be, and… I would like to raise this child. He is mine in every way but blood now, and… when Thor returns, I pray that he will feel the same.”

Haela was silent for some time, observing how Loki interacted with the child. Loki figured it was because she was trying to determine if they could handle raising a child so soon after being married.

Finally, Thor’s aunt sighed, nodding her head. “Norns… what is the child’s name?”

“Adras.”

The pair remained silent for some time, watching Adras eat.

When the toddler was finished, Loki gratefully accepted the warm cloth from Haela and cleaned off Adras’ face.

He knew that deciding to take in a child was a spur of the moment decision, but he didn’t regret it.

This child was so innocent in all of this, and… Loki hoped that he would at least be able to help save this child.
Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

Hello!!

Here’s chapter 3. Thor and Loki work on getting closer in this chapter, and break down some walls.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The decade and a half that Thor spent away from Loki after their wedding went by in a blur for the Niouvi now that there was a child in their home.

It had taken Adras a few weeks to warm up to Loki and Thor’s family, but now that the young toddler was comfortable around them, he was a bright ray of sunshine, bringing a smile to Loki’s face each day that the pair shared together.

Adras didn’t speak too much to anyone in the very beginning after being adopted by Loki, opting instead to laugh and run around their home while Loki chased him, or using gestures and small sounds to express himself.

He did begin to call Loki Beberi a few years after the Niouvi took him in though, and it warmed Loki’s heart to hear this. Adras called out to him with such a fondness and light in his voice and heart, and Loki could honestly say that he had never been happier.

Adras was his literal saving grace, and he spent every single second that he could with the young child, encouraging him to express himself, and teaching him about the world, and what life had to offer.

He and Adras grew very close in that short decade that they spent together, and the young child became the center of Loki’s entire being, much like his bright sunshine in this desolate life he’d been forced into.

Loki had almost forgotten that he was even married during this decade, and that Thor would ultimately make the decision on whether or not they would continue to raise Adras. Just thinking about Thor forcing him to take Adras to an orphanage was the cause of many sleepless nights and panic filled days for the Niouvi, and the closer and closer it got to the end of the decade, the more terrified Loki became.
When it had almost been 11 years since Thor’s departure, the giant finally decided to return home, which sent Loki into a panic.

The Niouvi was currently playing in the living room with Adras, using his seidr to animate the child’s toys in a way that amused Adras greatly.

Loki heard their front door open in the midst of Adras’ shouts of glee, and figured that it was Haela and Tulla visiting them. Tulla had been coming over at the end of each week to play with her new cousin, and Haela had been coming over more frequently to help Loki with Adras, always bringing the child a new outfit or toy.

To his complete and utter shock though, Thor entered the room, a deep set frown on his face once he noticed that Loki was playing with a strange child in their living room.

The same fear that Loki felt that first night he spent with Thor began to creep back into him, and he widened his eyes slightly, reaching out and scrambling to take Adras in his arms. “Adras, come here child.”

Adras looked up at Loki in confusion when the seidr left his toys before turning to look behind him, absolutely terrified to see Thor.

He began to hiccup and cry when he saw the large unknown giant looming over them, and ran quickly into Loki’s safe and warm embrace, pressing his face into the crook of Loki’s neck, and trying to hide from Thor.

Loki was too busy trying to comfort Adras to notice the pain that flashed across Thor’s face at the toddler’s reaction, and he looked back up warily when Thor exhaled slowly and moved to sit on one of the couches in their cozy living room, feeling on edge.

He didn’t know how Thor would react to this situation.

“Whose child is this, Loki?”

Loki bit his lower lip nervously, an untrusting look in his eyes. Very carefully, he began to relay
Adras’ origin to Thor, and at the end, he kissed Adras’ crown a few times, hoping to calm him further. “I’m not giving him away.”

This was the first time that he had ever put his foot down and stood up to Thor, and he feared the giant’s reaction. King Thrym had meant it when he said Loki was to obey every word that came from Thor’s lips, and Loki knew that if Thor told him no, that he would have to listen.

It was this that scared him most.

Adras meant so much to him already, and to know that the fate of this child’s life rested in Thor’s hands and his hands only, had him breaking into a cold sweat, his heart pounding faster than it ever had before.

“You are not required to have anything to do with him, Thor. H-He’ll be my responsibility.”

Thor remained silent still, so Loki found himself doing something that he hadn’t done in years, at this moment; beg.

“Please don’t make me abandon him, Thor.”

The giant looked immensely troubled by Loki’s whispered plea, and he frowned even deeper, visibly uncomfortable with this situation, and Loki’s view of it.

The entire decade that he’d been away, Thor thought of Loki, and how they could make this complicated situation work. It pained his very soul to see the Niouvi look at him in such fear, and Thor was at a loss on how to change it.

Finally, he spoke, deciding then to choose his words very carefully. He didn’t want Loki to fear him anymore. “That will not be necessary, Loki. If you’re wanting to raise this child, then… we will raise him. Together. This will not be a burden that I will force you to carry alone.”

Hearing Thor refer to such a beautiful and loving and bright and joyful child like Adras as a burden upset Loki more than anything in this life, and he held the toddler even closer, finding the courage to glare at Thor from deep within. “He is not a burden!”
Thor’s deep set frown remained on his face, and he stayed silent for some time, mulling over the best way to diffuse this situation.

It seemed that he always had the unfortunate knack of making situations worse than they actually needed to be.

“That was not my intent, Loki. Forgive me.”

Loki still didn’t trust Thor too much, and although the giant had yet to touch him, he had gotten a bit better at reading Thor’s mannerisms before he left.

It appeared that Thor was troubled greatly by Loki’s continued fear of him, so Loki tried his best to relax, and forced himself to stand up on shaking legs, walking over to the large couch that Thor was on, and sitting down next to him. He wasn’t sure if Thor would punish him for raising his voice earlier, so to force away his fear and actually sit next to Thor was a huge step for Loki.

Thor had told him so many years ago that he would never hurt him, and although Loki didn’t believe him, Thor had yet to raise a hand against him.

Thor was always so silent, and kept to himself, and… and Loki knew then that he couldn’t live like this forever, in a constant state of fear or panic. He had to at least try.

Gathering the courage to speak, Loki cleared his throat, pressing a warm kiss against Adras’ temple, and running a calming hand down his small back. He had thankfully put on some weight since coming under Loki’s care.

“H-His name… his name is Adras.”

Thor nodded, sitting up carefully and turning towards Loki and the child. “How old is he?”

“We aren’t sure… but he can speak, and run, so… he has to be at least 3 centuries.”

Adras had calmed down by this point in the conversation and shyly looked over at Thor before looking up at Loki. “Beberi… who’s he?”
Thor was startled to hear Adras speak, and he looked down at the child in mild wonder, feeling a tug on his heartstrings. “He calls you Beberi?”

Loki nodded, carefully turning Adras in his lap to face Thor’s looming form. “He is your Deneri, sweet child.”

Adras seemed to be confused by this, and he stared up at Thor, still feeling shy. “Deneri?”

Loki nodded, pressing a warm kiss against Adras’ cheek. “Yes, sweet child.”

Clearing his throat, Thor reached out a gentle hand, stroking Adras’ cheek with a large thumb. “Hello, child.”

Adras looked up at Thor, still feeling quite nervous about being around him. “You’re big…”

Thor blinked a few times in minute amusement and cocked his head slightly. “Do I scare you?”

Adras seemed unsure of himself and how to answer this, looking up at Loki for guidance.

“It’s okay, sweet child,” assured Loki, rubbing at his side soothingly. “It’s alright.”

Adras turned back to Thor then and warily reached out his arms, silently asking to be held. It seemed that the child had made up his mind, and felt that Thor was trustworthy.

Loki’s heart dropped when he did this, and he almost pulled the child away in fear, not knowing what Thor would possibly do to him. But Thor hadn’t given him any reason to believe that he would hurt this child, so he would watch. If he felt that Thor would hurt the child in any way, he would use seidr to protect them, for as long as possible.

Thor seemed nervous about picking up the child as well, and reached out warily, gently taking him from Loki’s arms.
Adras seemed to melt in Thor’s arms at his touch and moved to relax into his broad chest, closing his eyes, and beginning to fall asleep.

Thor froze, not sure what to do, and looked over at Loki, who was just as surprised. Neither of them had expected Adras to warm up so quickly to the giant.

They sat in silence for quite some time, neither of them sure about what to say to each other. The last true conversation that they had shared was so many years ago, and… they were still strangers.

They knew nothing about each other.

Finally, Loki broke the silence, deciding that he would ask Thor about his trip. He found himself wanting to know a bit more about Thor, even if he still feared the giant.

Maybe the giant had another family that he knew nothing about; another life that was hidden from everyone.

“How was your trip?”

Thor took some time to form a response, and Loki wondered in these moments why the giant was always so careful when he spoke.

“It went well.”

And then… “Has the king bothered you in my absence?”

Loki shook his head no, biting a lower lip. “I… I haven’t been to the capital since you left.”

Thor relaxed when he heard this, leaning back against the couch and closing his eyes. “This pleases me greatly.”

Loki could see that Thor was exhausted from his journey, and he moved to take Adras out of his arms so that the giant could rest, but Thor cleared his throat, stopping him. “It’s alright, Loki. I’m
sure the child has been through enough. If… if he finds solace from the pains of life in my arms, then… I will not object to his touch.”

Loki nodded slowly, surprised that Thor was okay with all of this. Rubbing at Adras’ back, Loki shot a careful glance up at Thor, wondering if the giant would be upset with him if he continued to speak.

“Are… you upset?”

The seconds that Loki waited for a reply from Thor were agonizing, and he almost couldn’t bear the silence, his heart trying to force its way out of his chest, and his mind running a million miles a minute.

He shouldn’t have asked Thor, he shouldn’t have tested the waters, the giant was tired from his journey and-

“You’ve given me something that I never thought I would have. Upset is the last thing that I would be inclined to feel right now.”

Loki blinked a few times in confusion. “I… I don’t understand?”

“My entire life, I believed that I would be unable to have the simple things that every giant around me seemed to have, Loki. And out of all of those things, I knew that I would never have someone to call my own. There would be no warm kiss to greet me each morning, there would be no open arms to embrace me each night, and there would not be children rushing to greet me and tell me about their days when I return home from my travels. This… this was a fact of my life that I accepted long ago.

“When I was told that I was to be married to you, I felt a deep ache in my soul. Because someone else would be forced to carry the burden that I carried, and it would be someone who did not choose this life willingly. My soul hurt for you, Loki. And to this day, it still does.”

He sighed deeply then, taking a moment to process his thoughts. Adras continued to sleep peacefully on his chest, oblivious to what was going on around him.

“You look at me with such fear, and I cannot say that I hate you for it. It breaks my heart to see you
hurting, stripped of your title, and forced into a position that you never wanted. And I could never live with myself, if I took advantage of this situation, to get what I’ve always wanted, Loki. So when I said I would never touch you without your permission, and that I would not expect you to bear our children, I meant it.

“But coming home… and hearing a child’s laughter… seeing a child’s smile… and feeling their chest rise and fall as they sleep in my arms… I couldn’t be happier. You’ve given me something that I believed I didn’t have the right to experience, and for that… I am eternally grateful.”

He sighed once more, keeping his eyes closed and his posture relaxed. “Whatever you need of me, Loki, I shall always give it. If it is easier for me to stay away, then I will. The guilt that I feel, knowing that your life is ruined because of my status in this land, consumes me, and… I feel it is only right to make sure that you are living in the way you desire. I will not hurt you for voicing your opinions, or if you make certain demands. All I have to offer you are my word and my actions, and… I pray that these are enough to settle your heart and calm your mind.”

Loki had never heard Thor speak so much in his life, and he was willing to bet that Thor had never spoken like this to anyone.

“It is nice to know that you have a tongue.” murmured Loki, averting his gaze and blushing once he realized how rude his remark was. “Norns, forgive me.”

To the complete and utter shock of Loki, that actually put a smile on Thor’s face, and the giant laughed softly, careful to not wake the sleeping child. “A good friend explained to me that my silence is more fearsome than my words. And I don’t want you to be scared of me anymore, so… I will speak, and express myself more clearly to you, from this day forward.”

Loki began to relax fully then, and sank back into the couch, closing his eyes. “Thank you.”

The pair sat in a comfortable silence for a bit longer before Loki came to a decision.

There was no getting out of this marriage to Thor.

That was a fact.

And now that Loki had learned more about Thor, he didn’t feel so scared of him anymore.
He didn’t want to be resigned to a marriage of toleration anymore, and… a part of him wanted to learn to trust Thor.

He wasn’t naive enough to think that they would ever fall in love, but… mutual respect could begin to become fostered between the two.

And now that they have decided to raise Adras together, Loki couldn’t keep blowing Thor off, or living in fear. He wanted Adras to be raised in a healthy and happy home, one where he did have two loving parents who knew how to speak to each other, and treat each other with respect.

He decided to speak while he still had courage in his heart to do so, and cleared his throat, staring up at Thor’s piercing blue eyes.

“Husband…”

Thor exhaled softly when Loki called him this, growing uncomfortable. “You are not required to call me this, Loki. I… I am not expecting you to.”

“I would like to.”

Thor was taken aback at this. “Loki, I-”

“You told me to be honest about what I wanted from you, and I am.” rushed Loki, trying to remain respectful. He believed now that Thor wouldn’t hurt him, but… there was still a part of him that didn’t want to push his luck.

He had yet to see Thor’s dark side.

“I realize that we are not getting out of this arrangement. And I don’t want to feel like a stranger in my own home. I don’t want to feel as if we are walking on eggshells around each other. I cannot say that there will be love, but… there can be respect. So I ask that we work on becoming closer, if only for Adras’ sake. There is no reason why a healthy friendship cannot bloom between us.”
Thor wished that hearing this didn’t fill him with joy. He wished that he could feel indifferent about this proclamation, but… he didn’t. Hearing this made him happy, happier than he’d been in a long time, and he couldn’t stop the smile that was trying to force itself across his lips.

“Thank you, Loki.”

Loki bit his lower lip after hearing Thor’s answer, still feeling nervous. He hadn’t meant to be so demanding, but… he felt like testing the waters. He wanted to see just how much he could demand before Thor got angry.

Pushing the envelope just a bit further, Loki scooted closer on the couch to Thor, and rested his head on the giant’s shoulder, nestling into his side.

Thor froze at this, and after a minute he forced himself to relax, and accepted Loki’s advances.

And there they sat, for the remainder of the day, relaxing as a family, and enjoying the newfound peace that these confessions of their hearts had gotten them.

After their talk together, Loki and Thor tried their best to slip into a stable and comfortable routine; even if it was only for Adras. Thor promised Loki that he wouldn’t take as many mercenary jobs, in order to be home with Loki and Adras more often.

Loki worked on getting closer to Thor, and in turn, Thor worked on being less imposing, and more open with Loki.

It was very hard at first, and there were definitely a few strained arguments sprinkled in along the way, but over time, Thor and Loki managed to build a semi-amicable relationship, minute respect growing between the two.

A few years after Thor returned home found the family getting ready for a trip to the market.
They needed more supplies, and because Adras was getting so big so fast, they needed more clothing for him as well.

Loki also knew that he would need some items for his spells, and although their village’s market was not large, it still had the basics.

Loki didn’t feel too comfortable dressing in the typical clothing of a Niouvi anymore, so he opted for clothing that was more subdued when he ventured out on those weekly market trips.

He also noticed that he wore fewer piercings and that his eyes and lips remained bare.

His hair pulled back into a disheveled ponytail had become his signature look ever since he married Thor, and although Adras had become the light of his life, there was still a sadness there in his eyes.

He couldn’t bear to look in the mirror at himself for longer than a few seconds, anymore.

In the still moments of his new life, Loki often had to force back the feelings of his overwhelming hopelessness, and his tears.

Just thinking of his bleak future made him want to do nothing besides lie in bed all day, and he took a moment to thank the Norns for giving him Adras.

That child was the one reason that he found himself able to even continue going on in this life that he felt was no longer his, and just thinking of how much joy that child brought him put a small smile on his face, forcing back those dreadful thoughts and the emotions that came along with them; even if only for a moment.

The door to his bedroom burst open then, and Loki jumped, turning sharply.

The culprit was no other than the young Adras, of course, and Loki began to laugh, stooping over to pick up the toddler, and pressing a flurry of kisses against his cheek.
Adras began to giggle, pushing at Loki. “No, Beberi, no!”

Loki pressed a final kiss against Adras’ cheek before straightening up, noticing that Thor was standing awkwardly at his bedroom door.

He fought against the urge to frown, and smiled politely at him, heading his way. “Hello, husband.”

Thor nodded, taking a step back so that Loki could walk past him. “Are you ready to go?”

Loki nodded in reply, and led them all down the hall and down the stairs, a large part of him still trying to get used to the feeling of having Thor so close.

Their talk all those years ago had helped lessen the strain between them, but it was still awkward to be around each other.

Adras began to squirm in his arms once they all stepped outside, so Loki rolled his eyes and chuckled, setting the child down.

“Deneri! Watch this!” shouted Adras, beginning to run ahead. He then did his best to cartwheel, before rushing to stand back up, and running over to Thor. “Did you see?!”

Thor found a gentle smile gracing his face, and he nodded, crouching down so that he could ruffle Adras’ hair. “I did. Who taught you how to do that?”

“Tulla did!” laughed Adras, pressing a quick kiss against Thor’s cheek before running away so that he could flip or cartwheel to his heart’s content.

The love and acceptance that Thor felt at that moment from the minute and innocent display of affection was overwhelming, and he stood quickly, turning away from Loki, and trying to compose himself.

Loki noticed this of course and warily reached out, placing what he hoped was a comforting hand on Thor’s back. “Thor?”
Thor clenched his jaw and wiped at his eyes quickly, turning back towards Loki. “I’m fine.”

He certainly didn’t look fine, but Loki dropped the issue, deciding that he would bring it up later on in the day, when they were alone.

The family made their way to the central part of the village, greeting familiar faces, and letting Adras speak to some of the other children in the village. They knew it was important for him to be around others his age as well, and wanted him to experience everything that life had to offer.

While the family was purchasing cloth to make Adras’ new clothes, the child seemed to be deep in thought, staring consistently at a nearby family.

Finally, he decided that his curiosity must be quenched, and pulled at Thor’s leg, catching his attention.

Thor wondered what the young toddler wanted, and crouched down, ruffling his rosewood hair. “What is it, Adras?”

“Do you love Beberi?”

Thor was taken aback by this question, and he and Loki shared a look, silently debating about how to proceed with this.

“I care for him very much,” answered Thor after some time, staring down into Adras’ innocent eyes. “His presence is very comforting to me.”

“How come you never kiss?”

Thor was at a loss here. He looked up at Loki helplessly, hoping that the Niouvi had an explanation that was age appropriate.

Loki cleared his throat, crouching down so that he could stare at his son. “Deneri and Beberi care
for each other very much.”

Adras didn’t seem convinced by this though and pointed at a family that was at the same stall as them. “They kiss… why don’t you?”

“Do you want to see Beberi and Deneri be more affectionate, Adras?”

Adras nodded eagerly, a hopeful smile on his face. “I want us to all be happy, Beberi!”

The innocence of their child often caused Loki and Thor’s hearts to melt, and this explanation from him was no different.

“Then Beberi and Deneri will be more affectionate so that we can all be happy,” assured Loki, pressing a quick kiss against Adras’ cheek. “Now let’s hurry up and get what we need from this stall.”

Adras hummed and nodded, seemingly content.

Loki made sure to purchase enough cloth to craft a few outfits for Adras, and made his way over to the food section of the market, purchasing things that they would need to get them through the week.

Their final stop was a cordoned off area of land where the young children of their village often played under the watchful eyes of their parents, chasing each other and living out the fantasy worlds of their imaginations.

Loki made sure to bring Adras here at least once a week, as being around other children helped Adras’ development tremendously. Being around the other children seemed to help with his verbal skills as well, and for this Loki was thankful.

He wasn’t sure what Adras and his birth mother had been through on their journey, but judging by Adras’ recovery, it was something that no giant should have to experience.
Thor and Loki both kissed Adras goodbye and sent him on his way, sitting down on a nearby bench, and watching their son play with the other children.

The silence between them was not as strained as it had been during the earlier years, and after gaining the courage to bring up Thor’s earlier state, Loki cleared his throat, catching Thor’s attention.

“... Husband?”

Loki couldn’t overlook the way Thor cringed when he called him this, and he bit at his lower lip, a small part of him still terrified that Thor would eventually go back on his word, and hurt him. “I-I’m sorry… I won’t call you this if it troubles you.”

Thor exhaled slowly, beginning to frown again. Loki had learned over the years that this frown meant Loki had done something that bothered Thor.

“Loki… I meant what I said all those years ago. I will never touch you without your permission, and I will give you whatever you want, whenever you want it. But all I ask is that you not force yourself to do or say things that you don’t want to do.”

Loki felt a spark of indignation at Thor’s statement, and he frowned, crossing his arms. “Referring to you as my husband is the absolute least I can do, Thor. You’ve told me you don’t want love, you don’t want children, you won’t touch me, and… And I don’t know what else to do. My pride won’t let me take and take and take from you, without offering anything in return.”

Thor looked away from Loki, debating about how candid he could be with him at this moment.

He knew though that the Niouvi would never begin to understand who he was as a person until he expressed himself; however hard that might be.

Like Loki had stated so many years ago, there was no getting out of this marriage. They would be together until their dying days, and… they had to do things that were out of their comfort zone, to make this work.

So as hard as it was, Thor decided that he would be open with Loki, at this moment.
Strife would only grow if his silence continued, and… he did not want the environment of his home to be strained any longer.

“May I be candid with you for a moment, Loki?”

The Niouvi was taken aback by this statement and found himself blinking a few times in confusion, curiosity beginning to rise from within.

“Please…”

“I feel uncomfortable when you call me “husband” because I know there is no love that can be found within that statement.”

Loki remained silent, so Thor continued to speak. “I don’t want to hear someone that doesn’t love me, call me “husband”. I don’t want to be touched by someone that doesn’t love me, and I don’t want to touch someone that I don’t love. When you call me “husband”, it is a painful reminder that this marriage is a sham, and that no matter how amicable we become, there will never be love. This is something that I knew I would bear the burden of my whole life, and I am more than prepared to bear this burden, but… that doesn’t mean it hurts any less. And it doesn’t mean the pain isn’t there.”

Hearing Thor speak so honestly made him feel like complete and utter shit.

Every day that he’d been married to Thor, he’d lived in fear. And even after Thor assured him that he wouldn’t harm him, Loki had been distant and cold. He’d been difficult, he’d been cruel, and… he’d been so wrapped up in his own misery that he’d failed to see that Thor was an actual being like him. One that felt, one that needed, one that breathed, and… and the guilt that he felt then was overwhelming.

For the first time since he’d met Thor, Loki saw him as a person. Not a monster, not a brute, not a stranger, but a person.

A person who was incredibly strong but in so much pain, and… it wasn’t right.
At all.

At this moment, Loki saw that Thor carried the weight of the world on his shoulders, and he wondered if anything could be done to rectify the damage that had been done towards him.

He noticed then that Thor had that troubled look on his face, the one that he showed when Loki was scared or angry with him, and it took Loki a moment to realize that he was crying.

The guilt and the shame that he felt in this moment was so overwhelming that the only way he could express this visceral ache was through tears, and he dabbed at his face with a cloth, trying to process everything that he was feeling, and thinking of the best way to express it.

Loki had never been good with emotions or expressing them, so to feel this way right now was unbearable.

Thor seemed to be going through a crisis of his own, looking around and seeing if anyone they knew might be able to help calm Loki.

When he realized that there was no one, and that he would have to get through this with Loki, he took a deep breath, and reached out with a careful hand, surprised when the Niouvi remained still at his touch.

“Loki? What have I said? Are you alright?”

Loki seemed to tear up even more at this, and Thor began to panic, distress clear on his face. “Loki, if it means that much to you, you can refer to me however you’d like. I’m sorry; I didn’t know it meant this much to you.”

“That’s not why I’m crying.” sniffed Loki, dabbing at his face a bit more and taking a shuddering breath.

Thor continued to stare at Loki in concern, waiting patiently for an explanation.

“I just… I feel so guilty, Thor!”
“Why do you feel guilty, Niouvi? What has happened? You have done nothing wrong.”

“But I have!” argued Loki, dabbing at his eyes again. “This whole time, I looked at and regarded you as a monster! I’ve been so cruel, and you’re just like me! You’re terrified of this too! I-I feel so much guilt for assuming that you’re someone that you’re not, Thor… all this time you’ve been hurting and suffering and I haven’t made that any easier… I’d argue that I’ve made it worse.”

Loki sniffed once more and looked up at Thor, taking the giant’s hands in his, and looking up into his piercing blue eyes. “Can you ever forgive me, Thor? This whole time… I concocted this brilliant fantasy in my mind. One where you would hurt me… one where you didn’t have a heart, and were a cruel and unforgiving monster. And just now… your candid confession has made me realize that I couldn’t have been more wrong. And… I owe you an apology… truly, I am sorry.”

Hearing Loki apologize was the last thing that Thor ever expected to come out of his mouth, and he shifted nervously on the bench they were sitting on, feeling uncomfortable.

No one had ever apologized for treating him like a monster, before.

“You are forgiven, Loki… I am not upset. Please… please don’t cry anymore.”

Loki nodded quickly, dabbing at his eyes and wiping away his tears. “This… this should’ve been said so long ago… but… may we start over? There are things I want to discover about you, and… and I know that in time, there will be things you’ll want to know about me. There’s no escaping this marriage but… it doesn’t have to be a death sentence, either.”

Thor found himself rendered speechless by Loki’s question, and looked down at him, not sure how to feel.

Finally, he decided on a safe answer. “If… if this would make you happy.”

Loki shook his head, becoming more insistent. “My feelings aren’t the only ones that matter, Thor. I’m asking you this because I want to know if this is something you’re willing to do as well.”

“I…”
Loki squeezed his hands again. “*Please*, Thor. I’m telling you that it’s okay to want the same.”

Thor had never truly shared an intimate moment with another before, so to see Loki in front of him, emotional because he felt guilty for how he treated and perceived him, made him uncomfortable.

Thor was used to being treated and perceived as less than. He wasn’t used to being treated or looked at as an actual *person*.

He wasn’t sure how he should respond to Loki’s request, and decided that the best plan of action would be to agree to it for now. At the end of the day, he had a son because of Loki, and he wanted nothing more than to raise their son in a healthy and stable environment, with parents who were amicable and respected each other.

“... Okay” nodded Thor, finally agreeing. “We shall do this.”

The weight of the world seemed to fall off of Loki’s shoulders then, and he sighed in relief, thankful that Thor had forgiven him. “Thank you, Thor.”

Thor nodded again, still feeling unnerved by their conversation. He had learned early on to not be an emotional person, and after years and years of crying and bemoaning his fate, Thor’s heart hardened in order for him to survive.

So the fact that someone was trying to force their way in... it scared him.

He truly believed that he wasn’t worthy of companionship or love, and to be presented with either option was alarming.

Adras chose this exact moment to run up to the pair, worrying them when they saw that he had tears in his eyes.

Loki bent over and picked up Adras immediately, shushing him and kissing his temple. “What’s wrong, sweet child? What has happened?”
Adras sniffed, nestling into Loki’s neck, and breathing in his comforting scent.

Thor reached over when Adras remained silent and rubbed at the child’s small back, encouraging him to tell them what was wrong.

Adras sniffed again, and pulled away from Loki, now wanting the comfort of Thor’s arms. “D-Deneri… am I a Niouvi?”

Thor quirked up an eyebrow, taking Adras and holding him close. “No, child… why do you ask this? Have the other children said so?”

Adras nodded, beginning to tear up again. “They said I’m too small to be a giant!”

Loki’s heart broke at this, and he scooted closer to Thor on the bench, rubbing at Adras’ back. “Norns… not everyone is big and strong once they leave the womb, Adras. You still have plenty of centuries to grow big and strong.”

Adras seemed to perk up here, beginning to get hopeful. “Really?”

“Of course…” assured Thor, looking down at him with a gentle gaze. “Deneri used to be small too, growing up.”

Adras gasped and widened his eyes at this new information. “Really?!”

“Yes, child. And once 12 centuries passed by, I began to grow taller and stronger. And the same will happen to you. Just because you are small now, does not mean you will always be.”

Adras seemed to have been calmed down by Thor’s words, so Loki rubbed at his back again, hoping to calm him further. “Let’s head home, Adras. We can sleep out in the garden under our favorite tree.”

Adras cheered at this, so Thor and Loki stood, beginning to leave the village hub, and making their way back to their home.
Loki went to go get a large blanket to lie under their favorite tree once they arrived home, and set up a spot under the shade, gratefully taking Adras into his arms when Thor handed him to him.

Pressing a warm kiss against Adras’ temple, Loki shifted so that he was lying down as well, and found himself surprised when Thor remained outside with them.

Thor usually left the pair alone during Adras’ nap times, so Loki found himself intrigued when Thor stayed.

He figured that the giant was trying to open himself up more to him and Adras, and was thankful that he was willing to do so.

If Thor was trying, then he would try too.

“Would you like to enjoy this beautiful day with us for just a bit longer, Thor?”

Thor nodded, his shoulders sagging with relief. “If you wouldn’t mind.”

Loki scooted over to make room for Thor and repositioned Adras so that the child lied nestled between them.

This seemed to make their young toddler happier than anything, and he began to hum, pulling Loki and Thor’s arms over him so that he lied in their warm embrace.

Seeing this pulled at Loki and Thor’s heartstrings, and they both smiled softly, taking a moment to stare down at Adras in fondness.

After he’d fallen asleep, Thor looked over at Loki, feeling a pang in his chest when he saw how gaunt and tired and hopeless he looked.

He decided then that he would be a bit more honest with Loki, from now on. He wasn’t sure if this would work, but… maybe if he shared parts of himself with Loki… maybe that would make things
a bit easier between them.

“Loki…”

Loki looked up at the sound of his name, and a part of Thor felt… happy almost, to see that the Niouvi wasn’t staring at him in fear or annoyance anymore. “Hm?”

“I… would like to explain my emotions from earlier if you’re willing to listen.”

Loki nodded to himself, thankful that Thor was willing to open up about something so personal.

“Earlier… when Adras kissed my face… I felt a love and an acceptance that I believed I would never feel in this life. And… it overwhelmed me. I was so thankful, to be able to look down and say that I had a child, one that loved me, and was excited to show me the things that he learned each day. I… am aware that I don’t show this, but… Adras is without a doubt, my greatest blessing in this life. And every day that he smiles and calls out to me, a little bit of the coldness in my heart melts away.”

He took a moment to collect his thoughts before continuing to explain. “I know that I can be abrasive and closed off, or hard to understand and approach. But… I ask that we work on creating a healthy balance between us two. As I said before, I will never request love or affection from you, but… if you are willing to be friends, then… so am I.”

Loki had never experienced his perception of a person change so quickly. This morning, Thor was scary, and someone that he was forcibly tethered to; someone who was a nuisance and a person that could and would turn on him at any moment.

But now… now Thor was someone that was scared of getting too close, for fear of rejection. He was someone who had been through so much all alone, and someone who didn’t know how to be open or honest because of the pain that he carried.

And oddly, he was now someone that Loki wanted to protect.

Hearing these confessions from Thor’s lips, Loki found that he wanted to show Thor that if they worked together, they could be happy, and that friendship wasn’t an unattainable goal.
He *wanted* to discover more about Thor; the parts of Thor that no one had seen before, the parts that the giant wouldn’t allow anyone to discover.

The Niouvi nodded emphatically, surprising himself and Thor with the eagerness he was displaying.

“Yes, yes of course! If… you can ever find it within yourself to forgive me for my treatment of you… then I would be more than willing to learn more about you, and become your friend.”

Hearing this put a broad smile on Thor’s face, and seeing the giant smile so genuinely took Loki’s breath away.

Thor’s entire *being* radiated when he smiled, and it was a look that Loki wanted to see on Thor more.

It felt… *strange* almost, to go from fearing Thor to wanting to nurture and encourage him to be his best self, but… Loki decided then that he didn’t mind.

He truly didn’t want to live a life void of happiness, and if he and Thor could at least be friends, he knew that things would be okay.

The pair relaxed in comfortable silence after making their agreement, each of them thinking about their future.

It definitely wouldn’t be easy, but… as long as they worked together, it *could* be done.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading this!

Sorry if anything seemed out of place, or didn't flow properly. I don't have a beta
reader on any of my stories, so if you're willing I will be so grateful to any
CONSTRUCTIVE criticism that you have to offer.
Chapter Four

Chapter Notes

Hello!

Here is the next chapter. I like this chapter, but I posted it so soon because I knew if I kept nitpicking at it, I would change it enough to not be happy with it anymore lol.

I'd like to quickly explain time in this story though, as it's something that completely slipped my mind. I wrote this story with the frost giants living long lives, and with long lives comes the quick passing of time, so a decade for them would be like a month is to us. A year for them passes so quickly, it would be akin to the passing of a week, for us. And then a century for them is like a year for us. If it's confusing for you, please comment and I'll do my best to explain it further.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Loki and Thor found that it was much easier to be friends than it was to be enemies, during their first century together.

Things weren’t so strained anymore, and Loki soon found that he didn’t mind being around Thor or speaking to him.

The giant was still very reserved, but now laughed or smiled more, often times partaking in the silly games that Loki and Adras played together.

He would help Loki out around the house when he could, and supported his desire to master his use of seidr.

Loki knew that it was unlikely that he would ever become as powerful as King Thrym, but he still enjoyed seidr, and wanted to become as skillful as possible in the craft.

He also decided that he would offer his services to the people in Thor’s village, wanting to contribute in some way, shape or form. Adras was a blessing, but he often grew tired of having very little to do each day.

The town’s healer was kind enough to take Loki on as an apprentice, so the Niouvi spent his days learning under the healer’s careful instruction.
Adras was as lively as ever with every passing decade in their home, and was beginning to grow even faster now that he was eating every day.

He was more expressive too, which Loki and Thor often found amusing. The child never kept his opinions or thoughts to himself, and made them known whenever possible.

Today just so happened to be one of those instances.

Thor had just returned from a month-long mercenary job, and was excited to see Loki and Adras.

He did always miss the pair when he left, and now that he and Loki were on amicable terms, the giant always looked forward to coming home.

He could hear Adras shouting with childlike glee from outside the doors of their home, and smiled to himself, unlocking the doors, and stepping inside.

Adras and Loki both looked up when Thor walked into the living room, ceasing their playing so that they could greet him.

Adras ran over to Thor first and tackled his leg, nestling his face into it and grinning up at him. “Deneri!”

Thor smiled down at him softly, and set his bags on the floor, crouching so that he could hug him close. “Hello, child.”

Adras peppered Thor’s face with kisses before hugging him again. “Deneri, guess what I saw!”

Thor stood up then to greet Loki, pressing a warm kiss against his cheek politely. “What did you see?”

Thor tried to not feel happy when Loki returned his greeting, knowing that nothing would come from it.
After getting to know each other better—and after Adras’ endless prodding—Thor and Loki felt comfortable enough with each other to offer minute forms of physical contact.

Thor would often massage Loki’s shoulders after a long week, Loki would find himself running fingers through Thor’s hair in the idle moments of their life, and they both kissed each other’s cheeks or rubbed shoulders or backs at times as well.

It felt nice, being able to share this level of intimacy with someone.

“I saw a baby!”

Adras’ eager voice brought Thor back to the present, and he looked down at his son, raising his eyebrows in surprise. “Did you, now?”

Adras nodded, beginning to giggle. “Beberi helped someone have it!”

Thor shifted his gaze to Loki, surprised. He felt proud, knowing that Loki was pursuing his interests and endeavors so diligently. “You delivered a child?”

Loki blushed faintly then, nodding. “Our town’s healer wanted me to learn, so I helped Berghild deliver her child.”

Thor let Loki lead them all to one of the couches in their living room, and sat down, grateful to finally be sitting after such a long journey. “How was it?”

“In the beginning, it was… unpleasant. But I found myself feeling wistful when she held her child in her arms for the first time,” he answered truthfully. “And… it made me take a moment to thank the Norns for blessing us with Adras.”

Thor understood what Loki meant, then.

It was a dream that he had given up on long ago, but… sometimes, he found himself wondering
what it would be like, to raise a child from birth; a child that shared his flesh and blood.

Of course, that didn’t mean he loved Adras any less; the child was his saving grace. And he truly thanked the Norns for him each and every day.

“Deneri?”

Thor and Loki paused their conversation to look down at Adras. “What is it, child?”

“Do you love Beberi?”

Thor and Loki shared a look before Thor answered. “I care for your Beberi very much.”

Adras hummed for a few seconds, mulling over something. “Tulla said that Aunt Haela said that babies come from love.”

Loki widened his eyes slightly, shocked that the children were speaking about something like this while they were so young. “What do you mean, Adras?”

“Tulla said that Aunt Haela said that when two people love each other, they pray to the Norns for a baby, and then the Norns put the baby in a Beberi’s stomach.”

Both giants relaxed at the simplistic description that Adras and Tulla had been told regarding conception. That was not a topic they wanted to attempt to explain with Adras just yet.

“So can you and Beberi pray to the Norns for a new baby?”

Thor honestly wasn’t surprised by this question, and judging by Loki’s face, the Niouvi wasn’t either.

Every child wanted a brother or sister, and they knew that one day, Adras would want the same.
“Adras, child…” began Loki, tucking a section of his hair behind his ear. “Beberi and Deneri want to enjoy our time with you right now. Can Beberi and Deneri pray for a child another day?”

Adras pouted at this, not happy that Loki wanted to wait. “But why?”

Thor pressed a warm kiss against Adras’ temple, trying to comfort him. “Adras… please listen to Beberi.”

Adras pouted even further, and crossed his arms, still upset.

Laughing softly, Thor pinched Adras’ cheek affectionately, causing a small smile to spread across the child’s face. “Why don’t you tell me about everything else you did while I was away?”

This seemed to distract the young child, and he began to prattle on about his days with Loki, the issue of wanting a sibling forgotten for now.

Thor and Loki played with Adras until it was time for his afternoon nap, and once he was laid down, the pair moved back to the living room after Thor bathed and changed his clothing.

Loki prepared lunch for them, and once they were situated, brought up this issue of children to Thor. He wanted them to be on the same page about this.

“Thor… I would like to discuss Adras’ earlier request.”

Thor took a bite from his meal and nodded, agreeing with Loki.

The Niouvi had honestly wanted to bring this topic up for some time now, as the past few decades between he and Thor had been quite peaceful.

In the very beginning, Loki had been too focused on surviving this marriage to even have thoughts of consensual sex register in his mind.

After he accepted that Thor wouldn’t touch him without his permission, he had time to focus on his
well being, and furthering his development as a person.

And once he had gotten used to his new life, and felt that he would truly not be harmed, the needs of his flesh began to make themselves apparent.

They were easy to ignore at first; Adras was enough to distract himself from them during the day, and at night… at night, he had to accept that he was resigned to himself.

He and Thor did not share a room, so he spent his nights alone.

Adras bringing up his desire for a sibling didn’t surprise him, and Loki knew that he and Thor did need to discuss sex.

He was an intensely sexual being by nature, and had never gone longer than a few months without sex in his adult life.

Being forced into this situation with Thor had nulled these desires, but now that they were amicable, Loki knew that he wouldn’t be able to remain chaste and celibate for the rest of his life.

“If I gave you permission to touch me, would you?”

This was the last thing Thor expected to hear from Loki, and he choked on his food, hitting his chest and coughing to try and breathe again.

Loki wordlessly passed Thor his drink, and waited for him to answer him.

“But…”

This wasn’t the answer he was looking for, so Loki turned on the couch towards Thor. “Thor… we both understand that there is no getting out of this marriage, correct?”

Thor nodded slowly, wanting Loki to explain himself more before he gave an answer on it.
“And because of this acceptance, I have also come to realize lately that I… I can’t live a life of celibacy. I was not cut from that cloth.”

Thor found an amused smile on his face at this; Loki was always so skilled with his delivery and word choice in conversations. “And you’re suggesting that we work on having a more physical relationship?”

“Precisely,” murmured Loki, taking a sip of his tea before continuing. “I’m not suggesting that we reproduce like animals, but… I have been thinking to myself lately, and… having Adras has opened me up to a world that I swore I would never be in. And… although I understand that it is unlikely to expect love to come from our union… that doesn’t mean that absolutely nothing has to come from it.”

Thor set down his fork, staring at Loki strangely. “What are you saying, Loki?”

“That… I believe I am not opposed to expanding our family.”

Thor frowned deeply when Loki said this, straightening up in his chair. “Loki-”

“I’m not forcing myself to do this, Thor.” he sighed, knowing that this would be Thor’s main concern.

Thor remained silent after that, so Loki continued to explain himself, and reassure Thor that this was something he was open to.

“What if this happens Loki, and you regret it? There’s no going back after making that decision.”

Loki huffed, beginning to feel miffed. “This isn’t something that I’ve decided on a whim, Thor. I’ve spent the latter half of this century thinking about it.”

“About which part, Loki?”
“The sex and the child, Thor.”

The silence between them was suffocating then, and Thor exhaled slowly, trying to process everything that Loki was saying.

“Loki… are you certain that this is something you want?”

“I don’t want to force you into this either, Thor. I want a willing partner on both endeavors.”

Thor spent some time truly thinking over this before giving Loki his final decision. “If you would like to begin to work on our physical relationship, then I am open to doing this. And as for expanding our family… I feel we should adhere to tradition. If you’re willing to partake on that part of life with someone like me, then I am open and accepting of this as well. Whenever you make the decision to expand our family… know that you have my support and my eternal gratitude.”

Loki nodded, his heart beginning to race with minute anticipation. “Then… should we begin to share a room?”

Thor took a final bite of his meal before giving his answer. “Only if you’re comfortable doing so.”

Loki nodded to himself again, making sure that he was truly okay with this.

“Adras naps for at least another half hour…” he murmured after a few seconds, shifting his eyes towards Thor.

Thor moved to place his plate and cup on a nearby end table, and faced Loki completely, picking up on what Loki was suggesting, and not knowing if he was serious. “He does.”

After fighting with himself for sometime, Loki looked back up at Thor, pursing his lips. “Am I allowed to touch you as well?”

“... Well… yes. I am not averse to your touch.”
“Then… forgive me.”

Thor opened his mouth to ask Loki what he meant, and was rendered speechless when the Niouvi warily sat down in his lap, facing him. “Is this okay?”

“I… I don’t know, Loki.”

Loki readjusted himself in Thor’s lap, and rested careful hands on his shoulders, staring into his eyes. “Thor… if this is something that we have agreed to do, I cannot do it alone. I need a willing partner.”

Thor remained silent and shifted his gaze away from Loki’s intense one, still feeling uncomfortable with actually being this close to him.

It wasn’t that he didn’t find Loki attractive; Loki was one of the most beautiful beings that Thor had ever laid his eyes on, and the giant looked at the Niouvi like he was the pinnacle of perfection.

And it was because he looked at him as a pinnacle of perfection that he felt he wasn’t good enough to even think about touching Loki, or to act on his impulses or desires.

Loki had gotten much better at reading Thor’s countenance over the decades that they’d been married, and could see that Thor was holding something back.

Placing as much concern in his voice as he could, Loki gently held Thor’s face in his hands, wanting to know what battle he was fighting within himself. “Thor?”

Thor seemed terrified for some reason, so Loki ran a calming hand through his hair, wanting him to know that there was no reason to feel as he did. “Thor… please talk to me. What is going through your mind at this moment?”

Thor closed his eyes and inhaled slowly before opening them again, and exhaling.
It was getting easier to open up to Loki, now that he knew the Niouvi wouldn’t take advantage of his vulnerability, but with issues like this… deep-seated issues in his heart that stemmed from his heritage… he still struggled with expressing.

“Loki…”

Loki remained silent, willing to wait as long as it took for Thor to express himself.

“The day we were wed… and I looked upon you at your physical best… I was awed. Not because I felt you were mine, and not because I felt entitled to your person. I was awed because of your beauty. At that moment, you were the single most perfect, beautiful, and strong-willed being that I have ever come across. You were scared out of your mind, and yet… you were so determined to make the most of this situation, and come out on top.”

He took a moment to gather his thoughts again before explaining further. “When I saw you, I swore to myself that I would not let anyone or anything ever harm you again; including myself. I told myself that I wouldn’t touch a single part of you without your permission, and now that you’re telling me that it’s okay… I feel as if you will regret your decision, and I’ll end up hurting you. And that’s the last thing I want to do to you…”

Loki frowned slightly, his heart aching when Thor explained himself. “Thor…”

“If we do this… if we become intimate, and immediately after, you feel disgusted… and end up hating me because of it… I will never forgive myself.”

Loki rubbed at Thor’s cheek with his thumb, still concerned that the giant felt this way about himself. “Thor… why would I feel disgusted?”

Thor was surprised by the harsh laugh that left his mouth at this. “You and I both know why, Loki.”

Pursing his lips, Loki let go of Thor’s face, resting his hands firmly on his shoulders instead. “Thor… Thor if your heritage disgusted me that much, I wouldn’t be sitting in your lap. And I wouldn’t have offered to bear a child for you. I wouldn’t ask to be intimate.”

Thor remained silent still, so Loki let out a frustrated sigh, racking through his brain to determine
the best way to help Thor understand that he did not look at him with disgust or in revulsion.

“Thor… I would like to tell you something. Will you listen, if I share it?”

Thor gave him a stiff nod, so Loki cleared his throat, beginning to explain himself.

“What working under the king, I was an ugly person. I was vain, I was selfish, and because I had finally achieved the status that I had always been dreaming of, I looked down on others; especially ones like you. I believed that my life as I knew it was over when I was told we were to be wed. And being rejected by so many builders in the capital was proof of that for me.

“I spent the first part of our marriage hating you for sullying my reputation that I had worked so painstakingly to build. I was hurting and was looking for someone to blame. But when Adras came into our lives… my heart softened… and the more and more I got to know you, the more humble I became. Because I have traveled far in my life across these lands and… I have never met someone with as big of a heart as you.”

Thor felt as if lightning had struck him then at that moment, and he widened his eyes in disbelief, shaking his head. “Loki.”

“I do not lie. You have shown me that you are a loving, and caring, and compassionate individual; that you are more than your father. Your father is known as a cruel warlord; one who rules the realms with an iron fist. He’s regarded as a monster by our people; someone who has no heart. And you are nothing like him.”

Thor hadn’t cried in centuries.

The pain that came from being rejected by his own race because of his mixed heritage was a heavy burden to bear, and over time he hardened his heart to it, in order to carry on.

But to hear the words that he had been yearning for his entire life, at this moment, broke him.

Deeply.
He wept in Loki’s arms then, the unfamiliar feelings of validation and companionship making him feel as if he could be whole again.

Loki held Thor close while he cried, understanding that this was most likely the first time that Thor had ever heard these words.

Thor had been carrying a burden for so long, he had been hurting for so long, he had been crying out for someone to see his pain and help him for so long, and Loki had decided that there was no reason that the person that cared for Thor couldn’t be him.

He shushed Thor gently, and rubbed at or patted his back, holding him for as long as he needed to be held, and reassuring him that he was a good person; someone worthy of love and companionship, and the greatest joys that life had to offer.

“You have no idea how much those words mean to me, Loki…” murmured Thor, sitting up and wiping at his face. “Thank you…”

Loki nodded, pressing a warm kiss against Thor’s forehead. “I would be honored to give you a child, Thor. If our children could even exude a fraction of the love that you carry in your heart, then I will be pleased and thank the Norns. Your heritage is not something you can control, and… it doesn’t mean you shouldn’t receive the things that you desire. You told me so long ago that if I should ever want or need for anything, to ask. And now I’m asking you to do the same. If it is within my power, Thor, then I shall give it, whatever it is. Just tell me.”

Thor sniffed, laughing bitterly to himself. “Loki, please don’t say such things to me.”

Loki raised an arched eyebrow at him. “Why?”

“Because…it will give me hope.”

Loki’s heart shattered at the helplessness that was in Thor’s voice when he said this, and he reached back up to cradle Thor’s face in his hands, using the pads of his thumbs to wipe away his tears.

“Hope for what, Thor?”
Thor sniffed again, and shook his head, letting out a garbled sound. “Loki...”

“Thor, it’s alright! Talk to me... please.”

“I just... I want the same thing that everyone wants, Loki. And I can’t have that!”

Loki looked at Thor in pity, running his hand through Thor’s hair again. “Why, Thor?”

“You were forced into this marriage like I was, Loki. As close as we’ve become, and as close as we can get, I know that I will never know what it’s like for someone to love me. You’ve blessed me with a child’s love, and for that, I will always be eternally grateful. But you’re telling me to ask you for the one thing that I know you can’t give!”

Loki pursed his lips then, thinking very carefully about his next answer.

“How do you know that?”

Thor blinked rapidly a few times, confused. “What do you mean?”

Loki sighed then, staring at Thor pointedly. “When we were first wed, did you ever think you would see the day where I would be sitting in your lap, and holding your face?”

“... No.”

“Exactly. Because I didn’t either. But we’re here. So if you’re wanting to try and pursue a romantic relationship, Thor... then I am more than willing to work on it with you.”

“Loki-”

“Please take my word, Thor. I’m sure you know enough about me now to know that I do not mince my words. I truly do not know what the future holds for us, but... what I do know is this:...
You’re kind, open, accepting, hardworking, and considerate. You’re a good person, Thor, and… and I know that over this century, you’ve become my greatest friend. I have never loved someone before, but… I know that if we agree to work on us, that something like that could bloom. I would like us to be happy and to make the most of this marriage. And I can only pray that you feel the same.”

Thor laughed softly to himself then.

One thing he had grown to admire about Loki over the years was his resilience.

And to know that Loki was so willing to reassure him and tell him things that he yearned to hear for his entire life, meant a lot to him.

If Loki was willing to go down this road with him, then… he would trust him, and go down this road too.

To be so vulnerable in front of someone made Thor feel embarrassed, and he was surprised when Loki caressed his cheek, encouraging him to meet his gaze.

“Please do not feel ashamed for opening up to me, Thor. Please.”

Thor nodded slowly, finally noticing that his heart was racing. “Thank you, Loki... for this. For everything. It... it means so much to me, to be comforted by you.”

Loki nodded, wiping away the last of Thor’s tears. “I’ve come to realize that we have to talk and communicate if this is going to work. And I know that it’s something we both struggle with. But it can be done... we just have to try.”

The pair smiled at each other then and felt the numerous walls that they had built around themselves crumble, and fall down.

Loki looked into Thor’s eyes for some time, wanting to convey that he did care about the giant.

And before his courage left him, Loki closed his eyes and leaned forward, pressing a tentative kiss
against Thor’s lips.

Thor seemed shocked by the action, and went rigid under Loki, staring at him in bewilderment when he pulled away.

“Was… was that not okay?”

Thor rushed to reassure Loki, shaking his head and holding his face in turn. “No, no Loki, it was fine. I just… I’m still processing our conversation. And reassuring myself of the validity in your words.”

Loki nodded in understanding and rubbed at Thor’s cheek for a final time. “Of course… then we shall take things day by day.”

Thor nodded in relief, and finally began to relax, looking at the clock on the wall across from him. “Adras should be waking up right about now.”

Loki shifted to leave Thor’s lap, and stretched, his legs aching from being in the same position for a prolonged period of time. “Let us wake him, then. If we don’t he won’t be able to sleep tonight.”

The pair shared a laugh, and walked upstairs to wake their son, a comfortable peace radiating between them.

They played with Adras for the entire latter half of the day, and once night fell, put him to bed again after dinner, kissing him goodnight.

Thor and Loki rearranged Loki’s room after this, making it so that Thor’s things could fit in here comfortably.

Loki’s room was originally the master bedroom, so there was more than enough space for both of their things.

They were both quite nervous about this progression in their relationship, but both agreed that it was something that they wanted to do.
They hadn’t shared a bed since the night before their wedding, so after bathing and dressing for the night, Loki noticed that Thor was hesitating to climb into bed with him.

He propped himself up on an elbow and gestured for Thor to follow him, wanting him to know that he hadn’t changed his mind.

Thor waited a few seconds before taking a few cautious steps forward, and climbed into their massive bed, getting under the furs of the bed.

The first few minutes of sharing a bed, they spent in silence, and Thor was too nervous to move, not wanting to do anything that might make Loki feel uncomfortable.

Loki figured that this was going through Thor’s head again, and rolled over onto his side, propping himself up on an elbow again.

“Thor?”

Thor turned towards Loki a bit too quickly, making his nervousness more apparent. “Yes?”

“Why are you so nervous?”

Thor blinked a few times, not exactly sure how to answer this question. “I… I don’t know. This… this is a first for me, Loki. I haven’t done this before…”

Loki widened his eyes here, sitting up hurriedly. “You’ve never held someone intimately before?”

Thor huffed with indignation, and sat up as well, facing Loki. “That isn’t what I meant, Loki.”

“… Have you, though?”

“Yes, Loki.”
Loki found himself blushing at the bluntness of Thor’s answer, and he laughed, reaching out to take Thor’s hands in his own. “I do not ask to make you feel inadequate, Thor. I assure you, I was merely curious.”

Thor frowned slightly, and Loki found himself laughing again, as this was a look that he had not seen on Thor’s face before.

It seemed to be a cross between embarrassment and annoyance, and Loki squeezed Thor’s hands again to reassure him. “Norns, forgive me, Thor. I’m only laughing because I’ve never seen this look on your face before.”

Thor made this face again, and looked away from Loki for a moment, before turning back towards him. “I’m… not used to being so expressive.”

Loki’s gaze softened then, and he scooted a bit closer to Thor, looking up at him. “And that’s alright… I’m not used to being so emotional or listening to my heart but… there’s no reason as to why we cannot grow accustomed to the things that we find challenging to do.”

Thor nodded in agreement, beginning to feel more at ease with sharing a bed with Loki.

“And Thor?”

Thor raised an eyebrow at Loki, encouraging him to continue.

“I will not reject your advances or your touch. I’m committed to exploring this aspect of our union, as long as you are too.”

Thor searched Loki’s gaze for what seemed like minutes, wanting to make sure that he spoke the truth.

“Then… forgive me.”
Loki quirked up an eyebrow when Thor said this, and was taken aback when Thor pressed a soft kiss against his lips, a hand on his waist holding him in place.

After the surprise wore off, Loki kissed Thor back before the giant could pull away or become unsure, and draped his arms around his neck, enjoying this kiss for what it was; simple, innocent, and full of curiosity.

He didn’t think that they would do anything more than this tonight and was pleasantly surprised when he felt Thor’s broad hand snake around his waist, and pull him closer so that their kiss could be deepened.

A soft sound found itself escaping his lips when Thor’s tongue met his, and the pair began to shift in between kisses until Thor lied on his back, Loki straddling his waist.

He was surprised when he felt Thor’s large hands on his ass, but didn’t mind the touch.

It was nice being able to share a moment like this with him, and he relaxed further in his hold, enjoying the leisure pace that things were going.

Because he was only wearing a long nightshirt, it didn’t take Thor long to venture onto feeling his bare skin.

He broke their kiss to let out a breathy moan when he felt Thor’s finger begin to trace itself along the wettening lips of his cunt, and closed his eyes, spreading himself a bit and arching so that Thor had more access to him.

Thor managed to slip a finger into Loki, and bit back a moan. Loki felt so warm and slick and inviting around him, and he began to pump this finger in and out of him slowly, not wanting to rush anything, and wanting to enjoy this moment.

“A-Another…” murmured Loki, resting his head on Thor’s shoulder, and grasping at the sheets of their bed.

It had been so long since he felt the touch of another, and he admitted that he was mildly embarrassed by how eager he was for this night to progress.
Thor laughed softly and pushed another finger into Loki, the slick from Loki practically drenching his digits.

“Thor,” gasped Loki, moving to grasp at the giant’s shoulders. “Just fuck me.”

Thor did not need to be told twice, and shifted beneath Loki, flipping him over onto his stomach.

Loki found that Thor holding him down in place with a strong hand was extremely alluring, and he let out another desperate moan when he felt the thick head of Thor’s cock begin to make its way into him.

Thor spread him in ways that he hadn’t experienced in a long time, and he cried out once Thor began to enter him fully, his own cock straining against the bedsheets.

The deep visceral ache that was quenched when Thor entered Loki was enough to make Loki see stars, and he shook underneath Thor as he climaxed, surprising himself with how quick he came.

The pulsing and spasming of Loki’s walls made Thor feel as if he was in Valhalla, and he couldn’t stop the pace at which he snapped his hips into Loki, the hitched breaths and muffled gasps that came from Loki only edging him on.

Thor was grasping at his hips with an ironclad, bruising grip, and all Loki could do was clench at the sheets of their bed and pant or cry out, feeling as if lightning was shooting down the length of his spine with every thrust that was made into him.

Thor moved into him and struck every single place from within that sparked pleasure, and Loki shuddered when he climaxed again a few minutes later, the familiar sight of stars returning to his vision.

Thor wasn’t far behind him, and faltered with his precise movements for a second before his climax took over as well.

Loki groaned when he felt Thor’s warm seed spill into him, and collapsed onto his stomach, his knees finally giving out.
Thor collapsed onto his back next to him and laughed breathlessly, feeling a strange happiness within his heart when Loki moved to nestle into his side.

The pair fell asleep soon after their romp, feeling comfortable in each other’s embrace for the first time.

As the days and the weeks and the months and years passed by after their confession filled night and romp, Thor and Loki grew more comfortable with physical contact and affection amongst themselves, and Thor’s personality did a complete 180.

Adras was over the moon that his parents were finally “happy”, and would giggle each time he caught them sharing a quick kiss or an intimate embrace.

Before Thor and Loki had sex and agreed to work on their relationship, Thor was reserved and would keep his thoughts and opinions to himself. He would smile, but it would always be strained, and he would chuckle to himself, but never openly laugh.

But now… now Thor couldn’t keep his hands off of Loki, or help but express himself.

He couldn’t keep a smile off of his face at the sight of their son or Loki, and he laughed more and more each day, his inner light and beauty shining through.

Loki often found himself waking up every day to a flurry of kisses, a dozen hugs, and more romantic gestures than he knew what to do with.

At first, Loki found this endearing, if not a bit overwhelming. But as the months and the years passed in their home, Loki began to find himself looking forward to Thor’s romantic expressions.

He couldn’t deny that he now felt the stirrings of love in his heart for his husband, but he wasn’t ready to say those words just yet.
Thor was more than understanding with him, and never pushed or pressed him to do or say something that he was not willing or ready to do.

Three decades after they decided to work on their relationship found Thor and Loki in their kitchen before sunrise. Adras wouldn’t be up for some time, so the pair were enjoying the silence that the morning brought them, a comfortable air between them.

Because no one was sure when Adras was born, Loki and Thor decided some time ago that it would be best if they celebrated his birthday on the day Loki chose to adopt him, which just so happened to be today.

They had a large celebration planned for him later that day and were hosting many of the village’s young children at their property for the celebration, so there were many things to set up.

First though, Loki would have to eat something. He was quite hungry and found it slightly annoying that he was constantly hungry now.

Thor noticed his frustration, and smiled softly at him, opening a cabinet to look at the food available. “Are you hungry?”

Loki opened his eyes slowly and nodded, thankful that Thor was so attentive. “I am.”

“What do you have a taste for?”

Loki hummed to himself and thought about it for a moment, wondering if he should be honest. He’d been keeping something from Thor for some time, and was beginning to feel guilty about it, knowing that he needed to be honest with him sooner rather than later.

He was actually quite surprised that Thor hadn’t noticed yet.

“I’m not sure. Maybe some fruit, for now. We need to stop by your aunt’s later this morning, so I’m certain she would love to have us eat breakfast there.”
Thor raised a questioning eyebrow at him then. “Why are we visiting my aunt? She and the rest of my family will be over later today for Adras’ birthday.”

Loki pretended to feign ignorance at his question and stood, snagging the orange out of Thor’s hand, and beginning to peel it. “I need some advice about something and some supplies.”

“Supplies?”

Loki nodded, trying his best to not smile and give it away. “Because she is your closest of kin, I need her to buy me some sewing supplies.”

Thor still didn’t understand what Loki was hinting at and tried to think about why Loki would need this from her. “Forgive me, but… can you not go to the market and purchase some yourself?”

Loki finally allowed a small smile to grace his face. “No, Thor… I would like to adhere to tradition, per your request.”

The gears in Thor’s head began to turn then, and after a few seconds, his eyes widened in disbelief, his heart beginning to pound with nervous anticipation.

In their culture, when a Jötun became pregnant with their first child, it was common for them to ask for their husband’s closest female relative to provide them with cloth and supplies to craft the newborn’s blanket, which would then be given to their husband for safekeeping until the child was born.

Loki was now asking him for this, which meant…

“Loki…”

Loki popped an orange slice into his mouth and began to laugh, a full smile now spreading across his face. “I’m glad you finally understand.”

Thor reached out and grabbed Loki’s hands, looking down at him at him with thinly veiled hope. “Do you jest?”
Loki shook his head, smoothing out his nightshirt and showing his rounded stomach. “I do not.”

Thor’s eyes began to well with tears then, and he fell to his knees, eye level with Loki’s extended stomach. “Since when?”

“I’ve known for a little over a decade. I’m due in six or seven decades.”

Thor couldn’t stop the garbled sound that left his throat, and he began to cry, reverently placing a large hand on Loki’s stomach. “Loki…”

Loki was relieved to see that Thor was excited, and began to run his hand through his golden hair, humming softly. “I went to the healer yesterday. The pregnancy is viable. And the child is healthy.”

Thor made another garbled sound, openly beginning to weep. He rested his forehead against Loki’s stomach, his hands gripping his hips tightly.

Loki knew that this would be an extremely emotional event for Thor, as this was something that the giant thought he would never have.

On their realm amongst their people, they believed that it was solely up to the Niouvi to decide when they carried life, since they had that ability.

And the night they shared together that first time had been so raw, so vulnerable, so intense, that Loki knew he wanted to at least give Thor the one thing that the giant believed he would never have.

He didn’t regret deciding to carry Thor’s child, and although it had been scary at first, knowing that there was no going back, he was ready for this, and he knew that Thor was ready too.

Finally, Thor stood, and pressed a flurry of kisses against Loki’s lips, barely able to contain his joy. “Thank you, Loki. Thank you.”
Loki nodded, closing his eyes and kissing him back. He was surprised that he was this big already, and originally he thought that he was carrying multiples. But his trip to the healer revealed that this would be a singleton pregnancy, of an above average sized baby.

Because Niouvi were so much smaller than their giant counterparts, they usually began to show very early in their pregnancies, and generally did not always carry to term, their children born a decade or two before they would normally be born, had they come from a giantess.

Loki was assured that his body would be able to handle this pregnancy though, so he was not worried, trusting the experienced word of the town’s healer.

Thor kissed Loki once more, before pulling back to cradle his face, and smiling down at him. “You are truly with child?”

Loki rolled his eyes and kissed Thor again. “Yes. We are having a child, Thor.”

Thor began to press kiss after kiss against his neck then, causing Loki to smile and laugh.

“I’m surprised it took you this long to notice, though… I’m so large already.”

Thor blushed, averting his gaze for a moment. “I noticed that you were putting on some weight, but… I felt it was not my place to say something.”

Loki snorted, pulling himself away from Thor so he could rub at his stomach. It still felt odd, to know that he was actually carrying life.

“Beberi?”

The pair looked over when Adras’ confused voice interrupted them, and Thor removed his hand from Loki’s stomach, a blush on his face.

Loki laughed softly and walked over to their child, hugging him and pressing a loving kiss against his face. “Good morning, sweet child. Happy Birthday.”
Adras nestled himself into Loki’s arms, humming with content.

After he had gotten enough of Loki, he let go, and ran over to Thor, hugging his legs. “Why are you crying, Deneri?”

Thor sniffed and wiped at his eyes with one hand, using the other to rub at Adras’ soft hair. “I’m happy.”

Adras looked up at him curiously. “Why?”

“Because… you’ll have a new brother or sister before the century is over. Beberi is with child.”

Adras gasped, letting go of Thor and running over to Loki. “Really?!”

Loki laughed again and nodded, sitting down so that Adras could feel his stomach.

The child seemed fascinated by this, and looked at his round stomach in wonder, both of his small hands pressed against it.

“I suppose we can eat breakfast with your family since Adras has woken up.” murmured Loki, running his hand through Adras’ hair.

Thor nodded, walking over to Loki and placing another loving kiss against his lips. “Thank you, Loki. Thank you.”

Loki nodded, humming appreciatively and kissing Thor back.

The family got ready for the day and made their way to Thor’s family’s cottage, knocking on the door.

As always, Thor’s aunt opened it, and smiled at her family fondly, ushering them in.
Breakfast was currently being made, so Loki and Thor told Adras to go play with Tulla while they helped Thor’s aunt finish.

“So,” she began, slicing up some fruit. “What brings you over so early? Not that I mind, of course; I love you all so much.”

Loki looked over at Thor, wondering if he would want to tell her the news.

Grinning from ear to ear, Thor wiped his hands off on a nearby cloth, and moved to stand behind Loki, splaying his large hands around his stomach. “Loki now carries our child.”

Thor’s aunt gasped loudly, dropping her knife on the cutting board, and rushing to stand in front of Loki, feeling his stomach. “Norns! How far along are you?”

“A little over three decades.” murmured Loki, staring down at his stomach fondly. “I went to the healer yesterday, and was told that this pregnancy is viable.”

Thor’s aunt had a broad smile on her face, and she rubbed at Loki’s stomach affectionately. “How many?”

“Just one. I was told that it would be an above average sized infant… so there is the chance that they will be born a decade or two early.”

“Norns… I am so happy for you both. I truly am. This is great news!”

Loki leaned back into Thor’s touch, buzzing with excitement as well.

He was relieved that things were going as they should, and was glad that for the first time in a while, he finally felt happy.

Now only if it could last…
Chapter End Notes

Yay!

Love and a baby lol XD

Lemme know if you think Thor and Loki progressed too quickly with their relationship in the comments please, if you're willing. I don't have any beta readers for my stories, so everyone's comments really help me figure out the best way to progress the story. Plus I just like hearing what everyone has to say too LOL.
When Loki was five decades along with his first pregnancy, he and Thor decided that they would all attend the ceremony of the Norns together as a family. At the beginning of each century, every Jötun gathered at their nearest temple to offer their thanks to the Norns for bringing them to a new century.

Afterward, festivals were usually carried out for weeks at a time, to celebrate the life that they’d all been given.

Loki and Thor didn’t attend the festival last century, as they’d just adopted Adras, and were still getting used to being married.

This century though, they believed that it would be fun to attend it as a family, and believed that Adras would enjoy the event immensely.

Of course, Loki did find himself wondering in the back of his mind if it was a good idea to attend this event at all, the closer and closer the date of the celebration became. He’d been surrounded by the kind people of Thor’s village for so long, that he had almost forgotten that the world outside of this village was not so accepting.
To everyone outside of this small village, Thor was still a monster, and their union would always be looked at in revulsion and disgust regardless of where they traveled.

Thor noticed Loki’s sullen mood as they climbed into bed the night before the ceremony, and frowned to himself, wondering why Loki was turned away from him and curled up on his side. Nestling into his warm embrace was usually the first thing that Loki did once they got into bed each night.

Because they were living as a married couple and interacting as a married couple now, Thor found it a bit easier to approach Loki when something was wrong.

It was still hard to initially reach out and talk to the Niouvi when he was like this, as Loki often isolated himself when he was feeling upset or sad. Thor knew from experience though that it was best to approach Loki in the very beginning of him feeling negative, as the longer Thor left him alone, the darker Loki’s thoughts and feelings became, and the deeper he spiraled down.

Reaching out with a careful hand, Thor rubbed soothing circles into the crest of Loki’s hip with his thumb, catching his attention. “Loki?”

The Niouvi remained silent, so Thor scooted closer to him in their bed, sitting up and resting his hand fully on his hip. “Love?”

Thor knew he had Loki here.

Loki hadn’t told Thor that he loved him yet, and they haven’t called each other the traditional married couple names of “Jetoni” or “Aberi” just yet, but very recently Thor had begun to refer to Loki as “love”, whenever something was wrong, or the Niouvi was troubled.

Loki seemed to always melt when Thor called him this, and knowing that it made Loki happy to be called this only made Thor want to refer to him as this more.

Loki’s response came a few seconds later, and it hurt Thor to hear how worried Loki was. “I don’t want to trouble you, Thor…”

“Your worries are mine, Loki. If you’re willing to speak to me about what’s wrong, then I am more than willing to listen.”
Loki sighed and carefully sat up, placing a careful hand on his protruding stomach. “I’m just worried, Thor.”

Thor reached out to take Loki’s hands in his, marveling at how beautiful he looked under the moonlight that was shining through the windows in their room.

“Loki, please don’t worry yourself over something that is out of your control.”

The Niouvi bit a lower lip and closed his eyes, trying to hold back his tears. He felt that the further along he got in this pregnancy, the harder it was to hide his true feelings, and pretend that everything was okay.

“I can’t help but worry, Thor. If we go to that festival tomorrow, the bubble we’ve been living in will burst. No one will smile and greet us as we pass. No one will congratulate me on my pregnancy. No one will even stop to pinch Adras’ cheeks or tell him how adorable he is. Because us going to the festival tomorrow is a harsh reminder that we’re pariahs in this land.”

Thor sighed softly then.

He had been worried about Loki and Adras attending the festival tomorrow as well, for they had never truly experienced what it was like to be discriminated against and hated for something that they could not control.

“Loki… I cannot say that it won’t be as bad as you’re fearing it will. And I cannot say it won’t be better either. But what I can say is this; no one will lay a hand on you or Adras. And I will do my best to ensure that this will be a positive experience for both of you.”

“But how?!?” argued Loki, wiping at a few of his tears that couldn’t be held back anymore. “I don’t want our son to know what it’s like to be hated simply for who his Deneri is! It’s not fair! It’s not fair to you and it’s not fair to him.”

His voice broke at the end of this, and he took in a shaky breath, trying to calm himself. “He’s innocent in all of this, Thor. I don’t want Adras to grow up hating himself or even worse, hating you.”
It had been this exact scenario that Thor had been afraid of when Loki asked if they could adopt Adras.

In their village, it was easy to forget that the world wasn’t perfect and that people weren’t always nice.

And the one thing he had been terrified of experiencing when Adras first fell asleep in his arms that day so long ago, was gaining his child’s love, only to lose it.

Adras beginning to resent him for his heritage was something that caused Thor many sleepless nights in the beginning, and although Adras currently showed no signs of hating him, the giant still had this fear in his heart.

“I don’t want him to hate me either, Loki…”

Loki sniffed once more and wiped at his eyes again. “I don’t know what to do, Thor. I want Adras to experience everything that life has to offer, and I want him to grow up normally, but I don’t want him to know what it’s like to face this form of adversity.”

Thor sighed softly, racking his brain for a way to rectify this situation. “Loki… growing up and being part Aesir was very hard for me. And there were numerous times where I did resent my beberi for choosing to become involved with someone like my father. I couldn’t understand why everyone hated me for looking so different, and… over time, my heart did harden. But meeting you, and raising Adras… and knowing that our next child will be here in a few short decades… my heart has softened to a point where I can feel again. And I know that as long as I know you all love me… and as long as I know I mean something to you… then the opinions of the world don’t matter.”

Loki looked up at Thor then, the deep ruby of his eyes glistening with even more tears. “I just… I want you to be happy Thor. And be accepted. You’re such a good person, and it pains me to know that everyone in this realm regards you as something other than this.”

“And that’s fine, Loki. Because if everyone hates me… I know that there are people that don’t as well.”

He moved to cradle Loki’s face, and wiped at his tears with the pads of his thumbs. “Please do not cry, Loki. It will not always be this way. People’s hearts and minds can change. And I believe that
one day, they will.”

Loki closed his eyes and nodded, knowing that worrying endlessly about Thor’s treatment tomorrow was hopeless.

All they could do was remain headstrong.

He stretched up to kiss Thor, and pulled away afterward, staring deep into his eyes that matched the color of the sky.

Thor stared at him with such unabashed love and compassion, and it only made him feel more emotional over their treatment when they presented as a family tomorrow.

“Everything will be alright, Loki.” assured Thor, pulling Loki into a warm embrace. “As long as Adras sees us happy, he will be happy too.”

Loki laughed softly when Thor said this, knowing that this was the truth. The entire world could be falling apart around them, and as long as Thor and Loki were happy, Adras had a smile on his face too.

He rubbed at Thor’s cheek gently and smiled, grateful that they were so close now.

He could honestly say that besides Adras and their unborn child, Thor was the most important person in his life.

And he knew that he wasn’t always the best at conveying that to him.

Gathering his courage, Loki scooted just a bit closer to Thor, and pulled his face down to his level, an amused smile beginning to spread across his face when he noticed just how much Thor was hunched over because of him pulling him closer.

Thor was almost an entire foot taller than him, so oftentimes Loki found himself sitting in his lap or cradled against his side when they wanted to kiss.
“Thor… I understand that I’m not very open about just how much I care about you. But regardless of how tomorrow goes, I need you to not doubt me for a second, and I need you to know that I do love you.”

The smile that Thor gave him made Loki want to melt, and he couldn’t help but smile in return, pressing another quick kiss against Thor’s lips.

Thor kissed him back, and moved his hands to Loki’s hips, humming softly. “Thank you, Loki.”

Loki nodded and kissed Thor a final time before pulling away. “Of course.”

In the illuminating light of the moon, Loki was able to stare at Thor in a different light, and he realized something about Thor then that he hadn’t noticed before.

The giant had familial etchings.

Every full-blooded giant on their realm had markings upon their face and skin that were hereditary and spoke of their history and lineage.

Families and bloodlines could be identified by looking at someone’s familial etchings, and up until this point, Loki had wrongly assumed that Thor didn’t have any.

They were very faint upon his skin, and Thor’s skin was already such a light hue of blue, so Loki took some time to study Thor’s markings, knowing that they looked strangely familiar.

He couldn’t pinpoint why though and bit a lower lip, letting go of Thor’s face and pulling his arm into the light of the moon.

Thor snorted softly, wondering what Loki was up to. “What are you doing?”

“I never noticed your familial etchings before…” murmured the Niouvi, studying Thor’s markings a bit closer. “I never knew you had them.”
Thor stifled a yawn and nodded, staring down at his arm as well. “Yes... they’re very faint. People usually don’t notice them unless they’re this close to me.”

Loki felt minute guilt about keeping Thor up with his poking and prodding, and finally let go of him, embarrassed.

“Let’s turn in, Loki... we’ll deal with tomorrow when it arrives.”

Loki found himself yawning as well, and nodded, shifting down in bed and resting on his pillow.

He couldn’t hold back the gentle smile that spread across his face when Thor pulled him a bit closer, and he nestled underneath Thor’s chin, wrapping his arms around the giant, and allowing the warmth of his skin to lull him to sleep.

A very odd sensation from within caused Loki to wake up the next morning.

It was still very early -only 7am- and the ceremony usually didn’t start until 12, so they wouldn’t leave until 9:30.

This odd sensation would have to be dealt with first though.

It felt like a strange, fluttering sensation, and as he moved away from Thor’s comforting side and lied on his back, the fluttering sensation only becoming more apparent.

He closed his eyes and sent out a pulse of seidr throughout his body, scanning every organ system in his abdomen, and trying to pinpoint why he felt this way.

The answer was so blaringly obvious after his scan that for a few seconds, he felt quite embarrassed.
He quickly shoved the embarrassment out of the way though and laughed, placing a tentative hand on the center of his stomach, and hoping that he didn’t imagine the light kicks.

His child seemed intent on showing him that he hadn’t imagined the kicks, and sent a flurry of them his way, aiming them at his hand.

He couldn’t stop the laughter that came from his lips then, and sat up, shaking Thor awake.

He knew the giant would want to experience being able to feel their child’s kicks for the first time as well.

“Thor! Wake up!”

His husband groaned and pulled Loki down and back into his arms, caging him in a tight embrace.

Loki rolled his eyes and tried to pry himself out of Thor’s hold, continuing to shake him awake. “Wake up!”

Thor wasn’t sure how he did it, but he managed to crack open his eyes, staring at Loki’s face. The Niouvi seemed excited for some reason, and Thor blinked a few times, trying to wake up.

Grunting, Loki managed to pull Thor up to where he was sitting, and grabbed his hand, placing it over his stomach.

Thor yawned and rubbed Loki’s stomach affectionately before pulling his hand away and stretching, still trying to wake up. “Is it time to wake up already?”

“It’s a bit early, but that’s not why I woke you up. Here, feel this.” insisted Loki, grabbing Thor’s hand again and placing in on the center of his abdomen.

Thor woke up quickly when he felt something push against his hand, and began to laugh, shifting in bed so that he could place both of his large hands on Loki’s rounded stomach. “Norns!”
Loki looked up at him and smiled proudly, nodding. “I know! They actually woke me up this morning.”

Thor rubbed Loki’s stomach again, seemingly entranced by the small life pressing against his hands. “Did they, now?”

Loki watched Thor for sometime, allowing him to have his fill of this monumental moment. It made him happy to know that Thor was so excited about their child.

“How much longer?”

Loki hummed, thinking. He was quite large already, so he figured he wouldn’t make it past nine decades, and he was five already. “Maybe four more decades? Not too long.”

Thor hummed in reply as well and stooped over, pressing a loving kiss against Loki’s stomach before sitting up. “Should I wake up Adras?”

Loki shook his head, nestling back down into their bed and pulling Thor down with him. “No; it’s still early. And I don’t feel like making breakfast just yet.”

Thor laughed gently and pulled Loki against his side, wrapping a comforting arm around him. “I’ll make breakfast this morning.”

Loki hugged Thor just a bit tighter and smiled, the warmth of Thor’s skin always relaxing him. “Thank you.”

The pair relaxed in bed for a few more minutes before getting up, knowing that they needed to make breakfast, and begin to get ready for the festival.

Loki knew that it would take him quite some time to get ready, so after waking Adras up and eating breakfast, he began to think of how he wanted to dress, sifting through his closet for something to wear.
Because the clothing of their people was usually very expressive, with exposed midriffs and thighs and piercings the norm, it was very hard to hide a pregnancy.

Family and fertility were extremely important to Jötnar, so when a Jötun began to show, it was generally a cause for celebration.

They exposed their stomachs proudly and with no shame, bare for the world to see.

Loki debated about dressing up for this event for quite some time, as he hadn’t adorned himself in the jewels and fabrics of a Niouvi since marrying Thor. But now that he had accepted his life, he felt the desire to dress as he used to. Granted, he was no longer a Psemetri, but he still had very nice coverings that still fit.

He decided on a sheer red top that covered only his chest. A silken loin cloth with sheer, pant-like coverings attached to it covered his lower half, and came together to form brilliantly designed golden anklets.

Like many Jötnar, Loki opted out of wearing coverings for his feet when he dressed up, choosing to walk barefoot instead.

Beautifully dark kohl lined his eyes, and elegant, golden earrings adorned with rubies hung from his ears, multiple rings decorating his fingers.

To pull the look together, Loki had a golden piercing for his stomach custom made. His old piercings for his stomach no longer fit, but he found that he didn’t mind. This new piercing framed his stomach perfectly, and accentuated the bump, making it look broader and rounder than it actually was.

Examining himself in the mirror, Loki smiled, pleased with what he saw. He had decided to sweep his long hair up in a slicked ponytail, jewels adorning the length.

He hoped that he wasn’t too ornately dressed though. He wouldn’t want to draw too much attention to himself or Thor.

“Beberi! Deneri says we have to go if we want good seats!” shouted Adras, bursting into his room. “Beberi… you’re so pretty!”
Loki laughed gently, beckoning his son over to his side. “Thank you, sweet child.”

Adras ran over to Loki’s side and latched onto him, resting his head on his stomach, and staring at their reflections in Loki’s mirror. “Will your stomach keep growing?”

Loki nodded, his thumb rubbing Adras’ cheek affectionately. “Yes, child. Your sibling grows every day.”

Adras hummed in reply, and looked up at Loki, silently asking to be picked up.

This caused an indescribable love to bloom in Loki’s heart, and he smiled warmly at him. “You’re getting a bit too big for me to carry you for so long, Adras.”

Adras pouted, looking away from Loki and grumbling.

Sighing softly, Loki bent over and swept Adras into his arms, pressing a warm kiss against his cheek. “Come, sweet child. Let us not keep your Deneri waiting.”

Adras nodded and nestled his face into Loki’s neck, relaxing in his hold.

It warmed Thor deeply to see such a sight when Loki and Adras turned the corner, and he grinned at his family, pressing a gentle kiss against Loki’s lips. “You look breathtaking, Loki.”

Loki kissed Thor back then. “As do you, husband.”

They shared another kiss before parting, and exited their home, saddling up Thor’s llugem, and getting on.

They didn’t live too far from Jötunheim’s capital city, and made their way there, arriving an hour later.
Thor hitched his llugem to a post in the stable, and thanked the stable keeper, greeting Loki and Adras once he returned.

The family then walked amongst the crowd of Jötnar to the central arena, where the ceremony would be held.

Loki tried his best to ignore the pointing and the gasps of surprise that were being shot their way as they traveled through the city, but it was hard. Jötnar left and right were gawking at him and his family, and it made him angry, knowing that they were judging Thor by his appearance or the rumors heard about him, and not his heart.

He couldn’t get too angry at their people of course, as he used to be just like them. And he couldn’t have been more wrong about Thor.

The giant tightened his hold on Loki’s hand the deeper they traversed into the city, a heavy frown on his face. Adras was currently in his arms, as neither of them felt too comfortable with Adras walking next to them in the crowded streets.

“Deneri… why is everyone looking at Beberi?”

“Because your Beberi is so beautiful that he strikes envy in everyone’s hearts,” answered Thor, making sure to keep his voice light and playful. His child was innocent in all of this, and… and he didn’t want him to lose his innocent view of the world just yet.

His answer seemed to placate the child, for now, so for that, he was relieved.

The family decided that they would stop by the temples first, to pray and give their thanks to the Norns for their union and new found family. They would then make their way to the arena, and watch the performances.

Loki kept his face impassive when they made their way to the temple, ignoring the cuetrati who looked at him in shame and disgust, and choosing to teach Adras how to recite the standard prayer of thanks instead.

The young child fumbled a bit at first, but finished strong, which pleased Loki to no end. Plastering his child’s face with warm kisses, Loki crouched down to his knees, gesturing for Adras to do the
Thor crouched onto his knees as well, bowing before a statue of the Norns, and offering his prayer.

They then each offered up an item of importance to them, placing it on the tray at the altar.

Finally done, Thor stood, and helped Loki up, not wanting him to overexert himself.

Adras reached up for Thor as well, so the giant stooped over to pick him up next, and gently grabbed Loki’s hand, intertwining their fingers, and leading them down the temple's steps.

When they reached the bottom of the steps of the temple, loud trumpets began to blare down the street, and the crowd parted immediately, understanding that the trumpets blaring signaled the king and his family’s impending arrival.

Loki admitted that he found himself growing nervous when he heard the trumpets blaring, and subconsciously moved to stand behind Thor, hoping that the king wouldn’t see him.

Thor felt Loki’s sentiments exactly, and kept a strong, protective arm around him, wanting him to know that he wouldn’t let harm come to him.

There was no way to leave the area they were in while the king and his family walked past, so Thor and Loki were forced to remain where they were, out near the steps of the vast temple.

King Thrym looked out amongst the crowd with a bored expression, and widened his eyes in amusement when he saw Loki and Thor, seemingly noticing them the second he entered the vicinity.

The smug smile on his face quickly fell to that of surprise, and then a frown of distaste and anger when he saw that Loki carried life.

Loki knew that the king noticed his pregnancy, and he lowered his gaze, refusing to stare at the king any longer.
It seemed like an eternity before the king passed Thor and Loki, and it wasn’t until he was gone that Thor and Loki felt they could breathe again.

Thor grabbed Loki’s hand and led him away from the crowds once the king and his family passed, walking in silence to the arena.

He glared at anyone who got too close to them, eyeing every guard or noble with distrust. Seeing the king reminded Thor once more that he and Loki weren’t living in the fairytale that he had been believing they were, as absolutely *nothing* was stopping the king from taking Loki away from him.

And he knew that couldn’t happen.

He wouldn’t let it.

Adras’ warm face nestling into his neck helped calm Thor some, and he moved to press a quick kiss against the child’s crown.

Loki gripped Thor’s hand tighter every time a guard or soldier stared at their family, and began to look around with nervous eyes as well, starting to regret coming here. He still hoped that they would at least be able to enjoy the performances well into the night though, if only for Adras’ sake.

They arrived at the arena after an hour of walking, and sat near the front, trying to feel indifferent about everyone moving away from their family once they sat down.

Adras seemed to notice this as well, and frowned in confusion, not understanding why everyone stood up and left the area that they were in.

“Beberi?”

Loki turned to look at his child, trying his best to offer him a gentle smile. “Yes, sweet child?”

“Why did everyone move away?”
Loki thought about the best way to explain it to his child, not wanting him to feel bogged down by the stressors of their life. “They don’t want to bother us, child. They would like us to enjoy the show.”

Adras didn’t seem convinced, but nodded anyway, moving in Thor’s lap so that he faced the arena.

“Are you alright?”

Loki looked up at Thor, his gaze softening when he saw the concern and compassion in Thor’s eyes. “I’m fine, Jetoni. Nervous, but… fine.”

The affectionate name slipped from his lips before Loki could process it, and he blushed, averting his gaze from Thor, and hoping that he didn’t make things awkward between them.

Thor felt his heart skip a beat when Loki called him this, and a fierce blush spread across his face as well, feeling as if his very soul was soaring through clouds as it sunk in that Loki had referred to him with that name. “Norns…”

Loki blushed further and shyly looked back up at Thor, displaying a side of himself that Thor hadn’t seen before. He was usually so confident and self-assured, so to see him nervous and unsure made Thor’s heart skip another beat.

“Is… is that okay?”

Thor nodded fervently, a large hand reaching up to hold Loki’s cheek. “It is fine, Aberi.” The word felt so foreign on his tongue, but he found that he didn’t care in the slightest.

In the deepest parts of himself, the parts that no one knew existed, Thor had always dreamed of being able to call someone Aberi and to be called Jetoni in return.

He’d given up on this dream long before he met Loki, but now that they were actually a couple, that spark of hope returned to him.
Loki generally seemed minutely uncomfortable with his grand displays of affection, so he tried his best to dial it down over the years, and let Loki vocalize what he did and didn’t like, and what he did and didn’t want to do.

So to hear that Loki felt comfortable enough with him to call him “Jetoni”, meant the world. Even if Loki decided to never say this word again, just knowing that Loki carried enough love in his heart for him to say it, would comfort Thor until his dying days.

To Thor’s relief, Loki couldn’t stop the smile that spread across his face at hearing this affectionate name as well, and he reached up to hold Thor’s face gently, looking into his eyes.

His heart had never raced while pursuing someone before, as he had always been assured that no one was as beautiful or as cunning as he was.

But exploring this aspect of their union with Thor caused him to feel numerous things that he had not felt before. When he spoke to Thor, he smiled, when Thor laughed, his heart seemed to fly, and when Thor touched him, it was with a gentle reverence that Loki felt he didn’t deserve.

Just thinking about how much Thor cared for and loved him caused a strange feeling to bloom from within his heart, and made him smile even more, not caring about how the other giants around them might feel about their union.

He pushed these thoughts to the side though and shared a quick kiss with Thor, knowing that their display of affection was a bold one. He chastised himself mentally about being so bold and then frowned slightly when he felt their child kick quite fiercely. It didn’t really hurt, but it was still strange for him to feel someone moving around inside of him.

Thor noticed Loki’s discomfort, and reached out to him, placing a worried hand on Loki’s shoulder. “Loki?”

“I’m fine, Thor. Our child is just very energetic today for some reason.”

Thor smiled to himself, and moved to stroke Loki’s stomach fondly, looking forward to when their child would finally be here.

Loki looked down at Thor’s hand on his stomach and hummed softly, wanting to share his
thoughts with him. “I… often times wonder if our town’s healer was correct. When I look over
myself with seidr, I cannot tell if I carry one life or two.”

“What does it feel like, now?”

Loki hummed again, closing his eyes and sending out a pulse of seidr. “I feel I’m not experienced
enough with the healing aspect of seidr to tell. It is hard for me to distinguish our child’s life
energy from my own.”

Thor rubbed Loki’s stomach one last time before pulling his hand away and resting it on Adras’
shoulder. “As long as they are living and healthy, I am not concerned about how many there are.”

Loki snorted, an amused smirk on his face. “Of course you don’t care; you won’t be the one
delivering them.”

Thor laughed as well, a small blush still on his face. “Of course, Aberi. Forgive me.”

The pair smiled at each other then, each of them relieved that they had reached a point in their
relationship where conversation flowed so naturally between them.

Conversation between the giants in the arena ceased when loud trumpets began to blare once more,
and the king and his numerous Niouvi queens were introduced.

Loki was quite alarmed to see the king’s newest and final wife, as the Niouvi bore a striking
resemblance to him.

Of course, the king’s new bride was nowhere near as captivating as Loki, but… that was beside the
point.

This new queen was also heavily pregnant, and Loki found himself wondering why King Thrym
had the Niouvi out in public while they were this far along in the pregnancy. Niouvi were generally
bedridden during the last few years of their pregnancies, as the burden of carrying such large
children took its toll on their bodies.
He shuddered then, and sent out a prayer for this newest queen. The Niouvi had a sadness in their eyes that Loki knew only came from being forced into a marriage that he did not want.

The events could not begin until the king gave permission, so once he waved his hand, dancers and acrobats and performers entered the arena’s floor, beginning to perform for the crowd.

Adras was fascinated by the performances, and cheered and clapped his hands along with the rest of the crowd, excited to see what was planned throughout the rest of the night.

Halfway through the night, it was announced that the king’s newest queen had gone into labor, and would be delivering his 116th child soon.

It boggled Loki’s mind to hear how many children their king had, and he sent another prayer up to the Norns to thank them for saving him from that fate.

Because Jötnar valued fertility and children, the average amount of children that a giantess or Niouvi produced was 7.

And because King Thrym was married to an astounding 36 Niouvi, Loki could understand why the king had so many children.

The stadium cheered for their king once this announcement was made, and the festivities continued well into the night.

Thor and Loki decided that it would be best to return home when they noticed that Adras was beginning to get tired, and promised the young child that they would return tomorrow so that they could walk around the capital city, and partake in the remainder of the festival.

The ride home was uneventful, and once they returned to their village and home, Loki and Thor kissed Adras goodnight, and returned to their room, feeling exhausted themselves.

Now that he was aware of their child’s kicking, Loki found it hard to ignore the sensation, and he sat down at his vanity after bathing, beginning to feel slightly miffed.
Feeling a small life pressing against you and shifting from within was not a pleasant feeling when you were bone tired.

Thor came behind him and rested his hands on his shoulders once he left their bathroom, beginning to massage them. “Are you alright?”

Loki sighed, continuing to brush his hair slowly. “Just tired…”

“And thinking of the king?”

“… That too.”

The pair sighed together before Thor spoke again. “I don’t think the king will do anything, Loki… he announced that his most current bride was his last one, today.”

Loki frowned slightly, setting his brush down, and resting his hands over Thor’s. “I-I know that. But King Thrym is a dangerous man. And seeing him today made me realize that there is nothing stopping him from taking me, and forcing me to marry him. I’m sure that he saw we were happy today, and that was the last thing he wanted.”

Thor frowned as well, and helped Loki stand, following him over to their bed. “I won’t let him take you, Loki.”

This didn’t do much to still Loki’s fears, as he knew that Thor could not stand against an entire army. If the king decided to take him, all Thor could do was watch.

He decided to change the subject as he climbed under the covers of their bed, not wanting to consider a possibility where King Thrym demanded he return to his side. “I’m quite concerned about the newest queen… it was disturbing to see how much he looked like me.”

Thor climbed into bed after Loki, and pulled him closer when the Niouvi nestled into his side. “I find myself agreeing with you about that… it was very odd.”

“And he displayed his queen so late in his pregnancy… showing such a blatant disregard for the
lives of his wife and his child was disturbing as well.” rambled Loki, frowning slightly.

“The king has gotten crueler over the centuries, I must admit.”

Thinking of the king and his cruelness only made Loki worry about their future more, and he shook his head, wrapping his arms around Thor’s torso. “I’d rather not talk about the king anymore.”

Thor hummed softly in agreement, pressing a warm kiss against Loki’s temple. “Of course.”

He began to think of Adras, and wondered if the child enjoyed his day. Granted, it had been heartbreaking for them to see the child experiencing what it was like to be mistreated by their people for something out of his control. But he only hoped that Adras could overlook that, and enjoy the true beauty that life did have to offer.

He also thought of Thor, and how the giant handled himself today.

He made sure that Loki and Adras were safe, and made sure that everyone truly did enjoy themselves today.

And for that, he was thankful.

Stretching up to press a soft kiss against Thor’s lips, Loki shifted until he and Thor were eye level with each other.

“Thank you for today, Thor.”

Thor shifted as well and returned his kiss, resting his hand on Loki’s hip. “Of course, Loki.”

They stared at each other and smiled before sharing another kiss, and nestling closer into each other’s hold, beginning to fall asleep.

Now that he had felt his child’s kicking from within, it was hard to ignore it, and Loki struggled to fall asleep, feeling absolutely exhausted in the morning.
Thor noticed his poor state upon waking up and asked him to sleep in, letting him know that he would take care of Adras and prepare breakfast for them all.

Loki was thankfully able to sleep in till noon, and woke up when the sun's light shined through the windows of their room in a way that caused minor annoyance.

After changing and getting ready for the day, he was surprised to hear multiple voices in their dining room when he ventured downstairs, and greeted Thor's family, wondering why they were there.

Thor's aunt Haela smiled knowingly at him and rose to greet him, rubbing his stomach affectionately. “Good afternoon, Nephew.”

Loki nodded and hugged her in greeting as well, before nodding politely at Thor's uncle. “If I had known you were all over, I would've woken up sooner.”

Haela waved her hand flippantly, dismissing his concern. “Thor told us that the little one kept you up all night. We understand.”

Loki walked over to press a warm kiss against Adras’ temple next, running a hand through his hair. “What brings you over this afternoon?”

“Beberi said that we could all go to the festivals together!” exclaimed Tulla, as cheery and bubbly as ever.

Loki hummed in reply, pressing a quick kiss in thanks against Thor's lips when he helped him sit and presented him with a plate of food. “That should be fun. What part of the festival would you both like to go to today?”

Adras and Tulla didn't have to think long about it at all. “Food!”

Tulla's older sister Amon rolled her eyes at this, not surprised.
Loki wasn't as close to Amon as he was to Tulla, for the teen spent her time in school or with friends.

She was still a very pleasant and responsible girl and often babysat for Loki and Thor when they needed her to.

Beginning to eat his meal, Loki thought over the request of the children.

The particular section of the festival they were requesting to attend today was the food exhibition, where every district of their realm presented their signature dishes.

He had to admit that the idea was quite appealing to him now that he carried life. He was always hungry, and just the thought of tasting foods he hadn't in centuries had him salivating.

“Sure; we'll stop by the food section of the festival today.”

The children cheered and began to talk happily amongst themselves.

Loki took a moment to look at how his life was now and noticed that he was smiling.

He felt so happy to have an actual family and knowing that everyone was finally getting along and enjoying each other meant the world to him.

He shared an understanding look with Thor, and melted into the giant's touch when he moved to rest his hands on his shoulders.

It seemed like the children were done eating, so Haela asked them all to go play in the living room until it was time to go.

Their children agreed, and got up from the table, herded away by Thor’s older cousin Amon.

Once the children were gone, Thor’s aunt sighed, looking over at Loki. “Nephew… I spoke to Thor earlier, and I would like to tell you the same thing. I’m not exactly sure we should attend the
Loki frowned, raising up an inquiring eyebrow. “Why?”

Thor shared a look with his aunt and uncle before sighing and letting his aunt explain. “The king… is not in his right mind.”

“Well, we know that. And although he did see Thor and me at the festival yesterday, I personally didn’t feel like our family was in danger.”

“Yes Loki, but that was before his wife passed away.”

Loki stilled, his heart beginning to race. “I’m sorry?”

“The king’s newest wife gave birth last night, and… it has been reported that both the child and his wife passed during the delivery.”

Loki took in a sharp breath, shaking his head. “Norns…”

“But that isn’t how they passed, according to the village gossip, if that’s to be believed.”

Loki knew their king was a cruel man, but to even think that he would be mad enough to murder his wife and child was too dark of thought for Loki.

“Fridhild’s daughter was a handmaiden for the king’s newest wife, and she was there when his wife lost his life. She has told her mother that the king was upset the entire day of the festival… and when the king was presented with his child, he saw that the child was born missing a limb, and… and that in a fit of rage, he… he lost his mind and…”

Thor’s aunt could barely get the words out, as she was heavily disturbed by this act of the king’s. “He murdered both his child and his new wife, Loki. In front of everyone present for the delivery; the healers, the handmaidens, the guards.”
Loki closed his eyes and shook his head, beginning to feel ill.

Knowing that this poor Niouvi’s fate could’ve happened to him was terrifying, and he sent up a silent prayer to the Norns, asking them to guide the Niouvi and his innocent child’s souls to Valhalla.

Afterward, he opened his eyes and shook his head again, thinking. If they went to the festival today, they would chance running into King Thrym.

And that was something that couldn’t happen.

But the reverse of this situation was also true.

It was very likely that the king and his family would remain inside the castle, to keep up appearances of mourning.

“As long as we stay far away from the area surrounding the castle, I believe we should be fine. The king has to keep up appearances of being in mourning.”

Thor’s aunt sighed, agreeing with him. “I suppose you’re right, Nephew.”

Loki took a final bite of his meal before setting down his fork and standing, beginning to collect everyone’s plates, and heading towards the kitchen. “We can leave after I wash everything.”

“Let me help you, Loki.” offered Thor, gently taking the stack of plates and bowls from Loki’s hold. “Why don’t you help the children get ready, first?”

Loki smiled softly, looking up at Thor. “Thank you, Jetoni.”

Thor blushed deeply when Loki said this, and averted his gaze, walking over to the sink and setting the dishes inside.

Loki turned around then and made his way out of the kitchen, jumping in shock when a loud bang
sounded against their front doors.

Thor was by his side in an instant, and frowned deeply, carefully moving Loki behind him, and looking outside of the peephole.

“Get the children, Loki.”

Loki asked no questions, and rushed towards their living room, quickly pulling Adras and Tulla up, and motioning for Thor’s cousin Amon to stand behind him as well.

The children seemed confused, and before Loki could take the children upstairs, the doors to their home burst open, the king's personal soldiers forcing their way past Thor and his uncle, and making their way towards Loki and the children.

Thor's aunt Haela screamed when she saw the soldiers run towards her children and tried to push her way past them, fighting against their hold when they caught her.

Loki had no more than a second to react and protect himself and the children, and he quickly sent out a deflective spell, sending the guards that were rushing towards him flying back against a wall.

By then even more soldiers rushed to grab hold of him, and he panicked, trying to think of the best thing to do.

He currently had Adras in his arms, and Amon and Tulla behind him, and was pregnant, so he couldn't defend himself as easily as he was used to.

Of course, that didn't mean he wouldn’t go down without a fight.

He didn’t understand what was happening, but he did know that absolutely no one would harm his family.

The familiar scent of a storm began to fill the room then, and every soldier paused for a moment, looking around in confusion.
Thor used this confusion to his advantage, and forced his way to Loki's side, glaring at all of the soldiers, and making sure that he stood between all of them and his family.

“Why are you in my home?”

One of the generals sighed and stepped forward, crossing his arms. “Listen, Aesir. The king has demanded that this Niouvi is to be brought to his side immediately.”

“That's not happening.”

The general took a menacing step towards Thor then. “The king isn't giving him a choice this time.”

“And I am giving you one. You will leave my home now. Or you will lose your lives.”

There were about 30 odd soldiers crowded into their living room and hallway, and their general laughed, drawing his weapon. Giving a signal, he gestured for the nearest soldiers to kill Thor, so that they could get to Loki.

Thor moved before anyone saw it coming, and grabbed the forearm of the nearest soldier, yanking them towards him, and driving his knee into their face, breaking their nose.

He snatched the spear out of the soldier’s hands once he broke his nose, and used it to parry the blow of two other soldiers, flipping the spear and stabbing at the eyes of the two soldiers while they were still recovering from Thor’s parry.

He wasted no time in parrying the attacks of three more soldiers and used a broad sweeping motion to slice at their jugulars, showing no mercy.

Anyone who tried to come between him and his family deserved a fate worse than death.

Loki and Adras screaming caught Thor’s attention, and he blocked two attempts to attack him,
looking over at them quickly.

To his complete and utter horror, soldiers were attempting to rip Adras out of Loki’s arms and were holding back Thor’s aunt, uncle, and cousins from saving them.

Thor only saw red, and for the second time in his life, summoned the storm from within.

A harsh, acrid smell that could only be associated with lightning filled the room then, and Thor channeled the element, sending it in arcs until every single soldier had been struck by it.

He stopped only when their bodies were charred black, and ceased his relentless attack, dropping the spear in his hands, and rushing towards Loki and Adras.

They were both sobbing horribly, and he felt terrible, feelings of guilt running through his mind. If he had just been quicker, if he had been battle ready, his family wouldn’t have been harmed, and tears sprung to his eyes when he wrapped his arms around them, kissing their foreheads, and reassuring them that everything would be okay.

The adults spent the next few minutes trying to calm down Tulla and Adras, and managed to get them to stop sobbing.

The poor children were still crying softly and sniffing though and refused to leave the arms of their mothers, hiccuping every few seconds from the fear and intense emotion that they felt.

Thor looked around at the bodies surrounding them and knew that they had about 30 seconds to escape before more soldiers came.

“We have to go.”

Loki sniffed, and wiped at his eyes with a shaking hand, looking up at Thor. “Where will we go? The king will do whatever it takes to find me, h-he won’t stop, Thor!”

Thor shook his head, refusing to let that happen. “No, he won’t find you, Loki. I know where we need to go.”
“Where?” whispered Loki, his voice cracking from the fear that was now consuming him.

“I need you to teleport us as far south as you can. Now."

Loki nodded, taking a deep breath. “I-I need to grab my beberi’s necklace. It’s the only thing I have left from him.”

Thor bit a lower lip, not wanting to tell Loki no, but knowing that they needed to go, now. “Loki-”

“Please, Jetoni.” whimpered the Niouvi, displaying a rare sight of rawness and vulnerability.

Thor closed his eyes to focus on the silence, and see if there was anyone outside of their home.

He didn’t hear anything and nodded quickly. “Please hurry, Aberi.”

Loki nodded and snapped his fingers, teleporting himself and Adras upstairs to his bedroom.

Quickly grabbing his mother’s necklace and earrings, and Adras’ mother’s ring, Loki teleported them back downstairs, and waved his hand, getting the entire family down south.

Because seidr users could only teleport to places they’ve physically been, Loki could only get his family down to the furthest city he had ever traveled to, which was about a month’s ride away from the capital.

When Loki teleported upstairs to grab his mother’s necklace, Thor rushed to grab their life’s savings, knowing that he would need to purchase enough llugem and supplies to make it to where he believed his family would be safe.

They arrived at the town gates of this southern city that Loki teleported them to and managed to blend in with the incoming crowds.
Thor led his family over to an inconspicuous section at the front of this city, and let them know to remain here.

He didn’t feel too comfortable leaving them all alone and defenseless, but he rationalized this decision by telling himself that word wouldn’t get back to the king about the deaths of his soldiers anytime soon. By the time the king was notified that they had been here in this particular city, they would’ve been long gone.

He bought three llugem, and enough supplies to get them to the next city, which was also a month’s ride away.

He knew they would have to pitch camp at night, and bought enough supplies to make sure that they would be able to do this as well.

He and his uncle knew how to hunt, so once they pitched camp they would have no trouble with finding food.

And their realm was *covered* in with streams, springs, rivers, and lakes, so they would always have a source of water.

Thankfully, they still had more than enough money to get to where he believed his family would be safe, so he rushed back to them, almost falling to his knees in relief when he saw that they were still there.

He and his uncle quickly saddled up the llugem, and helped their wives and children onto them, before getting on themselves.

His uncle felt that it was best if Thor rode in front, and he rode in the back, and Thor agreed, guiding his family out of this city, and away from everyone.

They rode until nightfall, and Thor guided them all to a cave that he used when he was on the road for his work.

It was right in front of a spring, so Thor knew that they could stay here for a night or two, to make plans, and discuss what to do from here.
The adults began to set up camp silently, each of them still shaken from the events of the morning.

Amon watched over Tulla and Adras as well, keeping both children in her lap, and kissing their faces in reassurance, murmuring comforting words to them.

The cave was large enough to encompass their entire family, so once Thor gathered dry wood and started a fire, the adults laid the children down to sleep and gathered around the fire.

Thor’s aunt seemed broken, and took in a shuddering breath, squeezing her eyes shut and beginning to cry silently.

Thor’s heart shattered when he saw how broken and distraught his family was, and he pulled Loki closer, thankful when the Niouvi nestled closer to him in his lap.

“What are we going to do?”

Thor pressed a gentle yet reassuring kiss against the base of Loki’s neck then. “We’re going south.”

“There… there’s nothing south after the city of Reykur.”

Thor and his uncle shared a look before Thor sighed softly, and began to explain. “I… a mercenary friend of mine invited me to join the resistance against our king some time ago, and asked if my family and I would like to live in their settlement.”

He closed his eyes and rested his head on top of Loki’s crown, holding him even closer. “At the time, I said no. But now… now I know we have no other choice.”

Loki took in a sharp breath upon hearing this, and shook his head. “No, no, w-we can’t go there! I heard about the resistance when I was first appointed as a Psemetri. It is a weak settlement; one that would be ravaged if the king decided to put an end to them!”
Thor remained silent for some time before answering Loki. “Aberi… where does the king believe this settlement exists?”

Loki blinked a few times, and thought about it, trying to recall this information. “Out west, on an island leagues out on the sea.”

“I am pleased to hear that. Because that is not where the settlement is. And they are much more involved in the running of this kingdom than you think. Their settlement is not as small or as weak as the king and his Psemetri believe.”

Loki bit a lower lip, turning slightly to look at Thor. “… Are you certain?”

Thor pressed another reassuring kiss against Loki’s lips. “I am certain, Loki. I’ve been there numerous times.”

The Niouvi’s eyes shifted over to their child, before shifting back up to look at Thor. “They might not accept me, Thor. I used to be a Psemetri…”

Thor shook his head, knowing that this scenario wouldn’t happen. “They will accept you, Loki. I am certain of that.”

“But what if they don’t?” pressed Loki, one of his hands absentmindedly moving to stroke his stomach. “I’m due in 3 or 4 decades, Thor…”

Thor sighed softly, attempting to reassure Loki again. “Loki… they will accept you. I am sure that they are more than understanding of our situation.”

The Niouvi remained silent for some time. And then… “If… if they don’t, Jetoni… I wouldn’t be able to live with myself if I put our children in danger. If they refuse to let me stay… promise me that you’ll keep the children there. Please.”

“Loki-”

“Please, Jetoni…” begged Loki, turning in Thor’s lap and grabbing his face.
They stared at each other for a few intense seconds before Thor nodded quickly, pulling Loki closer.

He didn’t want to even think about abandoning Loki and refused to let this thought come into fruition. He would do everything in his power to make sure that Loki was allowed into this settlement too.

Now that they had a plan set in stone, Thor’s aunt and uncle dismissed themselves and said goodnight to the pair.

When it was just Loki and Thor awake, Loki put out their fire, and nestled into Thor’s side once they settled themselves onto their piles of furs on the ground.

“How did you summon lightning, earlier?”

Thor remained silent for so long that Loki figured he had fallen asleep and was surprised when Thor finally replied to him, his voice quieter than he had ever heard.

“I… I believe it’s something I inherited from my father. I can’t summon it whenever I desire… and it usually arises from within when my life, or the lives of those that I love, are in danger.”

He answered Loki with such finality, that Loki remained quiet, not wanting to press for more information.

Thor always clammed up while talking about his father, and because this day had been so stressful already, Loki didn’t want to push Thor to speak about things that he was not ready to discuss.

Pressing a warm kiss against Thor’s arm, Loki nestled into his hold further, and closed his eyes,
knowing that they would need to sleep.

No one could have predicted the events of today, and although they were terrifying, Loki was thankful that everyone was okay.

And while he did love and trust Thor, it still worried him to know that they were planning on living on a settlement that prided itself in being a resistance front against the king.

Their lives were so uncertain right now, and he tried his best to not let the overwhelming guilt consume him.

Before he fell asleep, Loki sent up a prayer to the Norns and asked that they would protect him and his family on their travels.

It was the only thing he felt he could do, now.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading!

Next chapter should be out either next weekend or the weekend after that. Please let me know in the comments if you're interested in seeing a few chapters of their life while they live in this settlement, as this part of the story does play a large role in the development of everything else. I personally don't want to skip it, but if everyone is saying they won't be too interested in reading that then... I'll have to figure out another way to get to where I want the story to go lol.

ALSO

Here's a really funny story:

My laptop was having trouble connecting to the printer at my place, so I asked my dad to fix it. I had THREE windows open (One that was my fanfiction, one that was my k-show, and one that was for the printer) and each window had the title of what that window was. So my brilliant father read each window title, BYPASSED the window that said "HP Printer" and CLICKED on the window that said "Chapter 5". And then proceeded to read it for a few seconds before I snatched it away. So yeah. My dad knows that his 21-year-old daughter writes fanfic now, and he's been giving me the "I'm so disappointed" look ever since then XD So yahhhhhhh... I'm still super
embarrassed about that LOL

But have a good week everyone! And thanks again for reading :)

Their family ended up staying at this current spring for two more days before packing up and traveling towards the last major city before the resistance’s settlement.

Thor kept his family close to the river during this time, knowing that if they strayed too far from it, their scents would stand out to the animals that the king might be using to track them. If they traveled close to the river, then the prints of their llugem would also be long gone before the king’s soldiers came to this area, intermingled with and covered by the prints of the various creatures who came to the river to drink.

Their journey to the resistance’s settlement was a bit longer than Loki expected it to be, and it ended up being more arduous than he expected as well.

It scared him to know that they wouldn’t reach the settlement for 3 or 4 more decades, which meant that he would most likely go into labor at any time during their journey.

It was this reality that terrified him the most about their long journey, and during their travels, the larger he became, the harder he found it to ride the llugem for long periods of time.

Because Niouvi were largely found in the realms of the elite on Jötunheim, they could almost all afford to go on bedrest when they entered the later stages of their pregnancies, as they often got so large they became bedridden, bogged down by the weight of their children.

Loki unfortunately no longer had this luxury, and knew that he needed to stop soon and rest until the pangs of his labor began.

When he was halfway through his 8th decade, and they were about a decade away from the resistance settlement, Loki knew that he was close, and needed to stop.

His back felt as if it would snap at any given moment, his hips felt like they were being forced apart, and his entire body felt like it was on fire, threatening to collapse from weakness.
He couldn’t continue any longer.

Managing to clear his throat, Loki called out to Thor, hoping that he was loud enough to catch the giant’s attention.

Thor looked down at Loki, noticing the discomfort that he was in. He felt his heart break with guilt, and he sighed softly, rubbing at Loki’s hip. “What is it, love?”

Loki began to take measured and careful breaths, knowing that if he didn’t, he would begin to panic about their current situation. “I need to stop.”

Thor nodded, looking around at the passing scenery. “There is a spring nearby, that is safe. I know we need to stop.”

He was well aware that the movement of Niouvi was limited at best the farther they got in their pregnancies and had planned on stopping at a spring in the area until Loki went into labor.

The absolute last thing he wanted was the king’s soldiers finding them, and the spring he was taking them to was very secluded. They would be able to stay here until Loki gave birth, and then for some time afterward.

He just hoped Loki could make it there.

Loki bit back a pained grunt after hearing Thor’s response, and rubbed at his large stomach, trying to calm the child inside. “How far?”

“Not far. We shall be there shortly.”

Loki couldn’t stifle his next groan, and he shook his head, squeezing his eyes shut again. “We need to stop now, Jetoni…”

Thor looked down at Loki once more, trying to assess what was wrong. “Are you alright?”
Loki shook his head, groaning again as that familiar pain returned. “The baby…”

Thor widened his eyes in a panic, and looked around hurriedly, trying to spot anything that could be used as a shelter for a few weeks. He knew Loki would need time to recover once he gave birth before they moved to the secluded spring that he wanted them to reach.

“The spring is about 15 minutes away, Loki. Can you hold on until then?”

Loki grunted again, and squeezed the reins of the horse, trying to not worry Adras. The child was currently asleep in front of him. “I-I don’t know, Thor. I’ll try.”

Thor pressed a reassuring kiss against Loki’s cheek, and urged their llugem to hurry, hoping that they could get Loki there soon.

By the grace of the Norns, Loki was able to make it to the spring and was even more relieved to see that this cave was hidden behind a waterfall.

The sound of the waterfall would mask the sound of their child’s cries, so they would be able to recover here for some time.

Once the llugem were stopped, Thor climbed down first, and helped Loki down next, thankful when his aunt took over, and led Loki to the river’s edge to bathe, and allow the cool water to ease his aches and pains.

The children were helped down next, and Thor’s uncle steered them clear of the cave’s entrance, helping them bathe in the river as well.

Thor set up a quick, makeshift camp inside the cave, and did his best to make a comfortable spot for Loki, knowing that his aunt would give him further instruction if necessary.

He stepped out of the cave then, and strode over to Loki and his aunt, seeing that they were climbing out of the water.

It broke Thor’s heart to see Loki limping and leaning onto his aunt for support, and he rushed to his
side, shifting so that he could carry him back to the cave.

His aunt followed him, and together the trio made their way inside the cave, carefully setting Loki down on the spot that Thor set up for him.

The Niouvi was breathing shallowly still, which concerned Thor greatly.

He reached out to cradle Loki’s face, trying not to panic as well. “How are you, love?”

Loki took a moment to assess his body before replying, and grunted, carefully shifting so that he could rest against Thor’s broad torso. “I’m close, Jetoni. I-I can’t take deep breaths because of our child’s position.”

Thor hurriedly looked at his aunt, his concern for Loki only increasing. “Aunt Haela… is this normal?”

Thor’s aunt nodded, moving Loki’s hair out of his face, and urging him to take slow, calming breaths. “Try your best to relax, Loki. Everything will be okay, I promise.”

Loki gripped at the furs beneath him and bit his lower lip, squeezing his eyes shut. “They’ll be here in a few hours… I remember what the healer taught me about labor… my water should break soon.”

Thor nodded, and shifted them so that they were more comfortable while Loki labored, wrapping his arms around him, and beginning to murmur comforting words in his ears.

The longer that Loki labored, the louder his groans or moans of discomfort became, and he bemoaned the fact that he was too large to writhe or move much to alleviate his pain.

He could hear Adras’ cries from the mouth of the cave that they were in, and groaned through another contraction, reaching out and grabbing Thor’s hand. “Jetoni…”

Thor looked down quickly, readjusting his hold on Loki. “Yes, love?”
“Adras… let him see that I’m alright. He won’t calm down unless he knows that I’m okay.”

Thor nodded, and called out to his uncle, letting him know that it was alright for Adras to come further into the cave.

The second Thor’s uncle released him, Adras ran to Loki’s side and nestled himself into him, hiccuping from his sobs. “Beberi!”

Loki grunted from the intensifying pain, and managed to shift a bit more, encompassing Adras in his arms. “Hush, sweet child. Beberi is okay.”

Adras hiccuped and shook his head fiercely, pressing his face further into Loki’s swollen chest. “No, you’re not!”

Thor’s aunt reached out and rubbed at Adras’ shoulder, trying to calm him. “Adras… Beberi is going to have a baby soon. And having a baby is very painful.”

“Then I don’t want a baby anymore!” huffed Adras, wrapping his arms a bit tighter around Loki.

This put a small smile on Loki’s face, and he chuckled softly, raising an arm and rubbing at Adras’ back. “Beberi has to go through this, Adras. I promise, I’ll be fine once they’re here.”

Adras sniffed and sat up, the look on his face breaking Loki’s heart. “You promise?”

“I swear ,” assured Loki, pulling Adras towards him so that he could kiss his cheek. “And once your new sibling is here, you’ll be the first one to see them.”

This seemed to placate Adras some, and the child kissed Loki before sitting up, still immensely worried for him.

“Adras, why don’t you go back out to play with Tulla and Amon in the water?”
The young child hesitated before rising, and wiped a shaky hand across his eyes, trying to clear his tears. “I-I love you Beberi!”

This confession melted Loki’s heart, and he smiled softly again, summoning the strength to blow a kiss towards Adras. “Beberi loves you too, child. Very much so.”

Adras turned on shaking legs and ran out of the cave after hearing this from Loki, off to wait outside with the rest of their family.

Now that the distraction was gone, Loki became more aware of his pain again, and groaned, feeling their child shift for a final time.

This seemed to do the trick, as a fierce kick against his ribs caused the oddest sensation to resonate from within Loki.

It was akin to a strange popping sensation, and he shuddered when warm fluid rushed from him, soaking the furs beneath him.

He could breathe a bit easier now, and rejoiced silently, knowing that although it would only get more difficult from here on out, he was that much closer to holding their child.

Luckily, Thor and his aunt remained by his side and helped keep him calm until he felt like he was ready to bear down.

He knew the exact moment that it was time for him to push, as in that singular moment, he felt immeasurable pressure, and it felt as if he was truly being torn apart.

He was screaming before he could stop himself, and felt his body take over, using everything in him to bear down.

And although everything in him was screaming for him to use seidr to lessen his pain, he refused, knowing that labor and delivery were a right of passage amongst their people. He would not taint this experience by lessening his pain.
Feeling their child shift and begin to exit him caused him to scream louder, and he moaned when his vision started to swirl, and he became weaker.

He could hear Thor calling out to him, and he tried to mumble that he was alright, but the pain he felt was overwhelming, and he was so weak from their travels, so he began to nod off, forgetting in his exhaustion to even breathe.

Thor began to panic, and stroked at Loki’s cheek with his thumb, trying to get him to breathe. “Aberi, you have to breathe. Breathe for me, Loki, breathe.”

Loki moaned and looked up at Thor, his vision still blurry.

“That’s it, love, just breathe, please just breathe.” urged Thor, his eyes brimming with tears.

Death during delivery wasn’t unheard of amongst Niouvi, and they didn’t have a healer present to help them deliver this child, so if something happened to Loki now, Thor wouldn’t know what to do.

If he lost both Loki and their child during this delivery, he would never be the same.

All he could do for now was continue to urge Loki to keep breathing and pray that he pulled through.

Loki didn’t know how he managed to listen to the deep tenor of Thor’s voice, but he took in a deep breath, and exhaled slowly, beginning to feel better as he took in another breath.

Thor and his aunt signed in relief once the color returned to Loki’s face and encouraged him to continue to bear down at his own pace, not wanting him to overexert himself.

He gripped at the furs beneath him after regaining his strength and bore down once more, shouting when their child began to crown.

Based on his time working under their town’s healer, Loki knew that there was even worse to come.
He sat up a bit and gripped Thor with an iron hold when he bore down again, trembling from the pain and the effort that it took to get their child’s shoulders out of him.

He could see that their child had Thor’s golden hair, and began to cry, feeling happy, overwhelmed, exhausted, and relieved.

Thor’s aunt Haela kept her hands underneath the child’s head and upper back, gently urging Loki to continue when he was ready.

By now, Loki just wanted their child out of him, and he took in another deep breath, bearing down, and pushing with everything in him.

He was relieved to see that most of their child had been delivered when he looked down again, and took a few seconds to breathe, preparing himself for the final moment.

Taking another deep breath, Loki grunted, and bore down for a final time, collapsing in Thor’s hold when their child was finally delivered.

Their child’s wailing sounded like the singing of Valkyries to Loki and Thor’s ears, and Thor’s aunt Haela held the squirming infant up for them, smiling proudly. “A baby girl!”

Thor couldn’t stop the tears of joy that left his eyes then, and he wiped at them with a strong hand, pressing a loving kiss against Loki’s temple. “Thank you, Loki. Thank you.”

Loki nodded and reached out weakly for their daughter, wanting to hold her. “Let me see her please, Aunt Haela.”

The giantess nodded quickly, and helped Loki cradle the large infant, stroking a loc of her blonde hair. “She’s beautiful, Loki.”

Loki began to laugh when their child stopped wailing once she felt his touch, and rubbed at her cheek gently, marveling at her size. Their daughter looked big enough to give even a giantess some trouble, so Loki felt proud that he was able to deliver her without much tearing. “Norns… I don’t think I’ll ever be the same.”
Thor’s aunt snorted, an amused look in her eyes. “After you deliver the afterbirth, I can assure you that you will heal.”

Delivering the afterbirth was… unpleasant to say the least, but once Loki was cleaned up and wrapped in furs, he was finally able to admire his baby with Thor.

The infant had the roundest cheeks Loki had ever seen, and he began to laugh, tears brimming in his eyes as she yawned and made a soft sound.

A garbled sound from above him made him look up, and his face softened when he saw that Thor was holding back choked sobs.

The giant was looking down at something he believed he would never have, something that he had given up on so many years ago, a dream that he thought was to never be, and she was staring right back up at him, with eyes that matched his own.

His child.

Loki was still impossibly sore and didn’t want to shift or move around too much, so he called out to Thor softly, catching his attention. “Jetoni… if you help me sit up against this wall, you’re more than welcome to hold her…”

Thor sniffed and nodded hurriedly, shifting Loki and moving him until he sat up against the wall, surrounded by furs.

Loki then handed their daughter to Thor, and reached out to Haela, asking her to give him water, and to bring Adras back in so that he could see his sister.

Thor’s aunt agreed, and left, bringing back more than enough water, and the children.

Loki took the water gratefully, and set down his cup once he was finished, beckoning Adras and Tulla over. “Come, children.”
Tulla grabbed Adras’ hand, and ran over to Loki and Thor’s side, an excited grin on her face. “She looks just like you, Cousin Thor!”

Thor smiled softly and readjusted his hold on his daughter, lowering her so that the children could see.

“She’s so pretty! What’s her name?”

Loki and Thor shared a look before the Niouvi nodded, letting Thor know that he wanted him to choose.

It was a tradition amongst their people for the fathers to name their children upon birth, but it could only be done if given permission from the mother.

Loki giving Thor permission to do this was another way of him saying that he felt Thor was more than worthy to be a father for their child, and that he felt honored to have their child raised by him.

Of course, Loki giving him permission to do this made him tear up even more, and he laughed, a proud smile on his face. “Astrid. For she is the most beautiful thing I have ever laid my eyes on.”

Loki liked the name, and nodded once more, agreeing with it. “That is a lovely name, Jetoni. It shall be as you say.”

Receiving Loki’s blessing for the name meant *everything* to Thor, and he closed his eyes, taking a moment to praise and thank the Norns.

To hold a child, *his* child, in his arms meant so much to him, and the love that he had for Loki and their family could not be quantified any longer.

And when his baby grasped at his finger, he knew then that he would do anything and *everything* to protect them.

Loki, Adras, and Astrid were now his world, and… and he wouldn’t have it any other way.
Because they were traveling nonstop before Loki had their daughter, it took the Niouvi a bit longer to recover.

He did use seidr to heal any tears or wounds from the delivery, and while that did help, he was still exhausted.

And no one in their family got much sleep those first few days, as Astrid cried constantly.

This worried Loki and Thor greatly, and Loki tried his best to apply what he knew about healing via seidr to his daughter when he had the strength.

Because seidr drew on the strength of an individual, it was very taxing to use it while you were in a weakened state.

Instead, Loki and Thor’s aunt relied on herbs and surrounding plants to try and help the infant, sending constant prayers up to the Norns that everything would be okay.

The herbs and plants seemed to help, and after a week of constant crying, Astrid finally slept.

Of course, everyone in their family learned to sleep when the baby slept, and after Astrid was two months old, Loki finally felt that he had recovered enough to try and head towards the resistance settlement.

They were only a decade away from the settlement -which wouldn’t be too long of a journey- but he knew that it would still be tough trek nevertheless.

And the closer and closer they got to the settlement, the more fearful Loki became that he wouldn’t be allowed in.

He knew that they wouldn’t trust him because of his former allegiance to the king, and he began to
pray that if they didn’t accept him, they at least took in Astrid and Adras.

If returning to the king meant that his children would be protected forever, then he would do it.

His children didn’t deserve to be raised in fear and… and he fell asleep that night on the road with a single thought on his mind.

If he did have to return to the king, he hoped… he hoped that his children knew he loved them.

The river they’d been following to the settlement flowed all the way down to the sea, and just before the southernmost sea on their realm, the resistance settlement lied.

Thor stopped when he and his family were a few miles away from the settlement, and climbed down from his llugem, letting his family know that he needed to approach the resistance first. Once they gave him permission, he would return for them.

Loki found himself panicking when Thor left and began to think of how he could convince the leaders of the resistance into letting him stay.

Astrid wouldn’t be weaned for at least another century, and Adras still needed him, and-

He didn’t know if he could leave his children behind.

Seeing Thor return with three other giants scared Loki further, and he handed Astrid to Adras for a moment, so that he could climb off of their llugem before helping the children down.

Thor’s family got off their llugem as well, and crowded around Loki, nervous for him.

They all knew just how terrified Loki was about not being allowed into the settlement, and wanted to act and speak on his behalf to these giants.
The leader of these giants seemed to be in the center, and Loki kept his face down and away from the giant, knowing that the second he looked up, he would be recognized.

Thor moved to stand beside Loki, and pressed a warm, reassuring kiss against his cheek, rubbing a soothing hand into his back. “It’s alright, Aberi.”

Loki found himself tearing up at this, and quickly wiped at his eyes, keeping them trained on his daughter.

He wanted to memorize every single thing about her, in case he had to return to the king.

“Is this your family?” gruffed one of the giants, who stood a bit shorter than Thor.

Thor straightened up and nodded, setting his face in that passive, stony mask that Loki hated.

It made Thor seem cold and unforgiving, cruel and dead inside, and Loki now knew that this was the furthest thing from the truth.

“How many all together?”

“Eight. My wife, our children, my aunt and uncle, and their children as well.”

“What brings you to our settlement, Thor? You always let us know that you didn’t want to join us because you didn’t care enough about the happenings of the kingdom or who ruled it.” mused the giant in the middle, who locked his eyes on Loki.

“That was before I married and had my family,” replied Thor, a slight edge to his voice. He kept a strong arm around Loki, and had Adras close to him as well, knowing that everyone was scared.

The third giant who hadn’t spoken yet narrowed his eyes then, and began to walk towards Loki, intending to reach out and grab his face.
Thor growled low in his throat and moved Loki, Astrid, and Adras behind him, eye level with the giant. “Do not touch him.”

The giant who attempted to grab Loki’s face glared back at Thor, refusing to lower his gaze. “I notice that you’ve forgotten to remind us that you have married a Psemetri, Thor.”

Loki took in a sharp breath and finally looked up, distressed about how this meeting was progressing.

The other two giants present studied Loki’s face then and frowned deeply, turning their gazes towards Thor.

“And the Niouvi wanted by the king at that,” sighed their leader, shaking his head. “Norns, Aesir…”

“He is no longer allied with the king,” argued Thor, knowing that no one was leaving this spot until they agreed to let Loki stay. “The king stripped him of his title centuries ago. And the king only wants him because Loki refused his advances. My wife is connected to the crown in no way, shape, or form. He is innocent.”

“Yes, but how can we know that? Are we supposed to take your word for it?” sneered the giant that attempted to touch Loki.

No one missed the underlying insult in his voice, and before Loki knew what he was doing, he growled at him, glaring up at him fiercer than he should be, considering their situation. “Do not speak of him like that!”

The three giants from the resistance were taken aback by Loki’s outburst and looked at each other, confused.

“Thor is the most trustworthy one in this group! He left everything he ever knew to protect his family, and is prepared to do whatever it takes to keep us safe! He is a giant with a heart of gold, and has done nothing to warrant the disrespect that you have sent his way!”

Loki knew it wasn’t a good idea to snap at the group of giants, as they were the ones who had the right to determine if he was allowed in this settlement or not.
But he couldn’t just sit here, and allow these giants to disrespect someone as pure and as loving as Thor.

“Do you really think you’re in a place to criticize me, Niouvi?” answered the giant that Loki liked less and less the more he spoke.

“I will not apologize for defending my husband’s character.”

Before the giant and Loki could bicker back and forth any longer, the leader of the group sighed, and spoke over them, silencing them both. “Enough.”

He looked down at Loki then, mildly impressed by the fierceness in his gaze. “What do you have to offer us, if we let you in? We cannot support the vast and lavish lifestyle that Niouvi are accustomed to.”

“I haven’t lived like that in centuries. Whatever you have to offer, my family and I would be more than willing to humbly accept.” sighed Loki, readjusting his hold on Astrid. “And as for what I can do… I am certain that there is no one in your settlement that is as skilled at seidr as I am. I am also well-versed in the healing aspect of seidr. I am more than willing to use these gifts to help everyone.”

Loki knew that this was a good point.

Niouvi had a natural affinity for seidr use and could use more of it for longer periods of time when compared to their giant counterparts.

And Loki was a very skilled seidr user; this was something that no one could deny.

“And if we refuse to accept you?”

Thor opened his mouth to speak, but Loki beat him to it. “Then I humbly ask that you take my children if nothing else. They are innocent in all of this, and do not deserve to lose their lives because of the king’s greed.”
Everyone remained silent after Loki said this, and it hurt Thor deeply to hear that finality in which Loki said this statement.

The leader of the three giants nodded, and crossed his arms, looking at Thor. “You may all stay the night. We shall hold a meeting with every leader in the morning, to decide if your family can stay indefinitely.”

Loki and Thor’s shoulders sagged in relief, and they thanked the giants, getting back onto their llugem, and following them to the settlement’s gates.

Loki was surprised to find that the settlement was as large as it was, and from the looks of things, there seemed to be a few thousand giants here.

Of course, it was nowhere on the grand scale of the capital or other cities in the realm that held millions of giants, but it was still a nice sized town.

The three giants who led them into the settlement guided them to an inn, and let them know that they could stay here for the night.

They would come and get them at the sun’s first light.

Thor helped Loki and the children climb down from the llugem before hitching all three in the stables, and guiding his entire family in, paying for two rooms.

Giving his uncle one of the keys, he promised that they would all meet up for dinner later that day.

He then picked up Adras, and helped Loki up the steps to their room down the hall, praising the Norns when they finally sat down on the mattress.

Adras seemed to mirror these sentiments exactly, as he crawled across the bed and attempted to climb underneath the covers, huffing when Loki stopped him.
“Wait, Adras. We all need to bathe before resting. We’re dirty from our travels.”

“But I’m **tired**!” huffed Adras, crossing his arms.

“Beberi and Deneri are tired too, Adras.” sighed Loki, closing his eyes. “We all are.”

“So why can’t we sleep?”

“Adras, why don’t you wash up with me?” interjected Thor, knowing that Loki was more exhausted than any of them. “Beberi needs to feed Astrid.”

Adras grumbled but did as Thor said, climbing off of the bed, and following Thor into the bathroom of the inn.

Once they were gone, Loki rose and moved to a rocking chair in the room, encouraging Astrid to wake up so that he could feed her before he went to nap.

He was relieved to see that there was a cradle in the room, and sent a silent prayer up to the Norns.

Even if they decided to not let him stay, he would cherish this moment with his family.

The last few decades had been a trying time for them all, and just like he had done every day before then, Loki prayed to the Norns, and begged them for mercy.

Loki didn’t sleep at all that night.

Instead, he spent the whole night watching his children and Thor, wanting to cement their faces into his memory.
He knew that Thor didn’t want him to think about what they would do if Loki wasn’t allowed to stay, but he couldn’t help it.

Him being kicked out of this settlement because of his previous allegiance to the king was a very real possibility, and if he was forced to return to the king to protect his family, he would.

Adras, Astrid, and Thor meant so much to him, and although it would break his very heart to be forced to leave them, he would do it in an instant if it meant that they could all live safe lives.

Right at the crack of dawn, a sharp knock at their door stirred Loki from his thoughts, and he had to fight back his tears as he sat up, knowing that in a few short hours, he might not ever see his children again.

Thor was still asleep, so he stood up to look down at his family for a few seconds before going to the door and opening it.

A messenger representing the government of the settlement nodded at him, and cleared his throat, relaying his message. “Niouvi. Our leaders wish to speak to you and your husband, in an hour.”

Loki nodded, trying to keep his nervousness at bay. “I understand.”

“I will wait for you both in the lobby. Please do not be late.”

Loki thanked him and closed the door, making his way over to Thor’s side of the bed, and gently shaking him awake.

Thor woke up slowly, blinking a few times to himself before sitting up. “Is it time?”

Loki nodded, too overcome with emotion to speak.

“Loki…”

The Niouvi bit his lower lip and sat down next to Thor, beginning to cry silently on his shoulder. “I
“And you won’t have to,” assured Thor, wrapping a comforting arm around Loki, and pulling him closer. “Loki, everything will be alright. They won’t make you leave.”

“You don’t know that! What if they only let me stay until Astrid is weaned? Or even worse, what if they tell me I must leave immediately? They don’t trust me, Thor! And they have every right to tell me to leave.”

“I will not let them kick you out, Loki.”

“You don’t have status in this settlement, Thor. These are all strangers, strangers who do not care about us and owe us nothing,” argued Loki, wiping at his eyes. He was doing his best to remain quiet for the children, but it was hard, knowing that this might be the last time he ever saw them.

Thor exhaled then, shaking his head. “Then we’ll follow you.”

“No!” hissed Loki, glaring up at Thor. “You will do no such thing!”

“Loki, I’m not lea-”

“The children need to be protected, Thor! I can’t. I just can’t live with myself, if I’m the reason they are harmed. And I need you here to protect them.”

Thor closed his eyes, trying to not become too emotional over the prospect of losing Loki. He wanted his children happy, healthy, and safe, but he also wanted his spouse by his side, healthy and happy as well.

And he knew he would never be the same if Loki was sent away from this settlement. Asking him to choose between Loki and their children was impossible, and Thor honestly didn’t know if he could do it.

If he chose to leave the settlement with Loki, and have his aunt and uncle raise their children, he would lose his heart. And if he had to abandon Loki and stay with the children, he would never be
Every member of his family meant so much to him, and he couldn’t let go of any piece of that family.

But he also didn’t want to put his children’s lives in jeopardy.

Just like Loki couldn’t bear the thought of their children being hurt because of his actions, Thor could not go on if his children were hurt because they didn’t stay here, and ended up being captured by the king.

There was no victor in this situation they’d been forced in.

“Loki… you will return to us. They will not turn you away. I am certain. And… if they do… if they do, wait for me… and I will find you again.”

Loki couldn’t continue this conversation and began to break down completely in Thor’s arms, begging the Norns to have mercy on their family.

He didn’t know if he could handle returning to the king, and being forced to experience whatever horrors the king had planned for him.

If the king could kill his wife and newborn child in a fit of rage, then there was no telling what he would do to Loki.

The king didn’t have an ounce of humanity left in his heart.

“Beberi?”

Loki couldn’t even bring himself together enough to pretend to be okay for Adras, and this worried the child, who climbed from under the covers and furs of the bed and maneuvered into Loki’s lap, hugging him tightly. “Beberi, what’s wrong?”
Loki could only hug his child and sob, trying his best to remember what it felt like to hold him in his arms, what his voice sounded like, and he hugged him \textit{that} much tighter, wishing that he didn’t have to let go.

Adras was very worried to see Loki so upset and wiped at his face, tears beginning to form in his own eyes. “Beberi, don’t cry! It’s okay!”

“I-I know, sweet child,” whispered Loki, trying once more to calm down. “I know.”

He kissed Adras’ temple a few times, and wiped at his face, staring down at him with all of the love and compassion that he felt in his heart. “Beberi loves you \textit{very} much, Adras. Please always remember this.”

Adras sniffed, hugging Loki tighter as well. “I love you too, Beberi!”

It broke Thor’s heart to see his family become so undone so fast, and he pulled them all into his arms, closing his eyes and praying that the Norns didn’t take them away from each other.

And although it \textit{killed} him inside to let go of Adras, Loki knew that he and Thor had to get ready.

He sobbed the entire time he got dressed to leave, and spent his final minutes in this room saying goodbye to Adras and Astrid.

His very \textit{soul} left him when Thor guided them out of their room and away from their children, and after making sure Thor’s cousin Amon could watch the children, they made their way downstairs.

Loki felt a piece of himself die for every step that he walked away from the room his children were in, and he couldn’t stop crying, not caring that it was unbecoming to show this much emotion in public.

It was hard for Thor to see the one he loved so undone as well, and he found himself wiping at his eyes on their way over to the town’s meeting hall, the prospect of Loki possibly having to leave becoming more and more real.
The messenger that led them here seemed to be very uncomfortable with how emotional the pair were and quickly left after showing them to the leaders of this settlement.

From what Loki could gather, there were 10 leaders of this town, who all shared equal status and power here.

Each leader also had three councilmen or women who worked for them, and it seemed like every councilman was here today as well.

It would be these very giants that determined their fate, and Loki found that he could barely stand, the scrutiny of these giants overwhelming.

Just knowing that his past was the reason he could possibly never see his children again killed him, and he clutched at Thor’s arm in a display of vulnerability and weakness that he was not used to showing.

After staring at the pair for some time, a leader that Thor and Loki had not met yesterday spoke to them, beginning the meeting.

“So the son of Odin seeks refuge from our king?”

Thor frowned slightly, answering the giant who spoke to him. “The son of Jörd asks for refuge.”

The group of leaders seemed surprised that Thor was referring to himself as his mother’s child, and not his father’s, in name.

Another leader sighed softly, shifting his gaze to Loki. “On top of being an Aesir, you’ve brought the very Niouvi that the king has issued a warrant for, to this settlement.”

“My spouse was stripped of his title the day he married me. He has not been a member of the king’s court for centuries.”

“And yet the king demands to have his head?”
Loki sniffed and wiped at his eyes, finally looking up at every leader. “I rejected the king’s advances too many times… I did not desire to be one of his queens. And for that… he has decided that if he cannot have me, no one will.”

His voice cracked at the end of this, and he wiped at his eyes with a shaky hand, trying to remain calm. “My time as a Psemetri is over. I do not wish to be parted from my children and my husband, and I do not wish to return to the king’s side. My ties to the king have been severed, and my allegiance is pledged to him no longer.”

“Why did you reject the king’s advances, Niouvi?” murmured a giantess leader, minute compassion in her gaze.

“Being a Psemetri of the king… I witnessed first hand just how cruel and unforgiving the king could be. And that was not a life that I wanted for myself or any children that might have come from that union.”

“Surely being a queen would have offset the troubles that came with being married to King Thrym?” interjected another leader.

Loki stared at him coolly, not wiping at the tears that spilled from his eyes. “No jewel, no cloth, and no amount of riches or wealth and prestige are worth seeing my children suffer at their father’s hand, and at the hand of their numerous siblings, who are all vying for their father’s attention, and throne.”

The leader who allowed them to stay in the settlement for the night sighed then, and spoke for the first time, turning to Thor. “Thor… Bjarke has come here today to speak on your behalf. We will now give him the floor to do so.”

Thor’s mercenary friend stood up from his position in the room, and made his way to the front, standing beside Thor and offering him a nod. “Thor is arguably the strongest and most calculating fighter on this realm. He has saved my life numerous times in situations where we both should have died, and rids the land of the filth and scum that plagues it. I have personally witnessed him fight off a mass of 50 criminals by himself, and come out victorious. Allowing him to stay in this settlement will no doubt allow for us to increase our numbers, and bolster our defenses. Thor has proven himself to me, he has proven himself to our guild of mercenaries, and if given the opportunity, he will prove himself to you.”
Bjarke then stepped back, finished with his statement.

Because Bjarke was one of the settlement’s bravest fighters, his words carried weight, and the leaders of this settlement began to look at Thor in a new light, now seeing his potential.

“If we allow you to stay, Thor… how will you aid us?” asked another leader, leading forward.

“I am more than willing to earn my keep. If training our soldiers is something that is asked of me, I will do it. And if my work as a mercenary is to continue, then I will do it. I can farm as well, if this is necessary, as I was raised on one.”

All of these options were very appealing to the leaders, and the leader that attempted to touch Loki yesterday spoke up, his question causing Thor's blood to run cold.

“Are you willing to remain here without your precious Niouvi?”

Thor growled low in his throat, and moved Loki behind him, glaring at this leader. “Absolutely not.”

“How will this Niouvi help bolster our town, Aesir? He is a liability. If the king discovers that he is here, he will destroy our settlement and everyone in it. Allowing this Niouvi to stay puts everyone’s lives in jeopardy.”

“Allowing Loki to stay here is no more dangerous than allowing the undercover soldiers and staff in the king’s castle to return here to see their families,” argued Thor, refusing to leave this meeting until they all agreed to allow Loki to stay indefinitely. “The king does not know where our settlement is. We were not followed here on our journey. And Loki will not leave this settlement for any reason, should he be allowed to stay. Him staying here will not put anyone’s lives at risk.”

Every leader was silent then, knowing that Thor spoke the truth.

“What of his talents, or gifts?”

“Loki is skilled in the art of seidr; more so than most beings. His skill in seidr is what initially
attracted the king to him, and I am willing to bet that there is not a giant in this settlement that is as talented as he is.”

The giantess who spoke earlier laughed softly, standing up and walking towards Loki. “If I ask you to summon something of substance, could you do it?”

Loki frowned slightly, and nodded, looking around the room.

Using seidr required someone to have a vast knowledge of energy, and how it flowed, as well as the composition of certain materials, and how the materials interacted with the environment around them.

To summon something that already existed in the natural world, a user of seidr would need to draw from the energy around them, and would need to know the exact makeup of the object being summoned, for it to be an authentic summon.

To teleport, the seidr user not only had to have physically been to the location they’re attempting to travel to, but they would also have to draw on the energy around them and combine it with their essence, in order to accomplish this task.

And in order to summon something that previously did not exist in the natural world, the seidr user had to combine those two principles, imparting their own natural essence into the object in order for it to remain.

Seidr was extremely difficult to master, and because there were different divisions of seidr, where one could become a master healer, or a master builder, for example, the possibilities of seidr mastery and skill were endless.

So to be asked to summon something of substance was something that although he knew he could do, still worried him.

If it was something astronomically difficult, he might not be skilled enough to do so, and because of that, he might be denied residence in this settlement.

He sent a silent prayer up to the Norns and asked that they guided him through this moment. “What shall I summon?”
The giantess hummed softly to herself before answering. “I am the most skilled user of seidr in this settlement. If you can surprise me, I will allow you to stay. So at this moment, I would like you to summon authentic gold.”

Loki almost laughed at how simple this request was and raised an eyebrow up at the giantess before him. “How much?”

“As much as you can without hurting yourself.”

“Then this entire room shall be filled with it.”

The leader that tried to touch Loki yesterday, and seemed to be the most against him staying here, scoffed loudly, not believing a word. “Impossible; no one can procure that much authentic gold via seidr.”

Loki frowned but held his tongue, and closed his eyes, knowing how he would accomplish this task.

Rather than create huge blocks of gold, Loki knew that the easiest thing to do would be to create gold coins. They were smaller, required less energy to reproduce, and would benefit this settlement greatly, should they choose to allow him permanent residence.

Muttering the spell, Loki began to expel seidr, and filled the vast room they were in with gold coins up to the ceiling, until they were surrounded by them.

Every leader there gasped in disbelief, and the leader who didn’t believe Loki could do this stood up, walking over to a large pile of gold coins, and picking one up, allowing it to rest in his palm.

Because pure gold didn’t react to the sweat on a being’s skin and cause discoloration, everyone watched with bated breath, widening their eyes when the leader shook his head, his skin remaining unchanged.

“Norns have mercy…”
Loki found it mildly amusing that everyone seemed so shocked by his mastery of seidr, but he didn’t let their surprise ease his worry. No one had blatantly given him permission to stay yet, so he was still on edge, his hands back on Thor’s strong arm.

The giantess who asked him to do this seemed amazed with his ability and turned back to face him, looking him up and down. “Niouvi… are you only particularly gifted in the art of summoning?”

Loki shook his head and cleared his throat, beginning to speak. “No. I can summon, teleport, create via transmutation, and heal or repair wounds or injuries.”

“Five nights ago, I was ambushed by a wild beast. I have a gash in my shoulder that I am still healing from. Are you saying that you could heal this?” gruffed a burly leader.

“I… I could certainly try. I only began training in the art of healing seidr two centuries ago, so there is still much to learn.”

“Loki healed his hemorrhaging and tearing mere seconds after he delivered our daughter, on our journey here. He is more than skilled or qualified to heal you, and anyone else who needs it,” interjected Thor, not wanting Loki to downplay his skills in the slightest. “Even after giving birth, and healing himself, he knew enough about various herbs and plants to help our child survive. I have no doubt that he will become a master of healing as well if he is given the opportunity to.”

The leaders all looked over at Loki then, beginning to see him in a new light as well.

Without speaking, Loki walked over to the massive giant who asked to be healed, and carefully removed his bandaging, noticing that the wound was more of a gash that looked to be infected.

Beginning to mutter a healing spell appropriate for the wound, Loki sent out a pulse of seidr, and healed this giant’s injury, removing the infection as well.

After a few seconds, the giant’s injury was no more, and his arm was just as it was before he was harmed.

He gave a few test flexes of his arm and began to laugh, eternally grateful to Loki. “Norns… no
wonder the king wants you for himself. You’re definitely a force to be reckoned with.”

Loki nodded and quickly returned to Thor’s side, hoping that he proved himself to these people.

The giantess who asked him to summon the gold returned to her seat, and hummed softly, beginning to speak after mulling over something. “You have surprised me, Niouvi. And I believe you have proven yourself and your worth. I grant you permission to stay here, for as long as you’re willing.”

One by one, every leader gave their permission for Loki, Thor, and their families to stay, and Loki felt himself sink to the floor as his knees gave out, relief flooding through his core.

He covered his face with his hands and began to thank the Norns profusely, burrowing into Thor’s broad chest and crying silently when the giant crouched to embrace him.

Thor looked up at every giant and thanked them on behalf of Loki as well, letting them know that they would both do anything they could to help this cause.

After Loki composed himself, Thor helped him stand, and wiped away his tears, pressing a gentle kiss against the center of his forehead.

The leaders present watched this display of affection with curiosity, as everyone with ties to the crown and the kingdom knew that Thor and Loki did not marry of their own volition.

“Aesir; that is, Thor,” murmured the giantess that asked Loki to summon gold. “I’m sure we are all aware of how this union came to be. Yet I find myself surprised to see that the love shared between you is genuine.”

Loki snapped his gaze up, staring at the giantess coolly. “Besides our children, Thor is the only holder of my heart. I understand that our union did not begin with love as its foundation, but it is now there. And it will always be.”

Hearing Loki defend him so passionately made Thor’s heart soar, and he looked down at him, running a calm hand through his long hair. “It’s alright, love. I’m sure she meant nothing by it.”
Loki ceased his relentless tirade against the giantess and looked up at Thor, searching his gaze to make sure that he truly was okay.

The two things that filled Loki with the anger of a raging sun were people messing with or threatening to harm his children, and people who attacked Thor and his character because of his heritage.

Just knowing that these leaders doubted Thor’s character and loyalty upset him greatly, and he bit his tongue to avoid ranting further.

They had just been given permission to live here in this settlement, and he didn’t want to do anything to jeopardize it.

“What will you do with all of this gold, Niouvi?” asked the leader that allowed them to stay the previous night. “You can surely afford to live the life you’ve always known, now.”

Loki glared at him as well, becoming defensive. “I lost my parents when I was very young, and raised myself as an orphan on the streets of the capital city. I fought tooth and nail to get to my previous position of Psemetri. I was not raised in the palace or by a wealthy family. And I do not require riches to live. If this gold can be used to help this settlement, then use it. I only ask that I be allowed to have a master seidr builder or a skilled carpenter and stonemason build a home large enough for myself and my family.”

The leaders assured him that while they did not have a master seidr builder, a carpenter and a stonemason would be appointed to build Loki and Thor a home in this settlement.

Thor and Loki were also advised that they would be given time to adjust to their new life, and that once their home was complete, they would be required to earn their keep.

This was something that Thor and Loki agreed with, and after thanking the leaders profusely, they left the town’s meeting hall and walked back to the inn they were staying in, each of them taking a moment to thank the Norns.

The last half-century of their lives had been uncertain and terrifying, and for the first time in years, it looked like everything would be okay.
Loki knew that he would have to work hard to prove himself to the other inhabitants of this town, but it was something that he was prepared to do.

If he could remain here safe, happy, and healthy with his children, then he would do anything and everything that was asked of him.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading!

Not sure when I will have the next chapter out TBH. Life is really picking up for me, and I am still trying to decide which path I want this story to take, as I have a few rough drafts written, but nothing that I feel too comfortable with.

Thanks for being here on this journey with me, everyone! I appreciate it!

And have a great weekend!!!!!! <3
Thor and Loki arrived back at the inn they were staying at shortly after their meeting with the leaders of this village, and hurriedly walked upstairs to their room, not surprised that Thor’s aunt, uncle, and youngest cousin were also in their room, comforting Adras and Astrid.

Both children were crying, and Loki rushed over to them the second Thor opened the door, gently taking Astrid from the arms of Thor’s aunt, and kissing her cheek a few times before sitting on the bed in the room, beckoning Adras over.

Both children stopped crying once they were wrapped in Loki’s warm embrace and assured that everything was okay, so he closed his eyes, taking a moment to cherish this moment.

Knowing that he would be able to remain here, and raise his children and see them grow and become whoever they wanted to be meant the world to him, and he felt himself grow emotional again over the immense relief that he felt.

“What have they said, Nephew?”

Thor sat down on their mattress next to Loki, ruffling Adras’ hair affectionately. “They said that we are all allowed to stay, as long as Loki and I earn our keep.”

Thor’s uncle raised an eyebrow at the pair. “What is that supposed to mean?”

“They want Loki to use his affinity for seidr for the betterment of the settlement, and they would like me to offer my services to the settlement as well. I assume they’ll want all of us to farm if we can get some land.”

Thor’s aunt sighed softly, expecting as much. “Well, it isn’t anything we haven’t done before.”

“Beberi?”
Thor’s aunt looked down at Tulla, running a calming hand through her hair. “Yes, Tulla?”

“Is this our new home?”

“Yes, Tulla.”

The young child frowned slightly, but remained silent, nestling further into her mother’s hold.

“What will we do about our living situation, Thor? We can’t live at an inn forever.”

“The leaders of this village have agreed to build us homes. A stonemason and carpenter have been appointed to build our homes, so we shouldn’t remain in these rooms for too long. The leaders are eager for Loki and me to get to work, so I assume our homes will be complete in a few months.”

Loki kept his eyes closed while Thor and his family spoke, wanting to take time to appreciate this moment.

The last few decades of their lives had been hell, and although things were peaceful now, Loki knew that it could always change.

For now, he would enjoy spending time with his children and getting closer to Thor.

He was more deserving of it than anyone.

Life in this resistance settlement was very amusing to Loki, if he had to put a word on it.

In the very beginning, giants here either fought tooth and nail please he and Thor because of what they heard about the pair, or were as cruel as they came, shooting them dirty looks because of their union and family.
Word of Loki’s “mastery” over seidr spread like wildfire amongst the townspeople after his meeting with the leaders of this settlement, and a few days after the meeting, he was approached by one of the giantess leaders of the settlement, who was the second most skilled user of seidr in this village, after Loki.

She told him that her name was Svanhild and that she would like him to not only train the current seidr users in this settlement but to also become 1 of 10 healers in the resistance.

Loki wasn’t too sure if he wanted to accept this much responsibility at first, as he had just given birth not too long ago, and they were still gaining the trust of everyone, but after speaking it over with Thor, he informed Svanhild that he would be more than willing to do these things -with some realistic exceptions, as he wanted to have time to be a parent- once their home was complete.

Thor had also experienced something similar to this a few days after the meeting with the leaders of this settlement, with numerous leaders approaching him and asking him to be a part of their council. Thor had been to this settlement numerous times in the past, so the leaders felt more comfortable with giving Thor this level of responsibility.

After speaking it over with Loki, Thor decided to join the council of the giant Asger, who was responsible for their defense and military, as he knew that more than anything, this aspect of the settlement needed to be fortified. Their “army” consisted of a few dozen “soldiers”, and Thor knew that if the settlement allowed him to, he would train them, and hopefully in the future recruit more.

He also informed the leaders that he would not begin working until their home was complete, as he wanted to help Loki with Astrid. Their daughter was still very young, and he didn’t want the bulk of her care to be put on Loki.

They had a sneaking suspicion that the leaders of this settlement asked the builders to work on their home day and night so that the pair could begin working for the settlement, as after two months of residing here, both the homes of Thor and Loki, and Thor’s aunt and uncle were complete.

They were homes similar to the style and size of the house that they previously lived in before the attack, and the homes were on the same plot of land.

Because Thor’s aunt and uncle were farmers by profession, they had been given a few acres of land to begin doing so as well.
Furniture was quickly crafted for the families, and a month after their homes were complete, they were furnished and ready to be moved into.

Most of the gold that Loki summoned during his meeting with the leaders of this settlement was used to fortify the town and make their settlement more permanent.

Wooden buildings were in the process of becoming stone or brick, dirt roads were becoming paved streets, and what was once a sprawled village with no design or plan for expansion now had blueprints that would turn it into a nicely built town, that was prepared to handle more and more citizens.

Of course, not too much change could occur in three months, but the change that did occur was surprising to Loki and Thor.

Loki knew though that the gold he gave them would be the only gold they ever received from him for the time being, as the last thing he wanted was to cause inflation in their small economy.

This settlement had a lot of work and growing to do before it could be considered a proper resistance effort, but he knew it wasn’t impossible.

With the help of everyone here, it could be done.

The night before Loki and Thor were set to begin working found them in their new home, getting ready for bed.

Loki was a bit nervous about the responsibility that had been thrust upon them so quickly, as he hadn’t worked in quite some time.

Gazing down at Astrid’s face helped mitigate his fears for the moment though, and as he set her down in her cradle he kissed her round cheeks, smiling softly when she cooed.
Motherhood was something that Loki had always believed wasn’t for him.

After experiencing the childhood he did and living the life he lived up until he married Thor and took in Adras, he always felt that he wouldn’t know how to be a parent.

But gazing down at Astrid at this moment, Loki was thankful that he had taken in Adras and decided to give Thor another child.

Staring down at his baby, who was so lovely and innocent in this world, helped Loki feel a purpose for life, as the last thing he wanted to do was let either child down.

Being a parent had opened him up to an entire world that he never knew existed, it showed him feelings and emotions that he believed he could never experience, and he loved every single second of it.

Astrid made another soft sound when Loki tickled her cheek, and he laughed, beginning to fawn over her.

It warmed Thor’s heart to see Loki so happy, and he made his way over to the pair once he finished dressing for bed, pressing a warm kiss against Loki’s neck. “Isn’t she supposed to be asleep?”

“She is,” murmured Loki, moving his fingers to her belly and tickling her. “But I find myself unable to leave her side. She is more beautiful than words can describe, and every time I gaze at her, I fall more in love.”

Hearing Loki say something so candid surprised Thor, and he bit back a laugh, noting just how much Loki had changed since they married. “If we don’t let her sleep now, she’ll be upset and cry all night.”

“I suppose you’re right about that…” sighed Loki, bending over to press another loving kiss against her cheek. “We should turn in as well.”

The door to their bedroom opening caused them to turn away from Astrid, and neither of them were surprised to see Adras standing there, his favorite toy in hand.
Thor walked over and crouched down in front of their son, placing a calming hand on his shoulder. “What’s wrong, Adras?”

The young giant seemed embarrassed, and looked away for a few seconds, before looking back up at him. “Can I sleep in here, Deneri?”

Thor smiled softly, knowing that Adras was most likely uncomfortable with being alone at night, in a new environment. “Just for tonight.”

Adras reached out to hug Thor, and wrapped his arms around his neck, nestling his face against him as he was picked up.

Loki wasn’t too surprised that Adras was asking to sleep in their room this night, as they’d slept together as a family for half a century while they traveled to this settlement.

Tomorrow Thor and Loki would start working, and Adras would begin his first day of schooling, so to be gathered here tonight as a family made Loki feel sentimental.

Thor seemed to feel this way too, and hugged his family just a bit tighter that night.

They all woke up as the sun’s first light began to shine through their bedroom that morning, and began to prepare for their day.

It had been decided amongst the leaders of this settlement after they saw Thor spar, that he would spend his days training their soldiers, which was something that he didn’t mind. Now that he was no longer working as a mercenary, helping the soldiers train would keep him on his toes, and battle ready.

There were no more than a few dozen soldiers at this settlement, and while the army of the settlement was currently not large enough or skilled enough to ward off an attack from the king, Thor knew that in time, with proper recruitment, the size of their army and their settlement would grow.

Loki was now responsible for running one of ten health centers in the settlement and was to open
up his clinic after Adras was dropped off for his schooling.

Astrid would remain with him throughout the day - she was still too young to be away from him for long periods of time - and once Adras was finished with school, he would make his way to the clinic, available to help Loki with any minor tasks until he closed for the day.

Loki was thankful to be busy and contributing to society again, but still felt minute worry, to have so much responsibility when the leaders and people of this settlement barely trusted him.

Adras seemed to be worried as well about starting school, but felt better about going because Tulla would be with him.

After kissing both Thor and Adras goodbye once they dropped him off at his clinic, Loki unlocked the doors, and stepped inside.

The settlement had begun redevelopment efforts with the gold that Loki gave them, so the settlement was now bustling with growth and change.

The clinic they’d built him, in particular, was very nice considering that this was still a small town and not a brimming metropolis, and once he’d fed Astrid and readjusted her onto the sling on his back, he went to unlock the front doors once more, ready to begin his day.

To his complete surprise, the leader Svanhild was waiting outside for him, a large book in her hands.

She smiled down at him gently, offering him the book. “Good Morning, Loki. This book has been in our possession for some time, and now that there is someone skilled who can use it, I would like to give it to you.”

Loki blinked a few times in confusion, and warily accepted the large book, opening it and beginning to thumb through it. He widened his eyes in disbelief when he saw how detailed the pages were, and the particular fashion that the runes were written, and he skimmed through a random page, beginning to get excited.

“Norns have mercy! You, h-how did you find this?!”
Svanhild laughed softly at his surprise. “A builder found it buried underneath this very settlement when we were much smaller than we were now, centuries back.”

Loki flipped the large book over to look at the signature inscribed on the leatherbound back, taking in a sharp breath when he read it.

“Svanhild… were there any other books or items that were found along with this book?”

“Well, yes,” she nodded. “There was an entire volume of books actually. Most of them are in a language we don’t understand, but this book, as well as a few others, are in our language. No one here is strong enough to use these spells, unfortunately.”

Loki almost cried when she said this.

If he had been asking for a sign that he was supposed to be here, this was it.

Millennia ago, millennia before even King Thrym lived, and sometime after the fall of the original giant Ymir, the Niouvi Frode Gundson wrote a series of books on the art of seidr.

No one knew if he ever truly existed, but the works written had been translated and altered over the millennia, and were the standard for seidr use.

It was reported that every original book but one had been lost long ago, and it was from that singular book that every giant who practiced seidr learned from.

The single remaining book of Frode Gundson had been rewritten or altered and distributed through the ages, and the original untouched copy lied with King Thrym.

The king had been searching tirelessly for the entire volume set once he took the throne 3 and a half millennia ago, and to know that he now held one of those very books in his hands was boggling.
Loki wanted nothing more than to be the sole owner of every single one of the fabled books, and he began to think of the most realistic way this could happen.

If he learned from these books throughout the years they lived here… he believed it was very possible that he could become powerful enough to get rid of King Thrym.

Of course, this would all take time, but… he had more than enough of it. If staying up late at night to practice spells and his seidr became the norm, then so be it.

The potential to get rid of King Thrym was the first glimmer of hope that he had felt in some time, and he ran his hand over the leatherbound back, looking up at Svanhild.

He would *get* these books, doing whatever he had to do -within reason- to receive them.

“Svanhild… would the council of leaders be willing to allow me to have the remaining volumes? I would undoubtedly be able to translate them for you, and knowing their contents would allow every seidr user in this settlement to become very powerful.”

Svanhild raised an eyebrow at Loki then. “What do you mean?”

If Loki told Svanhild the truth, the council would never give these books to him willingly. He needed to make her think that these books weren’t anything special; books that if he were allowed to have, could be used to better the settlement.

“This is a very detailed book; one that I am thankful you’ve given me to learn from. And because you and the other leaders have tasked me with training the other users of seidr in this settlement, I could use this, or the other books that you’ve found, to do that. The other books in the old tongue that many people can’t read, can be translated by myself, and redistributed to the seidr users of this settlement.”

Svanhild frowned slightly here. “*You* can read books written in the old tongue?”

Astrid made a soft sound then, so Loki placed the book under his arm, and carefully moved her upright, leaning her against his upper torso so that he could pat her back. “All Psemetri can read and speak in the old tongue. King Thrym requires it.”
“And you believe that you can translate these books, and train the seidr users in this settlement?”

Loki nodded. “I do. This book you’ve given me is for those who practice seidr from a more medical approach. I can only assume that these other books are a guide that would show us how to train those who build with seidr, those that use it to grow plants, and so on. If you are willing to let me have these books, I am more than willing to translate them and teach them to the giants here.”

Svanhild observed Loki for some time, before posing another question. “You’ve just given birth… would you even have time to decipher the texts we have?”

“With all due respect, Svanhild… if I am given permission to be the keeper of those texts and allowed to translate them, I will find the time.”

This put an amused smile on the giantess’ face, and she finally nodded, looking over her shoulder and seeing that a family of giants were beginning to approach Loki’s clinic. “I shall speak to the council, and return to you this evening with our verdict.”

“Thank you, Svanhild,” murmured Loki, looking at the group of giants that were quickly approaching him. “I will see you then.”

He waved her away and stepped back from the door, making sure that it was unlocked before letting go of it so it remained cracked open.

He was fairly certain that Svanhild and the other leaders would allow him to be the guardian of these books, and carefully shifted Astrid until she was on the sling on his back again, feeling excited about being able to expand his seidr ability.

He would just have to get through this day, first.

The clinic that the resistance built for him consisted of a large waiting room that could hold no less than 50 giants and no more than 75, a personal office and three examination rooms.

He knew that sooner or later he would have to begin training someone to help him, as there was no feasible way ten healers could support a rapidly growing town.
The family of Jötnar entered his clinic a few seconds later, and he turned to greet them, frowning quickly when he noticed that the wife and mother of this family was glaring at him.

He closed the medical book that Svanhild gifted him with, and straightened up, plastering a fake smile onto his face. “Good Morning.”

The father and husband of this family kept staring at Loki in an unabashed fashion, so he turned to the giantess glaring at him, beginning to feel uncomfortable. “How can I help you this morning?”

The giantess continued to scowl at him before scoffing and turning her head. “So you’re the one that Svanhild and the others have been talking about?”

Loki frowned slightly and reached behind him to rub at Astrid’s back. The infant was beginning to squirm and move, so he hoped that him soothing her like this worked.

“I am. How can I help you today?”

The giantess was taken aback by Loki’s curt answer and tone, and crossed her arms, staring at him like he was the muck on the ground she walked on. “I’m not sure you’re skilled enough to help my child.”

Loki turned to walk away and sat down, waving his hand and summoning the medical seidr book that Svanhild gave to him. “Then you are free to go to the numerous healers spread out across this town. No one is stopping you.”

The giantess began to sputter at this, and smacked her husband’s arm, wanting him to interject. He had been leering at Loki since they entered this clinic.

He jumped slightly before reading the situation and speaking to defend his spouse. “The leaders made it very clear that you were to help the town’s citizens, in order to stay, Niouvi.”

“You’re correct. In order to stay in this town, I am to help willing citizens with whatever ailments they have. Your wife has stated that I am not skilled enough to help heal your child, therefore there
is nothing more I can do for you. Have a wonderful day.”

“Now hold on Nio-”

“My name is Loki Laufeyson. And unless you would like me to heal your child, I will ask you to leave.”

Before the adults could argue back and forth further, the couple’s young child began to cough, which worried Loki.

Even though the child’s parents were downright horrid, the child was innocent, and he wanted to still help them if he could.

“Would you like me to examine your child, yes or no?”

The couple shared a look before the giantess sighed in resignation, averting her gaze. “Why else would we be here?”

“That was all I needed, thank you.”

He led the couple back to an examination room and instructed them to place their toddler on the wooden table in the center of the room, sending out a pulse of seidr once they did so.

“She just has a cold. I see nothing else wrong with her. After she is healed, please give her ginger tea with a spoonful of honey in the morning and the night for three days.”

“If you hurt our daughter, I’ll ensure that you’re sent right back to the capital!”

It took everything in Loki to not roll his eyes, and he waved his hand, using seidr to relieve the child of her cold.

For very basic spells that he had the energy flows memorized for, only a simple wave or toss of the hand was necessary to carry out the spell.
For more complex spells, he had to close his eyes and focus, while murmuring out the spell word for word.

“She is healed and has not been harmed in the process. Is there anything else I can do for you?”

The child’s mother rushed towards her side and ran her hand through the toddler’s hair, assessing her. “Are you alright, my princess?”

The toddler giggled and nodded, reaching for her mother to pick her up.

Astrid was beginning to coo on his back, so he figured it was time to feed her again. Normally he would’ve fed her the second she cooed, but the way this giantess’ husband was staring made him feel… uncomfortable.

Thankfully, she noticed that her husband was staring at Loki again, and smacked his arm before leaving the room without thanking Loki.

Her husband followed her out of the exam room and left the clinic, trying to reassure her of his “undying love” and “fidelity”.

Now that he was alone, Loki sighed in relief and made his way back to the waiting area of the clinic, gently moving the baby sling around on him so that Astrid was now at his breast.

Because it was still quite early in the morning, Loki was able to enjoy the quiet.

His life hadn’t been this calm in almost a century.

While Astrid drank from him, Loki decided to look at the medical book that he’d been gifted, a part of himself beginning to feel excited the more he skimmed through the book.

The book was organized by body part, and was very informative and detailed, with precise pictures painted on its pages that depicted the exact symptom or illness.
Right as Astrid was finishing up, the doors to the clinic opened, and a young adolescent ran in, trying to catch his breath.

“H-Healer!”

Loki raised an eyebrow at the child, who looked no older than 12. “What is it, child?”

“M-My beberi! He’s sick, and the other healer is too busy to see him, so I-I came here.”

Loki frowned slightly, and readjusted Astrid in her sling on his back before standing, and following the adolescent out of the clinic doors.

He made sure to place a sign on the door that let everyone know he would be back soon and grabbed the book he had been gifted as well, following the child through the streets of the town.

They finally stopped at a small cottage 20 minutes away from the clinic and entered, the adolescent leading Loki back towards his mother.

Loki was surprised to see another Niouvi in town, as it was very uncommon to find them outside of the elite rungs of society.

The Niouvi was currently on his side in bed moaning, with three children of various ages around him crying and hugging him, begging him to feel better.

It broke Loki’s heart to see such a scene, and he rushed over to the Niouvi’s side, resting a gentle hand on his shoulder. “Your son has called for a healer. Can you speak?”

The Niouvi grunted, squeezing his eyes shut and biting his lower lip. “N-Not much!”

Loki waved his hand quickly to cast a very small healing spell, that would mitigate some of the pain this giant was feeling.
Once some of the pain went away, the Niouvi was able to articulate himself and remained curled into a fetal position on his side, beginning to tremble. “I-I’m bleeding…”

Loki blinked rapidly, wondering what he meant.

The Niouvi’s children were surrounding him so tightly that Loki couldn’t find space to examine him, and he tried his best to speak to them in a firm but understanding voice.

“Children… Beberi is very sick, and I need to heal him. But I can’t do that if you hug him.”

“Don’t hurt Beberi!” cried a young child who couldn’t have been older than 5, clutching onto the Niouvi even harder.

“Geir! Get your brother and sisters off of my bed and out of the room, please!” begged the Niouvi, beginning to moan again as the pain he felt returned.

The adolescent that led Loki here nodded, and carefully gathered his siblings, encouraging them to leave their mother’s side, and the room.

Once they were gone Loki moved the blanket off of the Niouvi carefully, taking in a sharp breath when he noticed his pronounced stomach, and where he was bleeding.

A miscarriage was the first thing that came to his mind, and his heart broke as he sent out a pulse of seidr to check the Niouvi’s womb.

It did seem as if the Niouvi was miscarrying his twins, and Loki bit his lower lip, remembering the book he had been gifted with.

Flipping through it hurriedly, Loki found the page he was looking for, and began to chant, closing his eyes and placing his hand on the crest of the Niouvi’s hip, beginning to pour healing seidr into him.

The act of fixing a placenta so that it adhered against the uterine wall once more was something Loki had never heard of in all of his years of practising seidr, and although this was his first time
casting this complex spell, he knew that he had to try.

Knowing what a child’s love felt like, and knowing firsthand the anticipation that came from carrying life, made Loki want to work even harder to try and save this pregnancy for the Niouvi.

Because he didn’t want to tamper with the spell his first time performing it, Loki didn’t interweave a pain mitigation spell into this one. It made him feel terrible to hear the pained screams of the Niouvi, and it hurt him even more to hear all of the Niouvi’s children sobbing because their mother was hurting, but he continued to chant, reassuring himself that he was more than skilled enough to heal him.

The spell didn’t require him to chant for long, and once it was complete, he cast a very large pain mitigation spell, to soothe any soreness, and null any other effects from the miscarriage.

The Niouvi stopped moaning from pain once he did this, and shakily turned onto his back, wiping at his eyes.

Loki wasn’t the best at bedside manner, but he reached out anyway, placing a calming hand on the Niouvi’s thigh. “What is your name?”

The Niouvi sniffed, looking down at his stomach and beginning to cry. “H-Hemming.”

“Hello, Hemming. My name is Loki, and I am one of the new healers in this town. How are you feeling?”

Hemming sniffed, and wiped at his eyes again, trying to keep it together and failing. “This has never happened to me… Draeil thinks that it was the journey here that made me like this… and now they’re gone because of me!”

Loki shook his head quickly, wanting to reassure the Niouvi. “They aren’t gone, Hemming.”

The Niouvi stopped crying, widening his eyes slightly. “What do you mean?”

“I will do my best to explain to you what I did to save them. What is referred to as the “afterbirth”
is actually called,” he took a moment to grab his book, reading over the section where it described this. “It’s called the placenta, and it houses our children. It adheres tightly to our womb until delivery, and sometimes, it will loosen or detach from our wombs completely before our children are ready to be here, which causes the miscarriage. Now, in your case, the placenta carrying one of your children was partially detached, which caused the bleeding. I used this spell to adhere it to your womb again until delivery.”

Hemming widened his eyes and looked down at his stomach, bringing his hands to his mouth. “T-Then…”

“From what I saw with my seidr, your children are alright. I cannot check to see if mentally, a complication will arise, but as far as physical complications, there are none. Your children are fine.”

Hemming began to sob in relief, profusely thanking Loki. “Norns, thank you! Thank you!”

Loki scanned the Niouvi’s womb again with a pulse of seidr, wanting to make sure that everything truly was okay.

He saw nothing concerning and smiled softly at him, patting his thigh. “Everything is alright.”

Now that Hemming was no longer in pain, his children seemed to have calmed down and were all peaking at the pair from the door, wanting to come in.

Hemming laughed gently and gestured for his children to come in, laughing once more when they all piled on his bed and hugged him or his stomach, asking him if he was okay.

Loki watched this scene with nostalgia, thinking of his own family.

“How long have you been here?”

Loki snapped his gaze back to the Niouvi, answering him. “Not long… only three months.”

Hemming nodded and shifted on the bed to get more comfortable. “You said your name is Loki?”
“It is.”

“Well thank you for helping me, Loki. I am eternally indebted to you.”

Loki shook his head, beginning to stand. “Not at all, Hemming. If you have any more issues, please come back or send your child to fetch me. I would be more than happy to help you.”

After ushering the children off of Hemming’s bed, Loki changed the sheets for him, making sure that fresh linens and furs were on the bed before his departure.

He also made a quick meal for the entire family, knowing that the Niouvi would most likely be very sore for the next few days.

After all the children had been taken care of, and Hemming was reassured that everything truly was okay, Loki said goodbye, grabbing his book and making his way back to his clinic. He’d been gone for at least an hour now, and it was almost 10, so he wasn’t sure if he would have more patients now that it was later in the day.

Astrid was still in the sling on his back sleeping peacefully, so for that, he was thankful.

He returned to the clinic with a small line of patients, and opened his doors, helping them with their minor ailments.

None of them required more healing than the Niouvi today did, and once it was three, Loki closed the clinic for his lunch break.

Adras would also be returning here to wait with Loki and help him with small errands until Thor came in the evening so that they could all travel home as a family.

There was a small kitchen in the clinic, so after rushing to the market to buy some supplies, Loki began to fix lunch for himself and Adras.
Right as he finished, Adras opened the door to the clinic and barreled in with Tulla, shouting for Loki.

“I’m in here, Adras!”

Adras set his things down on a nearby table and ran to Loki, hugging his legs and looking up at him while he poured drinks. “Hi, Beberi!”

Adras’ happiness was always infectious to him, and he couldn’t help but smile down at him as well, feeling the joy bubble from within when he gazed at his face. “Hello, sweet child.”

Adras let go of Loki’s legs then so that he could carry the food out to a table in the waiting room, and followed him, happily sitting down. “Did you help babies today, Beberi?”

“I did,” laughed Loki, setting down food in front of Adras and Tulla. “I helped numerous people today.”

“Did you deliver any babies?” asked Tulla, beginning to eat. “Because Beberi said that she and Deneri might pray to the Norns for a new baby!”

Loki raised an eyebrow at this, surprised. Thor’s aunt was still young though -only a millennium older than they were, and they were in their 30’s- so if they wanted to expand their family, she still could. “Well, that’s great news, Tulla.”

Tulla nodded quickly, continuing to yammer on. “And Adras and I are in the same class!”

“Are you, now?”

“Yeah!”

Loki turned to look at Adras next, wanting to know how his day went. “How was your first day of schooling, Adras?”
Adras frowned slightly at the question before answering. “Are you sure I’m not a Niouvi?”

“Yes, child.” laughed Loki, taking a bite of his meal. “I promise, you are a giant.”

“That’s not what the other children said!” chimed Tulla. “When we were playing they said Adras had to be a Niouvi, and wouldn’t let him be a giant.”

Now it was Loki’s turn to frown. “Adras… who said you couldn’t be a giant?”

“… Erling…”

“Who is Erling, Adras?”

“He told me I have to be a Niouvi when we play pretend since I’m small…”

Adras’ stature was a point of contention amongst Loki and other mothers ever since Loki took him in. Adras wasn’t abnormally small, but he was a bit smaller than his peers.

And he couldn’t keep track of all the times Adras had come to him over the years crying because the other children made fun of him for his height.

He had no idea who Adras’ biological father was, and if he was a giant of small stature, so when Adras came to him and asked if he would grow, Loki had no honest way of knowing.

Of course, he reassured Adras like any parent would, and the number of times he’d spoken to other parents about their children being rude to Adras was too many to count.

“Adras… you’re a giant. You’re just small right now; it does not mean you will always be.”

Adras still seemed bothered by this, so Tulla pinched his side, causing him to giggle. “Don’t be sad, Adras! I’m sure you’ll grow up and be really big one day.”
This seemed to help Adras feel better, so the family continued their lunch in peace, speaking about trivial things.

Afterward, Loki asked Adras to walk Tulla back home before he opened the shop again, but the young child refused his help, saying that she wanted to stay and help Loki in case any more infants came for help.

Loki found the thought amusing, and agreed, cleaning up before opening the clinic once more.

Adras and Tulla weren’t too much of a handful, and once the sun began to set, Thor came for his family, ready to head home.

The family dropped Tulla off at home before heading to their own, and once they arrived Loki set Astrid down in her cradle that he moved to the kitchen, beginning to make dinner for the family.

Thor came down after bathing, and once dinner was set out for everyone, they began to eat, and speak about their days.

“Deneri! Beberi helped a lot of people today!” shared Adras, beaming with pride.

Thor raised an eyebrow up at Loki then. “Really?”

Loki smiled softly, beginning to eat his meal as well. “I helped a Niouvi who was miscarrying twins today.”

Thor’s smile fell, and he reached out, placing a comforting hand on Loki’s wrist. “Norns…”

“I actually used seidr to reverse it and to prevent it from happening. Thankfully, I was able to save both the Niouvi and the unborn children.”

Thor widened his eyes in shock. “Seidr can do this?”

“Normally, no. But, just this morning, I was given a book by Svanhild that taught me how to recite
then the proper spell.”

“Then I am thankful for your affinity.”

Loki blushed at the compliment and continued to explain further. “I… there is an entire set of seidr books that this town has. And they are priceless. King Thrym is only as powerful as he is now because he has one. And we have all of them.”

Thor took a sip of his drink, processing this information. “What does this mean for us, Loki?”

“I’m the only one in this settlement that can read and write and speak in the old tongue. And an overwhelming majority of the books they have are written with the old runes. The spells in the books that they do have, I assume cannot be carried out, because no one has been strong enough to try, until me.”

“Do the village leaders know this?”

Loki shook his head, taking another bite of his meal. “They don’t. They only know that these books can be translated and that they are books about seidr. They don’t know how vital these books are when it comes to finally ending King Thrym’s reign. They’re currently voting on whether or not I should be allowed to be the holder of these texts, and if so, if I will be allowed to translate them.”

Thor was beginning to understand what Loki was getting at now. “Loki… how powerful can you become, if you study and translate these texts?”

“Realistically… more powerful than King Thrym. If I spend the next few centuries translating these texts, practicing what is in them, and imparting some of the information to the other seidr users of this settlement… then that will change everything, Thor.”

“But what is stopping someone from abusing the power that these texts hold, and using it against us? We are still not favored positively in this village, Loki.”

“Truthfully, spells that are not harmful will be translated first. Anything that would give someone too much power, will not be translated,” admitted Loki, shrugging his shoulders. “And until King Thrym is taken down… I would be the only one who would know those dangerous spells.”
“Making you the most powerful seidr user in millennia, effectively?”

Loki nodded once more, trying his best to not let this situation cause him to become power hungry. The absolute landmine that these books were filled him with a hunger that he had not felt in centuries.

To know that in a few centuries, he could become one of the most powerful users of seidr in existence, was a liberating thought.

Being that powerful, he could protect his family, he could save those who have been ravaged by King Thrym, and it made the entire idea of the resistance that much more tangible.

“Of course, this is all contingent upon whether or not I am allowed to protect these books, and if I am allowed to translate them.”

Thor hummed to himself, thinking about what Loki said.

Those books could change everything about their lives, and the resistance front.

“When will they have made their decision?”

“Someone should be stopping by this evening, I believe.”

Adras had finished his meal already and was beginning to become restless at the table, so Loki sent him away, granting him permission to play with his toys for an hour before bed.

“Well, I can’t say that my day was as eventful as yours.”

Loki raised an eyebrow at Thor then. “What do you mean?”
The giant sighed, shaking his head. “The “soldiers” that we have are sub-par at best. If the king found our settlement and decided to attack us with an army of 30 giants, within the next half-century, we’d be done for.”

Loki widened his eyes in shock. “Norns…”

“They are weak giants who have grown comfortable with a stationary life. They are all giants who have never seen battle, much less wielded a weapon. They are out of shape, lazy, and unmotivated. I don’t know how to inspire them to actually train, and become soldiers worthy of that title. They seem to think that this settlement is a utopia; one where we are safe from the king. And they have no desire to recruit more giants, either. It’s very frustrating.”

It honestly scared Loki to hear this, and he set down his fork, closing his eyes and frowning.

If they didn’t have to be in this settlement, Loki wouldn’t want to be here. But because there was strength in numbers, and because they needed to live somewhere that was unknown to the king, they needed to stay.

But knowing that if the king sent a few dozen soldiers to this settlement any time soon, that they would be done for, was a terrifying fact.

“Surely there are one or two people with promise?”

“There is one.”

Loki didn’t know what to say, so Thor continued to speak, wanting to reassure him of their safety. “No harm will come to us here, Loki. I’m certain of it.”

Loki frowned slightly, still troubled by the information Thor told him. “You don’t know that, Thor… if we were attacked, you couldn’t take on an entire army.”

Thor frowned as well, sighing. “That doesn’t mean I wouldn’t try.”
Thor was so simple sometimes it was frustrating, but it was one of the things that Loki loved about him, and it was also one of the things that helped him see things from another point of view.

“Do you think the leaders will listen to us, if we ask them to begin recruitment efforts?”

“We haven't been here long enough to make requests, Loki.” murmured Thor, a minute frown on his face.

This was obviously the last thing that Loki wanted to hear, and the Niouvi pursed his lips, covering his worry with anger.

“Loki… please give it a few centuries. We will focus on the children, and focus on integrating ourselves into this town’s leadership. It will take time, but it can be done. In the meantime, you can focus on translating the books, and learning their contents. The king will not find us. And if he does, I am more than certain it will be centuries from now, when this settlement has grown to a substantially sized city with an army that can stand against the might of the king.”

He reached across the table to caress Loki’s cheek, not wanting him to be worried. “The Norns will not forsake us, Loki. And even if they do, I will not forsake you. If I have to kill the king with my bare hands to protect you and the children, then I will.”

Loki held Thor’s hand with his own, closing his eyes and sighing. “I’m just worried, Thor.”

“And I am too. But that doesn’t mean that everything won’t be okay. All we can do is try our best to build this settlement up.”

Loki nodded, pressing a warm kiss against the palm of Thor’s hand. He knew it was out of character for him, but the longer he remained with Thor, and the more they interacted as a couple, the easier it became for him to be more affectionate.

Before he could reply, a loud knock came from their front door, interrupting their conversation.

Loki figured that it was Svanhild, and shot Thor a nervous look, kissing his palm once more before rising.
To his surprise, Svanhild and three other leaders of this settlement were at their door, each of them carrying a few books.

He widened his eyes slightly and stepped aside, hurriedly beckoning the giants into his home, and directing them to the dining room.

Thor stood to greet them all, and helped Loki sit back down once every other giant was seated, carefully picking up Astrid next.

He hadn’t held her much today because of his work, and wanted to hold her while she was still awake, so that they could bond.

Svanhild was the first leader to speak from the group, turning her attention towards Loki. “Good Evening, Loki.”

Loki nodded, returning her greeting. “Good Evening.”

“We have all spoken, and have agreed to allow you to be the guardian of these books as well as translate them, as long as you understand you are to use the contents of these books for the betterment of the settlement. You are to translate them in your own time, whenever you see fit, and are to impart this knowledge to me, so that I can train the other seidr users of this settlement as well. Do you understand?”

Loki nodded, forcing himself to not nod too quickly. “I understand.”

“You are to also meet with me once a year, to give me what you have translated, and teach me what you have learned. Do you understand this as well?”

Loki nodded again. “I do.”

“Then please protect and guard these books, Loki, for the betterment of the settlement.”

“You have my word. These books shall be protected, and their contents will be shared with this settlement.”
Svanhild hadn’t said that everything within these books was to be translated and written down or taught, so for that he was thankful.

This would be one loophole that he would exploit and use to his advantage.

The power that was contained within these books could not be quantified, and the last thing Loki needed was everyone in this settlement using seidr spells that could bring harm to their realm.

“Well then, please have a good night.”

Loki stood up to walk the leaders to his door, and bid them farewell, sighing when he returned to the dining room. “Norns, have mercy.”

Thor laughed softly, ticking Astrid’s stomach affectionately. “They’ve allowed you to protect the books, so that’s one thing off of our list.”

Loki sighed again, gathering their plates so that he could place them in the kitchen. “I’m thankful for that, at least. Now that they’re in my possession, they can be summoned by me at any time, no matter the location. I just need to place a few guard spells over them, to prevent anyone from being able to summon these books too.”

Thor watched Loki wave his hand to place these spells over the books, and stood up as well, carefully cradling Astrid in the crook of his arm so that he could grab her cradle, and follow Loki upstairs.

They usually played with Adras before bed, and tonight would be no different.

Loki wasn’t too pleased that the “army” of the settlement had no promising members, but he trusted Thor.

If the giant could change him, he could change anyone.
Thanks for reading, everyone!

Not too sure when I'll have the next chapter out, as I am still concepting for this story, and I also want to finish my story "Under the Full Moon" before the semester starts in 3 weeks.

Since I'm going back to school and I'm working, I really only want to work on one fanfic at a time :p

Till next time, everyone!
Hey guys!

I know I said that I’d be working on my other story, but... my creative juices are flowing for this fanfic at the moment, so I want to take advantage of that and crank chapters out while I feel inspired XD

I’m really happy with this chapter because I finally get to delve into the main arc of this story, and we get to see a snippet of Loki in his former glory.

I really enjoyed writing this chapter, so I hope you guys enjoy it just as much.

ALSO

Two new words;

Afi- A Jotun Grandfather
Amma- A Jotun Grandmother

Loki didn’t have as much time as he originally believed he would have when it came to translating the lost books and learning their spells. The first few months that Loki and Thor spent working here in the settlement went by so fast, Loki didn’t have time to read and study anything other than the medical book he had been given.

Between running his clinic, teaching the basics of seidr to other beginner users, and raising Adras and Astrid, Loki barely had time to get a good night’s rest.

He knew once he trained other Jötnar to help him with his clinic, the responsibility on his shoulders would lessen.

Thankfully, Svanhild altered their agreement, and would only meet with him once a decade instead of every year, in regards to the texts and their contents.

And so, their life in the settlement began.

When they had been in the settlement for a year, Loki managed to build up a steady flow of patients.
It seemed that word of his “miracle” healing of the Niouvi Hemming had spread throughout the settlement, for the number of patients waiting for him each day seemed to multiply.

He didn’t mind it too much, as this only helped solidify he and Thor’s plan of infiltrating into the leadership of this settlement.

Both Thor and Loki ultimately wanted to be leaders on the council, as they knew that as this settlement grew and grew, they would want to have a say in the running of it.

Their children meant everything to them, and they could no longer sit by and wait while other giants made important decisions that could impact their life.

While he was sitting down for Astrid’s feeding, and a lull in the traffic of his clinic had been reached, the Niouvi Hemming entered Loki’s clinic, his two youngest children following close behind him.

Loki was pleased to see that he still carried life, and was now moving without any pain. The Niouvi had been on his mind throughout the year.

“Hemming! It is a pleasure to see you. Is everything alright?”

The Niouvi nodded, beckoning for his younger children to follow him. “We are all fine, Healer. I’ve only come to bring a gift to you, for your help.”

Loki raised his eyebrows, surprised by the gesture. “Really? Norns, bless your heart.”

Hemming sat down next to Loki, gently rubbing at Astrid’s side. “Norns, she’s so big. How old is she?”

“Almost two decades now,” murmured Loki, staring down at his daughter fondly. She was staring back up at him with such joy in her eyes, and his heart melted, the love he had for his child blooming in his heart even further. “The older she gets, the more and more she looks like my husband.”
Hemming laughed softly, rubbing at his own stomach. “Hopefully the next one looks more like you.”

This made Loki laugh as well, and he surprised himself further when he realized that he wouldn’t mind if he and Thor had more children years later once Astrid was older.

If you had asked him a few centuries ago if he would ever want children, he would’ve laughed, and continued living his life, selfish and cruel and as cold as they came.

But his children helped open up his heart, and having them filled it with a love that he never knew was possible.

So as long as the children were adequately spaced apart, Loki knew he wouldn’t mind having more children.

He would just have to speak to Thor first.

“I hope you haven’t cooked lunch, yet.”

Loki turned to look back at Hemming. “I haven’t, unfortunately.”

“Good! I brought some for all of us.”

Loki noticed the covered bowls that were on the table then, and inhaled, smelling the spices and the scents of food from a region that he hadn’t eaten from in centuries. “Norns… you’re from out east, aren’t you?”

“From Gehglir? Yes, I am. My husband and I actually met while he was a Lieutenant of the king’s army so… our family is in a similar situation to you.”

Loki was surprised to hear this.
Knowing that there was another family in this settlement that had previous ties to the king comforted him. It made him feel less alone in this settlement.

He had never been a person who had friends, so besides Thor and their children, he had no one.

But knowing that there was another Niouvi here, and hearing that they were previously allied with the king too, gave him hope that their life here might not be as lonely as he believed.

Astrid made a loud noise then, so Loki looked down, seeing that she was finished drinking. “Let me place her in her cradle before we begin eating.”

Hemming nodded, beginning to set up the meal.

Once Astrid was situated, Loki sat back down across from Hemming, trying his best to not moan at how sinful the food smelled.

He cast a simple spell to heat the food up, which surprised Hemming. “Can seidr be used for those purposes?”

“Of course!” exclaimed Loki, beginning to explain. “Every single action can be done with a spell. Of course, the more complex the action, the more powerful you will have to be in order to complete the spell successfully.”

Hemming bit his lower lip, and reached out for two small plates, fixing food for his children. “Is it hard? To learn seidr, I mean.”

Loki shook his head, summoning a pitcher of water and cups for them all to drink out of. “Not at all. I cast my first spell when I was just shy of a millennium.”

“Norns… I… I always wanted to learn, but… my parents believed that being the wife of a court noble was more important so… I was never allowed.”

“If you would like me to, I’m sure I can find some time to teach you in the evenings for an hour or two a week, after work.”
The words were out of Loki’s mouth before he could stifle them, and he widened his eyes slightly, shocking himself once again.

Loki had gotten better with his selfishness after marrying Thor and raising their children, but it was very unlike him to offer to help a random stranger for personal reasons; especially if he had nothing to gain from it.

Having a family had truly softened his heart in more ways than one.

“Norns, a-are you certain, Healer? That would be such a blessing!”

Loki nodded to assure him, hoping that this wouldn’t be too much for him. He rationalized his decision by telling himself that it would be good to have help around the clinic. It would only take a few years for Hemming to memorize the very basic healing spells, and once he did, Loki was certain that he would be able to convince Hemming to work in the clinic with him.

“Niouvi have a natural affinity for seidr, so it won’t be difficult at all for you to learn.”

He remembered that Hemming was pregnant then, and hummed, wondering how far along he was. “When are you due?”

“Half a century; I’m almost there.”

Loki laughed softly, understanding. As scary as it had been to carry a child for the first time, he remembered how excited he was to meet Astrid with each passing day. “How have you been, though? Are you still feeling pain or tenderness?”

Hemming shook his head no. “Thankfully, the tenderness left me a few weeks after you healed me. Other than their kicks, I feel nothing that would be a cause for concern.”

Loki sighed in relief then. Hearing this comforted him, as that had been his first time performing such a complex medical spell.
“Good. I’m relieved to hear this.”

He and the Niouvi talked about aimless things while they ate, both of them just wanting to enjoy a simple conversation.

Talking to someone other than Thor or Adras and Astrid was nice, and after their lunch was over, Loki thanked Hemming for coming, letting him know that he would stop by at the end of the week to begin teaching him seidr.

Although they hadn’t been in the settlement long, Loki felt that things were beginning to look up for their family.

And he would do his best to make sure that things stayed this way.

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Thor was not happy.

He’d been attempting to train the “soldiers” of the resistance for a year now and had gotten nowhere.

Every day that he spent here trying to convince them to do their best was spent in vain, and he was at his wit’s end.

He would love nothing more than to go back out into the realm and work as a mercenary again, but he knew that he couldn’t risk being seen by a member of the king’s court, or a soldier of the crown.

The soldiers here were simple men, giants who had never wielded a sword in their lives, much less any other weapon.

They seemed to be content with the life they lived without being under the king’s rule, performing the bare minimum.
They didn’t live in fear, or worry about the fact that if the king discovered where they were, he would kill them all.

It was this lack of care that bothered Thor the most.

The leader that he was a councilman under was a giant who had seen war but had also grown lax in the centuries since, comfortable with the “peace” that living in this settlement brought.

Thor wasn’t sure what to do about this attitude that the “army” of the settlement had, and he debated about asking if he could just focus on farming like his aunt and uncle. At least then, he’d have something to do.

If the king wasn’t looking for them, he would’ve loved to take Loki and their family to another city.

But unfortunately, that just couldn’t happen.

The only member of the army of the settlement that was almost as skilled as he was, was a giant by the name of Draeil.

From what Thor had gathered through his conversations with him, he was a giant who used to be a Lieutenant in the king’s army.

The pair got along fairly well, and along with Thor’s mercenary friend Bjarke, they seemed to be the only ones who cared enough to train together every day.

And as the years passed in the settlement, Thor’s anger with the state of the army only grew.

He gave up trying to force or encourage them to all to train after they’d been here in the settlement for a decade, and just focused on training with Draeil, and when he was not out doing mercenary work, Bjarke.

And as the decades in the settlement passed, and Loki grew stronger and more skilled, the less and less the leaders of this settlement began to trust them as a family.
The settlement seemed to be divided on how they felt about their family, and either treated them with the utmost respect or treated them like criminals.

Throughout their decades in this settlement, Loki had been training a group of seidr users and translating the texts for them, leaving out the spells that were extremely powerful or harmful to others and keeping them for himself, which Thor agreed with.

Neither of them wanted to give so much power to the other giants and agreed that the best plan of action would be for Loki to learn these powerful spells in secret, in case they were ever needed.

When they had been in the settlement for a century, Thor’s anger with their situation had reached its breaking point.

The soldiers were off doing what they usually did, and he and Draeil and Bjarke were off training on their own.

Just seeing the other soldiers laughing and joking around as they half-heartedly trained or ran made him see red, and he parried Draeil’s hit a little too hard, sending the giant flying.

He was a burly giant that stood at seven feet tall, so knocking him over wasn’t an easy feat.

The giant seemed surprised that Thor knocked him over as well, and looked up at him in shock, beginning to laugh. “Norns, Aesir! You’ve knocked me clear off my feet. What has you so upset this morning?”

Thor blushed slightly, offering him a hand. “Forgive me, Draeil. My mind was elsewhere.”

Draeil sighed, accepting Thor’s help. “Is it the soldiers?”

“Aye.”

His friend Bjarke sighed as well, looking over at the soldiers. “It’s a sorry sight, the lot of them.
They should be ashamed.”

“This whole settlement should be ashamed,” gruffed Thor, bending over to grab his spear. “If the king chose to attack us today, we’d be done for.”

Both giants frowned when he said this, knowing it was true.

All three of them were bothered by the lack of care that the other soldiers had, and it seemed that the settlement had ceased their efforts of recruitment as well, so for now, this was what they were stuck with.

“Sometimes I wish that there was another stronghold, far, far away from the king.”

Thor and Bjarke looked at Draeil in surprise, as he was a council member like Thor.

“I only say this because of my family. If the king did attack, no one would be spared. And I could never forgive myself if I was the reason that happened.”

Thor understood what he meant then, for he felt the same.

Every day that he stayed here, “training” these soldiers, he wished that there was a different settlement. One where the people cared, and tried to become strong.

“If I could travel outside of this damned settlement, I could at least try and find one.”

“What’s stopping us from creating our own?”

Thor and Draeil stared at Bjarke like he had two heads, which caused the giant to stutter and rush to explain himself. “I-I mean, there’s no reason why we can’t! What do you think the leaders of this settlement did?”

“Bjarke, we would need at least 100 adults that would agree to leave with us, or agree to leave the cities under the king’s rule, to even begin to think about doing this.”
Bjarke was silent for a few seconds then. “If I was able to recruit them… would you both stand with me?”

Thor and Draeil stared at each other then, each of them trying to determine if the other would be willing to do this.

Finally, Thor sighed, answering honestly. “I would need to discuss this idea with my wife before I could commit to such a thing, Bjarke. Loki would kill me otherwise.”

Draeil laughed heartily, agreeing with Thor. “Hemming would serve me on a platter if I made a decision like this without consulting him. Let us discuss this with them tonight, and then we can all discuss it together the following night, in private.”

Bjarke nodded, a small blush on his face. He was the only one in their friend group that was single, which was unusual for a Jötun of his age. Generally, by their late twenties or early thirties, Jötnar married. And they were all currently in their mid-thirties, so Thor assumed Bjarke was mildly embarrassed about still being single.

He reached out and clasped the giant’s shoulder then. “Do not feel ashamed, my friend. The right person will find you.”

“Thank you, Thor.”

They noticed that the other soldiers were beginning to pack up their things and leave for the day, so they each said goodbye, promising to all meetup tomorrow night at Thor’s home to discuss this idea more.

Leaving the training complex and heading towards Loki’s clinic was always the best part of his day, as seeing his family after a complicated day caused him to feel immeasurable joy.

Thankfully, the “closed” sign was hung on the door of the clinic when he arrived, so he entered, his smile broadening when he saw Loki playing with Astrid and Adras.

Adras and Loki were currently sitting down at a table inside, playing peek-a-boo with Astrid, who
giggled and clapped her hands every time one of them uncovered their faces and pressed a quick kiss against her face.

Their daughter was currently a century old and was able to sit up and even take a few steps on her own, which filled Thor with pride. It made him happy, seeing his children grow.

“Hello, everyone.”

His family looked up as he entered the clinic and smiled, happy to see him.

Astrid, in particular, was always very happy to see him and began to call out “Deh!” and reach for him.

He picked her up from the table and plastered kisses over her face in rapid succession, causing her to laugh and babble.

Once she was settled, he pressed a warm kiss against Adras’ crown, and another against Loki’s lips. “Ready to go?”

Loki nodded, kissing him back before standing. “Yes. I need a long bath after the day I’ve had.”

“Me too!” piped Adras, crossing his arms. “Today was rough!”

Thor made a soft sound, following them out of the clinic doors. “Was it, now?”

“Yeah! Erling kept messing with me today!”

Hearing this upset Thor, as no parent liked hearing that their child was being bullied. “I’m sorry Adras. Did your teacher do nothing?”

“The teacher said that I probably did something that made him mad and that he wouldn’t punish him!”
Now it was Loki’s turn to frown. “Did this truly happen, Adras?”

“Yeah, Beberi! Tulla saw the whole thing and got in trouble for speaking against the teacher!”

Loki and Thor’s frowns only deepened then.

They have been having trouble with this particular bully ever since they moved to this settlement, and he unfortunately belonged to the horrid couple that Loki helped on his first day as a healer.

They’d spoken to her and her husband numerous times about how their child treated Adras, to no avail, so hearing that the teacher was now allowing this behavior to occur under their watch, was infuriating.

“It seems like I’ll have to speak to your teacher tomorrow morning, then.”

Adras seemed relieved to hear this, so Loki held his hand just a bit tighter as they walked to their home, wanting him to know that he truly loved him, and only wanted the best for him.

They arrived home not too much later, and bathed in the communal bath in their home after dinner, saying goodnight to Adras and setting Astrid down to sleep for the night afterward.

Once they were in bed and nestled in each other’s hold, Thor decided to broach the topic that Bjarke presented to him. “Loki?”

Loki hummed softly, already beginning to drift off to sleep.

“May we speak for a moment? About something serious?”

Loki furrowed his brow then. “Of course.”

“I think it’s best to have this conversation sitting up, facing each other.”
Loki definitely did not like the sound of that, and he sat up quickly, glaring down at Thor. “What’s wrong?”

Thor bit back a smile at the look on Loki’s face, and sat up as well, taking his hand and kissing it to calm him. “Nothing along the lines of what you’re thinking.”

Loki blushed then, averting his gaze for a moment in embarrassment. “Please don’t sound so guilty when you ask to speak to me…”

Thor found a small smile on his face, and he squeezed Loki’s hand affectionately, wanting him to know that he had nothing to worry about. “You are the only holder of my heart, Aberi.”

Loki blushed further, embarrassed with himself and his petulant jealousy. “What would you like to speak to me about?”

“I… I was wondering if there was an opportunity for us to leave and begin our own settlement, would you take it?”

“In a perfect world, Thor, yes. But the fact of the matter is we don’t know enough people to start our own functional settlement. We just don’t have the time, the money, or the resources to do that.”

Thor was silent for some time then.

Loki raised valid points about it all, but he knew that if they sat down with Bjarke, and discussed the minor details, it might be easier to make this decision.

“I was speaking to Bjarke and Draeil today, and Bjarke asked us both if he could find 100 adults to start a settlement, would we do it.”

Loki raised an eyebrow at him. “And what did you say?”

“I let him know that I needed to speak to you first.”
Loki laughed softly at this. “And what would you like to do?”

“I asked Bjarte if we could all gather here tomorrow night, to discuss the details in private.”

“If he is willing to do this, then I am willing to discuss it. But… as frustrating as our life here is… it’s safe, Thor. And I don’t want to jeopardize that.”

Thor agreed with Loki here. Their children meant everything to them, and the last thing they wanted was for them to become harmed because of their actions.

“I agree… but I also know that I would at least like to hear Bjarke out, and see if anything can come from our discussion.”

Loki bit his lower lip and frowned, feeling split on the issue. “My hesitance exists only because I don’t want to jeopardize our safety by leaving. The smaller a settlement or village, the more prone it is to bandit attacks.”

“I feel the same, Loki. But I would still like to discuss this together with him tomorrow night.”

“If we decide to go forward with this, Thor… what are we going to do if I’m pregnant? I won’t be able to tell for two more decades at least.”

It hadn’t occurred to Thor to factor this into their plans, and he frowned, considering it.

He and Loki had recently discussed having another child, and if it would be a good time for them. Thor wasn’t against having another child, and although he wished that their life here wasn’t as draining as it was, he knew that it was the safest way to live, and the safest place to be.

So per tradition, he’d left the decision up to Loki. Hearing that the Niouvi had decided to expand their family again though made him think deeply about this issue.

“It might take centuries for us to create this and gather enough people, Loki. If we do this, I want to
take down the king. We cannot live in fear our entire lives, or pretend that we can exist in a small town forever, away from the king. As long as he and his lineage are alive, our lives and our children’s lives are in jeopardy. So if we must remain here half a millennium to ensure that our own settlement is populated accordingly, and everything is set in place, then so be it. Because of this, I don’t think having another child will hinder us.”

Loki hummed softly then.

Theoretically, he had only translated one of the 7 books to completion. And because he was the only one who could read the old tongue in this settlement, they needed him, as much as they hated him.

If it took him at least a century to translate one book, then they would need him for at least another six, which meant that they couldn’t kick him out without losing the ability to gain knowledge of the spells within the books.

“As long as I’m translating those books and teaching the spells held within to Svanhild, I’m necessary to this settlement. So if we wanted to have more children, I now believe that the best time would be while we live here. If it takes half a millennium to get everything together for our settlement, then that will be more than enough time for us to get any children we have or might have, old enough to walk and talk.”

Thor nodded, agreeing with Loki about this. “So we will listen to Bjarke tomorrow, as well as have another child?”

“I’ll know in two decades.”

Thor smiled softly and brought Loki’s hands up to his lips, kissing his knuckles. “That’s perfectly fine, Loki. You deciding to expand our family again means more to me than you’ll ever know. And I can’t thank you enough.”

Loki couldn’t stop the smile that spread across his face at this, and he blushed, averting his gaze yet again.

He wasn’t sure why speaking to Thor about such things caused him to lose the confidence and self-assurance that he worked so diligently to build, as every time Thor said or did something chivalrous or heartwarming it caused Loki’s heart to race.
He overcame his uncharacteristic bashfulness to kiss Thor goodnight and nestled into his side once they settled down in bed and drifted off to sleep.

He thought of what Thor told him all throughout the next day, wondering if it was something that could truly be done.

To actually hold a meeting where they would try their best to determine if creating their own settlement was actually feasible was a terrifying thought, as their settlement wouldn’t be content with existing off of the grid.

No, Loki knew that if they did this, their ultimate goal would be to kill the king and his lineage and supporters.

And although grand, if they decided to do this, they couldn’t do it alone.

The day passed by quite fast for Loki, and after he closed the clinic, he and Thor made dinner large enough for Draeil and Hemming, and their children. They didn’t know how long this meeting would take, so their children would all play in the living room with Adras while the adults discussed their plans.

Dinner went over well, and after Loki and Hemming were certain the children were set up with more than enough toys to keep their attention, they returned to the dining room to speak with everyone.

Bjarke arrived not too long afterward and began the meeting between them all.

“Good evening, everyone. Thank you, Healer, for hosting us in your home this evening.”

Loki nodded, waving his hand dismissively and casting a spell that would allow any and all sound made in this room, to remain in it. The last thing they needed was their children prattling away at school about the things they overheard tonight. “Do not worry yourself.”

Bjarte cleared his throat then and looked back at everyone. “Now that we are all here, I will ask the question I gave your husbands; If I can find 100 adults who are willing to start a settlement with us,
would you be willing to do it?”

Hemming and Draeil shared a look before Hemming decided to speak, tucking a section of his silken copper hair behind his ear. “My main priority is the safety of our children. I wouldn’t feel comfortable doing anything that put their safety in jeopardy.”

Bjarke nodded, agreeing with him. “The safety of everyone involved is key. And this wouldn’t be done without ensuring that it would be a discrete process that ensured safety.”

Loki frowned slightly, not liking how vague this sounded. “Bjarte… in your mind, what do you imagine when I ask you to explain how we would do this safely?”

The mercenary remained silent for some time, thinking over the best way to answer Loki’s question. “Forgive me for asking, Healer, but… I must ask all of you to be sworn to secrecy. What we speak of in this room cannot be discussed outside of it, with any other party.”

“Speak comfortably, Bjarte,” assured Loki. “Having this meeting places us all in a precarious position. You have my word that I will not speak of this outside this room, to anyone that is not currently present, here.”

“I second this, my friend,” added Thor, leaning back in his chair and crossing his arms.

Hemming spoke next, nodding definitively. “I agree as well. What is spoken of here, shall remain here.”

“I will speak of this to no one, Bjarte. You have my word as well.” finished Draeil.

Now that he had every giant’s agreement, Bjarke began to share his plans.

“During my travels, I have met numerous giants who do not wish to be under the king’s rule. He has gotten much more cruel over the years. And there are many people who, like all of you, have run from the king, and live in inconspicuous towns or villages. If over a period of a few centuries, we are able to gather enough giants who are willing and able to do this, and take this chance, then we can succeed.”
“Bjarke… how would this be done? We can have a million giants who wish to stand with us, and if there is no concrete plan on where we would go, who would build homes and forge weapons and lead, then it will be the same as this Norn forsaken place.” grunted Draeil, crossing his arms as well.

“Well, that’s why I’m here, discussing it with all of you.”

Loki sighed then, thinking about this. “Hemming and I can use seidr to begin this process. If we find at least 100 adult giants who are willing to move with us, after a location is found, then we can plan from there. At night we can work, to avoid suspicion of the current leaders of the settlement, and we can also avoid the watchful eye of the king and his soldiers. Theoretically, it can be set up so that once these giants agree, and an area of the kingdom is found, Hemming and I can teleport builders and masons to this land, to develop it at night. The more seidr users that join our cause, the quicker this can be done.”

Hemming frowned slightly, trying to understand. “You’re suggesting that once we find a plot of land and willing giants are found, you and I teleport necessary beings to our new settlement during the night, and return for them at dawn, to teleport them back to their homes?”

“Precisely. Of course, all of this is relative, and tentative to change, but it’s a start. We choose one night a month where we will teleport builders to this settlement to craft the settlement until it is habitable.”

Thor found himself wondering if it would even be this easy. Finding land could take decades, and once they did that, Bjarte would be putting his life at risk by searching for disgruntled citizens of their realm.

“My only concern for this part of the plan, is you, my friend. I could never forgive myself if you ended up captured and killed, because of this.”

Bjarte looked at Thor softly, touched by this. “There is no need to worry, Thor. I am more cunning than you believe me to be.”

“That might be true, but you are not a god. Every giant is prone to error.” murmured Loki, waving his hand to summon a necklace with an emerald embedded in its center. “Please wear this, when you travel. If you rub your thumb across the underside of the emerald, you will instantly be teleported back to this settlement. Please use it in times where your life is in danger.”
Bjarke took the necklace that Loki gave him with reverence, awed by his power. “Is such a thing possible?”

“I learned that spell a few decades ago, and have tested it myself. It works.”

Bjarke thanked Loki profusely, and put on the necklace, marveling at how strong Loki was. “You’ve certainly got a talented wife, Thor.”

Thor laughed softly, beginning to play with Astrid in his lap. “As talented and cunning as he is, we still need to have a location before we begin recruiting for this settlement. And I want to know if everyone here agrees that if a section of land in this realm could be found for our own settlement - one large enough for expansion - that this is something that we would do. Because if Loki and I do this, our end goal is to kill the king and end his lineage.”

The three giants around the table frowned, each of them thinking if they were truly ready to take the plunge, and do this.

“If I could have a few weeks to think about this… then I would have an answer for you.” murmured Hemming, lost in thought.

“Aye,” agreed Draeil, stroking at his beard absent-mindedly. “I want to sleep on this, and determine if it is something that can truly be done. Even if we managed to build our settlement up into a vast city, with an army that could rival the king’s, who would kill the king himself? He is too powerful; he can kill a hundred giants with a wave of his hand.”

Thor and Loki shared a look, each of them trying to determine if they should reveal the truth about the books that Loki had in his possession.

Finally, Loki turned back to face the giants around him, sighing softly. Although these giants were their friends, they hadn’t known them long enough to feel comfortable telling them the entire truth.

Bending the truth and making the other person feel as if they were getting the whole story was something that Loki excelled at though, and he intended to do just this, tonight.

Right now, only Thor and himself could know the truth.
These books had too much power for everyone to know what they truly were.

“The books that were given to me by the leaders of this settlement contain spells that can be used to train other seidr users. They won’t become as powerful as the king, but… if I can train enough users, we would have a fighting chance.”

Thor relaxed as he heard Loki’s explanation, relieved that the Niouvi wasn’t revealing the entire truth.

Hemming sat forward a bit in his chair, intrigued. “How powerful can these seidr users become, Healer?”

“Powerful enough that if we all banded together, we could stand against the king.”

“What would stop the seidr users of this current settlement growing just as strong as well?”

Loki laughed, sitting forward too. “The people of this settlement will never become powerful enough to take on the king. They all have a false sense of security by living here, and believe that they can remain here their entire lives, a small town “free” from the clutches of the king. By the time I have finished teaching the basics of seidr or very small spells to these giants, our settlement - if we choose to do this- would be ready to move into.”

Hemming narrowed his eyes at Loki then. “You’re intentionally not teaching the most powerful spells to the giants of this settlement, aren’t you?”

Loki’s greatest gift was his ability to lie and pretend or divert someone’s attention onto something else, and away from himself.

He was very surprised that Hemming called him out on this, as Loki was very careful in how he described these books to them.

Feigning ignorance, Loki straightened up, holding Hemming’s stare. “I never said that. If we all decide that it would be too impossible to have our own settlement, then in time the giants here would learn the powerful spells.”
Hemming smirked when he heard Loki’s response, not fooled by his answer. “I was a court noble, Loki. And if I know anything, I know when someone is lying to me or trying to hide something.”

Loki was not going to let up though. He had to admit, seeing Hemming like this painted him in a new light, and made Loki think that they were more alike than he originally thought.

He wasn’t sure if that was a bad thing just yet.

“What leads you to believe I’ve not been forthright with you all?”

“Because what you said doesn’t make any sense to me. If I were you, tasked with translating ancient texts, I wouldn’t teach Svanhild or the other seidr users the truly powerful spells, because the reality is they can’t be trusted. You were being modest when you said that a group of seidr users could take down the king; you are planning to use what is in those books to become strong enough to take down the king yourself.”

Loki sat back in his chair when Hemming said this, and crossed his arms, thinking of his next move very carefully.

Because now, they were in dangerous territory.

Although Loki considered Hemming an associate, he didn’t know if he could trust him. And right now, he wasn’t sure if Hemming would relay this information to the leaders of this settlement.

He decided to use his family as a way to defend his actions, as they were a determining factor in his desire to kill the king. Hemming was very maternal, so if Loki pandered to this, he could possibly defuse this situation.

“I want my children to be safe, Hemming. And as long as the king or his children are alive, the lives of my family are at risk.”

Hemming’s gaze softened then. “I understand this, Loki. But if we are going to create a settlement of our own, with the main goal being amassing enough people that could battle the king’s army, so that we can reach the king, then I want complete honesty. Draeil and I will not put our lives and the
lives of our children at risk, if you and Thor hide things from us.”

“And you will not get full honesty if after a few weeks, you and your husband decide that you cannot join us in creating a settlement of our own.” countered Loki, a cool edge to his voice. “Because as fond as I am of you, I cannot trust you with this information if you are not willing to stand by our sides.”

The entire room was silent after this, everyone but Hemming and Loki feeling uncomfortable with the mood of the conversation.

“If you teach me everything you know, Draeil and I will join you, Thor, and Bjarke.”

Loki’s face darkened at this. “No.”

“If Draeil and I do this, *everyone* here needs to be transparent with each other, Loki. Because secrets and lies are the one thing that will destroy this idea. If we do this, we need to be a unified front.”

Loki understood what Hemming was hinting at, then.

He was telling Loki that if he did this, that if he taught him these spells, that Loki and Thor would have their unwavering partnership until they achieved their goal.

And this would be important in the long run, if things went according to Loki’s plans, as he’d discovered something else very recently that could change the tides of their future attack on the king.

But he would need to take things slow, for now.

Things would work out, in time.

Loki decided then that the foundation of his plan would be created here in this moment, and he gazed at Hemming with a deliberate, unrelenting stare, conveying a demand that only they would understand. “If you and Draeil join this cause, I will be honest with everyone here, and teach you
what I know. But in return, I would like *absolute* fidelity from you in all things concerning this movement, whether they be in the present, or future. The things that I can teach you are not for the faint of heart, the plans that I have are not for the weak, and I refuse to include anyone that cannot relent to me."

Thor was *not* a skilled negotiator, and the pace at which Loki and Hemming went back and forth made his mind hurt, as he couldn’t understand why Loki was saying some of these things, or why he sounded so detached and calculating.

Draeil and Bjarke seemed to feel much like him, as they were all blown away by the pair’s conversation.

Hemming seemed to realize that in this situation, being in Loki’s good graces was the best way to ensure the future safety and stability of his family.

Loki wasn’t crazy enough to threaten the lives of Hemming or his family, and he would never do anything to harm them, but in this moment, Loki had taken back the upper hand by offering Hemming a chance to stand with him or to stand against him, and risk being swept up by the changes that he had planned.

Hemming *knew* that Loki had other things planned, and Loki watched his face, seeing him calculate and weigh the options; relent to Loki, and the unspoken things he had planned for the future, or take his chances and stand alone while all of these changes took place.

He could stand with the unavoidable change that was coming, or go against it, and be lost in its current.

Finally, Hemming sighed, and Loki tried his best to not smile.

He knew he had won.

“If you teach me everything you know, then you have my complete fidelity, and we will agree to create our own settlement. Whatever you and your husband decide to do in the future after the king is killed, you will have my loyalty in as well.”

Hemming’s husband began to protest at this, but Hemming shot him a look, stopping him in his
tracks. “We will stand with you all, and create this settlement.”

One of Hemming’s infant twins began to cry then, and the Niouvi sighed, looking back up at Loki. “It is late; the children need to sleep. Let’s meet back here in a month’s time, to go over a rough blueprint of what we hope to accomplish.”

Everyone nodded and rose, so Loki waved his hand, releasing the spell.

Everyone filed out of their home afterward, and once Adras and Astrid had been put to sleep, Loki and Thor climbed into bed, exhausted from their day.

Hearing Loki speak like that with Hemming earlier didn’t scare Thor, but… it did make him feel mildly uncomfortable, seeing a side of Loki that he hadn’t seen before.

Seeing Loki like that made it easier for Thor to picture him as the renowned Psemetri he used to be, and he wondered just how much of that personality Loki had hidden from him.

“Are you alright?”

Thor looked down at Loki, who was currently nestled against his chest. “I don’t know.”

This was the last thing Loki wanted to hear, and he frowned, shifting so that he could look up at Thor. “Will you tell me what’s wrong?”

“I saw a side of you today that I didn’t know was there. And I’m struggling with it.”

Loki went silent then, so Thor rushed to explain, not wanting Loki to think he was doubting their union. “Please do not think that is a bad thing, Aberi. There are parts of my personality that you haven’t seen yet, as well. It was just…” He sighed then, trying to figure out how he wanted to say this. “In my mind, I always found it hard to picture you as a renowned Psemetri. And over the years, you’ve become so loving and open, so… to see you become that callous and calculating so quickly, was a bit of a surprise.”

“… Does this aspect of my personality scare you?”
“No.”

The word was out of Thor’s mouth quicker than he intended it to be, but he knew that he meant it.

“I understand that this world is set up in a way that forces us to be certain people, in certain situations. Your scheming or planning surprises me, but… it doesn’t scare me. Because I know that everything you do is done to protect our family.”

Loki relaxed a bit when Thor said this, choosing to be candid in this moment. He knew their relationship worked better when they were both honest.

“Thor… if you found out that in a few centuries, you could become one of the most powerful beings alive, how would you feel? And what would you do? Because the stronger I become, the more tangible our goal is. And because of what I have learned, I began to think of what would be done after King Thrym is killed. And… I discovered some things a few weeks ago that I’m trying to wrap my head around.”

Thor pulled Loki a bit closer, resting a hand on his hip. “Involving seidr?”

Loki remained silent for so long that Thor rubbed at his hip, encouraging him to speak. “Loki?”

“I think this is a conversation we need to have face to face.”

Thor now understood how Loki felt last night, in this moment. “What is this about, Loki?”

Loki wasn’t sure if Thor was ready to know what he discovered, and he decided to broach the topic lightly, and tread carefully.

Sitting up, Loki waved his hand, lighting two large candles on each nightstand with seidr. “It will be something that you don’t want to talk about. And… and I will respect your decision if you tell me to stop speaking.”
Now Thor was worried, and he sat up in bed as well, facing Loki. “Alright…”

Loki took his hands and looked deep into his eyes, conveying the severity of this moment. “Thor… the books I was given don’t only contain seidr spells. They contain history as well. History from long, long ago.”

Thor remained silent, waiting for Loki to continue.

“And in one of the books that I found… I discovered something very important about your heritage.”

Thor immediately went stone-faced here and began to pull away from Loki, not wanting to think about it.

“Wait, Thor, this is important! Your heritage… it can change everything about this movement to kill the king and overthrow those who stand with him.”

The absolute last thing Thor wanted to speak to anyone about was his father.

Not now.

But a part of him still wanted to hear what Loki had to say.

He deserved to know.

Shifting his gaze back to Loki, Thor decided that he would ask him what he knew. If his heritage could save his family and protect them, then he deserved to know what it was that Loki was hiding.

“What is it, Loki?”

Loki waved his hand to summon the book, flipping to the bookmarked page. “Thor… when we first shared a bed, I believed I had seen your familial etchings before. And at first I thought that your aunt shared them and that was why, and that they might be from your beberi. But they’re not.
They’re from your amma, Thor. And they’re very important.”

Thor raised a confused eyebrow, not understanding what Loki was getting at. “My amma? She passed long before I was born, Loki.”

Loki looked down at the page for a moment before looking up at Thor, wanting to be certain before he said this. “I don’t mean your beberi’s beberi, Thor. Your familial etchings come from Odin’s beberi.”

Hearing his father’s name sent a passionate rage through him, and he closed his eyes, trying to calm himself.

All he saw when he heard his father’s name was the day they met; the day that marked him with this terrible scar.

Loki was patient with Thor, and gave him time to calm down, not wanting to rush this process.

When he felt that he was under control, Thor opened his eyes, Loki’s concerned face making him relax further.

Seeing Loki in this moment was a reminder that someone did care about him; someone loved him. And it meant that someone saw him. Not his father, not his hair or his eyes, and not his abilities. Loki saw Thor for who he was, and loved him for it. And for that, Thor was thankful.

“What have you learned about my father’s beberi, Loki?”

“I learned that she was the granddaughter of Ymir, who we all know to be the realm’s first ruler and the original giant. And yes, although all beings came from Ymir, not everyone was in line for his throne. Ymir chose one of his sons to rule after he grew old with age, and that son had a daughter named Bestla. Bestla fell in love with an Aesir, Thor, and that Aesir convinced her to kill Ymir, and relinquish Jötunheim to Asgard instead. They killed Ymir, and because of this, she was prohibited from ever stepping foot in Jötunheim again.”

Hearing that his grandmother was a traitor who killed the original giant Ymir was not something that made Thor feel better, and he frowned deeply, not sure what to make of this information.
“Asgard and Jötunheim were mortal enemies after this day, and Asgard continued to try and take hold of Jötunheim. During these battles, the Aesir who caused all of this madness, and who was your grandfather, was named Borr, and... he was very powerful, as he could control lightning. The giants of the past described him as a fearsome warlord, one who.”

“Loki, I don’t want to hear about how my grandparents ruined this realm together.” interrupted Thor, pinching at the bridge of his nose. “I feel terrible for being connected to Odin, and now I am told that my grandfather was a warlord and my amma was a traitor? How is this information useful?”

Loki turned the page in the book, beginning to apologize profusely. “I apologize, Jetoni. But what I’m getting at is you have that same power within you. Borr could call upon it whenever he wanted; this book spoke of him moving through the sky, summoning lightning and storms. So if Odin can do this, you have it in you to become this too.”

Loki looked so sure of this, and... and Thor didn’t know how to feel.

“I’m only a quarter Aesir, Loki. I have eyes and hair like one, but I’m not one. I-I can’t do what my grandfather might have done. Never in my life have I ever felt the urge to soar through the skies, and I told you, I can’t summon lightning whenever I want. It’s not like seidr, Loki.”

“I don’t mean to make you feel like you’re not Jötun, Jetoni. You are Jötun, through and through. But the parts of you that aren’t, allow you to have the capacity to harness those very gifts that your grandfather and father had.”

Thor pinched the bridge of his nose again, shaking his head. “Loki, I can’t fly. I can’t summon lightning of my own volition. And I can’t control the weather. If it began to rain tomorrow morning, there is nothing I could do about that.”

Loki refused to give up though, reaching out to Thor. “You may not be able to do those things yet. But just like I practice with seidr, I believe that you could practice as well.”

Thor hadn’t been angry with Loki in some time, but this conversation was beginning to get under his skin.

He knew that Loki was only trying to help, but he also knew that he couldn’t do these things that
Loki was begging him to do.

“Loki, I don’t know how many times I have to reiterate this! I cannot fly! I cannot summon storm clouds and cause them to rain hellfire on my enemies! And I can’t summon lightning, and use it whenever I wish!”

The Niouvi drew back in surprise as Thor yelled at him, completely shocked by his tone. It had been some time since he had truly gotten under Thor’s skin like this, and because Thor rarely got angry, it wasn’t a good feeling to know that he truly upset the person he loved.

Thor immediately felt guilty about raising his voice and snapping at Loki, so he reached out to hold his face, wanting him to know that he wasn’t that upset.

Loki jerked away from Thor’s touch though, and he stared at him with an unreadable look in his eye, which made Thor feel even more guilty.

“Loki… I am not upset with you; please don’t think that. I just… I don’t want to talk about my father or his parents anymore.”

Loki remained silent, and looked away from Thor, closing his book and using seidr to send it back to his office down the hall.

Thor felt terrible now, and he reached out to touch Loki again, frowning when Loki brushed his hand away. “Loki-”

Loki moved away from Thor and sighed, refusing to meet his gaze. “You’re right. It was ridiculous for me to bring this up. Goodnight.”

Thor watched Loki wave his hand and use seidr to blow out the candles, the Niouvi moving to turn on his side, and away from him.

Thor sighed, reaching out to pull Loki closer to him. “Loki, I’m sorry.”

“Just… stay on your side of the bed tonight, please. We can talk in the morning.”
Thor warily drew his hand away from Loki and scooted back in their bed, giving him space. “Alright…”

He fell asleep soon after saying goodnight, with feelings of guilt flooding through his mind.

And while he snored, Loki simmered, trying to process how he was feeling, and why.

Because although he did feel bad about pressing this issue onto Thor, he was still hurt that Thor yelled at him. The giant never raised his voice at him, so it hurt to know that Thor had been that upset.

Thor shutting his ideas down definitely put a wrench in his plans, and Loki thought long and hard about how he was going to get what he wanted.

Because now that he knew what he did and knew what he could become, what they could be together, he didn’t just want to kill King Thrym and those who were allied with him, anymore.

No, Loki wanted the throne.

And he would get it.

There hadn’t been a single thing in his life that he had wanted and never got, and these aspirations of his would be no different.

Of course, he couldn’t tell Thor of his plans just yet.

Thor had panicked tonight when he saw a fraction of who Loki could be, so the Niouvi knew he needed to slowly get Thor used to this aspect of himself.

For tonight though, he would rest.
Hello!

Here’s chapter 9. It's sort of a tough read in certain parts, but it's necessary for the story to progress.

This is also a really long chapter, with over 10k words, so... you might want to get comfortable lol.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Loki appeared to be back to his usual self the next morning, and said he wasn’t upset with Thor about last night, but... Thor wasn’t fooled by Loki’s calm demeanor.

Loki often held onto personal slights like last night with a vengeance, and Thor had been on the receiving end of Loki’s calculated wrath one too many times, so today he decided he would lay low, and try to stay out of Loki’s warpath.

Loki mentioned wanting to talk in the morning, but other than kissing him in greeting, the Niouvi brushed off all of his attempts to talk, choosing to focus on making breakfast for their family instead.

Loki usually made huge meals for the family when he was upset, and this morning was no different.

Thor didn’t know why Loki did this, but he tried his best to thank him and show appreciation throughout the meal, as he didn’t want Loki to feel like he was forced to cook.

When Loki was halfway through making breakfast, and Thor finished getting Adras ready for school, he made his way downstairs, entering the kitchen.

He had gotten very adept at reading even the most minute facial expressions of Loki over the years,
so he frowned when he saw Loki’s smile waver when he entered the kitchen.

“Loki…”

Loki flipped over a large patty of sausage in a skillet on the stove top, pursing his lips. “Yes?”

“Can we please talk about this? I don’t like when you’re upset with me.”

Loki turned sharply and moved away from Thor’s attempt to touch him, opening their huge brick oven to see if the bread was finished. “I’m not upset.”

“Loki, yes you are. You won’t even look at me.”

Loki used seidr to get both baking pans out of the oven and set them down on a nearby counter. “Because I’m busy.”

Thor watched him head back over to the stove top, his frown only growing. “Loki, please don’t do this.”

“Do what, Thor? You said it last night; there is nothing that can be done on your end. So what else is there to discuss?”

“Yes, but I shouldn’t have yelled at you. And I’m sorry about that.”

Once all of the meat was finished cooking, Loki set it on a plate and grabbed the butter, walking over to butter the bread. “What would you like me to say, Thor?”

“I just want you to be okay, Loki.”

Loki grabbed a brush and dipped it into the melted butter, beginning to coat each loaf of bread. “I’m fine.”
Thor hated how Loki ran around in circles when it came to his emotions, which is why he hated arguing with him. “You’re obviously not fine, Loki.”

Loki looked up at the clock on their wall, seeing that they had about an hour until it was time to leave. “Can you make a dozen eggs for us, please?”

Thor opened one of their cabinets and grabbed a dozen eggs, beginning to crack them open in a skillet. “I don’t like when you’re mad at me, Loki.”

Loki paused for a moment, before continuing his task. “I’m not mad, Thor. I don’t know why you’re continuing to bring up something that is not an issue, but I’m fine. Now please add enough salt and pepper to the eggs.”

Thor sighed softly and accepted defeat, doing as Loki asked. Loki wouldn’t talk about his emotions until he was ready, so he silently scrambled and cooked the eggs, placing them all in a large bowl when he was finished.

“Beberi, is breakfast ready yet?” groaned Adras, walking into the kitchen. “I’m starving.”

Loki laughed softly, applying powdered sugar to a pastry that would be Adras’ lunch. “Give me a few minutes, Adras.”

Adras groaned again, beginning to complain. “We’re both starving, Beberi.”

Loki looked over at Adras, seeing that Astrid was toddling over next to him. She wasn’t walking completely yet, but she could move unsteadily on her feet, which always filled Loki with the utmost pride. “Here. You can both have some cinnamon bread until breakfast is finished.”

Adras laughed and ran forward, grabbing two pieces of bread. “Thanks, Beberi!”

“Give half of a slice to your sister, Adras! They’re not all yours.”

Adras groaned and tore one of the slices in half, handing it to Astrid. The toddler began to laugh happily and grabbed it, reaching for Adras to pick her up.
The young boy sighed but picked her up anyway, bringing her further into the kitchen. “I think we have to stop feeding Astrid. She’s heavy.”

Thor and Loki both looked over at the pair, laughing softly when they noticed Adras struggling to carry her. “She’s just growing up, Adras. You’re supposed to get heavier, the taller you get.”

Adras sat down on the ground then, placing Astrid in his lap so that he could eat his bread. “I can’t wait to be like Deneri. Then I’ll be able to be strong.”

“You’ll grow, Adras.” encouraged Thor, rustling his hair. “You’re only 6 and a half.”

“You have to eat to get strong though,” added Loki, using seidr to lift all of the plates, bowls, silverware, and food for breakfast in the air, and setting them down at the dining room table. “And with that being said, breakfast is ready.”

He used seidr to set the table and fix everyone’s plates, and once Astrid had been placed in her high chair, the family began to eat, enjoying the tales of Adras’ dreams, or his opinions on his classmates.

When they were almost finished with breakfast, Adras looked up from his food, calling out to Loki. “Beberi?”

Loki hummed softly, wiping at Astrid's cheek with a cloth.

“Can I have a brother?”

Loki snorted, looking over at his son. “I can't control what sex your new sibling will be, Adras.”

Adras’ mouth fell open then. “The teacher said Niouvi could control when the Norns put a baby in their stomach.”

“We can, Adras. But that doesn't mean we can control the sex of that child. We can only control the
“Can't you pray for a male baby?”

Loki laughed again, trying to figure out the best way to explain this to him. “The Norns are the only ones that decide what sex a baby is, Adras.”

“But since you can control when the Norns give you a baby, why can't you ask them to give you a male baby, instead of a girl or a niouvi?”

“Because the Norns only answer our wish for a baby. They don't listen if we ask for a specific type of baby.”

Adras looked disappointed to hear this, so Thor laughed, reaching out and ruffling his hair. “Why do you want a brother Adras?”

“All my friends have brothers that they can wrestle with and play with. I only have Astrid or Tulla.”

Thor understood what Adras meant, then. The child was just lonely.

“You can always invite your friends over from school, Adras. If their parents are alright with it, they can even spend the night.”

This seemed to placate the child, for now, so the family finished their breakfast, helping Loki clean up before they left.

Astrid was still too young for daycare at the school, so she remained with Loki after Thor and Adras left.

He always tried to get to the clinic at least 30 minutes before it opened, and today was no different.
as him, and once he was here, they worked to prepare the clinic for the day.

Hemming noticed that Loki’s mind seemed to be elsewhere while they set up for today, and he called out to him before they opened, wanting to know if he was alright.

“Loki?”

Loki looked up from the medical book he possessed, waiting for Hemming to ask his question.

Instead, Hemming walked across the room to sit down next to him, a worried look in his eyes. “Are you alright? You seem distracted.”

Loki frowned slightly at this, debating if he could trust Hemming with something so… personal.

He told himself that Hemming lived a life similar to him, so he could be told these issues, and understand, unlike Thor.

“When you married Draeil… were there parts of yourself that you hid from him?”

Hemming laughed softly, reaching out to gently take Loki’s hands. He was almost a millennium older than Loki and had been married for far much longer than him. “Draeil and I were much like you and Thor, in that we did not marry for love. I was a Niouvi with significant social standing, and he was a Lieutenant in the king’s army. So in the beginning, yes. We each played our roles in the marriage. But just like your walls crumbled around Thor the longer you were married, the walls around our hearts fell too. And the longer we remained married, the closer we became, and the more we understood each other. These things take time, Loki. It is to my understanding that you and Thor were not even given ample time to court; so be patient with yourself and your relationship.”

Loki looked up at Hemming, still feeling bitter about his argument with Thor. “I just… I don’t understand him sometimes. I have so much drive and ambition within me, and… and Thor would be content with just working on a farm. I-I’m not a housewife, Hemming! I’ve never been one, and I never will be one. I have to work, I have to be a part of a movement or a cause, I have to do something other than producing child after child, or cooking and cleaning.”

Hemming laughed again, staring at Loki patiently. “You and Thor have to decide if you both want
this marriage to work. You are out of the king’s clutches, so technically, you don’t have to remain married to him if you don’t want to.”

Loki stared at Hemming in horror at this. “I can’t leave him, I-I love him! I just don’t understand him, Hemming. Thor can be so many things, and he chooses to remain stagnant and simple .”

“Thor is a simple man, Loki. He wasn’t raised in the courts, he wasn’t raised under the crown, he was raised in a small village, on a farm. Dreaming big is out of the question for him.”

“But that’s what bothers me,” admitted Loki. “I want him to want what I want. I want him to see my visions, I want him to rise with me. I want to be strong, together .”

“No one is saying you can’t, Loki,” murmured Hemming, gently squeezing Loki’s hands. “You and Thor have not been married for long. You’re still learning who each other is. And that’s okay. Accept that there will be some arguments and deep-seated resentment sometimes. But as long as you focus on the love that you hold in your heart for him, you’ll be okay. You both have to actively work together to make your marriage happy and healthy.”

Loki sighed, looking away from Hemming. “I just… I feel like we’re from two different worlds. And to a certain extent, we are, but… as much as I try to accept and understand him… I wish he would do the same for me.”

He snapped his mouth shut after confessing something so personal, and began to mentally berate himself for giving away too much.

Hemming rubbed at the back of his hands with his thumbs then, soothing him. “Don’t be upset for confessing that, Loki. It’s good that you’ve realized that. Have you told Thor this?”

“… I haven’t.”

“So make that your mission for tonight. In a healthy way, explain how you’re feeling to Thor. He won’t understand what’s going on in your head until you tell him.”

This was very good advice, so Loki began to feel better about his situation with Thor. “Thank you, Hemming.”
Hemming squeezed his hands affectionately before letting go and standing up. “Of course. You’re not alone anymore, Loki. We are in this together.”

Loki felt his heart skip a beat when he heard this, and he blushed, standing up as well.

He wasn’t a person used to genuine kindness.

“Let’s open the clinic.”

Hemming laughed softly but nodded, opening the clinic for the day.

And as Loki saw his first patient of the day, he wondered if he could really talk to Thor about what he was feeling.

One of his fears was that Thor would take what he had to say as Loki not loving him, and it was this that made him feel conflicted over the issue.

He couldn’t have this occupy his mind all day though, as there were people to tend to.

He shoved those thoughts to the back of his mind and decided to focus on his patients.

He would think of Thor later.

After dropping Loki off at his clinic, and Adras off at school, Thor made his way over to the training grounds of the settlement, greeting Draeil.

Their days were usually spent sparring or working out, and today would be no different.
At high noon, Thor and Draeil left the training grounds for lunch, eating outside of the small shop they’d bought their food from.

“Do you hear that?”

Thor looked over at Draeil, pulled from his thoughts by the question. “Hear what?”

The two giants sat quietly for a few seconds, trying to pinpoint why they heard someone yelling off in the distance.

Thor looked in the direction that he heard the yelling and squinted, trying to see what the commotion was. “Why are there giants on llugem riding down the street?”

Draeil turned to look with him, both of them standing abruptly when they saw one of the giants swing his sword and kill a towns person.

They knew exactly who these giants were, then; bandits.

When Thor had been a mercenary, he spent a majority of his time killing these criminals and ridding Jötunheim of them.

Smaller villages and towns were always susceptible to attacks by large groups of bandits, and when Thor originally brought his family here, it was because of the secluded location.

He’d foolishly believed then that this settlement was strong enough to defend against any attacks.

Getting back to their weapons was the first thing on Thor’s mind, and he motioned quickly for Draeil to follow him, beginning to run. “We have to get back to the training field!”

Together they rushed back to the training grounds, the sounds of screaming and yelling beginning to intensify throughout the town.
There were even *more* strangers here, each of them cutting through the soldiers of the resistance with ease.

Thor grabbed his spear and began to run towards the closest assailant, throwing it with all of his strength at his back.

The spear pierced through the assailant’s chest, and he dropped dead in front of the resistance soldier that he had almost killed.

Thor didn’t waste any time to gloat over the kill and continued to run towards the next nearest assailant, dodging his swipe of the sword and punching his face, causing the giant to become unsteady on his feet. Thor used this to his advantage and swiped the giant’s legs from under him, causing him to fall.

Before the giant could process what was happening, Thor had stolen his weapon and was using it against him.

A swift swipe at the giant’s jugular ensured a painful death, so Thor turned in enough time to parry the hit from the assailant behind him, knocking his sword out of his hand and killing him in a similar fashion.

By now the assailants on the field all noticed Thor warding off their attacks, and he exhaled quickly, using the few seconds he had to develop a plan of attack.

He’d been in situations where dozens of giants had been trying to kill him at once and he’d managed to survive, so he knew that he could do this.

He noticed that there was a spear lying on the ground and took it, beginning to charge towards these giants.

They seemed to think that overpowering him would work in their favor, and tried to overwhelm him initially.

Thor refused to let these giants harm anyone else, and he used the length of his spear to his advantage, countering blow after blow after blow, waiting for a moment when just *one* attacker faltered.
Using a bit more of his strength, Thor knocked one of their swords out their hands, quickly stabbing underneath and through his jaw.

He used a similar method to take down a few of the others, cursing when his spear shattered in half from one of the blows.

He flipped back and grabbed a sword from a corpse, continuing to parry, and striking when he could.

It took him a few minutes to get through 20 of the assailants, and once he was done, he looked around the training grounds, not seeing anymore.

He ran into the small armory on the training grounds and grabbed a sturdier sword before running back outside, his thoughts lying with Loki and their children.

He rushed back towards Loki’s clinic, his panic only rising when he saw that Loki and Astrid weren’t there.

His next thought was their home, and he ran until he got there, his blood running cold when he saw that his front door was hanging off of its hinges.

“Loki?!”

The living room and dining room of their home were decimated, and Thor kept calling out for Loki, his heart practically beating out of his chest from fear. “Loki?!”

He heard a commotion coming from upstairs, and he ran up the steps two at a time towards the sound, his blood running cold when he saw that vagabonds were in Loki’s office.

“Make sure you take anything that looks valuable!” shouted one of the giants, stepping into the hallway. “T-”
Thor struck the giant before he was even aware of his presence, and he threw the door of the room open after killing him, rushing towards the remaining two giants.

He took them down in no time, and left the room, calling out for Loki once more.

He checked their bedroom and didn’t see anything, so he thought of the next logical place Loki could be, praying to the Norns that his family was safe.

Rushing out of his home and down the street, Thor ran to the school in their town, his heart dropping when he saw it littered with corpses.

His eyes filled with tears when he saw that some of the corpses were only children, and he shook his head, quickly looking over the bodies to see if any of them belonged to his family.

Not seeing them, Thor ran into the school, beginning to cry when he saw corpses everywhere.

Some were assailants, some were students, some were teachers, and again he quickly searched, praying that none of them were his family.

He didn’t see them, so he threw open every door of every classroom, growing sick from the sheer amount of corpses.

An overwhelming majority of them seemed to be the attackers, and Thor briefly wondered how they were dead, as they had not been slain.

Thor called out for Loki once he reached the back of the school, absolutely terrified when he didn’t see him.

“Hemming?!”

Draeil’s rough voice caught Thor’s attention, and he ran down the stairs to meet him, his heart breaking when he saw tears in the giant’s eyes as well. “They’re not here, Draeil… I-I don’t know where they could be.”
Draeil held back a choked sob, shaking his head. “I looked everywhere! Our home, Loki’s clinic, and I can’t find them!”

“Where else could they have gone?”

Draeil took in another unsteady breath, shaking his head again. “Hemming would’ve teleported here first, to get the children. And Loki might be with him.”

Thor’s mind was racing a million miles a minute, and he turned away, getting emotional.

His family meant everything to him, and not knowing where they were during an attack like this scared him.

“Let’s check the central part of town. They might be there.”

Draeil nodded and followed Thor outside, running down the streets and blocks of the town to get to its center.

Seeing the carnage of the town made the tears in Thor’s eyes spill over, and he shook his head, not knowing where he should begin searching.

The bodies of the assailants seemed to multiply around the steps of the town’s meeting hall, so Thor ran there first, muttering a broken prayer.

Flinging the doors of the meeting hall off of its hinges, Thor ran into the room, seeing that it was full to the brim with terrified giantesses, and children.

“Loki?!”

“DENERI!”
Thor turned towards the sound of Adras’ panicked voice, dropping his sword and beginning to cry when he saw his children, his aunt and uncle, and his cousins.

Draeil and Thor rushed over to Adras, and Thor scooped him into his arms before quickly taking Astrid out of his aunt’s arms, beginning to sob when he held both children.

Adras was sobbing too, and he hung onto Thor tightly, completely inconsolable. “B-Be-e-ber-i-i-...”

Thor sniffed, pulling away so that he could look at his son. “Where is Beberi, Adras?”

Adras began to cry harder, pointing to a room with a closed door that was next to them. “He won’t wake up!”

Thor set Adras down quickly and handed Astrid back to his aunt, practically ripping the door off of the wall to get to Loki. He let out a choked sob and fell to his knees when he saw Loki lying unconscious on the floor, Hemming fervently speaking over him and pouring seidr into him.

He managed to stumble over to Loki’s side, tears pouring down his face as he looked down at him.

He looked so gray and sick, and Thor began to sob, thinking the worst. “What happened to him?!”

Hemming ceased his fervent mutterings for a few seconds, explaining what happened to Thor. “He depleted his essence! He saved everyone, and he teleported us all here, and then fainted!”

Thor would often listen to Loki prattle on about his seidr when he practiced it, and through that, he became quite knowledgeable about the basics.

He knew that seidr stemmed from the energy or essence that every being and object carried from within. And he knew that energy being transferred from one thing to another was the foundation for using seidr.

If Loki was in this weakened state because he overexerted himself trying to save everyone, that meant that his very essence was in critical condition.
Depletion of one’s essence was no laughing matter, and it was the demise of many overambitious Jötnar throughout history; ones who believed they could carry out spells that they were not yet strong enough to cast.

Thor refused to let Loki become one of them.

“Use my essence.”

Hemming turned towards him with a panicked look in his eyes. “I-I can’t! That will put you at risk of-”

“I don’t care! Use my essence. I’ll be fine.”

Hemming continued to cry but nodded his head, moving one hand to Thor’s arm, and keeping the other on Loki.

Thor wasn’t prepared for the quickness at which his essence was leaving him, and he closed his eyes, taking in a deep breath.

Loki always spoke of nature being the best way to replenish someone’s essence, as natural properties allowed for an almost endless supply of energy.

The trees, the sun, the water.

Maybe… maybe his lightning would be able to produce enough energy for Loki to be healthy again, too.

He couldn’t control his lightning at will, but… if he tried, he could possibly keep it so that it remained on him. If he managed to do this, Hemming could draw from the energy of the lighting, instead of his own essence.

“Hemming, I would like you to try something.”
Hemming sniffed and removed his hand from Thor, wiping at his tears. “What is it?”

“Can you try to use the energy my lightning contains?”

Thor knew that Hemming was confused, but there wasn’t time for him to explain. He needed Hemming to try now.

“I-I can try.”

Thor nodded and closed his eyes, focusing on what he felt within the deepest parts of himself.

He thought of Loki, who had protected as many women and children as he could, and how he might lose him if this didn’t succeed.

The storm he felt inside shifted, and he latched onto that feeling, his skin beginning to prickle.

Thor fell deeper and deeper into this unfamiliar sensation and focused on the lightning being an extension of himself, instead of a foreign power.

Doing this seemed to do the trick, for he heard the familiar crackling of lightning, and felt it beginning to run throughout his body.

Focusing on keeping the lightning on him, he was able to keep it at bay and called out for Hemming to use it.

Hemming began to chant and used seidr to transfer this energy from the lightning, into Loki.

The more energy Hemming took, the more lightning Thor produced, managing to keep it on and around him only.

It surprisingly didn’t hurt him to feel the lightning on his skin or in his body, and he kept it up for
as long as Hemming needed him to, knowing that this might be their only hope of saving Loki.

Hemming kept this up for minutes, every second that passed by agonizing for Thor. He just couldn’t imagine his life without Loki in it, and he hated that their final moments together this morning were spent feuding.

Loki always tried to help him, Loki always had Thor’s best interests at heart, and Loki always fought for him and their family. Loki meant everything to him, and Thor couldn’t sit by and just let him die.

He swore, in the beginning, to always protect Loki, and he meant that now more than ever.

When they’d transferred the energy from Thor’s lightning into Loki for about 10 minutes, Loki’s eyes began to flutter, and he groaned, shifting slowly on the floor.

Thor immediately ceased the production of his lightning and reached out for Loki’s hand, beginning to cry. “Loki?”

Loki groaned again and mumbled something unintelligible, shifting on the floor and trying to sit up.

Thor carefully helped Loki sit up, and brushed his hair out of his face, looking into his eyes. “Loki?! Are you alright?”

Loki continued to sway in his arms for a bit, still feeling incredibly weak.

He had a pounding headache, and he was so tired.

He suddenly remembered why they were here and what got him like this, and he snapped his head upwards, beginning to panic. “Adras! Astrid!” His eyes welled with tears when everyone looked at him with tears in their eyes as well.

“Where are my children?!”
“They’re okay, love, they’re okay,” promised Thor, running fingers through Loki’s silken hair. “My family is watching over them. They’re alright.”

Loki began to cry in relief, praising the Norns.

He was beginning to feel a bit stronger, so he wiped at his eyes, wondering why everyone was so worried. “Why are you all staring at me like you’ve seen a ghost?”

Hemming wiped at his own eyes with a shaky hand, shaking his head. “You depleted your essence, Loki… you saved so many giants but you almost lost your life.”

Loki knew that using too much seidr at one time could kill him—or anyone for that matter—and that it took time to build up enough strength to use the complex spell he used today.

“I didn’t have a choice, Hemming… we all would have died if I didn’t defend us.”

“I know Loki,” assured Hemming. “But we almost lost you… I-I don’t know how to restore someone’s seidr, but I-I tried my best to help you.”

What Hemming had tried to do meant a lot to Loki because it was very dangerous. Hemming wasn’t as experienced as Loki, and he could’ve hurt himself trying to save him, but he tried anyway.

And that meant something.

“How did you manage to restore my essence and wake me up?”

Hemming looked over at Thor then. “Your husband… he remembered that the best way to restore your ability to use seidr was through nature… I-I don’t know how he did it but… he was able to summon lightning… he saved you, Loki.”

Loki quickly turned to look up at Thor, who was still staring at him with tears in his eyes.
To know that Thor did this to save him, even though the giant was so against using his lighting, meant everything to Loki.

He reached up and pulled Thor close, wrapping his arms around his neck and hugging him.

He then pulled back a bit after a few seconds so that he could kiss him, and wiped at his tears, wanting him to know that he was fine. “I’m alright, Jetoni. I’m fine.”

Thor continued to cry in relief, hugging Loki even tighter. Never in his life had he ever been this scared, and now that he knew Loki and their children were safe, he couldn’t stop his tears, not wanting to ever feel this terrified again.

Sniffing, Thor pulled away from Loki, holding his face with care. “Can you stand?”

Loki moved his legs to sit up a bit more, believing that he could. “I-I can try.”

Hemming and Thor helped Loki stand up, and once he was standing he turned towards Hemming, who was still scared out of his mind that Loki might drop dead. “There are no words that can express how thankful I am in this moment, Hemming. Thank you.”

Hemming wiped at his tears, laughing softly before pulling Loki into a hug. “You saved all of us, Loki. And you’re my friend… I couldn’t live with myself if I let something happen to you.”

Loki widened his eyes slightly, stunned by the confession and the hug.

Growing up the way he did, he wasn’t able to have friends.

He was always scheming, always thinking ahead, always trying to figure out how to get to where he wanted to be, and because of this, he was always alone.

People became pawns in his quest to become a Psemetri, and he became guarded, not able to trust anyone or anything.
Marrying Thor and having children lowered the walls around his heart some, but even then, he hadn’t made any attempts to be more social casually, like everyone around him.

He just didn’t know how.

Hemming had proven himself in Loki’s eyes at this moment, and… he decided that he would trust Hemming.

There was no reason he couldn’t try and be friends with him.

He nodded slowly after this revelation and hugged him back, the action feeling foreign to him. “Of course.”

The giants left the small office they were in after Loki assured them he was okay and entered the meeting hall, where everyone was speaking in hushed whispers and looking around nervously.

The ambush on their town was so sudden, and everyone here was scared to leave this building, in case there were more assailants outside.

Adras and Astrid were wailing in the center of the room, Thor’s family unable to calm them.

Loki dashed over to the center of the room and picked up Astrid first, kissing her cheek a few times before he picked up Adras, carrying the children over to a nearby bench. “I’m alright, I’m alright. It’s okay.”

Astrid and Adras continued to cry, nestling into Loki and hugging him close.

Thor sat down next to his family and rubbed at Adras’ back, hoping to calm him further. “Everyone’s alright, Adras. We’re okay.”

Adras hugged Loki even tighter, his voice breaking when he tried to explain himself. “I-I was s-scared! B-beberi wouldn’t w-wake up!”
It broke Loki’s heart to hear this, and he shushed Adras gently, kissing his temple. “I’m okay, Adras. I’m sorry I scared you.”

Adras made a garbled sound and shook his head, continuing to cry against Loki.

Thor knew that the children would calm down eventually, so he looked around the room, taking note of everyone that was here.

There seemed to be at least 300 giants in the meeting hall, and most of them were women and children.

Thor knew that the best thing to do would be to go throughout the streets, to see if there were any more assailants left.

He just wanted to make sure that Loki was okay first.

“Loki… what happened?”

Loki closed his eyes for a moment, trying to calm himself and gather his thoughts. “Hemming and I were at the clinic when they attacked. We immediately teleported to the school, and… and I was too late for some of the giants. The assailants were deranged, Thor… And I learned a spell a few decades ago that could kill any creature with a wave of my hand. I-I used it on the assailants, while Hemming went to look for our children. Many of the beberis of this town had a similar idea, and arrived at the school in droves, searching for their children.”

He took a moment to calm down before continuing to explain. “More attackers came, Thor, a-and I did my best to use that spell to kill them, and I-I tried to save everyone but there were so many. Hemming and I didn’t know what to do, so I-I asked him to teleport to every home he could think of, to bring giants here. We originally thought to barricade ourselves in the school, but it didn’t work. So I teleported to get your family, and when I returned, the attackers managed to force their way into the school.”

His eyes welled with tears here, and he shook his head, hating himself for not being strong enough to save everyone. “I used a very dangerous spell… because I knew I wasn’t strong enough to teleport everyone that was in the school, away. So I… I drained every attacker’s essence away completely, which killed them. And I used the energy that I drained from the attackers, to teleport
everyone to the meeting hall of our town. I-I didn’t have enough energy to perform the spell though, and when we arrived here, I became weak. More attackers were trying to break into the meeting hall, and I-I know how dangerous it is to use seidr when you have little to no energy in you, but I had to think of the best way to save everyone. And when I cast the spell to drain them of their essence so that I could have it… I was too weak to do the spell to its completion. So it killed them, and… it took everything out of me… I should have died too, Thor.”

Thor was infuriated to know that these rogue giants had been so sick, that they attempted to harm the women and children in this town.

He was relieved that he was able to save Loki, and he was very proud to know that Loki fought to the end to protect everyone.

He wrapped his arms around Loki and their children, pressing a tender kiss to his temple, and thinking about what needed to be done, next.

“I have to go back out there, Loki.”

Loki shook his head no quickly, completely against this. “No! I don’t want you getting hurt, Thor!”

Thor pressed another warm kiss against Loki temple before kissing Adras and Astrid as well. “I need to make sure they’re all gone, Loki. I’ll be alright.”

He stood quickly and walked over to Draeil, who was comforting Hemming. “I’m going to search the town for any more assailants and to see if there is anyone else who needs help. Would you be willing to stay here, to protect everyone should the need arise?”

Draeil nodded solemnly. “I’ll stay here.”

Thor left the meeting hall then and bent over, grabbing a spear from a dead assailant’s hand.

He trudged down the streets of the town, block by block, killing any assailants that he came across, and directing people towards the meeting hall of the town, determined to kill every single one of these morally corrupt giants.
He’d managed to direct everyone that he came across towards the meeting hall, and as the sun began to set, Thor was certain that not a single vagabond remained.

By the time he made it back to the meeting hall, Jötnar everywhere were calling out for their loved ones, in the hopes that they were still among the living.

The leaders of this settlement that still remained were trying to calm the masses, and gather their attention, to no avail.

This was the least of Thor’s concerns though, as his family was his main priority.

He carefully brushed through the crowded meeting hall, his eyes landing on Loki and their family after a few minutes of searching.

“Loki!”

The Niouvi perked up when he heard Thor’s voice and turned quickly, his shoulders sagging in relief as Thor made his way up to them. “Norns…”

Thor immediately wrapped his arms around him, taking a moment to thank the Norns that his family was alright.

His focus then went on his aunt, who now carried life. He was relieved that she was not harmed in any way and that his cousins and uncle were unharmed as well.

He knew there were giants here today that could not say the same.

Reaching down to grab Adras’ hand, Thor motioned for his family to follow him outside. “The leaders that are left are trying to get everyone’s attention outside. We should listen.”

He led his family through the crowd of giants and to the front of this crowd, where the leaders were still trying to quiet everyone.
Finally, the leader Svanhild used seidr to amplify her voice and called out to the crowd. “Everyone! May we have your attention, please?”

The crowd began to quiet down, so Svanhild sighed, looking at everyone. “I understand that we are all scared. And I understand that none of us were expecting an attack like this. Nevertheless, we need to do what we can to make sure that we can get through the night to see tomorrow. We need every giant that is not harmed to help us get the corpses of the assailants out of the settlement.”

“What of our families?!” shouted a random giant in the crowd, angry tears running down his face. “I-I lost my wife and my child today, and you expect me to be okay with that? Because I’m not! We moved to this settlement for a new life! One that was safe! And you’ve done nothing to protect that!”

The crowd began to riot with him, every giant that lost someone crying out for justice.

The leaders began to murmur amongst themselves before agreeing on something, so Svanhild cast another spell to amplify her voice again. “We shall hold proper burials for those that need it, first. Those that were lost today are to be buried behind the settlement. If you are in good health, and have not lost anyone, we need you to begin taking the corpses of the attackers out of the town so that they can be burned. We need everyone’s cooperation to do this!”

None of the giants in the crowd seemed happy about this callous decree, but no one else had plans that were more realistic than this one.

Because as much as these giants wanted to spend time keening over their lost ones, they couldn’t do that if they were surrounded by the rotting bodies of their killers.

Once the crowd began to move, Svanhild made a beeline for Loki and Hemming, who had come to stand beside him with the rest of his family.

Depletion of one’s essence was very serious, and although Loki was awake and alive and moving again, it would still take him some time to recover.

Trying to use seidr after depleting most of your essence was like trying to run with a broken leg, or trying to lift yourself up over something with a torn ligament. It just wasn’t something to be done.
It took *weeks* or *months* to recover from it, and during that time of healing, the individual couldn’t use *seidr at all*.

Loki hoped that Svanhild wouldn’t be expecting him to use *seidr* to heal anyone tonight, because he just couldn’t do it. Teleporting hundreds of people to the meeting hall had literally taken *everything* out of him, and fighting off the assailants with *seidr* immediately after should’ve killed him.

And if Thor hadn’t been there… it would’ve.

“Loki! Are you well?”

The Niouvi snapped his gaze up to look at Svanhild, pulled from his thoughts. “I am not.”

She looked him up and down quickly, seeing that he had no physical wounds. “What ails you, then? I see nothing wrong with you.”

“I depleted my essence teleporting hundreds of giants and children to the meeting hall. I also killed every single one of the assailants outside the steps of the meeting hall and in the surrounding vicinity. I almost *died*. I cannot use *seidr* until I’ve had a chance to give myself time to heal.”

Svanhild pursed her lips then, not happy with this. “In the books we gave you, have *none* of the chapters been about spells that help you replenish *seidr*?”

Loki narrowed his eyes at the giantess, readjusting Astrid in his arms. “I would need *seidr* to carry out that spell, Svanhild. And I have almost no energy left in me.”

“If you had no energy left in you, you’d be dead.”

“I was *almost* dead! The only reason I am standing here before you is because of my husband’s ability. That is *it*.”
Svanhild looked up at Thor then, surprised. “You can use seidr, Thor?”

“I cannot.”

Thor was not willing to speak about his ability, much less with someone that he couldn’t trust. He knew that Svanhild was waiting for him to explain further, so he frowned, deciding to let her know that Loki would not be helping anyone until he had recovered. “This is non-negotiable; Loki will not be helping anyone until he has recovered. I understand that this is a terrifying time for our town, but I will not allow my wife to put himself in harm’s way. Everyone will just have to recover like everyone else did before Loki came here.”

Svanhild began to sputter, full of indignation. “H-”

“We’re leaving. If you need me to return to help with the corpses then I will. But Loki is not helping anyone.”

He motioned for his family to follow him then, thanking Hemming for all of his help.

He walked his aunt, uncle, and cousins back to their home first, before finally walking home with his own family.

He suddenly remembered that there were three corpses in Loki’s office and grabbed his arm, preventing him from going inside. “Wait, Loki!”

Loki froze, turning to look back at Thor in a panic. “What?”

“Go to the neighbor’s home for now.”

Loki blinked a few times before it suddenly dawned on him. “They’re in our home?”

“Only a few. I don’t want Adras or Astrid to see.”

Loki nodded quickly, shifting Astrid in his arms so that he could take Adras’ hand. “Come, sweet
Adras began to panic when Loki said this, and tore himself out of his hold, running to latch onto Thor’s legs. “No!”

Although Adras was almost 7 centuries old, Thor understood his emotional outburst, as this had been a traumatic day for him.

He and Loki weren’t sure if Adras remembered his birth mother because he was so young when they adopted him. They didn’t feel it was right to bring up his adoption while he was so young though, and kept it within the family. Adras was theirs in all but blood, and they didn’t want him to think that they loved him any less than Astrid.

Adras always reacted strongly when either of them left for long periods of time, so they believed that a part of him was terrified that just like he lost his birth mother, he might lose them too.

Thor crouched down so that he was eye level with his son, and ran a large hand through his rosewood hair, trying to comfort him. “It’s alright, Adras. Deneri needs to help the town.”

Adras’ eyes began to well with even more tears, and he started to cry, having a complete meltdown.

Thor quickly shifted them so that they sat on the steps of their home, and wrapped his arm around Adras, shushing him gently. “It’s alright, Adras. It won’t be long at all. I promise I’ll come back.”

Adras continued to bawl next to Thor, inconsolable in this moment.

Thor picked him up and sat him in his lap, scooting over next and making room for Loki to sit down. “Adras, I’ll be okay. I’ll only be gone for a moment.”

When this did nothing, Loki began to rub at Adras’ back, shushing him calmly. “It’s alright, sweet child. It’s alright. Deneri isn’t leaving forever.”

“I-I don’t wa-ant him to go-o!” blubbered Adras, holding onto Thor tighter.
Thor and Loki continued to try and calm Adras down, reassuring him that everything would be okay.

He finally stopped crying soon after, and Thor and Loki figured that he was just overwhelmed from the day. He was still so young, and he’d already experienced three traumatic events in his life.

Adras pulled away from Thor once he calmed down a bit and sniffed, looking up at him with tears still in his eyes. “You have to come back!”

It broke Thor’s heart to see Adras so distraught, and he pulled the child close, wanting him to know that he would come back and that he loved him. “I’ll return soon, Adras. And then we can all bathe and sleep together. It’ll be alright.”

Adras wiped at his tears and nodded, hugging Thor one last time. “You promise?”

Thor leaned forward to place a loving kiss against Adras’ forehead, gently smoothing over his hair with his hand. “I swear.”

Adras nodded again and stood up with Loki, taking his offered hand. “You have to come back, Deneri!”

Thor stood up as well, tenderly rubbing at Adras’ cheek with his thumb. “I will. I promise.”

“I-I love you!”

Thor laughed softly and crouched down, looking fondly into the eyes of his son. “I love you too, Adras. Very much.”

Adras pressed a final kiss against Thor’s cheek before stepping back, and gripping Loki’s hand.

“Give me some time to clean up, Loki. I will come for you when I’m done.”
Loki gave a tired nod, pressing a tender kiss against Thor’s lips once the giant stood. “Thank you.”

Thor kissed him back before placing a chaste kiss on Astrid’s crown, not wanting to wake her up. The poor child had cried herself to sleep earlier in the evening.

Once his family was safely next door in the neighbor’s home, Thor opened the door to his own home, frowning when he saw how much of a mess the attackers made.

He would have to remove the bodies first, though.

Trudging upstairs, Thor’s frown only deepened when he saw just how much blood there was.

Cleaning this up would take time.

One by one he dragged each corpse out of his home, and down the streets to the front gates of the settlement, tossing them onto the growing pile that was going to be burned away.

Being burned to a crisp was the ultimate disrespect to a body of a Jötun, as they all believed that in death, they were to be buried, and returned to the ice from which they originally came.

These assailants though deserved to be burned, after what they had done.

Cleaning up his home enough so that the blood was gone from the walls and the flooring took a bit more time, and by the time Thor had managed to make their home look safe enough to not scare the children, the moon was high in the sky.

He knew Loki and the children would be exhausted, so he left their home to fetch them, gently waking them up and leading them back home.

Thor still had to go help those in need, the ones who needed to bury loved ones, or the ones that needed to drag the bodies of the assailants out of town, and after promising Adras that he would be back, he left, off to help.
It would take time to clean everything, but… he would do it anyways.

It was the right thing to do.

After getting the children washed up and ready for bed, Loki settled into bed with them, Astrid lying on his chest, and Adras nestled into his side, both children sleeping peacefully.

And for that, he was thankful.

Because after today… he didn’t think he would be able to sleep for some time.

He and Hemming had been in the clinic when they’d heard the commotion outside, and after they realized what was happening, they thought of getting to their children first and went to the school.

Never in his life did he ever imagine he would have to experience something like this, and it was this experience that made him determined to get stronger. No longer could he only practice a few times a month. No, he would practice every week, every day, every second if he had to because this couldn’t happen again.

He was more powerful now than he was when he lived in the capital as a Psemetri, but he knew he still had a long way to go if he wanted to kill the king, and anyone who stood with him.

It would take him a few months to recover completely, and once he did recover, he would continue to practice and train.

He lied awake in bed, wondering how Thor used his lightning to save him, and if the giant was alright.

He knew that Thor didn’t want anything to do with that side of himself, and thought about the day’s events, counting down the hours, minutes, seconds until Thor came home.
Right when the sun began to shine through the windows of their bedroom, Loki heard their bedroom door open, and he carefully shifted Astrid so that she rested next to him, sitting up. “Norns, Thor… are you alright?”

The giant was covered from head to toe in filth, and looked bone tired, barely keeping his eyes open.

Now that things had calmed down, and the adrenaline left him, it was hard to stay awake or move, as his muscles were sore from fighting yesterday.

“I’ll be in bed in a moment. I need to bathe.”

“Do you need help? I know you must be terribly sore by now…”

Thor wanted to protest, but Loki had already climbed out of bed and grabbed his hand. “It’s alright, Jetoni. Let me take care of you.”

Loki led Thor to their bathroom and sat him down on a bench, moving throughout the bathroom to gather things for a warm bath. “Can you strip?”

Thor grunted as he tried to remove his shirt, feeling as if he truly had no strength left.

Loki tutted gently at this, quickly setting down his things so that he could help Thor undress.

He maneuvered the giant into their large shower, and washed the muck and dried blood from him, leading him to their bath and helping him into the calming water next.

Thor moaned in relief as he sank into the tub, the aches and pains from the day beginning to melt away. “Norns…”

Loki laughed softly and pulled the bench behind Thor, sitting down and grabbing bottles of shampoo and conditioner. “I’m going to wash your hair, Thor.”
Thor closed his eyes and leaned his head back, making another soft sound when Loki’s slender fingers made their way through his hair, scrubbing at his scalp gently. “Thank you, Loki.”

Loki hummed in reply, washing the shampoo out of Thor’s hair and beginning to condition it. “Just relax. I’ve got you.”

The pair sat in silence for a few minutes, Thor relishing in the scalp massage, and Loki focused on his task.

After washing the conditioner out of Thor’s hair, Loki leaned forward to press a soft kiss against Thor’s crown in a rare display of affection, stroking his cheeks with his thumbs. “Thank you for today, Thor.”

Thor smiled softly, Loki’s gentle touch calming him and soothing a part of him that he had locked away so long ago. “I love you too much to let anything happen to you, Loki.”

Loki couldn’t stop the smile spreading across his face at this, and he blushed, kissing Thor’s crown once more. “Let me massage your shoulders for you at least.”

Thor moved to protest, but Loki was already pouring warm oil into his hands, rubbing them together before he placed one hand on either of Thor’s shoulders.

“Just relax, Thor. It’s alright.”

Thor relented to his touch, his eyes fluttering closed as Loki began to knead at his shoulders.

He wondered how Loki was so skilled at this and asked him a few minutes later, opening his eyes slightly when Loki’s movements stilled for a few seconds. “Loki?”

Loki moved to massage Thor’s shoulders again, trying to think of the best way to explain it to him.

Thor wasn’t the only one who hated talking about his past.
“I… was a valet servant of a politician when I was 9. I often did these things for my master.”

Thor didn’t miss the bitter tone of Loki’s voice, and he exhaled softly, knowing that both of their days had been rough.

He would ask about Loki’s past another day.

The pair remained silent for some time, each of them lost in their thoughts.

Finally, Thor spoke, feeling certain about what he wanted to say. “I realize now that you were right, Loki.”

“About what?”

“About my lightning. Today made me realize that although I hate that part of myself… it is useful. If something like this happens again… I want to be able to protect my family. If we create our own settlement, I want to be able to protect the people that live there. If we want to take down the king and his supporters, my gift will be useful. And in case I… if I see my father again, Loki… I want to kill him for what he did to me and my beberi. And I can’t do that if I don’t hone this gift.”

Loki finished massaging Thor’s shoulders and sat back on the bench, wiping off his hands on a nearby towel. “You wish to travel to Asgard?”

“The last thing my father said to me after redirecting the lightning I shot at him to my chest, was “If you survive this, come find me when you’ve grown some, boy. Maybe then you’ll be worthy enough to be called my son.” He left me bleeding in the snow next to my beberi’s grave, Loki. He left me to die. And he lives his life each day, not caring if I live or die.”

He sat up and sighed then, staring down at his hands. “I want to be strong enough to kill my father. And I can’t do that if I don’t work on this “gift” of mine.”

Loki nodded slowly, taking this information in. “I’ll get you to Asgard. It will take some time for me to learn that spell, and centuries for me to amass the strength it would take to transport two beings to another realm. But for you, Thor, I will do this.”
If Thor thought he couldn’t love Loki anymore than he already did, hearing this statement just proved him wrong.

Knowing that Loki loved him enough to be so willing to do this for him meant everything, and he laughed softly, marveling at this.

Loki stood up and walked around the tub, sitting on its rim so that he could stare at Thor fondly. “I love you. And because of this, I want to do whatever I can to help you achieve what you desire in this life. It might take a few centuries for me to become strong enough to take us both to Asgard, but I will do it.”

The sincerity absolutely melted Thor’s heart, and he smiled warmly, taking Loki’s hands in his. “Thank you, Loki.”

The Niouvi nodded, leaning forward to kiss Thor. “Let’s get you to bed. We’ll talk more when you wake up.”

Thor returned his kiss before shifting to stand, gratefully taking the towel Loki handed him and drying off.

Loki left the bathroom once Thor stepped out of the bath, going to his closet and getting the giant some night clothes to don. He knew that Thor was tired, and wanted to do whatever he could to help him get to bed sooner.

Thankfully, Thor was in bed snoring a few minutes later, Astrid across his chest and Adras nestled into his side.

Loki knew he wouldn’t be able to sleep any time soon, so he quietly stepped out of their room, heading to his office.

Thor had cleaned up most of the blood, and it looked like the giant tried to organize it the way Loki had it before, which made him laugh fondly.

He spent much of the morning and afternoon cleaning up their home, and trying to make it look somewhat normal.
Thankfully, their safe that contained important items and their life’s savings was locked with seidr, and could only be opened by Thor or Loki. The safe was dented some but was not damaged enough to cause its contents to spill out, so for this, Loki was relieved.

After cleaning up downstairs, Loki still felt worked up, and decided that he would make breakfast for his family.

The thieves hadn’t even gone in the kitchen, so most of their food was left intact.

Right when he set down the final plate of food, he heard Adras scream from upstairs, which terrified him to no end.

All he could think about was them missing an assailant, that someone was hurting his child, that something was wrong, and he flew up the stairs and into his bedroom, seeing Adras sobbing uncontrollably in Thor’s arms.

And when Adras cried, Astrid cried too, as she was only a little over a century, and panicked when she saw others panicking too.

Loki rushed to the bed and sat down, pulling Adras into his arms so that Thor could calm Astrid down.

“What’s wrong, sweet child? What’s wrong?”

“Y-You l-leave-e!” wept Adras, wrapping his arms around Loki’s neck and hugging him. “I-I thought you we-e-re gone! I don’t w-a-a-nt you to le-e-ave me!”


Adras made a garbled sound and hugged Loki tighter, beginning to tremble. “I-I was scared!”

Loki shifted in bed so that he rested against the headboard, and kissed Adras’ crown, continuing to reassure him. “I’m sorry for scarriing you, sweet child. I’m so sorry I scared you. I won’t leave you,
Adras. I won’t leave you.”

Loki knew that this fear of being left alone stemmed from yesterday when Loki had almost killed himself trying to protect everyone.

He understood far too well the fear that went through a child’s heart when their parent was sick, and wouldn’t wake up.

And it broke his heart to know that he’d incited this fear within Adras.

At the time when he’d made the decision to do what he did, he comforted himself by knowing that doing this would save his children and the lives of so many others. He loved his children so much, and he would lay down his life for them any day.

But knowing that Adras was so affected by what happened, hurt Loki like nothing else in this life.

He kissed his crown again and again, comforting him and reassuring him that everything was okay and that he wouldn’t leave.

Thor and Loki both knew “leave” was Adras’ understanding of death, and it broke their hearts to know that Adras was scared that they would both die if they left him alone again.

“I’m sorry I scared you, sweet child.”

Adras began to calm down a few minutes later, sniffing and wiping at his face with shaking hands. “I don’t want you to leave me, Beberi! I was scared!”

Loki felt tears in his own eyes over seeing Adras so undone, and he pulled away so that he could gingerly hold the child’s face, looking into his eyes with all the love that he had in his heart for his child. “Beberi’s sorry, Adras. I’m sorry. I love you so much. And I’m not going to leave you. Ever.”

Adras sniffed, looking into Loki’s eyes with hope. “Promise?”
“I swear,” swore Loki, kissing each of Adras’ cheeks. “Beberi will stay alive for a very long time.”

“Forever?”

Loki laughed softly, letting go of Adras’ face and resting his hands on the child’s shoulders. “I don’t think I can live forever. But I will do whatever I can to stay alive so that I get to see you grow up, and get married and have children of your own.”

Adras calmed down completely when Loki said this, and he looked over at Thor, worried for him too. “You can’t leave either, Deneri!”

Thor laughed softly, nodding his head. “I won’t leave you, Adras. I’ll be right by your side for every moment of your life.”

This seemed to be the confirmation that Adras was seeking, so he nodded, his shoulders sagging in relief.

Kissing Adras’ temple once more, Loki patted his back, wanting him to stand up. “Come, child. I’ve made breakfast for all of us.”

Adras climbed out of Loki’s lap, and turned to pull Loki up, wanting him to follow him to the dining room.

Loki laughed and stood up, taking Adras’ hand and beckoning for Thor to follow him.

He hoped that this breakfast would create some sense of normalcy in this day, as he knew that life from here on out would not be normal for quite some time.

Chapter End Notes

I tried my best to explain how I believed seidr would work in their universe, but please
let me know if you found the explanation confusing, and I will do my best to describe it more accurately. I always envisioned that seidr would be a complex process, so I hoped I explained it in a way that conveyed this properly.

Next chapter or two will be spent delving into both Thor and Loki's pasts. I think knowing how they grew up will help everyone understand why they are this way, in this story. I'm nowhere close to ending this story (in my mind, I have like... mayyyyyyyyyyyyybe 40% of the story done. Maybe.) but I would love to hear what you think so far, and what you might hope to see as the story progresses.

Thank you again for reading and supporting!

Until next time!
Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

Hello!

Got a hefty amount of smut in this chapter, and the town begins to rebuild itself from the attack. I really enjoyed writing this chapter, so I hope you all enjoy it as well.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

After breakfast, one of the councilmen of the settlement knocked on Loki and Thor’s door to let them know there would be a community meeting in an hour to discuss the events of yesterday.

They knew it was important to have the leaders here, hear their thoughts about yesterday’s events. Loki and Thor wanted to do everything possible to prevent this from happening again, and they knew that recruiting more people was the answer. The bigger this settlement was, the less likely it was that criminal outlaw groups would attack their town.

Bands of criminals that preyed on small villages and towns were the exact scum that Thor rid the land of when he was a mercenary.

He thought that this town was far away enough from civilization to escape groups like this, but yesterday’s attack proved everyone wrong.

They needed to recruit more people, they needed to bolster the defense of this town, and they needed to do everything in their power to ensure that if this ever happened again, they were prepared to defend their town.

They made their way to the town hall after dressing for the day and called out to Hemming and Draeil, who were making their way towards the town hall as well.

Loki didn’t know how Hemming kept his brood of 6 in line, but the Niouvi seemed to have it all under control, the perfect firm but loving mother.
The two families made their way into the meeting hall, which was almost packed with citizens of the town.

Thor managed to find an empty row to sit on for both of their families and sat down after them all, resting his arm on the back of the long-backed bench, and around Loki’s shoulders.

Astrid was currently in his lap, sucking on her hand and looking around at everyone, and as Thor stared down at her, he couldn’t help but feel his heart swell with pride.

When she was born, he’d been shocked to see that she had his hair and eyes exactly. He didn’t think that his Aesir genetics would be as strong as they were, and he found himself wondering if she’d be able to control lightning too.

He supposed only time would tell.

Once the meeting hall had been filled to the brim with giants, the leaders of their town made their way to the front of the room, sitting in their designated chairs.

A few of the leaders’ chairs were empty, so Thor could only assume this meant that they were lost in yesterday’s attack.

“Hello, everyone.”

The murmuring in the room began to quiet down as the eldest leader of their town stood to speak.

“What happened yesterday was a tragedy. And there is nothing I can ever say, or ever do, to heal the hearts of those who lost members of their families yesterday.”

The elder cleared his throat then, beginning to speak once more. “After conversing with my fellow leaders about what to do to rectify this situation, we have decided to sequester ourselves from this realm. We will not actively seek to bring in new giants and we will request that any mercenary guilds that reside here choose to remain within this town or leave forever. We cannot risk an attack like this happening again.”
Most of the room began to protest at this, but the elder raised up a hand, silencing them. “This is for the safety of everyone. No one should know about our existence, no one should be aware that we’re here, and they should only be able to find us by chance. If you would like to return to the cities under the king’s rule, then you are free to do so. But if you choose to continue to live here, you will abide by these new laws that have been set in place.”

Now Thor was pissed.

Sequestering themselves away from everyone and everything was the absolute last thing they needed to do right now. It would leave them open for an attack like this to happen again.

“And who exactly decided that isolating ourselves was the best idea?” called out Thor, removing his arm from around Loki’s shoulders so that he could sit up. “If we refuse to recruit more giants to this town, if we refuse to set ourselves up so that this doesn’t happen again, then it will. We can’t survive in this small town forever. This town prided itself in being a resistance against the king, and to now say that we are to isolate ourselves from this realm is to go against the very principles that this town was founded on.”

The leader who had been against Thor and Loki being here from the beginning scowled, sitting up in his chair. “What makes you think your opinion holds any weight in this discussion? You—”

“I am one of the only reasons this entire town wasn’t massacred.” interrupted Thor, narrowing his eyes at the man. “My wife, myself, Hemming, and Draeil are the only reason that so many of you are here today. My wife and I personally slaughtered over half of these assailants by ourselves, and you’re saying that my opinion holds no weight? Where were you and the rest of the leaders yesterday when this was happening? Because you sure as hell weren’t on the streets with Loki, Draeil, Hemming and I, defending these citizens.”

The room went deathly silent then, and everyone looked at the leader who had tried to quiet Thor. He was shifting nervously in his seat, beginning to stammer. “I-I-”

“I know exactly where you were,” called out Loki, drawing attention to himself. “You and the rest of the leaders, as well as your families, locked yourselves in the vault containing the town’s funds, and Svanhild used seidr to prevent the vault from being opened from the outside. That’s where you were. To demand that the people of this settlement listen to you, after what you all did, is ludicrous.”

Svanhild glowered at Loki then, rising to point an accusatory finger at him. “How dare you accuse me of not helping, when you couldn’t even help heal those who had been hurt yesterday!”
Loki hadn’t been angry in a while.

Living in this town, he’d been pissed at the way people treated him, Thor, and their family.

And although he’d been annoyed with how the leaders treated him, it wasn’t enough to cause him immense stress.

But to hear Svanhild *slander* his name to save her own in front of the whole town?

He was furious.

He shot up out of his seat to point an accusatory finger back at her, surprising everyone in the room. “No! You don’t have the *right* to accuse me of not helping these citizens! I would’ve *died* had it not been for my husband and Hemming because I used all of my essence saving the citizens of this town! While you and all of the supposed “leaders” of this settlement were hiding in that fucking vault, I was risking my life saving entire *families*! I killed at least 50 giants yesterday by myself, with no help! I teleported over 300 giants to the meeting hall by myself, with no help! And when the assailants decided that they would attack the meeting hall, I used up the last of my strength to kill over a dozen of them. My child is *terrified* because he almost lost me yesterday, and it breaks my heart to know that my children almost lost their beberi because of the carelessness of your “leadership”!”

Svanhild began to sputter, trying to protest what Loki said. “How *dare* you-”

“What Loki did was save my life!” shouted a giantess, standing up to glare at Svanhild. “While all of you were *hiding*, Loki came to teleport me and my entire family to the school, and then again to this very meeting hall!”

Before Svanhild could reply, another giant stood, glaring at her and the other leaders as well. “Thor is the *only* reason that my family and I are still here. When we thought everyone had forgotten about us, Thor saved us! He told us to go to the meeting hall, and he left to go kill the remaining attackers! *Hemming* was the one who healed our wounds when we arrived, *not* you!”

One by one, everyone began to shout how Loki, Thor, Draeil, and Hemming defended them and saved their lives, which sent the leaders of this town into a panic.
“Everyone! Silence, please!” called out another leader, beads of sweat beginning to drip down his face.

“Real leaders would’ve done what Thor, Loki, Draeil, and Hemming did yesterday. Real leaders wouldn’t have abandoned us! They wouldn’t have left us to die!”

A chorus of “Yeah!” rang throughout the room, before another giant turned to face Thor, Loki, Draeil and Hemming. “Those four have done more for us in a day than all of the leaders here have done in six centuries!”

“Now wait for just a mom-”

“No! We’re tired of living in fear! And after yesterday, I’m not content with just pretending attacks will never happen again! Because they will! Thor, Loki, Hemming, and Draeil have shown a dedication to us that means more than your leadership! They should be the ones running this settlement!”

Thor widened his eyes in shock at this, looking over at Loki. The Niouvi was just as surprised, and as the pair looked around them, it seemed that these townspeople agreed with this statement.

Svanhild and the rest of the leaders looked to be filled with indignation, but the citizens of this town didn’t care, beginning to yell for them to leave the town immediately.

The leader that was against Thor and Loki being here from the beginning stood up sharply from his chair, beginning to shout at the room. “You can’t kick us out of our town! We made this!”

“It’s not up to you on whether or not you can stay here!” called out a random giant. “If any of you believe that Thor, Loki, Draeil, and Hemming should be our new leaders, raise a hand so that we can stand together!”

Loki and Thor were blown away to see that every adult in the room raised their hands, each of them determined to stand with them.

“If our new leaders decide that you can stay, then you can. But we all want you gone.” called out a
Everyone in the room shifted their gazes to Loki, Thor, Draeil, and Hemming then, wanting them to make a decision.

The four giants stared at each other in shock, not knowing what to do. This leadership had just been thrust on their shoulders.

Loki knew that someone had to speak though, as the leaders of this town would do anything and everything to regain control of this situation if given the opportunity, and he refused to let that happen.

This opportunity had *literally* been served to them on a silver platter, and he was *not* going to let this be taken away by anyone.

“I think the most important thing this settlement can have is peace.” he began, looking around at everyone. “Anyone and anything that stands in the way of peace and what this settlement was originally created to be, should leave. The giants before you showed you that they cannot be trusted. And because we cannot trust them, they should not be here. I vote to kick the current leadership out of the town.”

Svanhild widened her eyes in disbelief at Loki, gripping the arms of her chair tightly. “You ca-”

“I will stand with Loki.” interrupted Hemming, looking at Svanhild sharply. “Any leaders who guide their citizens astray do not deserve to remain here with us.”

Hemming’s husband Draeil agreed with him, so everyone’s eyes shifted to Thor, waiting for his verdict.

Loki honestly brought up a very good point earlier, as the entire settlement needed to be in cohesive understanding. Anyone or anything that was a threat to this goal did not belong here.

“I believe they should go. They do not have the best interests of everyone at heart. And we cannot have that here.”
Svanhild laughed in disbelief, shaking her head. “You’re really going to kick us out of our settlement?”

“It’s not your settlement anymore, apparently,” smirked Loki. “We’ve all voted. And as long as everyone else agrees with me, I believe you should all pack your things, and leave immediately.”

The room began to call out to and jeer at the old leaders of the settlement, forcing them to leave and exit the meeting hall.

Once they were gone, everyone turned to look at Thor, Draeil, Loki, and Hemming, wanting to know what they all wanted them to do now.

Thor was not good in situations like this, and he really hated being put on the spot, but he knew that he had to say something.

Standing up slowly, Thor handed Astrid to Loki and looked around at everyone, beginning to feel nervous. “Um… first and foremost, thank you for trusting all of us with the future of this town. What happened yesterday was a tragedy, and it certainly won’t happen again. It will take some time for everyone to get used to this new leadership, and it will take some time for our town to recover, and build ourselves back up to what we used to be. But it isn’t impossible. And it can be done. We should all work together to get things back to how they used to be before we begin to discuss the future of this town.”

Everyone seemed to be nodding and agreeing with what he was saying, so he continued, beginning to feel a bit better about this. “As you all know, my wife is still recovering from yesterday. He will be out of commission for a few months, but once he is better, I know he will be more than willing to help us towards our goal of being a true resistance against the king. And as for myself, please let me know how I can help you. You all know where my home is, and I am always willing to meet with you, to help this town prosper.”

He didn’t know what else to say, but everyone kept looking at him expectantly, hanging onto every word he spoke with hope in their eyes. “We should all help each other, and work together to fix the town. There is more than enough saved up in the vault to help repair the town, and help rebuild our lives. Um… we’re not alone in this anymore. And I-I look forward to leading this town with Loki, Draeil, and Hemming. I don’t know what else to say, so… meeting adjourned?”

The giants all laughed gently and began to stand, talking amongst themselves, and filing out of the room.
When only Thor, Loki, Draeil, Hemming and their children were left behind, the adults all began to laugh, each of them surprised that the town wanted them to lead it.

“Norns…” murmured Hemming, looking over at Thor and Loki. “What do we do now?”

“I suppose we begin by helping the community in any way we can,” answered Thor. “All of the bodies have been burned, but there’s still work to be done.”

“I suppose that I’ll go around and heal people, then.” sighed Hemming.

Loki knew that Hemming hated leaving his children alone, so he pursed his lips, telling himself that he could do this, that Hemming was his friend, and that there was nothing wrong with being nice every once and awhile. “I’ll watch your children, Hemming. Please go help the community in my stead.”

Hemming’s shoulders sagged in relief then. “Norns, Loki. Thank you!”

Loki tried to tell himself that he could handle watching his own children and Hemming’s children at the same time. He told himself that it was completely possible to watch 5 children, two babies, and a toddler for an entire day. And he told himself that Hemming saved his life, and was his friend, so it was only right to help the Niouvi.

He did make a promise to himself as they all walked back to his home though, that Hemming would remain his only friend outside of family, in this life.

He couldn’t imagine having to be kind and selfless to numerous people, all for the sake of “friendship”.

Loki was ready to lose his mind when the moon shone brightly in the sky, and Hemming, Thor, and Draeil were still out in the town, helping people.
He had been watching all eight children for at least 9 hours now and was at his wit’s end.

He’d thought that he’d opened his mind up to loving children and being okay with having them, but after taking care of Hemming’s children, Loki quickly realized that he never got over his personal aversion to children.

He’d only made an exception to this aversion, which was his own children. He could handle them because they were his own and he loved them, but when it came to other people’s children, that was where he drew the line.

Hemming’s children weren’t bad, they were just full of energy, had a million questions, and were always hungry, crying, or bored.

When it was 11 pm, Loki’s front door unlocked, and Thor stepped in, followed by Hemming and Draeil. Loki had never wanted to weep in relief more than he did at this moment, and he bypassed Thor’s hug and kiss in greeting, opting instead to run behind Hemming and push him towards the living room so that he could collect his children.

He was never watching this many children again.

He ushered Hemming and his brood out of his home a bit too quickly, and slid against the door to the floor once they were gone, his entire body sagging in relief. “Norns have mercy…”

Thor snorted with amusement, walking to the living room to pick up Astrid and to greet Adras. “Was it that bad?”

Loki leaned his head back against the door, thanking the Norns that his household was peaceful and quiet once more. “No, Jetoni. It was worse than I imagined it would be.”

This made Thor laugh again, and he sat down on a couch in their living room, both of his children nestled against him. “No more children for us, then?”

“None,” stressed Loki, standing up and walking over to the same couch so that he could sit down. “If I’m pregnant, this child is it. No more. I’m not meant to be a Niouvi with a home full of
Thor was a bit sad to hear this, but he understood, not wanting Loki to force himself to have any more children just to please him. “I support whatever decision you make, Aberi. The two that you’ve given me are more than enough of a blessing.”

Thor always seemed to know the perfect thing to say to make Loki’s heart melt, and the Niouvi blushed, looking away from his sincere gaze. “Norns…”

It was very late by then, and Loki knew that they would have a busy day tomorrow, so he stood up, beckoning for Thor to follow him with the children. “Come. Let’s bathe and go to bed.”

Thor rubbed at Adras’ back to encourage him up, and picked up Astrid, following his family upstairs.

They bathed together in their communal bath, and changed into appropriate night attire, climbing into Thor and Loki’s bed afterward.

Adras was still terrified about being alone because of the attack, so for now, Loki and Thor allowed him to sleep with them, wanting him to feel safe.

Astrid had also just become a toddler within the last decade, but Thor and Loki both felt that they wanted her sleeping here with them instead of her crib until the fear of the attack had passed.

When both children had managed to drift off to sleep, Thor cleared his throat, turning slightly to face Loki. “Love?”

The Niouvi was on the cusp of sleep, and hummed softly in reply, waiting for Thor’s question.

“May I ask you a difficult question?”

Loki frowned slightly, his mind beginning to race about whatever Thor might ask him. “I suppose.”
“Do you have siblings?”

Loki was silent for so long that Thor began to get worried, and he beat himself up mentally for asking Loki this question. He knew how much he hated talking about his father, so for him to ask about Loki’s past was cruel. He shouldn’t have done it, Loki had already had a rough day, and—

“I have two brothers.”

Thor widened his eyes slightly, shocked by this information. “Loki, I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have asked.”

He could only imagine how upset Loki was right now, and he felt terrible, bringing something like this up. He only asked because he wondered if Loki’s aversion to children stemmed from being an only child.

“I know you want to know more of my past, Thor. I don’t blame you. But that is something that’s very hard for me to talk about. And I don’t want that information to change your perception of me. So… one day… I will talk about it. But I can’t talk about it now.”

Thor reached out to rub at Loki’s hip, wanting to calm him. “I understand. Please forgive me.”

Loki sighed softly, looking up at Thor. “Will you let me ask you a difficult question, then? It’s only fair,” he smirked softly at the end of this, wanting Thor to know that he held no ill will against him.

Thor smiled softly as well, nodding and mentally preparing himself for whatever Loki asked of him.

“What do you know of Asgard?”

Thor laughed softly again, not expecting Loki to ask that question. It was a difficult one indeed.

“Not much; I’ve never been there. But I know that their people are small; much smaller than you.
And… they are numerous colors. The color of sand, of cinnamon, of peaches even. They don’t have markings upon their bodies that speak of their lineages as we do. And… their eyes are all different shades of green, brown, or blue as well. They dress… like they have something to hide. And my father rules over them with an iron fist, it seems. They obey everything he says, without question.”

“Do they also control lightning, like you and your father?”

“I’m not sure…” answered Thor, being completely honest. “My father came with an army of them when I saw him, and none of them fought anyone.”

Loki wanted to hear more about these miniature, multi-colored people, with eyes like a rainbow, but he didn’t want to push Thor. The giant didn’t like speaking about his Aesir heritage.

He supposed speaking about his siblings in depth now… was only right. Thor had never done anything that made Loki believe he couldn’t be trusted. And Thor had shared some very useful information with him about Asgard. He deserved to know at least this much about Loki.

“My brothers were 5 when my parents died, and I was 7, Thor.”

Thor rubbed at Loki’s hip again, not wanting him to speak about something that was difficult for him. “It’s alright, Loki. You don’t need to tell me about them if you’re not ready.”

Loki looked up at Thor, marveling at the sincerity in his eyes. Thor was always so genuine, and Loki found himself drawn to that part of Thor.

Maybe it was because being genuine was something he found hard to do in this life.

“I would like to tell you why it’s so difficult for me to talk about them, at the very least.”

Thor nodded in understanding, keeping a calming hand on Loki’s hip. “Alright.”

Taking a deep breath, Loki exhaled slowly and began to tell Thor about his siblings. “After our parents died… we were sent to the capital city’s orphanage. We were barely fed… they hit us with
whatever was in their hands or nearby if we disobeyed or annoyed them… and we slept on the floors, with the other children… there were no beds there.”

He began to tear up when he remembered just how hard their life was back then, and everything they were forced to do at the hands of those running the orphanage. “I… I began to notice that the Niouvi of the city were like prized possessions of the elite when I was 8. They wore beautiful clothes, and… and everyone seemed to love them. And I wanted to be like that too.”

He wiped at his eyes and took in a shaky breath, continuing to explain. “I discovered that I needed to meet a politician at the very least, for my plan to work. So every day I searched the streets for someone that might have use of me… whatever it may be.”

Admitting this was hard, and he prayed to the Norns that this wouldn’t change Thor’s perception of him.

He’d been coerced into doing many things in the name of survival and stability, things that he wasn’t proud of, and… things that would have to be dealt with another night.

He wasn’t ready to face those demons yet.

“A few decades later, a politician from a smaller district in the city… took a liking to me. He asked me if I would like to work for him, and stay in his home. And I said yes. I told my brothers that I would come back for them in a few decades when I had been able to save up enough money to support them too.”

His voice broke at the end, and he wiped at his eyes once more, skipping over the unsavory parts of the story. “I wasn’t able to escape from that politician’s side for over a century. And when I’d finally freed myself… I ran back to the orphanage, only to find that my brothers had run away… they ran away because they thought that I forgot about them. And the harder I worked to climb politically in this realm, the more I searched for them. And I never found them. So I have no idea if they are living or… or if I am alone in this world.”

Thor wiped away Loki’s tears, sitting up and leaning over so that he could press a comforting kiss against his temple. “You’re not alone, Loki. You’re not alone. While getting strong enough to take on the king… we can use this position of leadership to our advantage, and find your brothers again.”
“But we can’t leave this village,” croaked Loki, closing his eyes and trying to calm down. The last thing either of them needed was Adras or Astrid waking up. “How am I supposed to search for them?”

“As we recruit, and grow, we can use our resources to do so, Loki.”

Loki didn’t think this would be possible, but he nodded anyway, touched that Thor was so willing and so ready to help him find them. “O-Okay.”

Thor kissed Loki’s temple once more, wanting him to be okay. “We’ll be okay, Loki. Everything will work out how it should. And if you want something, just tell me, and I’ll give it to you. I promised this to you centuries ago, and the promise still stands. I want you to be happy.”

Loki smiled softly, looking up at Thor. “I am happy. Happy with you…”

If their children weren’t here, Thor would’ve loved to show Loki just how happy he was with him too, but… times like that would have to wait.

Instead, he placed a tender kiss against Loki’s lips, and stroked at his face, staring at him with pure adoration and love. “I’m happy too.”

The pair shared another warm kiss before separating, and shifted back to their pillows, trying to fall asleep.

Thoughts of how they would lead this town went through their minds, thoughts of how they could build this town into the force that it needed to be, in order to kill the king.

They fell asleep with plans of building this town upon each of their minds and knew that if they worked together, and enhanced their abilities, that this could be done.

It took a few months before the town was back to what it once was, and during this time, Thor
learned many things about Loki that he was originally not privy to.

Thor had never really led anyone before, much less an entire town, so he found that Loki took over behind the scenes, handling the town’s money, ensuring that everyone was working together and doing what was necessary for their continued success, and teaching more willing participants seidr.

Thor was more hands-on with his leadership and often helped rebuild sections of homes, or with any other tasks that the citizens of this town needed.

And they worked together, to prepare the town for what they desired it to be.

Draeil and Hemming had sworn their allegiance to Loki and Thor the night before the attack when things were still uncertain, and Thor now understood that Loki said those things back then to ensure that Hemming would never challenge his leadership, should it ever occur in the future.

Hemming and his husband held fast to their promise though, and although they inserted themselves in the running of this town to help the pair, they left most of the final decisions up to Loki and Thor, effectively making them the true leaders of this town.

When it had been six months since the attack, Thor and Loki called for a town meeting. They wanted to make it known that they truly wanted to kill the king and overthrow his supporters, as things had finally calmed down, and were back to how they used to be before the attack.

The night before this meeting found Thor and Loki in their room though, getting ready for bed.

They’d both been constantly busy with running this town since they were given leadership, and hadn’t had much time for each other lately.

When the pair finally managed to get home late at night, their family usually cleansed from the day and piled into bed together.

Loki loved his family, and he was thankful each day that they were able to be together, but because Adras had been sleeping with them each night, he and Thor hadn’t been intimate since before the attack.
And it was driving him insane.

Loki was never one to go weeks or months without sex, and he didn’t plan on starting now.

Thankfully, Adras had decided that he wanted to be a “real giant” like all of his friends, so he wanted to sleep in his own bed tonight.

Loki decided that he would take advantage of this tonight, and spent more time than usual in their shower, conditioning his hair and spritzing it with diluted rose petal water so that it would smell nice.

He exfoliated every inch of his face and skin with an olive oil sugar scrub to soften and moisturize his skin, and climbed out of the shower, heading to their sink and mirror.

He usually never let himself look less than desirable, but with how busy they’ve been lately, he’d noticeably been slacking.

He used tweezers to pluck and arch his eyebrows, and combed all of the tangles out of his waist-length hair, turning and looking at himself from every angle in the mirror.

Satisfied with his appearance, Loki left their bathroom, opening his closet and choosing one of his nightshirts that Thor liked the best.

Thor looked up from playing with Astrid when Loki entered the room, taking a moment to admire his lithe form.

Astrid began to yawn then and pulled at Thor’s hands, calling out to him. “Deh!”

He tore his gaze away from Loki and looked down at their daughter, tickling her cheek. “Are you tired?”

Astrid nodded, so Thor sat up, taking her in his arms. “Let’s put you to bed, then.”
“Let me put her to bed, Jetoni.” murmured Loki, gently taking her from Thor’s hands so that he could hold her. “She’s getting so big.”

Thor hummed in response, his gaze back on Loki’s body. He noticed that the Niouvi was wearing his favorite nightshirt of his, and quickly shifted his gaze, beginning to blush. “She is getting big.”

Pressing a dozen loving kisses against Astrid’s face, Loki laid her down to sleep in her crib, tickling at her stomach affectionately. “Goodnight, my princess.”

He noticed that Thor was blushing and wouldn’t meet his gaze once he turned around, so Loki laughed softly, waving his hand and using seidr to extinguish the candle near Astrid’s crib. “Why won’t you look at me?”

Thor shifted to rest against their headboard, still averting his gaze. “Sometimes you’re so beautiful… that I feel too awed to stare.”

Loki’s gaze softened, and he sat on the bed next to Thor, taking his hand in his. “You’re so kind, Thor.”

Thor blushed further, still unable to meet Loki’s gaze. “I suppose we should try and sleep. We’ve got a busy day tomorrow.”

Loki grabbed Thor’s arm quickly, stopping him from turning over. “We can sleep later.”

The Niouvi was almost always the one who initiated sex between them, as Thor was impossibly shy. Even after being married for almost four centuries, Thor was still very reserved about being intimate with him.

Loki believed that it stemmed from Thor still feeling as if he didn’t deserve him, so he did his best to break out of his own comfort zone and reassure Thor that he loved him and that he was more than willing to be with him.

They were so vastly different, so Loki knew that he had to try that much harder to make it work between them.
“It’s been months, Jetoni… we finally have the bed to ourselves for a night.”

Thor carefully turned towards Loki on the bed, his entire face flushed with embarrassment. “Loki…”

The Niouvi’s face fell at this, and he pulled his hand back, clutching at his chest. “You don’t want to?”

“No, that’s not it Loki, I-I promise!” rushed Thor, sitting up and taking Loki’s hands before kissing his knuckles. “That’s not it at all.”

“Then what is it? I know you’re shy when it comes to this, but-”

“I’m not shy, Loki.” huffed Thor, his pride wounded.

“Then why is it so hard for you to do this with me?” countered Loki, crossing his arms defensively. “I love you. And I-I’m not used to saying that often, but for you, I do it. Because I do love you, Thor.”

Thor hated that he always said the wrong things when it came to speaking to Loki about his feelings, and he sighed, quickly wracking through his brain for an answer.

“I-I don’t know, Loki. I-I-”

“Are you seeing someone?”

Thor shook his head fiercely, rubbing at Loki’s arms to soothe him. “That will never happen. You’re the only holder of my heart, Aberi. You’re it for me.”

“Am I not alluring enough? Is that it?”

Thor widened his eyes in horror, shaking his head again and pulling Loki into his lap. “Norns, Loki, you know that’s not true. I tell you every day that you’re the most beautiful thing in the
world to me.”

“Then what is it?” snapped Loki, beginning to get upset. “If I’d known you were so against sleeping with me, I wouldn’t have spent so much time getting ready tonight.”

Thor’s face fell at this, and he rushed to reassure Loki that this wasn’t the case. “I’m not against sleeping with you, Loki…”

“You won’t tell me what’s wrong, Thor! I-If you’re not attracted to me anymore, then just tell me!” Loki had lost almost all of the weight he gained since giving birth, but he still sometimes felt insecure when he stared at his flared hips or rounder bottom; of course, this was something he would never admit.

“I-I-”

Loki had never been a patient individual, and although having children and being married to Thor had helped him learn some level of patience, he was still very quick to anger.

Thor’s inability to articulate what was preventing him from wanting to be intimate upset him greatly, and he moved to get out of Thor’s lap, shoving his hands off of him. “You know what, forget it. Forget it.”

Loki being hurt and upset was the last thing Thor wanted, and he quickly grabbed at Loki’s forearms, holding him in place. “Wait, Loki-”

Loki snatched his arms out of Thor’s hold and climbed out of his lap, moving to his side of the bed. “I said forget it, Thor!”

Thor watched Loki climb under the covers and furs of their bed, feeling terrible.

He loved Loki more than anything in this life, and he was attracted to him. He just still struggled with Loki actually wanting to be with him.

Loki was so perfect to him, and to know that someone that perfect wanted to be with someone like
him… sometimes Thor couldn’t understand how that was even possible.

He didn’t doubt Loki’s love, it was just… he still struggled with knowing that it was okay to want Loki and to want to be with him intimately.

It was hard for him to admit this to himself, but he knew that it was what Loki needed to hear.

Scooting closer, Thor rested a large hand on Loki’s hip, stooping over to press a warm kiss against his neck. “Loki… I’m sorry for hurting you. Will you let me explain myself?”

The Niouvi remained silent, so Thor sighed, rubbing at Loki’s hip. “Loki… you’re so beautiful to me. In my eyes, you’re perfect. And… and I don’t understand how someone so perfect, that was forced to marry me, can love me enough to want to be with me, and give me children, and want me. Sometimes I stare at you, and I just don’t feel worthy enough to want you in the same way.”

Loki sat up quickly and faced Thor, obviously hurt to hear this. “Thor… why do you feel this way? We both agreed to work on every aspect of our marriage. I love you, and I want you to feel as though you can touch me. You’re allowed to. Us being forced into this marriage doesn’t make our love less genuine or real than it would be with another couple, who were willingly joined. Because all that matters is that we love each other now.”

Thor remained silent, so Loki moved from under the covers and sat back in his lap, cradling his face gingerly and looking into his eyes. “Thor… it’s okay to want me, it’s okay to touch me, and it’s okay to love me. Don’t get stuck on how we started… focus instead on how far we’ve come, and the journey that we’ve decided to embark on together.”

Thor wrapped his arms around Loki’s torso and hugged him closer, feeling guilty about even feeling this way when it came to their relationship.

Loki hugged him back, relieved that Thor told him about this. “I want you to want me as well, Thor. I know I portray myself as someone who’s self-assured, but… when you don’t touch me, even I feel… confused.” He was too proud of a being to admit that he felt insecure sometimes.

Thor moved to press a tender kiss against his neck, wanting to reassure him. “I will work on this.”

Now that they’d smoothed things over, Loki decided that he would bring up sex again. If Thor
wasn’t comfortable… then Loki’s hands and fingers would have to be enough.

“Do you still want to go to sleep?”

Thor blushed and looked down at Loki, forcing himself to not avert his gaze. “No. If you’re still up to it, I would love to be intimate.”

Loki perked up then, pressing a quick kiss against Thor’s lips. “Lovely.”

He pushed Thor down on the bed quite forcibly next and slid down his body, moving his hands to the waistband of Thor’s night pants.

Thor watched in shock as Loki pulled down his pants and pressed a soft kiss against his navel, a mirthful glint in his eyes. “N-Norns, Loki-”

Loki shushed him gently, wrapping his nimble fingers around Thor’s semi-erect length. “I want to do what I can to show you that I do love you and that I do want to be with you in every way possible. So hush. Let me take care of you.”

Thor cautiously relented to Loki’s touch, letting out a low moan when Loki’s warm tongue slid along his shaft.

Loki took this as encouragement to continue, and stroked at Thor leisurely, using his other hand to gently roll the giant’s testes in his hand.

Thor’s eyes fluttered closed when Loki added his tongue into the mix again, the wet muscle swirling around his engorged head and drawing it into the Niouvi’s mouth.

His soft lips sucked at him in a way that made Thor see stars, and when Loki shifted so that he could lick along the seam of Thor’s testes, the giant groaned, grasping at the sheets below him. “Loki!”

Loki continued his ministrations for some time and licked up and along the length of Thor’s shaft, quickening the rate at which his hand moved along it.
He drew the swollen head of Thor’s cock into his mouth, and hollowed his cheeks, relaxing his jaws and throat so that he could take more of Thor in.

Thor let out a string of curses and writhed slowly underneath Loki, knowing that he was close. “Fuck, Loki, s-stop, I-”

Loki went even faster then, determined to make Thor climax.

When he felt Thor’s cock twitch in his hand, he sucked his way back up to his head, feeling victorious when Thor finally came in spurts into his mouth.

Sitting up on his heels, Loki swallowed Thor’s cum and wiped at his mouth, looking down at the giant. “I wouldn’t do this with someone that I felt wasn’t worthy enough to touch me, Thor.”

Thor continued to pant for a few seconds, before laughing and covering his eyes with his forearm. “Norns, Loki…”

“Are you tired?”

Thor shook his head, shifting to sit up on his elbows. “I’m not.”

He kicked off his night pants then, and sat up, beckoning Loki over. “Come here, Loki.”

Loki raised his eyebrows in surprise at Thor’s boldness, but crawled over to him anyway, sitting in Thor’s lap.

Thor kissed him deeply before he had a chance to respond, and he melted into the kiss, draping his arms around Thor’s neck, and letting the giant take over.

He made a soft sound when Thor’s calloused hands moved underneath his nightshirt and along the expanse of his skin, his touch gentle yet insistent.
Thor moved to kiss at Loki’s neck then, his lips pressing gently against his jugular, and the pads of his thumbs brushing over his chest.

Loki began to rock slowly against Thor’s thigh, feeling like he was literally losing his mind. He appreciated Thor taking the time to lavish his body with his kisses and gentle touches, but that was not what he needed right now.

He leaned closer into Thor’s ear, and nipped at the upper shell of it, catching the giant’s attention. “Fuck. Me.”

Thor blinked in surprise, pulling away so that he could stare at Loki. “I will. But I want to take the time to appreciate you tonight.”

Loki let out a frustrated huff. “I haven’t had sex in months, Thor. I want to be wrecked. And I want to know that you’re just as crazy for this as I am. So,” he reached down to grab at Thor. “If this isn’t fucking me into oblivion within the next few seconds, I will summon a clone and fuck myself.”

Thor balked at this, his pride as a man hurt for the second time that night. He loved Loki, but the Niouvi was so demanding and curt sometimes, and it drove him insane.

He narrowed his eyes at Loki and roughly flipped them over, pinning Loki beneath him with a strength that he’d usually not use in bed.

Loki was minutely ashamed to admit that a part of him loved to test and goad Thor, as the giant’s reactions were quite amusing to him. He was admittedly guilty of pushing Thor’s buttons every now and then.

It was a sick part of himself, and he wasn’t exactly sure where it came from, or why he did it.

Thor had never reacted like this though, and Loki found himself pleasantly surprised, a part of him relieved that Thor was finally letting go of some of his inhibitions.

Letting out an impish laugh, Loki spread himself out underneath Thor, looking up at him and daring him to lose control like he needed him to tonight.
Thor’s eyes narrowed further at Loki’s taunting gaze, and he changed his position, hooking his arms underneath Loki’s legs and forcing them past his chest, keeping him in this position with a brute strength that Loki was beginning to like more and more tonight.

The Niouvi was very flexible, so this position didn’t hurt him in the slightest. Before he could goad Thor further, the giant lined himself with Loki, and thrust into him, causing Loki to cry out and choke on his words.

Thor wasn’t cruel enough to cause Loki any undesired pain, as he understood Loki was wanting him to let go tonight. He began to kiss at Loki’s neck, and made his way up to his lips, hoping to distract him from the searing burn of the stretch.

Loki draped his arms around Thor’s neck and kissed him deeply, shuddering when Thor’s tongue slid into his mouth and against his own.

Although hungry, Thor’s kisses generally never overpowered Loki’s, and the Niouvi was pleasantly surprised once more when Thor took control of their kiss.

Thor giving a test snap of his hips a minute later caused Loki to break this kiss and cry out, feeling that familiar jolt of pleasure run through him as Thor continued to move into him, each movement into him stronger and rougher than the last.

Thor decided that he wanted to shift them, so he pulled out of Loki slowly, and flipped him over onto his stomach, grabbing at his hips and dragging him onto his knees.

Loki cried out once more when Thor entered him again from this angle, gripping at the sheets and throwing his hips back to meet each one of Thor’s thrusts.

“A-Ah! *H-Harder, Jetoni!*” moaned Loki, his jaw going slack when Thor did just that, the hold on his hips now bruising.

The pleasure from finally getting what he wanted made Loki see stars, and he shifted to place weight on his forearms, still making sure to arch into Thor’s thrusts.
The giant moved into him with what seemed to be reckless abandon, and Loki loved it, crying out and panting and grasping at the sheets below him.

Thor quickly pulled out of him and flipped him over onto his back, moving Loki’s legs apart, and aligning himself.

Loki readily accepted Thor, and opened his arms, wrapping them around Thor’s torso and gripping him tightly when he began to move again.

Thor shifted a bit then and changed his angle, which caused Loki to cry out again, the Niouvi grasping at him with a vice-like hold.

“D-Don’t stop! I’m close!”

Thor quickened his movements, and let out a guttural moan when Loki climaxed, faltering for a moment.

Thor knew that Loki usually wasn’t satisfied unless he climaxed at least twice, so Thor slowed his movements so that he could pull Loki closer.

In their current position, he’d be able to jerk Loki’s cock while they fucked, and doing this often drove the Niouvi insane.

Shifting to get more comfortable, Thor began to move into Loki once more, and grabbed at the Niouvi’s cock, running his hand up and along its shaft, and moving it in time to his thrusts.

Loki couldn’t help but cry out now, and he writhed in Thor’s hold, the dualized sensation driving him insane.

He came in spurts across his nightshirt, and climaxed for the second time around Thor as well, beginning to twitch and jerk from the overwhelming sensations.

Seeing Loki become so undone brought Thor closer to climaxing again, and after shifting Loki to his side, Thor moved into him once more, the pants and minor trembles from the Niouvi enough to
drive him over the edge.

Thor took a few seconds to catch his breath before pulling out of Loki and rolling the Niouvi onto his back.

He wasn’t finished with him just yet.

Loki was confused when he noticed Thor settle himself below his navel, and he sat up slowly, calling out to him. “Jetoni?”

Thor pressed a gentle kiss against Loki’s inner thigh, wanting him to relax. “Just relax, Aberi.”

Loki twitched when he felt Thor’s warm tongue part the lips of his cunt, and he bit his lower lip, closing his eyes and letting out a low moan. “Norns, Thor.”

Thor continued his ministrations, and pushed his tongue into Loki, gripping his thighs and holding him in place.

He alternated between dragging his broad tongue against Loki’s cunt or fucking him with it, one of his hands moving up Loki’s body to grasp at the Niouvi’s cock again.

When he’d managed to get Loki erect again, he moved his tongue up to Loki’s cock, and pushed his fingers into Loki, angling them the way he knew the Niouvi liked.

Having Thor’s tongue around his cock and his fingers buried deep within him caused Loki to see stars, and he trembled underneath Thor’s touch, his eyes rolling into the back of his head when Thor sucked the head of his cock into his mouth.

This had been done to him before by countless sexual partners, but it felt different when it was Thor doing this.

Thor touched him with such a reverence, and knowing that Thor truly loved him only added to this experience.
He’d never shared a connection this deep with anyone in his life, and knowing that Thor saw his heart when he caressed him, made his touch that much more stimulating.

He opened his mouth into a silent scream when he climaxed from both sexes, his vision going shockingly white.

Thor traced soft kisses up Loki’s body while he rode through the climactic waves, and pressed a warm kiss against his lips, staring down at him gently. “I love you, Loki. And I’m sorry for worrying you.” He kissed him again softly then. “I will work on being more open with you.”

Loki pressed a weak kiss against Thor’s lips, not wanting him to berate himself. “It’s something that we can work on together.”

The pair shared another kiss before Thor rolled off of Loki, and nestled beside him.

The Niouvi was too lazy to change his nightshirt, so he tossed his hand, using seidr to cleanse it of the cum.

Now that he was sated, his mind felt clearer, and he turned on his side, wanting to nestle himself underneath Thor’s chin. “Thank you, Jetoni.”

Thor hugged Loki close, relieved that they’d made up.

He knew he wasn’t perfect, and he didn’t expect himself to be, but he knew that Loki couldn’t be the only one that worked on doing things outside of his comfort zone, for their relationship anymore.

Before Thor fell asleep, he made a promise to himself that he would try harder in their relationship. He wanted them to be happy, and… and he now believed that there was no reason he couldn’t be happy as well.
So my lovely sister actually drew Loki for me for the story. You can view the image here: https://thetopazbear.tumblr.com/image/184588228959

In other news, I'm not sure when I will have the next chapter out. I kind of want to take a small break from writing, cuz my brain feels fried, but I definitely should have the next chapter out by the end of this month at the absolute LATEST.

Have a wonderful week you lovely people <3!
Loki woke up the next morning feeling more relaxed than he had in years.

He was relieved that he and Thor were able to work through their issues, and he only hoped that it would be mostly smooth sailing from here.

He knew that things weren’t perfect, but things were really good right now, and Loki had a feeling that things would stay this way.

He just had to speak to Thor about something first.

“Is it time to get up already?”

Loki looked down at Thor, seeing the giant beginning to wake up. “We have about three hours until the meeting with the town, so we should probably get out of bed.”

Thor nodded, stretching out in bed before sitting up and pressing a kiss in greeting against Loki’s lips.

He could see that Loki seemed lost in thought, so he reached out to take his hand, catching his attention. “Loki? Are you alright?”

Placing a reassuring kiss against Thor’s lips, Loki nodded, smirking up at the giant. “I’m fine, Jetoni. Just sore.”
Thor’s gaze turned to that of concern, and he reached forward to caress Loki’s cheek. “I’m sorry, I should’ve been more careful last night.”

Loki laughed softly and held the hand on his face with his own, not wanting Thor to feel guilty. “I’m fine, Jetoni. I promise.” He placed another reassuring kiss against Thor’s lips then. “But… something has been on my mind, Thor. And… and I think we should talk about it.”

Thor quirked up an eyebrow then, wondering what Loki wanted to speak about. “Is… is everything alright?”

Loki nodded, taking Thor’s hands in his. He was always terrible when it came to speaking about his emotions, and even worse when it came to revealing any fears or insecurities he had.

But Thor had opened himself up to him last night, and Loki knew that if he didn’t speak about this now, he would be thinking of it all day, and then he’d convince himself of it, and then he’d be in a terrible mood, and then he’d take it out on Thor, feeling hurt over the imaginary scenario that he created in his head.

No, Loki would be honest with Thor, and he would ignore his discomfort over talking about such embarrassing things. They both needed to be open and honest about their fears in this relationship for it to work.

“This… I find this subject very difficult to speak about, Thor. And although it might seem silly or redundant to you, I need to know the truth for my own personal sanity.”

Thor nodded slowly, still not sure where Loki was going with this.

“If… if the opportunity arose… and… and you met someone that you had a connection with… would you still love me?”

Thor frowned at the question, his eyebrows furrowed in confusion. “Loki, what kind of question is that?”

“I-I just…” he sighed then, getting frustrated with himself. He hated sounding so pathetic. “Thor… I know last night I said that it doesn’t matter how our relationship began and that all that mattered was our love. And this is true. But… sometimes… sometimes I’m terrified that you’ll meet
someone and form a natural connection with them… I’m worried that you feel you love me now, and then when you meet someone else of your own volition, you’ll realize… you’ll realize that you never felt that way.”

Admitting this was hard, and Loki couldn’t look at Thor after the admission, filled with shame and embarrassment.

Thor sighed softly, rubbing at the backs of Loki’s hands with his thumbs. “Loki… I could and never would do that to you.”

Loki frowned deeply then, hating that he felt this way. “Thor… it’s very hard for me to admit this to you, but… in some part of me, I’m always scared you’re going to leave me one day. I’m terrified that as this town grows, and more people come, you’ll meet someone of your own volition, and…”

Thor’s face softened when he heard this, and he scooted closer to Loki, pulling him into his arms. “Loki… why do you feel this way? I told you in the beginning that you’re it for me.”

Loki still couldn’t stare at Thor. “We’re not in the clutches of the king anymore, so you can leave me without being reprimanded. And everyone here loves you so you can have a maiden of your choice now. You’re not forced to be with me.”

It hurt Thor to hear that Loki thought this, and he shook his head, pressing a soft kiss against Loki’s cheek. “Loki… that’s not something I’ve ever thought of doing. I love you. And I only want to be with you. Even if I was king of the realms, and had millions of beings to choose from, I would still choose you.”

Loki shook his head, feeling conflicted. “Nothing is stopping you from leaving and wanting to experience a relationship with someone of your choosing. I don’t want to hold you back or tether you to-”

“You’re not doing any of those things, Loki.” interrupted Thor, finally pulling Loki into his lap and kissing his brow. “I don’t feel trapped when I’m with you. You’re it for me. If you decided to leave me tomorrow because we’re out from under the king’s rule, and you wanted to be free, I would never be with anyone else again, because my heart belongs to you.”

All of the pain and guilt and shame and anger that he’d been feeling over the years washed away from him, and he held onto Thor, feeling stupid for allowing himself to get so bothered by this. “I
would never do that to you, Thor.”

“And I would never do that to you, Loki.” murmured Thor, holding Loki close. “I’m happy. And although we were forced to be together in the beginning, we are not forced now. And I am making the conscious decision to stay with you because I want to. Do you understand this?”

Loki nodded, holding onto Thor tightly.

“I don’t want you to feel as if our marriage isn’t genuine, Loki. Because it is. If I have to marry you again in a ceremony here in the town, then I’ll do it. I’ll do whatever it takes to show you that I’m here because I want to be.”

Loki pulled away so that he could kiss Thor, relieved that this had been put out in the open. “You would really do that?”

Thor nodded, pressing another warm kiss against his lips. “I would. After you have this child, I would be more than willing to have a wedding of our own volition. We’d have our friends there and our children, and it would put any fears that we might have, to rest.”

Loki honestly didn’t mind doing this. It would calm something within him, and quiet the voice in his head that told him Thor was only tethered to him because he believed that no one else would want him.

He looked away from Thor after this, still heavily embarrassed that he’d shown his insecurities.

Seeing Loki like this made Thor laugh softly, and he placed a tender kiss against Loki’s temple, holding him close. “Loki, do not feel embarrassed about feeling this way. I… I will admit that sometimes, I feel the same. When the giants of this town whisper that you’re too beautiful or too good for someone like me, it makes me feel insecure as well. But I know that you love me. And I know that I love you.”

Loki sat up in Thor’s lap here, surprised to hear this. “The people of this town really say this about you?”

Thor nodded. “I’ve gotten into many brawls because of this.”
Thor was the least violent person Loki had ever known, so to hear that Thor got into fights over him shocked him deeply. “What happened? Has this really occurred?”

Laughing softly, Thor began to recount the various tales of his arguments with other men when it came to Loki. “When we first arrived, I overheard a few of the soldiers joking about how you would leave me now that we were out of the clutches of the king. I ignored them, but… as the years passed, they got more bold with their comments. And then one day one of them told me if he could beat me in a duel, he would pursue you. So… I defeated him. And everyone else who tried to lay claim to you.”

“What sorts of things would they say?”

Thor frowned, not wanting to relay this information. “Loki, I don’t think you need to know. It’s not very important.”

Loki looked up at Thor silently, and when Thor sighed Loki knew he had him. “I would at least like to know the nature of their conversations.”

“They… would say obscene things about your appearance, or… what they would do when you left me… I couldn’t stand hearing you spoken about in this light, so I would call them out, they would argue with me, I would respond, they would attempt to fight me, and then I would beat them senseless. I’m certain everyone knows now that I’m very protective over you and our family.”

Loki never expected that Thor had this side to him, and he found himself pleased that Thor defended his name and his honor so fiercely. “Norns… well, thank you. And why didn’t you tell me? I would never leave you, Thor.”

Thor kissed Loki then, smiling. “I know this. The day you sat in my lap and made your way into my heart, I knew that I would always love you. And… when you chose to carry Astrid, I knew that your love was genuine.”

Loki’s gaze softened when Thor confessed this. “I’m not sullying my bloodline by carrying your children. I would give you a million children if you wanted them. Our children are a symbol of our love, and the best parts of ourselves shaped them.”

Hearing Loki say this helped Thor let go of one of his fears. He knew that Jötunar viewed those of
mixed heritage as outcasts, and he didn’t have much experience with courting because of this. No one wanted to ruin the purity of their children with Aesir blood.

When Loki offered to carry a child for him, knowing the costs of doing so, Thor knew Loki was the one for him.

And hearing that Loki didn’t view it as sullying his bloodline, helped him let go of his fear that Loki felt guilty for bringing children into this world that were of mixed blood.

He pulled Loki close and hugged him for some time, appreciating that he had Loki in his life.

Loki held Thor for as long as he needed it, knowing that hearing this meant a lot to him.

“You know… I don’t mind having children, but… this one needs to be the last one for quite some time. I’ll go insane if I have 6 children under the age of 10 like Hemming does.”

Thor snorted, pulling away so that he could look at Loki. “I’ll always leave how many children we have, and when we have them, up to you. I hold you in such high esteem because you sacrifice your body and mind to carry these children. I don’t want you to ever feel obligated to have them.”

Loki searched Thor’s gaze, seeing that the giant meant this genuinely. “If they are adequately spaced apart, then… after this one, and after we get King Thrym off of the throne, we can have more.”

Thor laughed then, holding Loki close. “What are we going to do after King Thrym is taken down?”

“I… have a few ideas. But I don’t know if you’ll like them.”

Thor raised an eyebrow. “Like what?”

Loki squeezed Thor’s shoulders before shifting to get out of his lap. “That is a conversation for another day.”
Thor moved to stop Loki, wanting to talk about this. This morning had been full of questions and confessions, and he liked that he and Loki were working on being so open with each other. “I won’t be upset. I want to know.”

“Thor—”

“Please.”

Loki frowned and settled himself back into Thor’s lap, hoping that this didn’t ruin things between them. “After realizing that I could become the strongest user of seidr in the realm… I realized that killing King Thrym wouldn’t be enough for me. There would always be someone who would use their position to harm our family, someone who wouldn’t trust me because of my power, and…”

He thought about his wording before continuing. “I want the throne, Thor. I want it for you and I. For our children. I want that to be our legacy. And… and I know that if I get powerful enough, no one would be willing to stand against me if I made claim for the throne.”

Thor was silent for so long that Loki’s mind began to race. He hoped that this wouldn’t ruin things, that this wasn’t the end, that things wouldn’t become strained, that-

“Alright.”

Loki blinked rapidly in bewilderment, surprised by his answer. “What?”

Sighing deeply, Thor pulled back so that he could stare into Loki’s eyes. “I told you that I would do anything for you. And that if it was within the realm of possibility, I would give it to you. And I meant it. So if you want this, then… then I want this too.”

Loki’s eyes widened in shock. “You do?”

Thor nodded slowly, thinking about how he wanted to explain himself. “Loki… let’s say we kill King Thrym and his lineage. I still want to travel to Asgard, and I want to kill my father. If this causes a war between Asgard and Jötunheim again… I can’t fight an entire army by myself. And as powerful as you are, I wouldn’t want you trying to help me, because we can’t leave our children
alone in this world. If I was king… and if I practiced my power, and mastered it… no one would stand in our way. No one would be powerful enough to do so. And if someone else took the throne… they would never trust you and me because of our power. So… taking the throne for ourselves… is the most logical approach. And it is the best way to ensure our children are protected.”

Hearing Thor’s reasoning only solidified Loki’s desire for the throne now. And now that he knew Thor agreed with him, and that he wanted it too, made Loki fight back a grin.

Thor agreeing with him and having reasons of his own for wanting the throne meant the world to Loki, and made him feel immense relief.

It was hard not to become greedy or power hungry when he knew that he could become the most powerful seidr user alive; especially when Thor had the gifts that he had.

And now that Thor agreed they should take the throne, Loki couldn’t help but revel over this.

Thor pressing a soft kiss against his cheek brought him from his thoughts of grandeur and greed, and he looked up at him, raising an eyebrow. “And speaking of my powers… I need to tell you something.”

“What is it?”

“I… I know I said I couldn’t do what my grandfather did, but… I went to speak to my aunt about these things, and… some repressed memories came back up.”

Loki was intrigued to hear about this, and remained silent, waiting for Thor to explain. The giant hated speaking about his gift, so Loki was always receptive when Thor brought it up.

“My aunt… she told me that when I was a toddler, I… I flew. And that my beberi panicked, and told me to never do that again.Apparently, I was so terrified of my beberi’s reaction, that I never tried again. And as far as the repressed memories… I recall being beaten up by the children of my town when I was younger. And after this… it stormed day and night for an entire month in our village. It didn’t stop until one of the children’s parents forced them to apologize to me.”

Loki’s eyebrows shot up to his hairline when he heard this. “Norns have mercy…”
“My aunt says that after my beberi died, the same thing happened, except it was a storm that didn’t let up for years in our village. And it didn’t go away until I made peace with the fact that I would never see my beberi again. She told me that every time I was in a sullen mood, it would storm and that the more emotional I became, the fiercer the storm. My aunt says that this happened until I married you.”

Loki thought back to all of the years he spent in Thor’s village. It would rain and snow like any other place in the realm, but very infrequently. It was always very sunny in their village. “Norns… and you’ve never noticed, Thor?”

Thor shook his head. “No. It never occurred to me that the storms were because of me. I didn’t even know I had powers until the day I met my father when I was 15. And knowing that my father had the same gift made me not want to use it. I thought nothing of it until the day those soldiers tried to take you away.”

“What does this mean for our children? They won’t be full-blooded, but because they’re part Aesir, there’s a possibility that they have your gifts, too.”

Thor frowned, knowing that this was a possibility. “I have to learn how to control my gifts so that if any of our children have it too, I’ll be able to guide them. My aunt said that my powers manifested when I was a toddler, so… we’ll see with Astrid. She’s just learning how to walk.”

Loki knew in a part of himself that his children might bear Thor’s gifts, but it still worried him. He wanted his children safe, and he wanted them to not feel like they were outcasts on this realm because of their gifts.

“How will you practice this?”

“I will practice in the forests, far from here.”

“What if you are caught?!”

“I will use your amulet, and return here.” murmured Thor. “I need to get stronger, Loki. And I cannot do that without practicing. I can’t practice here because it would be suspicious, and it might hurt someone.”
Loki didn’t like the idea of Thor being separated from him considering their circumstances, but he knew it was necessary.

“I suppose you’re right…” he sighed then, clearly troubled by this information.

Thor kissed him in reassurance, hoping to calm him. “Everything will work out as it should, Loki. We’ll be alright. We can do this.”

Loki smiled softly, returning Thor’s kiss. “We can.”

Their bedroom opening caught their attention, and they laughed when they saw it was Adras. The young child made his way over to them and jumped on the bed, pushing at Loki so that he could lie nestled between both parents. “I’m hungry.”

This made them laugh, and Loki hugged him close, the young child’s smile always warming his heart. “Deneri and I will make breakfast. What do you want to eat?”

“Pancakes!” grinned Adras.

Loki was never one to deny his child the simple pleasures in this life, so he rolled his eyes, pinching at Adras’ cheek. “I suppose that’s fine.”

The family climbed out of bed then, and after waking up Astrid, they all made their way downstairs to make and eat breakfast.

Breakfast was as lively as usual for their family and after getting ready for the day, the family made their way to the meeting hall, greeting Hemming and Draeil and their brood.

The meeting went over better than expected, and Thor and Loki were blown away by the town’s support.
They’d been nervous about this meeting with the town, as they weren’t too sure if the town’s citizens would support their desire to take on the king.

The town surprised them though by agreeing wholeheartedly, as the citizens felt that they could not keep living in fear. Taking on the king was the only way to ensure their families remained safe.

Of course, they all needed to go about this carefully. They couldn’t rush into towns or cities and broadcast themselves as a resistance, as that would get them all killed.

No, they needed to work from the shadows. They needed to plan and be patient about how they did this.

If it took centuries or a millennium for their plan to come to fruition, then so be it.

They only had one shot at this.

And they had to do it right.

The next few years in the town were spent building homes and other necessary structures for an expanding town, as Thor and Loki wanted new people that moved here to already have a place to call their own.

It had been agreed upon that the one mercenary guild in town would be responsible for recruitment, which was spearheaded by Bjarke.

When any of the members of the guild felt that they found a family or a giant that wanted to join their cause, they would lead them to a spring that was a few years away from the settlement, before using the amulets that Loki created to get themselves back to the settlement.

Thor and Loki or Draeil and Hemming would then teleport themselves and the mercenary back to that spring, where the family or that giant would be interviewed and assessed. If they were giants
that genuinely wanted to join their cause, then they would all teleport them to the settlement, to begin their new lives.

All four of them agreed that it wouldn’t be good to expand too quick, too fast, so they decided that once every two decades, the mercenary guild would recruit.

And so began their new life, as the leaders of this resistance.

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Being the leaders of this town was like a dual-edged sword.

Thor’s good nature and honest heart won over the citizens of their town, and every year that passed, the town’s love and respect for Thor grew and grew.

Loki was relieved that the town respected Thor and saw him in such a good light, as that would make it easier to get to his goal of ruling this realm with Thor.

Morale was an important thing to have, and Thor seemed to be the glue that held this town together. He kept everyone’s spirits lifted and inspired everyone to just do the best that they could, within the parameters they’d been given.

Of course… Thor’s popularity did have its drawbacks.

The giantesses in this town swooned over Thor when he passed them in the streets, and Loki hated it; he knew the only reason they didn’t actively try and pursue Thor was that they were scared of Loki.

He had never experienced what it was like to be jealous or possessive over a lover, so it was very hard for him to let these feelings go.

Thor made him feel things that he’d never felt before, things that he thought were never possible, and sometimes it was hard to admit that he wasn’t strong.
When it had been two decades since they were appointed leaders of this town, Loki confirmed that he was pregnant with seidr.

The night he found out found he and Thor in their room, putting Astrid to bed. She was almost two centuries now and could walk and say a few words, so Thor and Loki were proud to see her growing.

Kissing her forehead one last time, Loki said goodnight to their daughter, and yawned, making his way over to their bed. “I’ve got some good news, Jetoni.”

Thor quickly kissed Astrid’s cheek and said goodnight, getting into bed. “What is it?”

Loki nestled into Thor’s side and hummed softly, basking in the warmth of Thor’s skin. “I’m pregnant.”

Thor hugged Loki a bit tighter then, overjoyed by this news. “Norns…”

“And… I sensed multiple life energies. It’s not just one.”

Thor’s eyes snapped open, and he took in a sharp breath, looking down at Loki. “How many?”

“Two.”

Hearing that they were having twins caused Thor to feel immeasurable joy, and he pulled Loki up towards him so that he could plaster numerous kisses against his face. “Thank you, Loki.”

Loki laughed softly, happy that Thor was so excited. “I don’t know how big I’ll get with them, and I don’t know how long I’ll be able to carry them for since I’m so small, but… if I can get them to 7 decades, they’ll be viable.”

Thor froze when he heard this, his heart beginning to pound nervously. “What do you mean?”
“I worry about my ability to carry a child to term because of my size. I couldn’t carry Astrid for a full century, and the earliest a child can be born and survive is if I make it to 7 decades in the pregnancy. So… because there’s two… I’m worried about carrying them both to term.”

Thor was terrified to hear this, as he didn’t want to lose his children. “We were on the run when you carried Astrid. You were moving when you shouldn’t have because our lives were in danger and we didn’t have a choice. But we’re safe now. You can be on bedrest for as long as you need it, and I will do whatever I can to help you and make this pregnancy comfortable for you; even if I need to massage your ankles and calves or your hips and back every night until their birth.”

Loki smiled softly at this, knowing that Thor meant it. And the giant did have a point; now that they were safe, he could rest when he needed, until his children were ready to be here. They weren’t on the run anymore.

“Thank you, Jetoni.”

Thor nodded, pressing a warm kiss against Loki’s temple. “We’ll do this together, Loki. I just need you to trust me and depend on me for help. Believe in yourself just as much as you believe in me at times.”

It was times like this that Loki felt thankful to be married to Thor. The giant always knew how to calm him down, and help him see reason when he felt too emotional and panicked to do so. Thor always lifted his spirits and encouraged him when he felt broken, and he loved the giant for this aspect of his personality.

He looked up at Thor then and placed a warm kiss against his lips. “Please don’t feel guilty about being happy about this. I am nervous about this pregnancy… but I wanted this just as much as you did. I don’t regret this.”

Thor’s gaze softened, and he caressed Loki’s cheek, love blooming in his heart for the Niouvi. “I know, Loki. But you’ll be okay. I know you can do this.”

The pair shared another kiss and smiled, nestling further into each other’s hold, and falling asleep for the night.
Thor and Loki’s recruiting efforts didn’t execute as flawlessly as they wanted them too, but they still worked, and by the end of the fourth decade of Thor and Loki’s leadership, the town had almost doubled in size.

Thor and Loki didn’t want expansion to happen too quickly, so they let Bjarke and his guild know that they wouldn’t begin recruitment for at least another three decades.

Because of the influx of new citizens, the townspeople needed to build more homes and buildings of commerce or interaction, such as schools or business buildings.

Loki and Thor knew that they couldn’t do everything themselves, and although Hemming and Drail were a big help, Thor and Loki eventually began to implement the council system again, to help ease their burden.

Doing this seemed to do the trick, and five decades after the attack, the town was bustling with giants living their lives, and doing what they could to support the growth, life, and health of the settlement.

Because Loki was very nervous about this pregnancy, he took at least two days a week off from work, so that he could rest, and spend time with Astrid and Adras.

He was already quite large by then, and he at least wanted to try and make it two more decades, as he knew for certain that his children would survive if he made it to seven decades.

Today found he and Thor getting the children ready for school, and he tried his best to help them, without over-exerting himself.

Astrid was two now and amused Thor and Loki greatly with her outbursts and confident personality.

She was Thor’s mirror image and had a beautiful blend of their personalities, which meant there was never a dull day in their home.

She was also old enough to go into daycare and be around other children her age, so Loki and Thor
encouraged her to go each day so that she could make friends, and develop social skills.

He’d already woken up Adras for the morning, so now it was Astrid’s turn. The two-year-old was now old enough to sleep on her own, and in her own room, so Loki walked down the hall, opening her door.

Astrid wasn’t in her bed, and Loki’s heart began to race. He called out for his daughter, and when she didn’t reply Loki called out again, searching for her everywhere he could think of.

He looked under her bed, in her closet, in her bathroom, and tried to calm himself when he still didn’t see her. She was most likely playing hide and seek with him.

“Astrid, this isn’t funny. Do not play hide and seek with Beberi right now.”

He heard giggling from above him and snapped his eyes up towards the corner of the room, almost fainting from the sight.

He let out a piercing scream and clutched at his chest, closing his eyes and screaming for Thor. “THOR!”

Loki screamed for Thor again and kept his eyes on his daughter, who was in the corner of her room, hovering close to the ceiling.

Thor barreled into Astrid’s room not even five seconds later, rushing over to Loki. “What’s wrong?!"

Loki pointed up at Astrid, his eyes wide in a panic. “She won’t come down!”

Thor looked over at Astrid, shocked to see her floating in the corner of her room. “Norns have mercy…”

Astrid giggled again, remaining where she was.
“Astrid, princess, come down here.”

Astrid giggled and shook her head, flying across the room to another corner. “Catch me, Deneri!”

“Astrid, you need to come down here. Now isn’t the time to play monster.”

Loki slammed the door of her room shut when Astrid tried to leave the room, knowing that it would be much harder to get her down if she left the room. “Get her!”

Thor was still learning how to control every aspect of his gift, and flying was something he struggled with. He could hover for a few seconds, but he definitely couldn’t do what Astrid was doing.

He knew that he needed to get her down though, so he sighed, focusing.

He walked over to Astrid and jumped, able to get himself high enough to pull her into his arms.

Lowering himself to the ground, Thor looked at Astrid sternly, wanting her to understand that she couldn’t do this whenever she wanted. “Astrid, it’s very important that you only fly at home. Do you understand?”

Astrid pouted, not happy to hear this.

Loki placed a hand on her back, relieved that Thor was able to get to her. “Astrid, you can only fly with Deneri. That is it. If Deneri isn’t with you, you cannot fly.”

Astrid teared up, heartbroken over this. “But I want to!”

Loki shot her a stern look, putting an end to the tantrum before it began. “Deneri and Beberi only want you to be safe, Astrid. We don’t want you to get hurt.”

Astrid wiped at her tears, begrudgingly accepting this.
Now that Astrid understood she was only supposed to fly with Thor, and after Loki checked all over her to see if she accidentally hurt herself, he relaxed, his heart not beating as fast as it was before.

He knew that it would be a possibility that Astrid inherited Thor’s gifts, and he thought that if her gifts manifested this young, he’d know how to handle it. But actually seeing Astrid demonstrate her abilities scared Loki to no end, and it took him some time to calm down completely.

He and Thor helped Astrid get ready, and afterward, they made their way to the kitchen, greeting Adras.

Loki was relieved to see that Thor made breakfast and that Adras was dressed, the young child currently sitting on one of their countertops.

“Morning, Beberi!”

Loki made his way over to Adras and kissed his temple, greeting him. “Good morning, sweet child.”

“Hey, Beberi?”

Loki hummed and looked down at Adras, waiting for his question.

“My teacher said he wants to talk to you and Deneri before class starts, today.”

Loki frowned when he heard this, raising an eyebrow at Adras. “Why? Have you done something?”

“No! I promise!”

“Astras …”
The young child jumped off of the counter and wrapped his arms around Loki’s waist so that he could stare up at him. “I’ve been good in class, Beberi.”

Adras was beginning to shoot up like a tree now that he was 7 and now stood at Loki’s hip, which made the child happy.

Loki couldn’t keep a stern face when he stared at his son, and he rolled his eyes fighting back a smile. “If you say so…”

Adras pressed a flurry of kisses against Loki’s pronounced stomach before letting go of Loki. “My teacher says that I’m the best in the class.”

Astrid began to pull at Loki’s leg so that he would pick her up then, so Loki bent over and picked her up, grunting from the effort it took to straighten up. “Does she, now?”

“My teacher is actually a guy, Beberi.”

Male teachers weren’t unusual on their realm, so although it surprised Loki to hear this, he didn’t mind too much. “What else does your teacher say?”

“That I’m really smart, and that I can be just like Deneri one day.”

Thor chuckled at this, grabbing breakfast and beckoning for his family to follow him. “You can be better than me, Adras. Always aim high.”

The family enjoyed their breakfast together before cleaning up and heading to school, and after dropping off Astrid at the daycare portion of the school, Thor and Loki walked upstairs to Adras’ class, greeting all of the parents and teachers that waved or smiled at them as they passed.

Finally, they made it to Adras’ classroom, which was empty save for the teacher. It was still very early in the day, and because Loki and Thor were so busy, they generally dropped off their children around 7 am.

“Mr. Ynoddson!”
Adras’ teacher looked up as they all entered the room, smiling when he saw Adras. “Hello, Adras.”

Adras ran over to his teacher and hugged him, grinning when the teacher ruffled his hair. “I brought my parents as you said.”

The teacher pinched Adras’ cheek affectionately. “Good boy.”

Loki narrowed his eyes when he saw how close Adras was to his teacher, and he crossed his arms, brushing back the unpleasant memories brought about by the teacher’s affection, and clearing his throat. “What is this meeting about?”

The teacher seemed confused by Loki’s curt tone, but brushed it off, getting on his knees instead. He carefully turned Adras around and rubbed at his back, encouraging him to speak. “Go ahead, Adras. Tell them what you told me.”

Loki really didn’t like how affectionate this teacher was being with Adras, and he shifted his eyes to Adras, wondering what the child wanted to tell them. If the teacher touched him affectionately again, he would say something. “Adras?”

Adras blushed and looked away from his parents, turning in the arms of his teacher instead.

The teacher encouraged Adras to speak, and pressed a warm kiss against his crown, looking into his eyes. “It’s alright, Kizraen. Just tell them.”

Loki did not like when the teacher kissed Adras’ forehead so affectionately, and when he heard the affectionate name “Kizraen”, Loki lost it, rushing over to the teacher before he could stop himself, and shoving him off of Adras, yanking the child over to his side. “Get away from him!”

Thor widened his eyes in shock when this happened, and he reached out for Loki, trying to calm him. “Aberi, it’s alright, it-”

“Don’t EVER refer to my child like this again! Do not touch my child, do not kiss my child, and if you ever touch a single hair on his head, I will see to it that you never work around children again!”
Thor hadn’t seen Loki this upset in ages, and he looked down at Loki, concerned when he saw tears in his eyes. “Loki?”

Loki wiped at his eyes with a shaking hand, continuing to glare at the teacher. “You should be ashamed of yourself!”

Adras seemed just as worried about Loki, and he pulled at his sash on his hip, not wanting him to worry. “Beberi, I’m alright, he didn’t hurt me.”

Loki sniffed, quickly crouching and looking into Adras’ eyes. “Adras, if an adult is not a family member, they are not allowed to hug or kiss you. Do you understand me?”

Adras blinked a few times, confused by Loki’s pleading tone. “Yes, Beberi…”

Loki pulled Adras into his arms then, kissing his brow. “Promise me, Adras.”

“I-I promise.”

Loki sniffed then, before hugging Adras again.

Thor looked over at Adras’ teacher, who was now standing and looking at Loki in pity. “Mr. Ynoddson… please forgive us. My wife is pregnant, and stressed, and-”

“There’s no need to apologize, Leader. The last thing I want to do is worry your wife… I apologize if my actions seemed inappropriate.”

“We… can all talk about this after school. My wife and I will return then.”

Adras’ teacher nodded, continuing to look at Loki in pity. “That is fine with me.”

Thor began to rub at Loki’s back then, wanting him to release Adras, as students were beginning to
file into the classroom. “Love?”

Loki looked down at Adras then, beginning to tear up again. “Adras, if this ever happens again, run away and come right home, okay?”

Adras nodded, reaching up and meeting Loki for a kiss. “I will, Beberi.”

The last thing Loki wanted to do was leave Adras here in this classroom with this teacher, but he didn’t want to cause a bigger scene in front of the other children and parents.

He felt so conflicted over this, but he knew that if Thor didn’t think anything was wrong, then he might’ve overreacted.

If Thor felt that it was safe for Adras to remain here today… then Loki would trust that.

He didn’t want to have a breakdown in the middle of Adras’ classroom, so Loki kissed Adras goodbye and waited for him to sit down before teleporting he and Thor out of the school, and to one of the docks of the lake of the settlement.

He hoped that fresh air and the gentle sunshine would calm him.

Thor helped Loki sit down on the dock’s edge before sitting down himself and wrapping a strong arm around Loki.

He remained silent and just let Loki cry, kissing his brow or shushing him gently and comforting him. “It’s alright, Loki… it’s alright.”

Loki’s eyes teared up even more at this. “I don’t want him touching our son, Jetoni.”

Thor could admit that Adras’ teacher was unusually affectionate, but it wasn’t alarming to him. “What’s going through your mind, Loki?”

Loki sniffed, wiping at his eyes.
He had been through many things in his life, and many of these things he didn’t feel comfortable ever bringing to light.

But his outburst today… he understood that he overreacted.

He’d always been scared to talk to Thor about his past, as he’d always believed that Thor would be ashamed to be with him if he found out.

But after today, Loki knew he couldn’t keep some aspects of his past to himself.

Taking in a shuddering breath, Loki looked out at the water and the trees beyond it.

"No one was there to protect me when I was young, Thor! No one was there to keep me safe! We have to protect Adras!"

"No one is going to hurt our son, Loki," assured Thor, rubbing at his back. "Why do you believe someone will hurt him?"

"Because affection like that is how it starts!" wept Loki, hands covering his face. "Children are innocent; they don't know any better. I know the signs all too well, Thor!"

Thor’s heart broke when he heard this. "Loki… what do you mean?"

“When I was 8, I began searching for someone who could help me get to my goal of being a beautiful Niouvi, just like the ones that I saw on the streets passing by.”

Thor nodded slowly, rubbing at Loki’s back and encouraging him to continue.

“And… and one day, a politician decided that he would prey on my innocence, and groom me to be the perfect wife. He asked me if I wanted to come home with him, and I naively agreed to, thinking that he was my ticket to being rich, to being favored, to being loved.”
Loki took in another shaky breath before explaining further. “When I left my brothers and began to live with this politician, my life was hell. He locked me away from everyone, he beat me when I talked back to him or asked certain questions, and... he would refer to me as his “precious Niouvi”. He told me that I would never be anything or ever amount to someone worth something if I left his side. And because I wanted to be a beautiful Niouvi that people cared about… I stayed with him.”

“As the decades passed, he began to comment on how beautiful I was… he would dress me in the prettiest clothes, and nice jewels, and I had a bed and food every day and night… I finally felt like someone cared about me and... and I asked him if I could bring my siblings to stay here. When he found out they weren’t Niouvi, he slapped me, and tore off the jewels and clothing, telling me that I was his, and his forever.”

He took a moment to calm down before continuing his story. “He coerced me into doing things that children should never do. And... because of him, I was introduced to sex at a very young age.”

Thor’s heart dropped when he heard this, and he pulled Loki closer, kissing his temple to reassure him that everything was okay.

“He told me that he was molding me to be his wife, and because I was going to be his wife, I needed to learn how to please him. He told me he would marry me when I matured and became able to bear children. When I turned 9, I knew I needed to escape, because I couldn’t live the life that he was forcing me to. He caught me when I attempted to run away, and while he was beating me, a pencil on the desk of my room fell onto the floor. I wasn’t very skilled with seidr, but I... I was scared that he would kill me. So I used seidr on the pencil and used seidr to make the pencil stab him in his jugular. He let go of me and I-I panicked because I knew they would hang me if they found out I killed a politician, so I ran away, back to the orphanage. When I discovered that my brothers ran away and were no longer there, I knew that I couldn’t go back to that orphanage. So... I lived on the streets.”

Confessing this was hard because Loki hadn’t told anyone of this. No one knew these things about him.

“I lived on the streets for a few decades before another politician found me, and took a liking to me when I tried to pickpocket him. When he saw that I was a Niouvi... he told me that I didn’t have to stay on the streets anymore. And my brothers were gone, so... I had nowhere to go, and no one to depend on. I went with him and ended up in the same situation that I was in, with the first politician. This one... required me to do things with him, and his politician and lawmaker friends. But he didn’t beat me, and he fed me, and dressed me in pretty clothes, so I told myself I could stay here, and be okay with this.”

Loki’s lip quivered as he remembered everything that these giants did to him. “He would call me
Kizraen, and… I wasn’t allowed to say no to him. Even if I was sick, even if I was tired, even if I was sore or bruised, they didn’t care! They’d pass me around between them, they’d give me aphrodisiacs, they would all do things at the same time, and… and I lived with him until I was 15.”

He wiped at his tears then. “He told me he wanted to marry me when I turned 16, and that he wanted me to bear his children when I matured at that age. I… I almost stayed, but… one of his friends, who was a governor of a district, offered to keep me as his concubine. He promised me that if I listened to him, he would help me become a politician too.”

“I took him up on his offer, and because he was a governor, my social status changed. For the first time in my life, I had freedom. I was allowed to go to school, I was allowed to practice seidr, I had money, and all I had to do have sex with the governor whenever he came to my room, or called for me. He didn’t want children from me, as he was married with children of his own. And it was because of him that I was able to educate myself in school and get stronger with my seidr. I remained his concubine until I was 21, and… by then I’d memorized the law. I became familiar with the court nobles, I made a name for myself, I slept with whoever I had to, to get what I wanted. I lied, I manipulated people, I betrayed them, all so that I could become strong enough and rich enough to take care of myself.”

He took in a shuddering breath then. “I worked twice as hard as any noble to become a politician at 23, a governor at 26, and a Psemetri at 30. My heart had been hardened by my experiences, and until I met you… I was convinced that I didn’t need anyone or anything in this life, that I didn’t already have.”

He finally looked up at Thor, tearing up even more when he saw the tears in Thor’s eyes. “I don’t want my son to ever experience what I did, Jetoni. I want to protect my children. I want our children to take on the world, to feel safe, to know that they are always loved and protected by us. I want them to keep their innocence! Mine was stripped from me, and I didn’t have a choice! I don’t want the same thing happening to our son.”

Thor pulled Loki into a breathtaking hug, the guilt and the heartbreak that he felt over Loki’s upbringing tearing him apart.

Loki held onto Thor tightly, allowing himself to be open and honest and vulnerable for once in his life. “Sometimes I feel like I don’t deserve you because of my past. I’m so ashamed of the things I’ve done, Thor. I’m used, and dirty, and shameful-”

“You are none of these things.” interrupted Thor, his voice trembling with emotion. “You aren’t your past, Aberi. You were young. None of that was your fault. You were just trying to survive.”
Loki broke down in Thor’s arms when he said this, feeling a validation that he hadn’t felt since he was a young child, and his parents were still alive.

He cried for all of the years he suffered, for all of the pain he’d been in, for everything that he kept inside, and Thor held him through it all, reassuring him that he was safe, that he wasn’t tainted, that he was worthy to be loved and cared for, that he was loved.

Thor validating him healed his heart, and he held onto him like he was his lifeline, Thor comforting him in ways he’d been too proud to ask for before.

Thor pulled away slightly to press a loving kiss against Loki’s forehead, staring into his eyes with an everlasting love that made Loki tear up even more. “I’m so sorry that this realm failed you. And I’m so sorry that you had to fight just to survive. I’m sorry that you were hurt, and taken advantage of, and… I need you to know that this doesn’t change my opinion of you. You’re brave, Loki, and I respect you for achieving your dreams even though everyone around you tried to hold you back. You’re the strongest person I know, and hearing about your past only solidifies that thought in my mind.”

Loki closed his eyes and rested his forehead against the center of Thor’s chest, clutching him tightly.

Being accepted by Thor meant everything to him, and he looked up at the giant, reaching out to hold his face. “Thank you. For everything.”

Thor smiled softly, holding Loki’s face as well. “I love you. Every single part of you. And I always will. Nothing will change that.”

Loki stretched up to kiss Thor, feeling that their bond was deeper and more meaningful than it’d ever been.

After hugging a final time, Loki sighed, a gentle hand resting on his pronounced stomach. “I know I have to apologize to Adras’ teacher.”

“You do. But I will agree with you about him being so affectionate with our son. After hearing your story… it would break my heart if something like that ever happened to Adras. I doubt his teacher has those proclivities, but I’d still like to be on the safe side of things. There are wretched giants in this world.”
Thor looked over at Loki then, taking his hand. “And you’re not one of them.”

Loki smiled softly at this, thanking Thor again. “Thor… I’ve never told anyone, what I’ve told you today. I trust you and love you so much and… and I’m thankful that you were placed in my life, to show me that there is light in this world.”

Hearing Loki say this caused the biggest grin to spread across Thor’s face, and he thanked the Norns for leading Loki to him. “I’m thankful that you’re here by my side too, Loki. You mean the world to me.”

They shared a loving kiss before separating, each of them feeling closer than they’d ever imagined possible.

Loki felt lighter almost, after sharing his past with Thor.

To feel accepted for who he was, for what he’d done, was very freeing for Loki.

And he only hoped that healing from his past would allow him to alleviate the pain in his heart.

Chapter End Notes

Not sure when I'll have the next chapter out, of course, but I hoped you enjoyed this one. Next chapter will be spent with some domestic fluff, before we get into chapter 13, which delves back into the main plot of the story, and will reveal some important things about Thor and Loki, and their quest to end King Thrym's reign. Thank you for your support! Have a great rest of the week!
Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

Hello, wonderful people!

As I said, here is your domestic fluff chapter, with a bit of emotional rolled into it.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Loki and Thor remained at this dock for some time, enjoying each other’s presence.

Loki never thought that he’d be able to trust anyone with his past and knowing that Thor not only didn’t judge him, but still loved him, meant more to him than anything in this life.

Knowing that Thor still loved every part of him erased any and all fear that he might have felt about Thor leaving him.

When it was an hour before the children were due to be picked up from school, Thor and Loki went out to lunch and then picked up Astrid and Adras. Once both children were picked up, Loki and Thor sat down to speak with Adras’ teacher, wanting to continue their conversation from earlier.

The teacher seemed reluctant to talk, but sat down anyway, waiting for Loki and Thor to begin.

Thor knew Loki had been through enough today, and he was heavily pregnant with their children, so he decided to speak first. He wanted Loki to know that he understood the situation, and that he didn’t have to do things on his own anymore.

He wanted Loki to know he could depend on him for anything.

“Forgive us, for earlier. My wife was very distressed when he saw how close you were with our son. He is pregnant, and… very protective over our son. I don’t condone his volatile reaction, but I do agree that I don’t feel comfortable with how close you are with our son. Ruffling his hair or pinching his cheek is fine, but the tender kisses, the hugs, and caresses need to stop.”

Adras’ teacher frowned deeply then. “I am like this with all of my students, and I have always been
this way. Children need to feel loved and uplifted and supported, and that is what I do for them. You are the first parents to feel uncomfortable with it.”

Loki glared at the teacher and moved to speak, but Thor placed a gentle hand on his thigh, stopping him. He wanted this conversation to remain peaceful, as Loki had the tendency to escalate things when it involved those he cared about, and if he exploded on the teacher, he wouldn’t stop until the man broke down in front of him, regretting his decision to ever become a teacher.

“You could teach a million students, and treat them this way, and I would still feel uncomfortable with my child receiving that type of affection from anyone that is not family. You will stop this behavior when it comes to our son.”

Adras’ teacher remained silent, struggling to understand Thor and Loki’s distaste. Finally, he nodded, accepting this. “I understand.”

It wouldn’t sit right with Loki to not apologize to the teacher -he knew that Thor would want him to, and he didn’t want to disappoint Thor- so he sighed, softening his gaze. “I apologize for my volatile reaction. It was unacceptable and uncalled for. My personal reservations about how you interact with our son was not an excuse to shove you or criticize you. With that being said, I stand by my husband. Please refrain from hugging Adras, kissing Adras, or any physical contact that is not a simple as pinching his cheek, patting his shoulder, or ruffling his hair.”

Adras’ teacher nodded, accepting Loki’s apology. “I understand.”

The teacher called out for Adras then and asked him to come over and sit down with them so that they could all speak.

Adras sat down warily, looking down at his feet.

“Now… Adras expressed something to me that I think both of you should know.”

Loki and Thor turned towards Adras expectantly, waiting for him to explain.

Adras began to tear up then, which worried his parents. “I don’t want to talk about it.”
His teacher tutted softly then, beginning to speak. “Adras has been bullied by a few of the children in the class, lately.”

Loki took in a sharp breath, beginning to get angry. “Why have we not heard about this?”

“I was planning to bring the parents of the bullies, as well as you both, together tomorrow. But it was the nature of the bullying that made me want to discuss it here with you both, today.”

Thor frowned also, beginning to get upset. “Tell us what happened.”

“The students are taunting Adras and telling him that he’s adopted because he doesn’t look like you, and that you both chose to have more children because you don’t care about Adras. And it has hurt him very deeply because he told me that he feels this is true.”

Loki’s heart dropped when he heard this, and he turned to Adras, who was sitting stone-faced, with tears in his eyes.

He had never seen Adras this upset, and it worried him greatly.

He knew that this wasn’t a conversation to have with anyone but family, so Loki turned back towards Adras’ teacher, wanting to end this conversation. “We will speak privately to Adras about this. And tomorrow afternoon we expect every single parent of every bully, to be present so that we can talk about this unacceptable behavior.”

Adras’ teacher nodded, understanding. “I will arrange this meeting.”

Loki stood up then, and touched Adras’ shoulder, teleporting them all home to their living room.

Adras moved to run upstairs to his room once they arrived, but Loki grabbed his wrist, preventing him from leaving. “Wait, Adras!”

Adras twisted to get out of his hold, growing more and more frustrated. “I don’t want to talk!”
Loki shot Thor a look, signaling that he wanted him to lie Astrid down for a nap so that they could all talk.

He then made his way over to their couch, sitting Adras down in the middle, and wrapping a stabilizing arm around him.

They remained silent until Thor came down to the living room, and sat on the other side of Adras.

Now that they were both here, Loki took in a deep breath, exhaling slowly.

None of them knew how to begin this conversation.

Adras wiped at his tears then, staring straight ahead. “Am I adopted?”

Loki and Thor shared a look before Loki nodded, his heart breaking when he saw the light in Adras’ eyes fade.

Adras whimpered and tried to run away, but Thor and Loki wrapped loving arms around him, begging him to stay.

Loki wiped at his tears, feeling terrible that they had to have this conversation while Adras was so young. “Adras… you being adopted does not mean that we love you any less then Astrid or your younger siblings.”

“Yes it does!” wept Adras, beginning to break down in Thor and Loki’s arms. “Everyone at school said that I’m not your real son because I don’t look like you, and that you don’t really love me!”

“Adras, we do love you,” assured Thor, rubbing at his son’s back. “We love you so much.”

“No, you don’t! I’m not your real son!”

Loki bit his lower lip, trying to think of the best way to handle this situation. He finally pulled Adras into his lap, holding him against his chest, and rocking and shushing him gently.
“It’s okay, Adras. You are our real son. And you always will be.”

Adras continued to sob in Loki’s arms, and Loki couldn’t help but cry too, feeling devastated that Adras was hurting so much.

Adras was his miracle baby, and the bond that they shared went deeper than words could ever express. Seeing his son so broken over this news killed Loki inside.

“Adras… may Beberi tell you a story?”

Adras whimpered but nodded, still holding onto Loki tightly.

Continuing to rock Adras, Loki began to be honest with him.

“Adras… before I married Deneri… I was a very mean person. I hurt the feelings of others on purpose, and I only thought of myself. No one in this world loved me, and for my entire life, I thought I would be alone. When I met you, you were very sick, and I worked for three days to heal you. We were so scared that you wouldn’t make it. But you were strong. And you survived your illness.”

Loki readjusted Adras so that he could stare at him and convey the love that he had in his heart for him. “Adras… I was so lonely in this world before I met you. The day you woke up from your illness, you looked into my eyes, and I kissed your hand, and you laughed. Your laugh was the most precious thing that I had ever heard, Adras. When I held you for the first time, I learned what it meant to love someone. You were the first person that I ever loved, Adras. You mean so much to me. You have always been my son, and you will always be my son until the end of time.”

Adras teared up even more when Loki confessed this, and he held him tighter, wanting to believe him.

Thor scooted closer to the pair next, and rubbed at Adras’ side, wanting to share his story as well. “May Deneri tell you a story as well, Adras?”

Adras nodded, so Thor began to recite their tale. “Adras… when Deneri was growing up, everyone
was very mean to me. They would bully me and call me names, and they wouldn’t include me in things. My entire life, people have hurt me. And before I met you, no one loved me.”

Thor got emotional here, and teared up, staring at his son with so much love and compassion. “Adras… you were the first person in my entire life, that loved me. You were the first person that ever loved me. The love that I have for you in my heart cannot be expressed with words. You mean so much to me Adras, and you mean so much to Beberi, and it breaks our hearts to hear that you think we don’t love you.”

Adras’ eyes welled with more tears then, and he reached out for Thor, who gratefully took him into his arms and held him close.

Adras continued to cry in Thor’s arms for quite some time, comforted and reassured by the pair.

He began to calm down the more Loki and Thor reassured him of their love, and finally stopped crying, still holding onto Thor tightly.

Thor kissed Adras’ temple, reassuring him further. “Adras… we love you.”

Adras nodded to himself a few times, looking up into Thor’s eyes hopefully.

Kissing Adras’ forehead, Thor smiled down at him, relieved that he was feeling better. “You are loved very much, Adras. Your beberi and I would do anything for you. And we always will.”

Adras hugged Thor tighter for a few seconds before reaching out for Loki, who took him graciously.

“You are our child, Adras. In every way. You are loved.”

Adras nodded again, choosing to stay in Loki’s arms. “Why did you adopt me?”

“We adopted you because the second we looked at you and held you in our arms, we fell in love with you. You completed our family, Adras. You are our family.”
Adras began to smile, and Thor and Loki’s hearts rejoiced at this, both of them feeling relieved that Adras believed they loved him.

“So you didn’t ask the Norns for more babies because you didn’t love me?”

“Norns no, Adras!” exclaimed Loki, readjusting the child in his lap. His stomach was quite large because he carried twins, but he managed to sit Adras in his lap comfortably, hands on his shoulders so that he could stare at his son. “We asked the Norns for more babies because we wanted to extend our love. Us giving you more siblings will never make me or Deneri love you less and less. Never.” He pinched Adras’ cheek affectionately then. “Okay?”

Adras giggled, looking up at Loki and blushing. “Okay.”

Thor ruffled Adras’ hair, glad that his son was feeling better. “Do you have any more questions about this, Adras?”

Adras nodded, shifting his gaze to Thor. “Did my real beberi leave?”

Loki and Thor shared a look before Loki nodded, answering him. “Your original beberi was very worried about you, as you were a sick baby. She traveled across the entire realm on foot, just to find someone to heal you. She loved you very much, Adras.”

"How did she leave?"

Loki sighed softly then. "She was very sick, just like you."

“What did she look like?”

“Very similar to you. She had freckles across the bridge of her nose, just like you do. She was very beautiful.”

“What about my real Deneri?”
Loki and Thor shared another look then before Loki answered him, choosing his words very carefully.

“Your original Deneri was a very bad giant, who hurt you and your original Beberi. I haven’t seen him, so I don’t know what he looks like.”

This information seemed to trouble Adras, so Thor spoke up, wanting to assure him. “Adras… Beberi and I are your real parents. And you are our real son. You do have original parents, but that doesn’t mean Beberi and I aren’t your real parents, and it doesn’t mean that we don’t love you.”

“But what do I say if the other children make fun of me?”

“You tell them that we love you very much and that we are your real parents.” murmured Thor. “You tell them you have an aunt and an uncle and cousins who love you just as much.” He leaned in closer here, pretending to whisper. “You can even call them idiots if nothing else works. You have my permission.”

Adras giggled again, a bashful smile on his face.

Loki pinched Adras’ cheek again, happy that his son felt better. “We love you, Adras. And we always will.”

Adras nodded, hugging Loki’s stomach. “Deneri… why was everyone mean to you when you were growing up?”

Thor and Loki shared a look before Thor sighed, figuring out the best way to describe this. “Have they taught you about the different realms, child?”

Adras nodded, beginning to recite what he knew. “Asgard, Vanaheim, Alfheim, Niflheim, Helheim, Muspelheim, Midgard, Svartalfheim, and our home Jötunheim! Each realm has a king and a queen, and Odin is the ruler over all of the realms.”

“On our realm, child… Asgard and Jötunheim went to war for millennia.” began Loki, running a hand through Adras’ rosewood hair. “And because of this, the people of this realm do not like
Asgardians. Your Deneri is part Asgardian, so the people of this realm don’t like him.”

Adras frowned when he heard this, beginning to get upset. “Deneri has a good heart! He wouldn’t hurt anyone! I love him!”

Thor was touched that Adras was so defensive over him, and he smiled softly, ruffling his hair. “Thank you, Adras. I love you too. But my father is a very bad man, so the people of this realm are mean to me.”

“What’s a father?”

“It’s what Asgardians call their deneris.”

“Who is your father?”

“Unfortunately, my father is Odin.”

Adras’ eyes bulged out of his head then. “Your father is the ruler of all nine realms?!”

Thor nodded. “Yes, my son.”

Adras sat up in Loki’s lap, beginning to get excited. “How come we don’t live in a castle on Asgard?! Or travel through the realms?! Are we rich?!”

Loki and Thor shared a look before sighing, and Loki took over explaining then. “Odin isn’t a very nice man, Adras. He hurt Deneri very badly when Deneri was young. They don’t get along.”

Adras frowned again, not happy to hear this. “That’s not nice… why did he hurt you, Deneri?”

“My father left me alone when I was young. And after my beberi passed away, I didn’t have any parents. My father didn’t care about me, and when I finally met him… he said he didn’t want me because I was weak, and then he hurt me. That was the last time I saw him.”
Pouting at this explanation, Adras took Thor’s hands, squeezing them tight. “I love you, Deneri! You don’t need Odin! You have us!”

Thor almost cried when Adras said this, and he smiled softly, touched by the conviction in Adras’ voice. “You’re absolutely right, Adras. I do have all of you. You’re my family. Not him.”

Adras’ nodded definitively, standing up in Loki’s lap so that he could hug Thor. “What about your beberi?”

“She passed away when I was 10, unfortunately. She got very sick, so Aunt Haela had to raise me.”

Adras hugged Thor tighter before kissing his cheek and pulling away. “I’m sorry, Deneri.”

Thor kissed Adras’ cheek as well, love blooming in his chest for his son. “It’s alright, Adras. I have you and Beberi and your younger siblings, so I’m happy.”

Adras giggled too, kissing Thor’s forehead one more time. “I’m happy too!”

After hugging Thor one last time, Adras sat back down in Loki’s lap, hugging him. “What about your family, Beberi?”

Loki usually didn’t like talking about his family, but for Adras, he would do it. He knew that Adras and he had being orphans in common.

“My Beberi passed away when I was 7, and my Deneri passed away when I was 8. I was separated from my brothers when I was 9, and haven’t seen them since then, so… you’re the first family that I’ve had in my life.”

Adras hugged Loki tighter, which comforted him. “I love you, Beberi.”

A fierce kick in the middle of his stomach made Loki make a soft sound, and he rubbed at his stomach gently, beginning to laugh. “It seems like your siblings want you to know they love you
Adras sat up then, placing both of his small hands on Loki’s round stomach. “Can I name them?”

Loki looked over at Thor, unsure of what to say. Traditionally, fathers were responsible for naming the children upon birth, as long as the mother approved of the name.

Thor surprised him though by laughing softly at the request and nodding. “Sure. You can name them. You just have to make sure it’s okay with Beberi too.”

Adras looked up at Loki hopefully, silently begging for permission.

Laughing softly, Loki nodded, giving him permission. “You can name your new siblings.”

Adras hugged Loki’s stomach, looking up at him still. “One can be named Pönnu, and the other can be named Lingon!”

Thor and Loki burst out into laughter at this, and Thor smiled, amused with his son. “You can’t name your siblings after food, Adras. That’s not very fair.”

“Well, what else can I name them?”

Loki waved his hand then, summoning a book with hundreds of common names for infants. He’d bought it for Thor, but he figured that it would help Adras. “Look through here if you would like to, and make a list of names. We don’t know what sex your siblings are, so we need to have names for every sex.”

Adras nodded, excited about being able to name his siblings. “Can I hold them when they’re here?”

“Of course, Adras. You’re their older brother. You can hold them as much as you like.”

Adras nodded to himself after hearing this, blushing again.
Thor placed a large hand on Adras’ shoulder, gazing at him softly. “Are you feeling better?”

“Yeah…”

Thor and Loki kissed both of Adras’ cheeks, which made the child laugh again, and Loki swore that every time his child laughed, a piece of his heart was healed.

The family all made their way upstairs next to wake Astrid up from her nap, and together they all played until it was time for dinner and then bed.

It hurt Loki to see Adras in so much pain, but he was relieved that the child knew he was truly loved and accepted.

Adras meant the world to them, and they were glad that he knew it.

Adras finding out he was adopted didn’t change the dynamics of their family in the slightest, and life continued on for Thor and Loki.

The pair stopped active recruitment efforts for the town once Loki reached seven decades in his pregnancy, and Loki lessened the amount of time he spent working the closer he got to a century.

To his complete shock, Loki was able to make it to nine decades before he became bedridden, and once he was put on bedrest, Thor took a leave of absence as well, trusting Draeil and Hemming with being completely in charge of the town.

Loki could honestly say that he didn’t mind the bedrest, as it allowed him to study and practice seidr consistently. Of course, any discomfort from the pregnancy was whisked away with a spell, so Loki didn’t mind the last decade of his pregnancy in the slightest.

Thor stayed true to his word, and helped Loki in every way possible, massaging his feet or ankles
or calves when they became swollen, and watching over him.

It was very scary for him to see Loki this large, and it broke his heart to know that Loki had trouble standing for longer than a few seconds, or walking, because of the pregnancy.

Luckily, they could afford for Loki to be on bedrest, so the pair waited with bated breath, knowing that their children could come at any time.

2 years before making it to a century, Loki woke up with unbearable pain in his lower back, and terrible cramps, so he knew that today would be the day.

Thor was knocked out next to him, blissfully unaware of this, and Loki laughed to himself, taking a moment to admire his husband.

His pain was not to be forgotten though, as another contraction reminded him that he was in labor.

“Thor…” he murmured, shaking the giant’s arm. “Thor, wake up.”

Thor mumbled something unintelligible, and Loki rolled his eyes, mildly amused. “Thor, I’m in labor.”

Thor snapped awake then, sitting up hurriedly. “Norns! Are you okay?”

Loki nodded, grimacing through another contraction. “It’s in the early stages. My waters won’t break for some time.”

“Should I get my aunt to watch the children, and then rush to get Hemming?”

“Please.”

Thor placed a calming hand on Loki’s stomach then. “Do you need help with anything before I leave?”
Loki shook his head, meeting Thor for a quick kiss. “No, Jetoni.”

Thor kissed Loki once more before getting up to go change.

The contractions intensified during the hour that Thor was away, but they weren’t earth shattering yet, so Loki knew he still had some time.

The door to his room opening drew him from his mind, and he smiled softly when Astrid walked into the room, her favorite toy in hand.

She made her way over to him and climbed onto the bed, wrapping her arms around him. “Hi, Beberi!”

“Hello, princess.”

Astrid seemed to know that Loki was in pain, and she frowned, looking up at him in concern. “Are you hurt, Beberi?”

Loki nodded, bringing her small hand up to his mouth to kiss. “Beberi is going to have your siblings today. And it’s very painful.”

Astrid grabbed her toy and handed it to Loki, wanting him to hold it. “Feel better, Beberi. Kitty will take your hurt away.”

Loki’s heart melted at this, and he accepted her toy, holding it close to his swollen chest. “Beberi will hold onto kitty.”

Nodding proudly, Astrid wrapped her arms around Loki and hummed, hoping to comfort him further. “I’ll hug you till the hurt goes away, because I love you!”

Loki didn’t know what he did in his previous life to deserve the family that he had now. His children were so innocently sweet to him, and he took a few seconds to thank the Norns for
allowing him to experience these joys.

A few minutes after Astrid came in, Adras opened the door, entering the room. “Morning, Beberi.”

Loki smiled softly when Adras climbed into bed with him, wrapping a loving arm around his waist. “Good morning, sweet child.”

“Adras! Beberi said he’s having the babies today!” exclaimed Astrid, grinning at her brother.

Adras widened his eyes, looking up at Loki in concern. “Will you be okay, Beberi?”

Loki nodded, kissing Adras’ temple. “It will hurt but… not for long. Beberi is very strong.”

Adras and Astrid nodded in agreement, continuing to relax in Loki’s embrace.

“Beberi?”

Loki hummed softly, using the sound of Astrid’s voice as a distraction from the steadily increasing pain. “Yes, princess?”

“Can I name one?”

“That’s my job, Astrid!” interjected Adras. “Beberi and Deneri already said that I can name them.”

Astrid looked crestfallen over this, and looked away, nestling back into Loki’s side and beginning to tear up.

Adras seemed to feel guilty though, and the young child sighed, rolling his eyes. “Since there’s two, I can name one, and you can name one. Deal?”

Astrid perked up and began to giggle, nodding hurriedly. “I already know a name.”
Loki raised an eyebrow, then. With his luck, Astrid would try and name her new sibling chair or pillow. “What name do you have in mind, sweet child?”

“What name do you have in mind, sweet child?”

“Eden!” she exclaimed, smiling proudly. “It’s the name of my favorite Niouvi princess!”

Loki didn’t mind the gender neutral name, as it meant everlasting life. He was surprised that Astrid came up with such a lovely name, and patted her back, pleased. “That is a lovely name, Astrid. I like it very much.”

“I have names too, Beberi!”

Loki looked down at Adras next. “Would you like to share them?”

“If it’s a boy, I’m going to name him Lysand! If it’s a girl, her name will be Hilda, and if it’s a niouvi, his name will be Eeren. At first it was Brynhild, but that sounded too ugly, so I changed it.”

Loki snorted at this, amused with his children. “Those are all very lovely names.”

He frowned slightly through a particularly strong contraction, and let out a soft sound, leaning back against the headboard.

Astrid and Adras kept him company and tried their best to comfort him until Thor returned with Tulla, his aunt, and Hemming.

“Tulla!”

Thor’s younger cousin beamed when Astrid called out to her, and she jumped on the bed with Loki, hugging Astrid tightly. “Are you excited, Astrid?”

Astrid nodded emphatically, beginning to giggle. “Beberi says that I can name one!”
Thor quirked an eyebrow up at this, looking down at Loki for an explanation. He *really* didn’t want his newborns to be named blanket or grass or whatever random word Astrid came up with.

“Astrid says she wants one of them to be named Eden.” murmured Loki, trying his best shift in the bed.

Thor was pleasantly surprised by the pleasant name, and gave his consent, agreeing to this. “That is a lovely name.”

Thor’s aunt could see that Loki’s discomfort was growing, so she made her way over to his bed, rounding up the children. “Follow me, everyone. You can see Beberi again once your siblings are here.”

Adras and Astrid grumbled, and made sure to give Loki lots of reassuring kisses and hugs before they left, wanting him to know that they loved him.

Hemming laughed softly once they left and closed the door before making his way over to Loki. “How are you feeling?”

“My waters should break in a few hours. I’ll be fine until then.”

Thor sat down on the edge of the bed, rubbing at Loki’s stomach affectionately. “Thank you, Loki.”

Loki shot him a weak smile and nodded, closing his eyes and letting the pain wash over him.

Hemming went about the room preparing things for the delivery, and checked in on Loki every half hour, directing Thor on what he should do to help lessen Loki’s pain.

The niouvi was too large to move or shift in bed on his own, so Thor moved him whenever he asked for it, reassuring him that he could do this, and that everything would be okay.

Loki wanted to try and take a warm bath, as he hoped that this would relax him, and that it might encourage his waters to break.
Thor carried Loki to the bathroom and sat him down on the bench, carefully undressing him, and filling the bath with warm water and bath salts.

Loki moaned deeply once he sank into the water, and focused on his breathing, wanting to do his best to remain calm.

Just as he suspected, relaxing in the bath seemed to help, and he felt his water break when one twin shifted in his womb.

Now the fun began.

Loki reached over to take Thor’s hand, catching his attention. “Jetoni? My water just broke.”

Thor gasped, reaching out to hold Loki’s face. “Are you alright?”

Loki nodded, grimacing through another contraction. “Please help me to our bed.”

“Of course, Aberi.” murmured Thor, standing up and pulling Loki up along with him.

After helping him step out of the bath, Thor picked Loki up, carrying him over to their bed.

Thankfully, Hemming had already stripped the bed of the expensive linens and blankets or furs, replacing them with plain sheets, and surrounding the area with towels.

Thor settled himself on the bed first, resting against the headboard of the bed. He then reached over for Loki, and helped maneuver him into the bed, readjusting him until he was encased in his hold, supported by him.

Loki grasped at Thor’s thigh through a horrid contraction, and knew then that it was only more pain from here.
He labored in Thor’s arms for two hours before he felt one of their children shift, and gritted his teeth, feeling the urge to push.

“Don’t push until you’re ready to, Loki.” murmured Hemming, rubbing at his thigh. “Everything will be okay.”

Loki grunted and bore down for the first time, his face contorting in pain.

He gasped and fell back against Thor to catch his breath, the giant whispering encouraging words into his ear and running comforting hands along his arms.

Loki let out a choked scream when he pushed again, and his eyes welled with tears, knowing that it would only get worse.

“Just take a deep breath, and push again when you’re ready. The child will crown soon.” instructed Hemming, rubbing Loki’s thigh again.

Loki couldn’t stop the scream that tore itself from him, and he began to sob, terrified about having to do this twice.

He managed to get this child to crown and wiped at his eyes with a shaking hand, trying to mentally prepare himself for the shoulders.

He looked down and saw that this child had hair that matched his, which filled him with a unique joy. He secretly hoped this baby was a niouvi, too.

“Come, Loki. Push again.”

Loki grunted and bore down, beginning to yell as a bit more of this child exited him. He writhed in Thor’s arms and continued to yell, screaming even louder once the shoulders were out.

“Breathe, Loki.” encouraged Hemming, humming softly. “Breathe, just take a breath.”
Once he caught his breath, Loki shifted, and bore down again, gripping at Thor and yelling in pain.

“One good push, Loki! Just one! They’re almost here!”

Loki inhaled deeply and pushed with everything in him, relief flooding through him once he felt his child leave him.

The wailings of an infant brought tears to Loki’s eyes and he looked up at Thor, whose own eyes were glistening with tears.

“A niouvi!”

Loki widened his eyes in shock at the size of the large niouvi, and he couldn’t stop the grin on his face as Hemming handed his child to him.

Their baby was so perfect, and Loki couldn’t help but cry as he caressed his baby’s cheek, feeling so much love for him in his heart.

“He’s lovely, Loki.”

Loki smiled and nodded, admiring their child. “He’s such a beautiful baby.”

The young infant cooed and blinked a few times, beginning to open his eyes, and Thor and Loki were shocked to see that the baby had the same eyes as him.

“Norns, Jetoni.” laughed Loki, readjusting the infant. “He has your eyes too.”

Thor rubbed at his infant’s cheek with a thumb, marveling at this as well. “Are you sure he’s a niouvi, Hemming? He’s so big.”

Hemming snorted, shooting an amused look Thor’s way. “He has both sexes, Thor. Niouvi aren’t always born small.”
Thor laughed softly, continuing to stare at his baby with Loki. “We’ll have to beat suitors off with a stick.”

This made Loki laugh, and he brought the infant to his lips, kissing him gently. It warmed his heart to imagine his children growing up and courting fellow giants, starting families of their own.

They bonded with this child until Loki felt ready to push again, and after swaddling the infant, Hemming placed their first child in a crib, prepared to help Loki deliver the next one.

Loki was exhausted by this time, and searched deep within himself to find the strength to deliver their other child.

When he felt the urge to push, Loki stiffened up in Thor’s hold, feeling that something was wrong.

"Breathe, Loki. Breathe. Take it moment by moment." murmured Hemming, rubbing his thigh.

"No, you don't understand, something is wro-"

Loki felt his child shift again and he let out a piercing scream, his nails digging into Thor's thighs and drawing blood.

He began to writhe in pain and sob, screaming every time he pushed.

Thor began to panic, and looked over at Hemming, who was just as concerned. "Hemming, what's wrong with him?!!"

Loki wailed again as his body took over, and forced him to push.

Hemming sent a quick pulse of seidr through Loki, trying to determine what was wrong. "I don't see any-"
He looked down then, the color leaving from his face. "Loki stop pushing."

Loki continued to sob and tremble from the pain, and Thor's heart began to race. "Hemming what's wrong with him?!"

"Loki, I need you to listen to me and only push when I tell you to. Your baby is breech."

Loki sobbed harder at this, beginning to panic.

Niouvi struggled to give birth to the children of giants in normal births, and often tore during delivery. Their pelvises were wide *just enough* to deliver giant children when they were in the standard birthing position, with their head faced down towards the birth canal.

When babies were in breech though, both the lives of the mother and child were at risk.

The birth canal of a Niouvi was not large enough to deliver breech children, and if the delivery was not done by a *very* skilled healer, both the child and mother would die.

"Hemming, what does that mean?! Hemming, what's wrong?!"

Hemming carefully adjusted Loki's hips, placing a pillow underneath them to put his hips at an incline, so that gravity could help this process.

"Your child is in breech position, and the birth canals of Niouvi are not big enough to deliver children in this position! If I don't take this step by step, Loki and this child *will* die."

Thor teared up at this, and he began to reassure Loki, who was still sobbing and trembling from the pain. If he panicked now, that would make Loki panic even more, and he couldn't have that happen.

He *couldn't* lose Loki and this child.

Loki screamed as his contractions forced his child through his narrow birth canal, continuing to
sob. "Don't let me die, Hemming!"

Hemming teared up at this, trying his best not to panic. "Loki, I have to break your pelvis. Once I do this, I have 5 minutes to deliver this child before it dies, and if I don't repair your injuries immediately after you will die too."

"Just do it!" wept Loki, feeling himself getting weak. "Please don't let my child die!"

"Thor, hold onto the crests of Loki's hips with all your strength. He needs to be completely immobilized in your hold when I break his pelvis!"

Thor nodded and did as he asked, tears pouring down his face when Loki howled in pain. Loki or their child dying was his worst nightmare, and he wept bitterly as Loki screamed, wishing he could trade places with him.

"Keep him at an angle, Thor. This is very important."

Thor tried his best to gently shift Loki, and held him close, reassuring him that everything would be okay and that he loved him.

Now that Loki's pelvis was broken, his birth canal had more room to pass this breech child.

"Loki, push for 5 seconds, and then stop."

Loki knew he had to deliver this child before fainting. If he fainted, they would both die.

And that wasn't going to happen.

He wailed when he pushed this time, spots beginning to dance across his vision.

He felt lightheaded, and so weak, and he didn't know if he'd make it out of this, but he swore to himself that his child would live.
Thor looked back and forth between Hemming and Loki, fervently praying to the Norns that Loki and the child made it out of this safe and healthy.

Grasping at the buttocks of the child, Hemming slipped a finger into Loki, hooking it around the leg of the infant, and guiding it out of Loki.

He did the same thing to the infant's other leg, and looked up at Thor again. "This will hurt him, Thor. But I need you to immobilize Loki. He cannot move until this baby is born!"

Thor sniffed and nodded, holding Loki down and in place.

Very carefully, Hemming grasped the body of the infant, and pushed it down so that it lied at an angle inside of Loki. Then, he began to rotate the baby very slowly, until the infant was no longer on its side.

"Push, Loki!"

Loki pushed until Hemming told him to stop, and took in a shaking breath, trying to not lose consciousness.

Hemming firmly grasped the infant and hooked a finger into Loki, gently guiding out the baby's arm.

He did the same to the other side, and rotated the child again, setting their body at an angle. "Last push, Loki!"

Loki screamed and bore down with everything in him, beginning to weep when he finally felt this child leave him, and heard its cries.

"Another niouvi!" announced Hemming, showing Loki and Thor their newest child.

He had Thor’s blonde hair just like Astrid, and Loki smiled softly, relieved that he was healthy and
Hemming quickly swaddled this infant and set it in its crib, beginning to heal Loki.

Thor sniffed and wiped at his eyes, pressing a warm kiss against Loki's temple. "I'm so proud of you, Loki."

Loki didn't reply, and Thor sat up hurriedly, looking down at him. "Loki?!"

Loki's remained silent, and Thor's blood ran cold when he noticed that Loki wasn't breathing.

"He's not breathing, Hemming!"

Hemming sent out a tidal wave of seidr into Loki, refusing to let his best friend die.

He applied his vast knowledge of medical seidr to heal Loki, repairing every single tear or broken bone within him.

He summoned Loki’s medical book - he was the only one besides Loki with the clearance to summon it - and didn't stop pouring seidr into Loki until the Niouvi began to groan, slowly moving in the bed.

Thor wrapped his arms around Loki and began to sob in relief, thankful that they had Hemming here to help them.

Hemming wiped at his tears too, praising the Norns.

Loki shifted in Thor's arms then, beginning to wake up.

He felt impossibly weak, but Hemming was healing everything, so he was no longer in pain.
He blinked a few times before memories of his delivery flooded through his mind, and he began to panic, fighting to get out of Thor's arms. "Where is my child?!"

"He's okay, Aberi! He's alright!" rushed Thor, pinning Loki down. "You can't move, Loki. Hemming healed the major things but things are still very sore and very tender. Your pelvis was broken and although it's been healed, your body is still recovering from it. Just stay still."

Loki stopped fighting against Thor's hold, knowing that he was right. "Let me see my children, Hemming."

Hemming finished healing some of Loki's tears and hemorrhaging, looking down at his friend. "I can assure you, your children are fine, Loki. But what is most important is you staying in this bed, so that I can heal you completely."

"What happened to me?"

"You went into shock, Loki. You tore to the third degree, and we had to break your pelvis for the delivery. You lost a lot of blood, and this coupled with the immense pain, weakened you. A bit of your child's amniotic fluid entered your bloodstream when we broke your pelvis, which caused you to stop breathing. Stay in this bed and do not move until I am done healing you."

Loki had never seen Hemming so stern before, and he snapped his mouth shut, relaxing in the bed against Thor, and allowing the Niouvi to heal him completely.

He could hear his children cooing, and he wanted nothing more than to hold them, but he knew that being healed first was more important.

He could've died during this delivery, and he had never felt that much immense pain in his life.

It took Hemming an hour and a half to completely heal Loki, and once he was done he checked him with seidr once more, wanting to be absolutely certain that every complication from this delivery was fixed, and everything was as it was before.

“Loki, I’m going to get you some water. In the meantime, Thor, I need you to carefully help Loki sit up against the headboard of the bed. He will still be very sore and very tender, and might bruise throughout the next few weeks, so he is not to leave this bed.”
Thor nodded seriously, relieved that Hemming healed Loki, and knowing that he would do whatever it took to keep Loki and their children safe, healthy, and alive.

Carefully shifting from behind Loki, Thor hooked his hands underneath the Niouvi’s armpits, and hoisted him up, freezing when Loki cried out in pain.

“Breathe, Loki. I know it hurts, but Hemming said we have to move you.”

Loki gritted his teeth and nodded, groaning and clutching the sheets of the bed as Thor readjusted him.

Once Loki was against the headboard, he fluffed numerous pillows behind him, and brought the sullied towels and sheets and furs from under him, changing them to clean ones.

He finally sat back down in the bed and wrapped a strong arm around Loki, kissing his temple. “I love you.”

Loki melted in Thor’s hold, nodding. “Thank you for helping me.”

One of their children cooed again, and Loki’s eyes darted over to the crib, the desire to hold them only getting stronger. “What sex is the second child?”

“A Niouvi,” murmured Thor, rubbing at Loki’s arm. “He has my hair and your eyes.”

This made Loki snort, and he looked over at the cribs in their room fondly. “At least these children take something from me.”

Thor laughed softly as well, relieved that Loki was okay. “We haven’t gotten the chance to observe their faces, yet. I’m sure they’ll be a beautiful blend.”

Loki nodded, closing his eyes and relaxing against Thor. He wanted to fall asleep, but not without seeing his children, holding them for some time, feeding them, and approving their names.
Hemming entered Loki’s room with a pitcher of water, two cups, and some sliced fruit, setting it on the bed table. “Drink two cups of water first, Loki. Then have at least a few apple slices. I know you’re tired, but you need some nutrients in you first.”

Loki nodded obediently, surprised but touched by Hemming’s stern tone. Over the years, he and Hemming became very close, and Loki began to look up at him as the mother/older sibling that he never had. The Niouvi cared for him fondly, and was always there for him, so although he would never admit it, Hemming was now an integral figure in Loki’s life.

“How are you feeling?”

Loki gratefully accepted the mug of water, and drained it before answering. “I’m very sore. And it hurts when I try and shift my hips. But… I know this will go away in time.”

Hemming nodded, handing Loki an apple slice. “You did very good, Loki.”

Loki laughed softly, thanking him. “Thank you for not giving up and for saving us, Hemming. I am forever indebted to you.”

Reaching out, Hemming placed a calming hand on Loki’s thigh, his gaze softening. “You are very important to me Loki; I look at you as if you’re one of my own. I would never let anything happen to you or your children. That’s what family is for.”

Loki blamed his tears on the hormones of pregnancy, and he averted his gaze, wiping at his eyes. “Thank you, Hemming.”

Hemming smiled softly and squeezed Loki’s thigh, handing him another apple slice. “Eat this, and then I’ll get your children.”

Loki took it graciously, and ate it, taking another swig of water before setting the mug down.

Hemming went to pick up their firstborn, and made his way back across the room, gently placing him in Loki’s arms. “Here is your firstborn.”
Loki took him graciously, unable to stop the grin that spread across his face at the sight of his baby.

He was a bit smaller than Astrid was when she was a newborn, but was still quite large for a Niouvi baby.

Now that he’d been out the womb for some time, Thor and Loki could make out his features a bit easier, and Loki was overjoyed to see that this child resembled him closely.

“Here is the youngest twin, Loki.”

Loki handed the child in his arms to Thor, and gratefully accepted the next newborn, beginning to laugh when he stared at him.

This baby had Thor’s hair, but had Loki’s eyes, and the roundest cheeks. This infant looked more like a blend between them, and Loki smiled proudly, thankful that his children were alive and healthy.

Gently shifting the infant in his arms so that he could hold both infants, Loki aligned them with his swollen chest, guiding them to his nipples so that he could feed them.

His children drank greedily, and Loki laughed at this, leaning back against the headboard of the bed and closing his eyes while they ate.

Once the children were done drinking from him, Loki pressed soft kisses against their foreheads, thankful that each one was safe and okay.

“Should I bring in everyone else?”

Loki nodded, handing the oldest twin to Thor again. “Please.”

Hemming nodded and stood up, leaving the room so that he could get the rest of Thor and Loki’s
family.

Their children burst into the room a few minutes later and crowded around the bed with Tulla, staring up at the babies in awe.

“Everyone, Beberi is very sore, so you need to be very careful when you climb on the bed to hug him, okay?” warned Hemming.

The children nodded, so one by one Hemming helped each child onto the bed, giving them strict instructions to be very gentle with Loki.

“I wanna hold one, Beberi!” announced Astrid, holding out her arms expectantly.

Loki laughed softly and gently handed her the blonde infant, making sure that Tulla helped her hold him. “Here, princess.”

“Me too, Beberi!” begged Adras, holding out his arms for the infant in Thor’s arms.

Thor carefully handed Adras the black haired infant, and helped him adjust his hold on it, readjusting his arms.

Once both children held their new siblings, Astrid began to giggle, looking down at her new sibling. “Eden!”

Loki nodded, approving of her name. “His name is Eden, then.”

“And his name is Eeren!” announced Adras, kissing his sibling’s forehead.

“Then his name is Eeren.” murmured Loki, beginning to get tired.

Thor noticed Loki’s exhaustion and kissed his cheek, wanting him to sleep. “Beberi is very tired, everyone. Let’s put your siblings to bed so that Beberi can sleep. We’ll come check on them all again in an hour.”
The children began to grumble, but understood, handing the infants to Thor’s aunt and Hemming before climbing off of the bed.

One by one they each kissed Loki’s cheek, and told him that they loved him, before leaving the room.

Thor kissed Loki as well, and asked him to call out for him if he was needed at all, before following his aunt and children out of the room.

Hemming closed the door behind them before sitting down beside Loki’s bed, and caressing Loki’s cheek.

“Thank you, Hemming.”

Hemming continued to caress Loki’s cheek, smiling at him fondly. “You were so brave today, Loki. I’m so proud of you.”

Loki blushed and averted his gaze, allowing Hemming to be this intimate with him. “Thank you for helping me. I wouldn’t trust anyone else to do what you did today.”

Hemming nodded, pinching Loki’s cheek before pulling away. “Scan yourself again, please, to make sure that I’ve healed everything properly.”

Loki nodded and used seidr to check himself, not seeing anything out of the ordinary. “Everything looks perfect to me. Thank you, Hemming.”

Hemming nodded and affectionately squeezed Loki’s hand before standing. “Send Adras or Thor to come get me if anything happens. Okay?”

Loki nodded, beginning to get sleepy again. “I will, Hemming.”

“And I’ll stop by next week and bring the children. I’m sure they’re excited to see your newborns.
Loki forced himself to not groan at the thought of all of Hemming’s children being in his home, and nodded, squeezing Hemming’s hand back. Their families were very close, and because of Loki and Hemming’s close bond, their children considered themselves as cousins, each of them referring to Loki or Hemming as “Aunt Loki” or “Aunt Hemming”.

After standing, Hemming checked on Loki’s infants one last time before sitting back down next to Loki, and watching him sleep for an hour.

Once the twins began to cry, Hemming gently woke Loki up, and helped bring the twins to him, guiding them to Loki’s chest, and watching over them.

They fed for 40 minutes before cooing, and Hemming took hold of Eden, beginning to burp him. “Thor will need to be by your side every moment until they’re 3 decades. It will be too taxing to raise newborn twins alone while you are responsible for two other children, and leading this town.”

Loki laughed softly, beginning to burp Eeren. “Thor and I have decided that the town’s expansion will stop until the twins are old enough to be in daycare. I’ll… pick up more and more responsibilities with the town as the babies age.”

“You can’t do it all, Loki.”

Loki closed his eyes and leaned back against the headboard of his bed. “You seem to do it.”

“I have six kids, Loki. I have a bit more experience than you.” murmured Hemming, a gentle smile on his face.

The pair remained silent for some time, continuing to burp the babies and listening to them coo or gurgle softly.

“You know, Loki… my boys just turned a century old. I’m beginning to wean them off of my milk, but… I understand that you have visions for this town. And I understand that you have your sights set high. I swore my fidelity to you, no matter the endeavor, and… and if you need me to watch the twins during the day while you work, I will.”
Loki turned to look at Hemming sharply, surprised by the offer. “Norns, Hemming! A-Are you certain?!”

Hemming kissed Eden’s forehead, shifting him to the crook of his arm. “You can’t get to where you want to be, without help. And we don’t have idle time if we’re trying to kill the king. He could attack us at any moment, so… we have to work together, for the betterment of our community, and our cause.”

Loki shifted Eeren to the crook of his arm as well, thinking carefully. It was not uncommon for mothers that were close or family, to nurse each other’s children when the mother was unavailable, so Loki wasn’t put off by this.

Hemming offering to watch his children during the day would be a tremendous help, and would allow for Loki to resume his duties in the town in a decade or two.

He felt guilty about leaving his children while they were so young, but he told himself that this was necessary. He would take off three days a week so that he still had time to spend with his children, and on the days he worked, Hemming’s offer would be a godsend.

“Thank you, Hemming. That… that means a lot to me.”

Hemming nodded, gently handing Eden to Loki so that he could bond to him too. “Just drop the twins off when you’re ready to return to work, and I’ll be there.”

Loki smiled softly, taking a moment to marvel at his friendship.

Hemming noticed this and smiled, leaning over to kiss Loki’s forehead. “You did a good job, Loki. I’m proud of you.”

Loki closed his eyes and allowed himself to feel comforted by Hemming’s affection.

He hadn’t been held or kissed tenderly like this since before his mother died.
Hemming pulled away and shot him another smile before standing, taking an infant in each arm so that he could put them back in their cribs. “I’ll get your family, Loki. Please send Thor or Adras for me if anything happens.”

Loki nodded and watched Hemming leave, beginning to laugh when he heard his children running up the stairs and shouting a few minutes later.

Loki’s family made their way upstairs and entered the room, Adras and Astrid leaping onto the bed and nestling themselves into Loki’s side. Tulla jumped up next and sat down next to Astrid, climbing under the covers and hugging Astrid.

Thor’s aunt laughed at this, amused with her child. “Tulla, say goodbye to your cousins. It’s time to go home now.”

“But Beberi! Can’t I stay the night?” begged Tulla, hugging Astrid even tighter. “I want to help Cousin Loki with the babies.”

“Tulla, Loki is tired, and-”

“Please, Beberi!”

Thor’s aunt sighed and looked over at Loki, waiting for his decision.

Sighing, Loki couldn’t keep the smile off of his face, and he nodded, giving Tulla permission to spend the night.

The children cheered, and Thor’s aunt laughed softly, kissing them all goodbye. “I’ll be back first thing in the morning, Loki. Do you need anything from the market?”

“No, Aunt Haela. I’ll be fine. Thank you for all of your help.”

Thor’s aunt smiled and nodded, waving before leaving the room.
Loki looked at the clock on the wall and noticed that it had been about two hours since the last feeding of his children, and called out to Thor, asking him to bring them over to the bed.

Thor nodded and kissed Loki’s forehead, getting Eden out of the crib first.

Eden began to whimper and grunt, but calmed down when he was in Loki’s arms, opening his eyes and staring at Loki.

“He has eyes like you, Beberi!” gasped Astrid, staring at her younger sibling.

Loki yawned and nodded, guiding Eden to his chest. “It’s normal for babies to take different physical features from their parents.”

Once Eden was drinking from him, he opened his arms to accept Eeren, and positioned the baby as well, closing his eyes and relaxing back into the headboard.

“Beberi?”

“Yes, sweet child?”

“Does that hurt?”

Loki shook his head no. “Not in the slightest.”

“Can only Niouvi do that?” asked Tulla.

“Giantesses can do this too.” murmured Loki, beginning to drift off to sleep.

“I’ll help you, Beberi!” announced Astrid, drawing attention to herself.
Thor snorted at her innocence, beginning to laugh. “You’re too young to do this, Astrid. You have to become an adult, and find someone you love to marry, before you can.”

Astrid pouted and crossed her arms, not happy to hear this. “I love Beberi!”

Loki laughed when Astrid said this, touched by the innocent gesture. “You can’t marry Beberi, Astrid.”

Astrid seemed heartbroken over this, and began to tear up. “Why?”

“Because you only marry someone if you romantically love them. The love you have for Beberi is familial love.”

Astrid continued to pout, still sad that she couldn’t marry Loki. “But I love you, Beberi!”

“And Beberi loves you too, Astrid.” assured Loki. “But that’s familial love. When you get older, you’ll meet someone that you romantically love, and then you can marry them. Okay?”

Astrid sniffed and nodded, nestling further into Loki’s side.

Thor and Loki shared an amused laugh, and enjoyed being here with their family, in this moment.

It was scary, knowing that Loki wouldn’t have made it through this delivery if Hemming hadn’t been there, but everyone was safe and happy, so for that, they were thankful.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter gets back into the main plot/arc of the story, and things start to heat up as we learn more about Thor, Loki, and their quest to kill the king and Odin.
Hello!

Super long chapter here, clocking in at over 12k words so I hope you enjoy it! We learn some VERY useful information this chapter, that guides us and prepares us for future chapters.

New word for the story is "Idri", which is what Niouvi siblings are called. So in this story, if someone is a male, they're a brother, if they're a female, they're a sister, and if they're a Niouvi, they're an "idri", which is singular and plural, just like "Niouvi".

I'd also like to explain a bit about Niouvi.

Niouvi generally have an androgynous appearance, as in this story, they are intersex, and a blend between the sexes. Of course, some of them, like Loki, look a bit more masculine, and others look a little more feminine, but they're still overwhelmingly androgynous. So when it comes to their titles and pronouns, it gets a bit blended. All Niouvi are referred to as "he/him/his", but will always be "wives/mothers/aunts/grandmothers". This was done to cut down on confusion, because in reality, I believe that Niouvi would have their own pronouns to use. I really didn't feel like creating a whole new set of pronouns though for this story, since I've already created a vast made up vocabulary.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Thor didn’t leave Loki’s side the first few weeks after the delivery.

Because Loki’s pelvis was broken to help him deliver Eden, he was still very sore, and struggled to walk, so Thor demanded on the orders of Hemming that he remain in bed that first month, and carried him everywhere.

He brought Loki their niouvi children when it was time to feed them, he changed them when Loki rested and recovered, he cooked breakfast, lunch, and dinner for the family, he took their kids to and from school, and made sure that Loki didn’t want or need for anything else during his recovery.

Two months after the delivery, Loki felt that he had recovered enough to try walking a bit, and was beginning to get tired of being an invalid, so that morning, while Thor was still asleep, Loki told himself he would get out of bed.
He’d learned to distinguish Eeren and Eden’s cries, and this morning, it seemed that Eeren was the first infant to coo.

Taking a deep breath, Loki carefully swung his legs over the side of his bed, and grunted, sitting up.

He shifted his eyes over to Thor to make sure that he didn’t hear him, and sighed softly, carefully bearing weight on his legs.

It hurt a bit, but the pain wasn’t unbearable, so Loki held onto the bed frame, slowly standing up straight.

He heard his hip pop and felt an *excruciating* pain, causing him to cry out and clutch at the bedframe tightly.

Thor snapped awake at once and gasped, rushing out of bed and over to Loki’s side. “Loki! What are you doing out of bed?!”

Loki bit his lip and closed his eyes, fighting back tears. “H-Help me sit, Jetoni!”

Thor swept Loki into his arms and carefully sat him in the bed, seeing that his hip was bruised. “Norns, Aberi, what did you do?!”

Loki made a pained sound, trying to readjust himself in bed without whimpering. “I-I wanted to walk!”

“Loki, Hemming said you can’t try and walk until at least three months have passed! You’re still recovering!”

Loki felt guilty for trying to force himself to walk before he was ready, and he *did* feel bad about worrying Thor, but he just felt so *bored*, having to depend on Thor for everything. He wanted to try and do something small, himself.

He couldn’t stop his whimper as Thor set him into the bed completely, and he shook his head,
squeezing his eyes shut. “Go get Hemming!”

His hip felt wrong, and he was in too much pain to assess himself with seidr to try and heal whatever he messed up.

Thor turned and called for Adras, shouting for the young boy again when he didn’t hear anything.

Loki and Thor’s bedroom door opened up a few seconds later, and Adras entered, rubbing at his eyes. “Yes, Deneri?”

“Adras, go get Aunt Hemming! Beberi is hurt!”

Adras widened his eyes and ran towards Loki, beginning to tear up. “Beberi?”

“Go, Adras.” pressed Thor, staring down at Loki in concern. “Hurry.”

Adras nodded, running out of the room and out their home.

Hemming told Thor that if Loki was ever in pain, to apply ice to the area for twenty minutes, so Thor pressed a soft kiss against Loki’s forehead, his heart breaking. “Stay here, Loki. Do not move!”

Loki made a pained grunt and collapsed against his pillows, waving his hand and casting a pain mitigation spell so that he could at least think through his pain.

Thor sat down hurriedly next to him, taking his face in his hands. “Loki, why did you try and get out of bed?”

“Eeren made a sound… I wanted to hold him and see if he was hungry.”

“Loki, all you had to do was wake me up…”
Loki made a face at this. “I wanted to do it myself…”

“Loki, you're not *healed*, yet. What if you getting out of bed today reverses all the healing that has been done? What if you accidentally knocked something out of place, and Hemming has to start this process all over again?”

Loki did *not* like being chastised by Thor, and he pursed his lips, remaining silent so that he wouldn’t say something snarky.

Thor’s face softened, and he kissed Loki’s temple, standing up. “I’ll be right back.”

Loki didn’t say anything, so Thor sighed, and left the room, getting some ice wrapped in a small towel to press against Loki’s bruised hip.

Loki would tear off Thor’s head if Thor ever addressed Loki’s tendency to “pout” when he didn’t get his way, or when things turned out in a way he didn’t like, so Thor kept the fact that he found this aspect of Loki adorable to himself, and entered the room again, carefully sitting on the bed.

“Let me see your hip, Aberi.”

Loki silently shifted his nightshirt up and continued to purse his lips, revealing his hip. The bruise had doubled in size, which worried Thor greatly, and he gently applied the ice to his hip, shushing him gently when he hissed from the sting.

“Loki… I understand that you miss being independant. But we need to keep working together so that you can make a complete recovery. I don’t like seeing you hurt.”

Loki averted his gaze, holding the ice pack on his hip. “I just wanted to try myself…”

“Loki… every time you are hurt or in pain, a piece of my heart dies. I feel so much guilt for wanting you to carry our children, *knowing* the pain that it causes you. I just want you happy and healthy. I don’t like when you’re *hurting*, Loki.”

Loki’s hardened gaze softened, and he looked up at Thor, begrudgingly remorseful. “Please don’t
feel this way. My body was made to carry life, Thor. I don’t mind giving you an entire nation, if that’s what you wanted. Me being stubborn and trying to walk before my body was ready is not your fault.”

Thor leaned forward and kissed Loki softly, staring deeply into his eyes. “How are you feeling?”

“Better, since I cast a spell. I shifted something out of place when I tried to walk I think, and I need Hemming to fix it.”

Their bedroom door opened quickly then, a flustered Hemming and a worried Adras making their way through.

Hemming rushed over to Loki’s side and sat down, immediately beginning to assess him with seidr. “Loki! Why have you done this?! I gave you specific instructions for you to remain off your feet for three months!”

Loki remained silent, so Hemming shook his head, casting a very powerful pain mitigation spell. “I’m going to reattach the ligaments that attach the upper right and lower right portions of your pelvis, to your tailbone.” He glared at Loki fiercely then. “Do not get out of bed for an additional three months! I mean it, Loki!”

Loki pursed his lips but nodded, wincing as Hemming began to repair his torn ligaments.

Adras climbed into bed with Loki while Hemming healed him and wrapped his arms around his torso, burying his face into his swollen chest. “Beberi, if you get out of bed again I’m gonna be really mad!”

Loki bit back an amused smile and ran his hand through Adras’ rosewood hair, closing his eyes and relaxing as Hemming healed him. “Beberi will not leave this bed until Aunt Hemming tells me to.”

Adras huffed and glared up at Loki, his adorable cheeks puffing out in frustration. “I mean it, Beberi! I-I’ll be really mad! I-I’ll even cry! And I’ll tell Deneri on you!”

Loki’s heart softened, and he nodded, meeting Adras for a warm kiss. “Beberi promises that he’ll stay in bed the entire three months, and not a day sooner.”
“Good!” murmured Adras, meeting Loki for another kiss. “I don’t like when you’re in pain, Beberi…”

Adras always knew the perfect thing to say to get to his heart, and Loki made a hurt face, kissing Adras again and pulling his son closer. “Beberi’s sorry.”

Astrid pushed her way into their room next, forever clutching her favorite toy, and rubbing at her eyes. “Deneri? What’s wrong?”

“Beberi hurt himself!” exclaimed Adras, hugging onto Loki tighter.

Astrid pouted, running over to his bed and jumping onto it, nestling into his other side carefully. “What happened?”

“Beberi tried to get out of bed before he healed, and hurt himself.”

Astrid pouted further, glaring up at Loki. “Bad, Beberi!”

Loki couldn’t help but snort at this. “Beberi is sorry, Astrid.”

Astrid continued to pout, staring up at him. “Listen to Aunt Hemming, Beberi!”

Loki kissed Astrid’s forehead, humming softly. “I will.”

“Promise!”

Loki leaned forward and linked his pinky with Astrid’s. “I promise.”

Astrid kissed their linked pinkies to seal the deal, and nodded definitively, nestling back against Loki’s side.
Hemming finished healing Loki a few minutes later, and sighed in relief, rubbing at his hip. “How does it feel?”

Loki carefully shifted his hip, relieved that it didn’t hurt as bad as it did earlier. “Much better, Hemming.”

Hemming nodded, relieved that Loki was alright now. “Are you well enough to feed the twins?”

Loki hummed again, determined to do this. Hemming had already done so much for him already, so he would hate to ask Hemming to feed the niouvi too.

“I can manage, Hemming. Thor is here to help.”

Hemming sighed softly and nodded, leaning forward to kiss Loki’s forehead. “Call for me if anything happens. And I mean anything.”

Loki nodded, and thanked Hemming once more, watching him leave.

Eden began to hiccup and cry then, so Thor strode across the room, carefully picking up the infant and beginning to calm him.

He made his way over to Loki and handed him Eden, guiding him to Loki’s nipple and making sure he was latched on before getting Eeren, and doing the same for him.

He watched his family nestle into or around Loki, and felt his heart bloom with pride and love.

After the twins finished drinking, Adras and Astrid requested to hold them, and they all didn’t want to leave Loki’s side, so after placing a baby in each child’s arms, Thor made his way downstairs, and made breakfast for them all, bringing it upstairs so that they could all be with Loki.

The children were unwilling to leave Loki’s side today, so the whole family spent the entire day here, watching over him, comforting him, and spending time with the twins.
True to his word, Loki did not try and get out of bed again until three more months had passed, and he was practically vibrating with excitement the day he was finally allowed to get out of bed.

Thor woke up first that morning, and checked on the twins, relieved to see that they were still blissfully asleep.

He then went to draw Loki a warm bath, and filled it with his favorite bath salts, surrounding it with scented candles.

Finally, he woke Loki up, gently rubbing at his arm. “Love? Are you ready to wake up?”

Loki made a soft sound, his face pinched in a frown. “No…”

Thor snorted, quickly kissing the tip of Loki’s nose. “But you were so excited to try and walk, today.”

Loki blinked a few times, remembering this. Groaning softly, Loki carefully sat up, swinging his legs over the edge of the bed. “Will you help me”

“Of course, Aberi. Here, give me your forearms.”

Loki scooted forward and held out his forearms to Thor, who grasped them firmly.

“Bear all of your weight onto me, Loki.”

Loki bit a lower lip then, getting nervous. “I don’t want to hurt you…”

Thor laughed softly, a twinkle in his eyes. “Loki… I could literally carry you with my pinky. I promise, you bearing all of your weight on me will not hurt me in the slightest.”

Blushing slightly, Loki nodded, and began to bear his weight on Thor, slowly standing up.
“That’s it, love,” encouraged Thor. “One step at a time. We’ve got all day.”

Loki nodded and exhaled deeply, fully standing up.

He swayed a bit in Thor’s hold because he’d spent the last 11 years in bed, and his leg muscles were impossibly weak, but Thor held on, readjusting his hold on Loki so that his arm was positioned around his waist securely.

“Do you think you can walk to the bathroom?”

Loki bit a lower lip, not sure. “I don’t know…”

Thor kissed Loki gently then, not wanting him to worry. “We can take this day by day, Loki. You already stood up, and beared your weight on your hips. That’s a major improvement.”

“I-I think I want to try and take a single step forward…”

Thor nodded, holding onto Loki tighter to offer him greater support. “Which leg?”

“My left.”

“Okay. We’ll do this together. On your count, okay, love?”

Loki nodded, taking another deep breath. “One… two… three…”

He shuffled forward, grimacing when he did this. It didn’t hurt terribly, but it still felt very uncomfortable.

His goal was to make it to the bathroom though, so he carefully took another step, grasping onto Thor tightly.
“That’s it, Loki. We’re almost there.” encouraged Thor, still holding onto Loki.

It took a few minutes, but Loki was able to shuffle all the way across their room, and into their bathroom, which made him happier than anything.

His heart melted when he saw that Thor drew him a bath, and he turned slowly to look at him, touched by the gesture. “Jetoni…”

Thor kissed him tenderly, smiling against his lips. “It’s the least I can do, Loki. Now, please let me help you undress.”

Loki bit a lower lip, and seemed to be feeling self conscious, which concerned Thor greatly.

“Loki?”

Loki looked away from him, not saying anything.

Reaching out to gently take Loki’s face in his hands, Thor stroked at his cheek, worried him. “Love?”

“... I look different.”

“Well of course you do, Loki. You’ve just given birth to twins. It will take some time for your body to return to its original size.”

Loki crossed his arms then, still looking away. “That’s not what I meant.”

Thor continued to stare at his spouse, waiting for him to explain.

“... My figure… I am no longer slender.”
“Loki, you’ve just-”

“I had Hemming permanently alter the size and shape of my pelvis, to make it larger. In turn, this has given me a more… feminine physique.”

Thor let go of Loki’s face then. “May I look?”

Loki nodded slowly, so Thor removed Loki’s nightshirt carefully, staring at his naked form.

Originally, when they were wed, Loki was a very slender Niouvi, that looked overwhelmingly masculine. Loki has broad shoulders, and a slender, elongated torso, which paired nicely with his slim waist. Thor could even wrap both hands around Loki’s waist in the beginning, and have his fingers touch.

After having Astrid, Loki’s hips flared a bit more, and he did get a naturally rounder bottom, but Thor didn’t mind in the slightest, as he loved every part of Loki.

Now though, Thor could definitely tell that Loki’s hips were more flared and pronounced than they were before. Hemming had definitely given him “child-bearing hips”, and Thor slowly turned Loki around, observing him further.

His shape was not overtly feminine, like a giantess, but it was no longer overwhelmingly masculine.

He now had a shape that most Niouvi naturally had, which blurred the lines between the sexes, and was overwhelmingly androgynous.

Overall, Thor did not mind what he saw in the slightest. He found Loki even more alluring now, and looked forward to when the Niouvi was fully healed, so that he could show Loki just how much he still appreciated his body.

Looking down at Loki, Thor kissed him once more, gentle hands splayed on his hips. “You look lovely, Loki. You doing this has not taken away my attraction for you in the slightest.”
Loki looked up at him hopefully, then. “Are you certain?”

Thor pulled Loki into his arms, his large hands firmly holding onto Loki’s bottom. “I am certain. I… find myself even more attracted to you. And I look forward to when you’ve made a complete recovery, so that I can appreciate you fully.”

Loki melted into Thor’s touch, blushing furiously. “Really?”

“Yes, love. The only thing I’m worried about now is beating off even more giants with a stick, for they’ll surely be all over you now, and I can’t let that happen.”

Loki began to laugh, feeling better about his new appearance. “I did this so that when we have more children… I will be able to give birth to them easier. I don’t want to ever experience the pain that I felt when my pelvis was broken, again.”

Thor nodded solemnly, stroking at Loki’s rear before kissing his neck. “Let me help you into the bath, Aberi.”

Loki stepped away from Thor and grabbed his arms, letting Thor guide him into the warm water.

This seemed to help, and Loki let out a low moan, feeling a million times better.

He and Thor sat in comfortable silence until Loki was ready to go back to bed, so Thor helped him dry off, and dressed him in a clean nightshirt, helping him walk back to their bed.

Loki was exhausted by the time he made it back to bed, and he yawned, looking over at the twins. “Let me feed the niouvi before I fall back asleep, Jetoni.”

Thor nodded, getting the twins one by one and handing them to Loki, helping him adjust them.

Once each twin was positioned properly and latched on, Thor relaxed against the headboard, closing his eyes. “We need to get you a nursing pillow.”
Loki had honestly forgotten that those existed, and he waved his hand, using seidr to summon one. “Help me reposition the babies, please.”

Thor reached over and carefully lifted Eeren, who began to cry when Thor separated him from Loki.

Thor tutted softly, quickly positioning Eeren onto the pillow and helping him latch back onto Loki.

He did the same thing to Eden, and rubbed at the backs of his children to calm them while they drank. “That should make things a bit easier for you.”

Loki nodded and closed his eyes, beginning to doze off.

Thor laughed softly and watched Loki until their children were done feeding, gently taking them from the pillow and returning them to their cribs.

He then pulled Loki down into bed and nestled him against his side, kissing his cheek, and falling back asleep with him.

Loki didn’t return to his leadership duties until the twins were two decades old, and in the meantime, the town focused on staying its current size, and not on expansion.

Loki made sure to practice seidr every chance he could while he focused on taking care of the twins each day, and by their third century in this town, he’d become very powerful. He believed he’d be strong enough to take on the king next century but would wait until his children were much, much older to do so.

Thor had also been practicing tiresley with his gift each day, and now knew how to fly, and cause
storms, so for this, he was thankful.

He did notice that using his powers for hours and hours at a time had no effect on his strength or energy, and he often wondered if he could use these powers endlessly.

When they’d been in this town for three centuries, and the twins were five decades old, Loki discovered something alarming about Thor’s heritage and his own, and he fretted over it for some time before bringing it up to Thor.

He waited until each child had been laid down to sleep, and changed into bedclothes, summoning two of his books.

Thor raised an eyebrow at him as he got into bed, staring down at him curiously. “Studying before bed?”

Loki shook his head and sighed, staring up at his husband. “We need to talk. I’ve learned something.”

Thor turned to face Loki completely then, nodding slowly. “What have you learned?”

Loki stared up at his husband seriously, knowing that this information would most likely wreck Thor. “Thor… remember the night I told you about your grandfather, and how upset that made you?”

Thor frowned, not liking where this was going. “… I do. Is this information worse than that night?”

Loki bit his lower lip and nodded, setting the books down in his lap, and taking Thor’s hands in his. “Before I tell you these things, I need you to know that I love you. And that none of this was your fault. We had no idea. You had no idea.”

Thor did not like the sound of this, and his heart began to pound in his chest, his mind beginning to race. “Loki, what is this about?”

Loki reached up to hold Thor’s face, wanting him to know that everything would be okay. “If you
have any questions, please ask and interrupt me. This will be difficult to know, but you need to know this before we try and kill Odin.”

Now Thor was terrified, but he nodded anyway, trusting Loki. “I understand. Please tell me.”

Loki sighed, and flipped through the very first book in his lap. “As you know, the creator of these books that I have was a very powerful Niouvi named Frode Gundson. These books were written after the fall of the original giant, Ymir. And although these books mostly contain spells, they contain lots of history too.”

Thor nodded, waiting for Loki to continue.

“This is a very long story, Thor. And it is very tragic. But this is very important information because this changes our plans on how to kill your father drastically.”

Thor didn’t like the sound of this, but he listened anyway, waiting for Loki to begin.

“Frode was one of the original children of Ymir. He was one of the first actually, and in this book, he says that he quickly became very skilled at seidr. As the years passed, he became the most powerful user of it across the realms. During his time, Asgard and Jötunheim were not enemies, and their people often went back and forth between the realms.”

“One day, Asgard decided that they no longer wanted to be amicable. They wanted to rule the realms instead. They attempted to take over Jötunheim first, and this was thwarted by Frode. This went on for a few decades before a man from Asgard changed the tides of their attacks. Frode says he had never seen an Asgardian like this, one who was filled with such power and bloodlust. Frode couldn’t understand how an Asgardian was this powerful, and because Frode was the strongest user of seidr in this realm, the two often went toe to toe, their battles fierce and deadly.”

“This Asgardian seemed to be Asgard’s trump card, and Frode had to fight twice as hard to not only protect Jötunheim but to make sure that he wasn’t killed as well. Through their fighting throughout the centuries, Frode and this Asgardian began to talk, and through their talks, a ceasefire was made. Frode learned that this Asgardian was named Borr, and Frode says that through their talks, Borr convinced him to marry him, as their children would undoubtedly be the strongest beings in the universe. Borr wanted them to rule the realms together, and over time, he wore Frode down until the Niouvi agreed to be with him. Frode’s condition though was that Borr needed to help uphold the peace between the realms, instead of ruling them with an iron fist. And Frode says that Borr begrudgingly agreed.”
“Frode says he happily married Borr and bore him two sons, Vili and Ve. While these two were married, there was finally peace between the realms. And when their children began to grow older, Frode got sick. No one knew what was wrong with him, and scans with his body via seidr revealed that he was breaking apart from the inside. No one knew why, and Frode knew that if he didn’t figure it out, he would die. He researched for years, and cast numerous spells, to no avail.”

“Frode says that something compelled him to ask Borr how he received his powers, and he was told that to become as powerful as he did, he killed a Norn, and took her power for his own. This changed everything about him from the inside out, and it made him a god, Thor. And a god can’t have children with a mortal. Carrying a god’s child kills the carrier if they’re not a god too. And this was what was happening to Frode.”

“Borr didn’t want him to die because he loved him, and so Frode managed to devise a very powerful spell that drew upon the essence of Borr instead of his own, to protect the Niouvi, and reverse the damage done to his body by carrying his children. This seemed to work, but through the centuries, Borr’s bloodlust and desire to rule the realms with an iron fist came back over him. Because Borr was now a god, he had an unusually long lifespan, and it was very hard to kill him. Frode loved him too much to see him return to darkness, so Frode devised a spell that would slow his aging, so that he would always be by Borr’s side, and keep him in line.”

“When their children were adults, Borr couldn’t hold back his desire to rule the realms, and control everyone. Frode says that Borr told him he would conquer every realm before Jötunheim, and then return for him. There was nothing Frode could do to stop this, and as the centuries passed, Frode taught his children how to hone their godly gifts, and taught them seidr as well, knowing that they would need to know it in case their father returned as he promised.”

“Frode writes that his children with Borr were very powerful, and that he cast spells on them, to prevent any of their future spouses dying, should they choose to marry and have children of their own. Frode married another Jötun, and had five more children, who all became very powerful seidr users. He placed this same spell on all of his children, knowing that should they ever fall in love with a descendant of Borr or another Asgardian who was just as powerful, they needed to be protected.”

“Borr returned to Jötunheim after conquering the other seven realms and offered one last time for Frode to rule the universe by his side. Frode begged him to not do this, and to release his hold on the other realms, but Borr refused. Frode still loved Borr too much, and when the time came for it to be either Frode, or Borr, Frode couldn’t kill him. So Borr killed Frode instead.”

Loki frowned slightly and looked through the book, flipping through the pages until he found what he wanted. “Frode’s niouvi child that was born from Frode’s second marriage, Danril, took over
the writing of these books then, and writes that after his beberi was killed, Borr wreaked havoc on Jötunheim again. Borr’s children with Frode were adults now and very powerful, and were able to fight off their father. Borr decided that the best thing to do to gain control of the realm would be to kill Ymir, and he couldn’t do it without someone’s help.”

“He set his sights on the princess of the land, Bestla, and charmed her, gaining her trust. She became pregnant with his child, and gave birth to Odin. She and Borr killed Ymir, and were banished from Jötunheim forever with a powerful spell, cast by Borr and Frode’s children. It was reported that Bestla died a few centuries later, her body unable to handle the burden of carrying a god’s child.”

“Jötunheim was at peace again for millennia. When it had been 7 millennia since the fall of Ymir, Odin came to Jötunheim, to finish what his father could not. He was more powerful than his father, and it was discovered that he too, killed a Norn for her power. Odin killed his half brothers Vili and Ve, and brought Jötunheim under his rule, asserting himself as king of the realms. And… and this is the last thing it says about Odin, Thor.”

Loki looked up at Thor then. “We can’t kill your father, Thor. He’s too powerful. He’s killed a Norn, and gained that same power that Borr had, on a grander scale. He’s *invincible*, Thor.”

Thor had a million and one thoughts running through his mind then, and didn’t know which one he should address first. Staring down at Loki, he knew that he needed to know about his health.

He could never forgive himself if he was the reason that Loki died. Loki had already sacrificed so much to give him children.

“Do the carriers of godly children always die?”

“If they are not of Frode’s bloodline, then yes.”

All Thor could think about was Loki, and how he selflessly carried their children at his request, unaware of the price, and he teared up, the guilt he felt overwhelming him. “Norns...”

Loki rushed to reassure Thor, not wanting him to feel guilty or think the worst. “Thor, I’m not going to die. Here, look at this heritage mark on my arm.”
Thor wiped at his tears and looked at it, seeing that it matched the one in the book.

“Frode’s niouvi child from his second marriage is my ancestor. So I’m protected. And because our children came from me, they are protected as well. Any children they bear with other Jötnar will be safe, and so will the carriers. I’m not going to die, Jetoni.”

Thor pulled Loki into his arms hurriedly then and began to cry, relief flooding through him. If he was the reason Loki died, he couldn’t go on in this world.

Loki hugged Thor for some time, knowing that all of this information was very alarming. He was also relieved that he was a descendant of Frode, which was the sole reason giving birth to Astrid, Eden, and Eeren didn’t kill him.

One Thor calmed down, he released Loki, staring down at him in concern. “Are you sure you’re alright, Loki?”

Loki laughed softly, reaching up and placing a reassuring kiss against Thor’s lips. “I’m fine. And I know the spell that Frode cast on himself and his children that protects his bloodline, so even if I wasn’t okay, I would cast that spell and be fine.”

Thor’s shoulders sagged in relief. “Norns…”

Loki noticed that it was beginning to storm outside then, and grabbed at Thor’s face, looking at him in concern. “Thor? What’s wrong? Please talk to me.”

Thor teared up again at a sudden realization, wiping at his eyes with a shaky hand. “My beberi is probably dead because of me.”

Loki’s face softened when Thor realized this. This was the hardest realization of their conversation, and Loki had been heartbroken for days when he first learned of this. He’d been fretting over how he would tell Thor, and he’d been worried that the giant would never forgive himself over this.

Because Thor’s mother was a mortal, and Odin was a god, it was very likely that she passed because of her inability to carry a god’s child.
Settling himself in Thor’s lap, Loki pulled him close, rubbing at his back as he cried. “Thor, you cannot blame yourself. You cannot control your heritage.”

Thor continued to weep, feeling so much shame over the fact that his mother most likely died because of him.

She died when he was 10, and her final years were spent with her in bed, too ill to leave it.

Knowing that his heritage was the reason his mother died was a heavy burden to bear.

“Thor, this isn’t your fault. It’s Odin’s. He knew that having a child with a mortal that wasn’t of Frode’s bloodline would kill the carrier. This is his fault, Jetoni. Not your’s.”

Thor took in a shaky breath, nodding and agreeing with Loki. “I have to kill him. I owe it to my beberi.”

“We can’t, Jetoni. Odin killed a Norn and is a god. You’re half mortal. Fighting Odin could kill you.”

“I’ve been practicing my powers for years, Loki. I destroyed an entire forest yesterday with my lightning, and flying now comes as easy to me as running. If I wanted to make it rain hellfire on the capital right now, I’m certain I could.”

Loki pursed his lips, trying to get Thor to see reason. “Thor. Your father has had his entire life to hone his abilities. You have not. I was certain we could kill him before discovering that he was a god. As powerful as I can become, I’m not sure if I can kill him. And if we work together, we could possibly kill him, but we might die too. And we can’t leave our children behind, Thor.”

Thor knew that Loki was raising very valid points. But he still wanted to kill his father. He wouldn’t feel complete unless he did so.

And he owed it to his mother.

“Please, Loki.”
Loki had never felt this troubled in his life. Knowing that Thor wanted to kill an actual god, one who had millennia of experience with his powers, terrified him.

He thought long and hard about how they would do this for a few minutes, before finally coming to an agreement within himself.

“How long do you think King Thrym has been alive?”

Thor furrowed his brow, not understanding. “I—I don’t know. He’s been on the throne since I was born.”

“Exactly. He took the throne in his 50’s.”

Thor’s face was one of bewilderment, then. “How is he still alive? He should be a frail old man.”

“Because there is a very powerful spell that reverses, and stunts aging, Thor. And he uses it on himself. Frode used this spell to survive for millennia. Gods have long life spans, and he wanted to remain by Borr’s side for as long as possible.”

Thor’s heart dropped when Loki said this. “Loki…”

“I have already thought of what to do when it concerns us, Jetoni. You’re half mortal, but that doesn’t mean you age like a regular Jötun. I noticed this last century, when I observed you, and realized that you had no signs of aging apparent on your face. So, after finding out what I told you tonight, I cast that same spell on myself, to prevent me from aging further.”

He took ginger hold of Thor’s face then. “I’m not leaving you, Thor. Ever.”

Thor wrapped his arms around Loki and pulled him into a breathtaking hug, thanking the Norns that he had been blessed with Loki as a partner.

Loki smiled softly and hugged Thor just as fiercely, basking in the warmth of his presence. “I don’t
know how long you’ll live, and I don’t know how long our children will, but… but I’ll be there
with all of you until you pass.”

Loki had made so many sacrifices for Thor and their family, and Thor truly couldn’t understand
how he was blessed with a partner like Loki.

Pulling away from Thor gently, Loki held Thor’s face gingerly, staring deep into his eyes. “Let our
children become adults, Thor. Let them make a life for themselves before we take on Odin. Once
every child is grown… I will take you to Asgard. And we will kill Odin together.”

This was something that Thor could agree with, and he felt his mind swirl, the influx of
information from tonight overwhelming him.

The storm outside began to quiet down, so Loki relaxed in Thor’s arms, gently rubbing at his back,
and calming him further. “Everything will be alright, Jetoni. Everything will work out as it
should.”

Thor laughed softly as Loki said this back to him, closing his eyes and enjoying the feel of Loki’s
skin. “Should Eden and Eeren be it, then?”

Loki hummed softly, thinking about it. “They should be it until we kill Odin. Since we don’t know
how long your lifespan will be, after killing Odin we might be able to have more.”

Thor kissed Loki’s shoulder then, agreeing with him. He still felt terrible about his mother’s death
and felt even worse about possibly burdening their children with long lifespans, but there was
nothing that could be done about it now.

He took a calming breath and finally relaxed, the storm outside becoming light rain. “We should
sleep. We learned a lot of things tonight, and… we need to rest and process this information.”

Loki nodded, closing his eyes and placing a loving kiss against Thor’s lips. “I love you. And I am
willing to go to the ends of the earth and beyond for you. Whatever I can do to make you happy, I
will do it. You mean everything to me, and… and I want to spend the rest of my life by your side.
However long that is.”

Thor smiled softly, cradling Loki’s face. “Even if it’s forever?”
“Even if it’s till Ragnarok and beyond. I’m not leaving you. Ever.”

The pair shared another kiss before separating, and smiled at each other, their gazes communicating what their words could not.

Their bedroom door creaking open caught their attention, and Loki waved his hand, using seidr to light a candle near the door.

Astrid was standing there with her favorite toy, tears in her eyes.

Loki immediately climbed out of Thor’s lap and made his way over to their daughter, scooping her into his arms. “Astrid, what’s wrong, princess? Please don’t cry.”

Astrid hiccuped and began to cry harder, wrapping her arms around Loki’s neck and nestling her face there for comfort.

Loki shared a look with Thor and climbed into bed, setting Astrid down between them so that they could comfort her.

“What’s wrong, princess?” murmured Thor, rubbing at her back gently. “Did you have a nightmare?”

Astrid nodded, clutching her favorite toy tightly. “A mean man spoke to me!”

Thor and Loki shot each other bewildered looks before Loki asked for clarification. “What do you mean a mean man spoke to you, sweetheart?”

Astrid sniffed, pulling at Thor and Loki’s arms so that they were wrapped around her. “I-I dreamed that I was in a castle, and an old man was talking to me.”

“And then what happened, sweet child?”
“He was really scary, Beberi! He looked just like Deneri!”

Thor’s blood ran cold at this. “What did this man say, Astrid?”

“He said that I was supposed to tell you to enjoy peace while it lasted.”

Thor and Loki shared looks with each other then, horrified to hear this.

Loki gulped and took in a shaky breath, continuing to comfort his daughter. “Did this mean man have a name, sweet child?”

Astrid looked up at him then, fear plain on his face. “He said his name was Odin.”

The ire that flowed through Thor’s body was enough to destroy an entire civilization, and he clenched his jaw, trembling with rage.

Messing with him was one thing.

But messing with his innocent daughter? Someone who had done nothing to warrant this threat?

Odin would regret this.

Loki felt terrified that Odin managed to speak to their daughter from another realm in her dreams, and he forced back his tears, knowing that this changed everything.

Odin did this as a warning; he was testing them.

And Loki knew he’d be damned if anyone ever hurt his children, just to get back at Thor.

“Is the mean man gonna get me, Beberi?” whispered Astrid, absolutely terrified.
“No.” answered Thor, pulling his child into his arms. “He will not touch a hair on your head. You are safe and you are protected, child.”

Astrid finally relaxed in Thor’s hold, and sniffed, wiping at her tears. “Can I sleep in here, Deneri?”

Thor nodded, placing a tender kiss against her cheek. “Yes, my love. Of course.”

Thor settled Astrid down between he and Loki, and the pair watched her fall asleep before speaking, both of them upset, terrified, confused.

Loki couldn’t help but tear up again and he looked at Thor in fear, his voice wavering. “What does he want with our daughter, Thor? How can he even speak to her from another realm?”

“I don’t know, love. But this changes everything. If he’s threatening the livelihood of our children, then I cannot wait around any longer.”

“But what if that’s what he wants?!” hissed Loki, glaring up at him. “What if he wants you to propel yourself into his domain, so that he can kill you? If you die, our children will be killed, Thor, and no one will be strong enough to kill him!”

Thor closed his eyes then a bit a trembling lip, taking in a shuddering breath. “I know what I have to do, Loki.”

Loki stared at Thor in horror, reaching to hold his face. “Jetoni you can’t go to Asgard, you can’t leave me, I-I need you! We need you! Please, don’t do this!”

Thor took Loki’s hands and kissed his knuckles one by one, hoping to calm him. “Our only option is to do what my father did, Loki. Like those books say, I’m only half mortal. And as long as I’m half as weak as him, all of our lives are in danger.”

Loki began to cry when he realized what Thor was implying. “No, no Jetoni you can’t, you can’t!”
Thor shushed Loki gently, not wanting him to panic. “I will be the last one to do this. I will figure out how to kill a Norn. I will gain its power. And after killing my father, I will make sure that no one has access to gain such power again.”

Loki began to weep silently when Thor said this. “Jetoni, please don’t do this!”

“What choice do I have, Loki? My father has threatened my child. I can’t just wait for him to strike.”

Loki continued to cry, feeling as if he was living his worst nightmare. The burden of being the strongest being in the universe that Thor would have to carry for the rest of his life if he did this was overwhelming, and he didn’t want that fate for Thor.

He continued to cry in Thor’s arms for some time, hating the Norns, hating Odin, hating everyone, for doing this to him and his family.

He couldn’t go on if Thor died, and he would suffer forever in Hell if he and Thor died while their children were still young.

There was no victor in this situation.

“Let us go to bed, Loki. We’re both upset, and scared, and… nothing will come of us fretting over what just happened.”

Loki looked so distraught over this, and Thor hugged him tightly, not wanting him to worry. “Loki, everything will be okay and work out as it should. Tomorrow, we’ll talk about this more, and make a game plan. Okay?”

Loki sniffed and nodded, placing numerous kisses against Thor’s lips. His gaze conveyed what his words could not, and Thor kissed him once more, comforting him. “We’ll be okay, Loki. I promise.”

Loki closed his eyes and fought back more tears, nodding hurriedly. “O-Okay.”
They shared another kiss before settling on either side of Astrid, and wrapped their arms around her, kissing her tenderly.

Loki couldn’t fall asleep, and he fretted over what to do about this situation. He was so worried for his daughter, he was terrified that Thor would lose his life, and he feared that he would lose everything.

He didn’t know how he fell asleep, but he woke up a few hours later in a throne room that he did not recognize, alone.

He quickly rose from the floor and looked around in horror, noticing symbols and paintings of Asgardians.

He could feel someone watching him, and he didn’t know from where, as it seemed to be coming from everywhere.

“You’re much more beautiful in person, Loki.”

Loki twirled towards the direction he heard the voice from, his heart beginning to race. “Who are you?”

A tall Asgardian man stepped out of the shadows then, and Loki’s blood ran cold when he saw that the man was a mirror image of Thor.

*Odin*.

Loki growled low in his throat and glared at the king, his rage overriding any fear that was within him. “Why have you brought me here?! What do you want?!”

Odin continued to make his way over to Loki, and stopped when he was in front of him, staring down at the Niouvi. “You’ve given my son three children.”

Loki continued to glare at Odin, his heart beating a million miles a minute.
He couldn’t understand why he was here, or how he was going to escape. But he knew one thing; Odin would not harm his children. And he would not get to Thor.

“And you’re not dead. This makes you extremely valuable to me, Loki.”

Odin reached out to take Loki’s face in his hand, but Loki slapped his hand away, continuing to regard him in contempt. “You will not lay a hand on my children!”

Odin laughed darkly, and Loki hated the sound. Never in his life did he believe he would ever hear someone that could sound more wretched and evil than King Thrym. “They’re not what I want.” He narrowed his eyes at Loki then and smiled. “I want you.”

Loki’s eyes widened in fear. “Thor will kill you if you harm me.”

Odin scoffed, continuing to stare down at Loki possessively. “He can certainly try. But he will not succeed.” He narrowed his eyes at the Niouvi again. “And neither will you.”

“What do want with me?”

Odin turned from Loki then, beginning to pace back and forth. “You are not dead. Which means you are a descendant of Frode; a worthy vessel to bear the children of a god.”

Loki shook his head in horror, beginning to back away from Odin. “I refuse.”

“Do you know how hard it is, to find a descendant of Frode? It is like searching for a needle in a haystack. Descendants of Frode allow their children’s godly abilities to awaken to their full potential, and they are exceptionally gifted with seidr. This makes you extremely valuable to me, Loki.”

“Thor will never let you take me!” spat Loki. “And I will not go down without a fight!”

Odin laughed softly then, turning to face Loki again. “You don’t have a choice in the matter,
Niouvi. It is either you, or your niouvi children. I am not leaving empty handed.”

“If you even think about touching my children, you will not live to see tomorrow!”

Stalking towards Loki, Odin reached out to grab Loki by the neck with a large hand, forcing him to stare deeply into his eyes. “I have received everything that I’ve ever desired. And this will not change because you feel that you’re strong enough to stop me.”

Loki was done talking, and closed his eyes, focusing on his essence. He didn’t know if this spell would kill Odin because he was a god, but it would definitely be enough to stop him.

Loki refused to let Odin come after his family, and he sent out his seidr in a large tidal wave, attacking him.

He used seidr to kill every nerve in Odin’s hand, arm, and shoulder irreparably, rendering the whole limb useless. He didn’t know if being a god would allow Odin to heal his injury, but Loki used enough strength to give him enough damage.

He’d grown much stronger over the centuries.

Odin screamed and let go of Loki, his arm hanging limply at his side. “What have you done ?!”

Loki pushed Odin away with all of his strength, debating about what to do next. He figured that this was a dream, as he had numerous protective spells placed over himself and his family, so that no one could harm them in any way, shape, or form, physically.

He’d cast a very dangerous spell on Odin that would carry over into his waking life, and unless there was someone as skilled at seidr as Loki, on Asgard, Odin would have a limp hand for the rest of his life.

Finally deciding on what he wanted to do, Loki waved his hand, using seidr to roughly throw Odin against a wall of the throne room. “Let’s make a deal, Odin. You leave my family alone. And when my children have matured, Thor and I will return, and Thor will attempt to kill you. If Thor dies, I will willingly agree to stay by your side and do whatever it is you’re wanting from me, as long as all of my children are kept alive and safe. Or, you decide to travel to Thor and me as soon as you wake up, and ruin everything. I assume that you’re planning on killing my children and
Thor, so in the event, you do this, I will kill myself, and prevent you from gaining your precious “Niouvi”. I will also kill every living descendant of Frode the second you descend on my realm, preventing you from ever passing on your godly gift to a child that can awaken to their true potential, and be as strong as you.”

Odin glared harshly up at Loki, assessing his threat. They glared at each other for minutes before Odin relented, agreeing to Loki’s plan.

He’d been watching Loki over the centuries and knew just how powerful he really was.

Standing up to his full height again, Odin stared down at Loki, an impassive look on his face. “You are just like your ancestor.”

Loki smirked at this, refusing to tear his eyes away from Odin. “I’m much more dangerous than him. I don't have a heart.”

Odin and Loki stared at each other for sometime before Odin nodded slowly, laughing to himself and turning away. “My son has found a spectacular partner. I will enjoy our time together in the future, Loki. You will serve me well.”

He waved his hand then, dismissing Loki. “Enjoy your freedom while it lasts, my dear. If I have to kill a million Norns and sell my soul to get you, I will.”

Loki felt himself grow weak, and his vision darkened before he fell out of consciousness.

He woke up again in his bed, Astrid and Thor sleeping peacefully beside him.

His heart was racing, and he let out a shaking breath, beginning to tear up.

He knew he needed to talk to Thor about what just happened, and he reached over, gently shaking him awake.

“Jetoni…”
Thor groaned, shifting in bed and pulling Astrid closer to his chest. “What’s wrong, Loki?”

“I need you to wake up. Something has happened.”

Thor slowly sat up and rubbed at his eyes, covering Astrid with the blanket on the bed. “What’s wrong, love?”

Loki bit a lower lip, staring up at Thor anxiously. “Odin came to me, just now.”

Thor’s blood ran cold, and he reached out to take Loki’s face, worried. “Here?! In this home?!”

Loki closed his eyes and shook his head, clinging to Thor. “No… the same way he spoke to Astrid… he spoke to me.”

Thor’s heart was almost pounding through his chest at this point, and he looked down at Loki in fear, waiting for him to explain.

“I fell asleep, and Odin summoned my spirit to Asgard. I-I don’t know how he did it, but… I was there, Thor.”

“What did he say, love? What happened?”

Loki took in a shaking breath, beginning to tear up again. “He told me that he wanted me, because I’m a descendant of Frode. He told me that descendants of Frode are not only able to bear the children of gods, but… our blood allows our children to awaken their complete abilities, and allows them to be just as strong as their godly parent.”

“Odin told me that if I didn’t agree to be by his side, he would take Eden and Eeren, and use them. A-And I couldn’t let that happen, so I told him that you would kill him. And he laughed and said that you could certainly try. He gave me a final chance to agree to be by his side, and I refused, and I-I hurt him. I severely damaged every nerve in his arm, rendering it useless. I have no idea if it will be permanent because he is a god, but… that seemed to surprise him.”
“I then offered him a proposition. I told him that if he allows our children to mature, then you and I will travel to Asgard, and if he kills you, I will bow my head and remain by his side. But if he decides to attack us before this, and if he kills our children and you, I told him that I will kill myself, and every single descendant of Frode via seidr, so that he can never produce a child as powerful as he is. And I will destroy Frode’s books, to prevent anyone from gaining their knowledge of the spell to protect their bodies when they bear godly children.”

Thor began to cry silently, and pulled Loki into his arms, holding him as his shoulders shook.

This was literally his worst nightmare.

“What did he say, Aberi?”

Loki held Thor just as fiercely, silent tears streaming down his face too. “He told me that he agreed with my plan. He would wait until our children matured, and he said he would wait until we came to him.”

“But how do we know he wasn’t lying?! What’s stopping him from coming here tomorrow?!”

“Because I am serious about my threat, Thor. If Odin attacks tomorrow, he will kill you, and he will kill our children because they would always be against him and resent him. They would be in the way of his rule. If he does this, I will use seidr to kill not only myself but every descendant of Frode. If I kill myself and every descendant of Frode, as well as the books of Frode, Odin will never be able to produce a powerful heir. His heir would be significantly weaker than him, and susceptible to anything and everything. And that isn’t what Odin wants. He wants a successor just as powerful as him, if not more. And he can’t do that without me.”

Thor hated that Odin was putting his family in this situation.

But he was relieved that Loki bought them some time.

That just meant that he had to train that much harder.

Sighing softly, Thor relaxed his hold on Loki, beginning to think seriously about this. “Loki… let’s say I kill a Norn. I will live for a very long time. I know you’ll be by my side the entire time, but… I don’t think we should have any more children. Because what if we do, and… and one of our
children becomes power hungry and greedy? I can’t take down my own child, Loki. And what if we have more children, but they have incredibly long lifespans too? It won’t be fair to them at all. We didn’t know when we had Astrid, Eeren, and Eden, but… we know now. I-I can’t burden any more children with this curse.”

Loki was silent for a long time, mulling over everything that Thor said, as they were valid concerns.

Finally, he decided on the best thing to say, and hugged Thor tighter, closing his eyes. “If the spouses of our children desire it, I will cast the same age spell on them, so that they may be alive for as long as our children are. If our children want to have normal life spans… there is a spell for this too. All they have to do is ask. And as for having more children after killing King Thrym and Odin… I don’t believe our children would turn against us. Children born of love and understanding and respect will always have good hearts. And as long as our children are taught to always see the good, and to always fight for justice… they will do so.”

Thor frowned slightly, wondering if everything would be as easy as Loki said. So many factors had been brought forward tonight, so many things that they were not prepared for, and Thor decided that it would be best if they tried to fall back asleep. His head hurt with everything he learned tonight, and he didn’t know what to do about it.

Loki seemed to sense this, and kissed Thor softly, wanting to calm him. “I am safe. And so is our daughter. We shall speak of this more in the morning.”

Thor nodded and returned his kiss, watching as Loki shifted out of his lap and nestled back against Astrid’s side.

Thor knew he wouldn’t be able to sleep tonight, and he sat awake in bed, staring at the ceiling of their room, and thinking about the events of the night.

Loki said that he bought them all time, but Thor was terrified that this wouldn’t be the case.

His entire life could fall apart in just a few mere hours, and this terrified him to no end.

He didn’t even know how to kill a Norn, or how he would go about doing it. He didn’t know if it would damn him to hell forever, he didn’t know if it would change him for the worst, he didn’t know if he’d survive actually doing it, and these thoughts troubled him as the sun rose.
The longer he thought of Loki’s plan with Odin, the more assured he felt that Odin wouldn’t attack them anytime soon.

If what Odin said was to be believed, the bloodline of Frode was the only way to produce an heir with the capabilities of mastering their gifts and full potential as a god. Thor knew his father had been alive for millennia, and that he was growing old; it seemed that not even a god would live forever.

If Odin wanted to keep his hands on the Nine Realms, he needed a successor; one just as dark and as evil as him. He couldn’t use Astrid, Eeren, or Eden, because they would always resent him for killing their parents, and would turn against him at the earliest chance.

If Odin used Loki to create his heir, it would be a surefire way to craft his perfect heir, and he could die in peace, knowing that his legacy continued.

By the time Loki and Astrid began to wake up, Thor felt better about their future success.

Because of Loki, they’d be able to get their children to adulthood, he would be able to master his gifts, and Loki would be able to become very powerful. They’d be able to take the throne, and in the case Odin decided to go to war with their realm, they would be ready.

Thor decided then that Odin’s hubris would be his downfall.

One of the twins began to coo across the room then, so Thor sighed softly and shook thoughts of Odin from his head, getting up and heading towards the cribs.

It seemed that Eden was the first twin awake, so Thor stooped over and scooped him up, plastering numerous kisses against his face. “Good morning, Eden! Deneri missed you while I slept.”

Eden continued to babble, reaching out and grabbing Thor’s beard with both hands. “Deh!”

“That’s right!” gushed Thor, kissing Eden again. “Deneri!”
Eden repeated “Deh!” to Thor’s amusement, and Thor laughed, all of his worries washing away as he stared at his child. “You’re so precious, Eden.”

By now Eeren was beginning to wake up, and he began to coo and gurgle, calling out for Thor as well.

Thor had gotten very adept at carrying both twins at the same time, and carefully shifted Eden in his arms so that he could take hold of Eeren, pressing loving kisses against his face. “Good morning, Eeren!”

Eeren babbled happily, also reaching out to pull at Thor’s beard.

Thor laughed and tried to pull away, surprised by the strength of his children. “Let go of Deneri’s beard, you two.”

The twins let go and began to suck on their hands instead, gurgling and staring up at him expectantly.

Thor figured that the niouvi were hungry, so he made his way across the room and sat down next to Loki on their bed, gently prodding him.

“Aberi…”

Loki moaned softly and tightened his hold on Astrid, frowning slightly.

“Aberi… the niouvi are hungry.”

Loki made a soft sound and slowly began to sit up, blinking blearily. “What time is it?”

“Half past 7.”

Loki gently took Eeren in his arms, kissing his face in greeting and grabbing a nursing pillow. “Norns, it’s been five hours. They must be starving,”
Thor tutted, handing him Eden once his idri had been situated. “It’s not your fault, Aberi. Last night was stressful.”

Loki nodded at this, a pained look on his face. “Norns, Jetoni… your father is a scary man. I’ve never met a man that is darker than our king.”

Thor sighed and reached out to rub at Loki’s shoulder, hoping to comfort him. “What was he like? It’s been 3 millennia since I’ve seen him.”

“He looks just like you, but darker. There’s a coldness in his eyes that is unsettling, and… his presence is stifling and commanding. His gaze is cold and calculating, and his aura is void of any emotion but greed. He is someone that I never want to meet again, much less produce a child with.”

Loki frowned then and turned to look at him, realizing something. “Wait, Thor… how old are you?”

Thor blinked in bewilderment, surprised by the question. “I’m 45. Did you not know this, Aberi?”

Loki widened his eyes in shock, beginning to laugh. “Norns! You’re a cradle robber!”

Thor snorted, staring at Loki in amusement. “What do you mean, Loki? You’re only 37.”

“I always thought you were two centuries younger than me!”

“No, Aberi…” murmured Thor, a twinkle in his eyes. “Did you really not know this?”

“I truly did not,” laughed Loki. “When we were wed, you looked young, but I just assumed that you were like me, and aged well. Are you truly 45?!”

Thor nodded, laughing softly again. “I’m an old man, Loki.”
“Wait, if you’re 45… how old is your aunt?”

“She’s a millennium older than me, so… she must be 55 or 56 now.”

Loki’s mind was blown at this. “Norns… I’d just always assumed we were all close in age.”

He leaned forward slightly then, observing Thor’s face. “I am almost certain that you’ll have an abnormally long lifespan, now that I know this. You still look very young.”

This made Thor sigh to himself. “Are you certain that you’re willing to spend it with me?”

Loki’s gaze softened. “I will spend eternity with you if that’s how long you’ll live. It will not bother me in the slightest, Jetoni.”

They smiled at each other warmly then, and Loki held back a yawn, still feeling tired. “I’m beginning to think that in a century or so, I’ll be strong enough to kill King Thrym. It might take too long to build our settlement up, Thor. If we kill King Thrym and his lineage and then spend our time fighting to get the realm under our control, that might be easier.”

Thor shook his head no, not agreeing with this. “No, Loki, that wouldn’t be a good idea. That would always leave our children in jeopardy. The larger this town is, and the more people we get on our side, the easier it will be to take down the king and his supporters. We need to grow, we need to gain allies, and we need to work within the shadows. This is our best bet.”

Loki agreed with Thor, sighing softly. “I suppose you’re right… we need to go about this in the safest way possible.”

Thor nodded, reaching out to caress Loki’s cheek. “Everything will turn out as it should, Aberi. We’ll take this century by century. We’ll raise our children, we’ll build up this city, we’ll gain allies, and slowly but surely, we’ll build ourselves up so that we can stand against the king. This will take time, but… we can do this, love.”

Loki knew that Thor was right, and he smiled softly, pressing a quick kiss against Thor’s lips. “When will you head into work?”
Thor looked at the clock, seeing that it was 8. He usually headed in around 9 and worked till 6. He also worked on the days that Loki was off, and today would be no different.

It was a Saturday, so the children wouldn’t have school, and Loki would be home with them all today.

After kissing Loki once more, Thor stood up and began to get ready for his day, heading towards the town’s city hall.

He’d spend today in meetings, and town halls, doing his best to make this small city as fortified as it could be.

Being the leader of this small city was a bit easier now that he’d been doing it for some time, and he could only imagine how much more difficult it would be as the city expanded and grew.

He knew they most likely needed to implement the same political system that the realm had, with politicians and psemetri and lawmakers, as their city had about 15,000 giants in it now, and it was impossible for Thor and Loki to be in charge of every detail.

He brought this up during one of the council meetings of the day, and was relieved that everyone agreed with him.

It would take about a decade to vote in giants to uphold these new positions, and a bit longer to train them, but it would be a tremendous help for Thor and Loki. They’d be able to spend more time with their children this way, and it would lessen their stress.

During his lunch break, Thor decided that he would surprise Loki and their family with lunch, and picked up some food from Loki’s favorite Reyhmkur restaurant, making his way back to his home.

Nodding at those that he passed by on the street, Thor let his mind drift as he made his way through the blocks of the city to the residential area. He wondered briefly if he and Loki should move, as it was quite a walk from their home to the central part of the city, where they worked.

Deciding he would bring it up with Loki, Thor rounded the last corner and frowned when he noticed something on his doorstep.
As he got closer he noticed an arm that was as white as snow hanging out of a bundle, and his heart began to race.

He saw that it was an infant -newborn at that- and that it was wailing, shivering from the cold.

Quickly setting the bags of food beside his steps, Thor scooped up the infant, beginning to shush them.

The infant continued to wail, and Thor looked around hurriedly, trying to see if he could find who did this.

The street was barren though, and the infant continued to cry, which worried Thor.

Thor stood up hurriedly and unlocked his front door, barreling into his home. “Loki!”

“I’m in here, Thor!” shouted Loki from the kitchen, the sounds of their children playing amidst the sounds of lunch being made making Thor’s heart soften.

“Loki! Something has happened!”

Loki looked up at Thor as the giant entered their kitchen, widening his eyes when he saw Thor holding an albino infant. “Norns have mercy, Thor! Whose infant is this?”

“I-I don’t know. She was left on our doorstep! I-I didn’t see anyone around our home when she was dropped off, and she’s just been born. She won’t stop crying, so I assume she’s hungry.”

Loki tutted and used seidr to put out the fire from the stovetop, gently taking the wailing infant in his arms. “Norns… it’s alright, sweetheart. It’s alright.”

Loki rocked her gently, and made his way over to a chair in their dining room, sitting down and using seidr to assess her. “She’s starving! Norns have mercy…”
Loki brought the infant to his breast and helped her latch onto him, gently patting at her back and urging her to drink from him. His niouvi children were still under a century and weren’t eating all solids yet, so he was still producing milk.

The young infant drank greedily from Loki, and he held her close, shushing her gently when she whimpered and encouraging her to drink from him.

“Norns, Thor… what do we do? Whose baby is this? A-And she was just born, too!”

Thor sighed, shaking his head. “I don’t know, love. Our city isn’t big enough to have an orphanage.”

Astrid and Adras made their way over to Loki then, staring up at the infant curiously. “Beberi, who is this?”

Loki frowned slightly, continuing to comfort the infant. “I don’t know, princess.”

“Beberi, we’re hungry…”

Thor stood up then, remembering the food that he bought. “I bought lunch for all of us. Let me go get it.”

Thor’s children cheered, and the giant left to go get their food, returning and setting up the table.

Their children sat down and ate happily, minding their own business while Thor and Loki spoke in hushed whispers.

Thor tried to rack through his brain for answers about what to do, taking a look at the infant.

He felt terrible that someone just left her on their doorstep, but… he understood why.

Albino Jötnar were viewed as an omen on their realm. They were viewed as unnatural, viewed as someone who could only bring misfortune upon their family. They were outcasts, often abandoned
on the streets or in forests, and left to die.

Of course, the newer generation of Jötnar were not as superstitious as their predecessors, but… it was not unusual to see albino Jötnar as beggars or as pariahs.

Sighing softly, Thor looked up at Loki, silently pleading with him. Loki shook his head fiercely, automatically refusing. “No. No, No, no. We have four children, Thor! Our niouvi are only five decades old! Astrid is only 3! And Adras is 8!”

Thor’s heart broke then, and his face dropped. “Loki… Loki we have to. She’s just like me! If we don’t take her in, she’ll be an outcast. She’s so innocent, and she doesn’t deserve that. She deserves to have people in her life that can love her.”

Loki frowned deeply, holding Thor’s gaze. “Thor-”

“Loki, I didn’t have anyone when I was growing up. My aunt did her best, but… she was not my beberi. Growing up, and not having anyone… I can’t bear to put that pain on someone else, knowing that I can help them.”

Loki pursed his lips then, remaining silent.

“Aberi, please. You know just as well as I do, what type of life this baby will live if we don’t take her in. She’ll be a pariah. She’ll never know what love is. She’ll have to fight for every single thing that she might ever get. Her life will be that of hardship and pain. And she doesn’t deserve that. No one does.”

Loki exhaled softly, looking down at the baby drinking from his breast. She stared up at him with a certain happiness in her eyes, with a certain hope, with a certain innocence that just melted his heart, and Loki just couldn’t say no.

This baby was so innocent, and… and although he and Thor couldn’t take in every hurting or broken child in this world… there was no reason they couldn’t help this one.

The same way Adras stared at him all those years ago, was the same way that this baby was staring at him. Such hope, such innocence, such trust.
She was so defenseless, and if no one helped her, her life would be one of suffering and pain. And it wouldn’t be her fault.

Loki couldn’t do that to her. Not after everything he’d been through in his life.

Sighing softly, Loki nodded in Thor’s direction, pressing a gentle kiss against the infant’s forehead. “She is now ours. The family that gave up this beautiful baby should be ashamed. She will want for nothing in this life, as she now has us.”

The biggest grin spread across Thor’s face then, and he laughed, his shoulders sagging in relief. “Norns… Thank you, Loki!”

Loki nodded, kissing the infant again. “No more children until we’ve accomplished our goal. We can’t save every single hurting child in this realm, Jetoni.”

“I know that, Loki…” murmured Thor, caressing Loki’s cheek. “But look at her. She needs us. There’s such a joy in her eyes, love.”

Loki looked down at her again and smiled, agreeing with Thor. “She is a beautiful baby…”

She kept looking at him with this unbridled joy, and Loki couldn’t help but grin at her back, his heart already blooming with love.

Being married to Thor and raising their children with him had truly softened his heart.

He sighed softly then, continuing to pat her back as she drank from him. “What would you like to name her?”

Thor stared at her fondly, already knowing what he felt compelled to name her. “Jörd. After my beberi.”

Loki nodded, approving the name. “Then her name is Jörd.”
The baby finished drinking from Loki then and gurgled, smiling up at him and reaching for his hair.

This made Loki smile, and he kissed Jörd’s nose, causing the infant to gurgle again. “Welcome to our family, little one.”

“Does that mean we have a new sister, Beberi?” sighed Adras.

“Yes, sweet child. This is your younger sister Jörd.”

Adras groaned and rolled his eyes, stuffing his mouth with a piece of meat. “Why am I surrounded by girls and niouvi? I just want a brother.”

Thor snorted, gently taking Jörd from Loki’s arms and kissing her face. “Beberi says he doesn’t want anymore children for sometime, Adras… so you’ll have to make do with your sisters and your idri.”

Adras grumbled but remained silent, continuing to eat his meal.

Astrid though seemed over the moon, and began to hum happily, kicking her legs in her chair. “I got a new sister!”

“I suppose we’ll have to go out and get another crib, Jetoni.” murmured Loki, running a hand through his long hair. “And I can’t return to work for at least two more decades since she’s a newborn.

“A small price to pay for a lifetime of happiness.” assured Thor, kissing the infant’s face again. “I’ll stay home so you can work, if need be, Loki.”

“Who’s going to feed our three infants, Thor?” laughed Loki, a twinkle in his eyes. “Certainly not you.”
Thor blushed deeply, forgetting about this. “Our town will run just fine as long as we depend on others for help. I suggested implementing politicians, lawmakers, and psemetri in our town, so things should become much easier for us in a few decades.”

Loki nodded and began to fix his plate, heating up his food with seidr. “Norns, I’m going to feel like a cow for the next century.”

Thor made a face at this, so Loki tutted, taking a bite out of his meal. “Don’t make that face, Jetoni. I mean nothing by it. I don’t mind doing what I need to do to make sure our children live lasting and fulfilling lives. Their dependence on me is not a burden.”

Thor relaxed then, readjusting Jörd into the crook of his arm, and beginning to eat his meal as well. “If I could help you with it, Loki… I would. I swear.”

Loki’s gaze softened then, and he smiled, nodding. “I know, Jetoni. You’re an amazing Deneri.”

“Yeah! You’re the best, Deneri!” added Adras.

“Yeah, Deneri! I love you!” chirped Astrid.

“I love you too, Deneri!” urged Adras, and Thor laughed, his heart melting at this. “Deneri loves you both, too.”

Thor knew that their lives would be hectic over the next few centuries, but as they grew stronger, and focused on their strategies, he knew that they’d not only be able to take over the throne but kill Odin as well.

Chapter End Notes

Whoo!!

New baby!

Sorry, Thor and Loki having a LOT of kids has and always will be, my weakness.
Hello!

Here is a brand new chapter for you all! It clocks in at just under 12k, so sit down and get comfortable LOL!

I'd like to repost this message, as it is important for this chapter and beyond: New word for the story is "Idri", which is what Niouvi siblings are called. So in this story, if someone is a male, they're a brother, if they're a female, they're a sister, and if they're a Niouvi, they're an "idri", which is singular and plural, just like "Niouvi".

I'd also like to say this story starts out pretty dark, so... like prepare for that. It gets light and fluffy and happy towards the middle and the end, and everything is perfectly okay and fine (I promise) but the very beginning of this story is quite dark.

Anyhoo, enjoy the chapter :)

To say that the city was floored by Thor and Loki’s adoption was an understatement.

News broke of their adoption of an albino infant mere days after they took her in as one of their own, and they became the talk of the city, everyone surprised, shocked, awed, or confused by their decision.

The general consensus seemed to be that everyone looked at Thor and Loki in awe and respect, for choosing to do something so selfless.

Loki wanted to know whose infant this was though, and although he didn't plan on giving her back, he did want to know who she originally belonged to.

And after two decades of snooping around and “encouraging” the members of his city to speak, Loki finally found his child’s original family.
He asked Thor to watch the children while he went to their home under the guise of teaching someone a spell—what he was about to do was something that Thor never needed to know about—and knocked on their door, waiting for someone to answer.

A middle-aged giantess opened the door and widened her eyes, surprised to see Loki. “Leader! Well, this is a surprise. May I help you?”

Loki observed the giantess for some time, taking in her heritage marks, and noticing that they slightly matched those found on Jörd. This must be her grandmother. “May I come in?”

The giantess nodded slowly, opening her door and allowing Loki in. “How can I help you?”

Loki looked around her home, noticing that it seemed they were still moving in. This family must be new to the city.

“Have you just moved in?”

The giantess nodded, walking Loki to her living room. “Can I make you some tea?”

“Please.” murmured Loki, sitting down on one of her couches. “Ginger-lemon, if possible.”

“As you wish.”

Loki waited for the giantess to return, and gratefully accepted his cup of tea and saucer. “I see you and your husband have just moved here. Do you have children?”

The giantess sighed softly, a pained look on her face. “No.”

Loki hummed, narrowing his eyes at the woman. “I was told you had a daughter.”

The giantess widened her eyes in shock, beginning to sweat nervously. “She passed two decades ago, unfortunately.”
Loki pursed his lips, not happy to hear this. “May I guess what happened?”

Giving an unsure nod, the giantess took a sip of her drink, remaining silent.

“Your teenage daughter was unwed and pregnant. And all of you took her to a healer when she went into labor. She gave birth, and all of you saw that the infant was albino. You panicked and told her that you wanted nothing to do with her or the infant. The mentally unstable teen didn’t know what to do. And after she was left alone at the healer’s clinic, she decided to drop off this “omen” at a family who she knew would have sympathy. And then after dropping off this infant, she killed herself. And you’ve lived the last two decades pretending that this didn’t happen.”

The giantess’ face paled at Loki’s explanation, and she began to stutter, getting flustered. “I-I-I-”

Loki set his cup down on his saucer and placed it on the coffee table in front of him, over this woman and this conversation. “You see… it is selfish people like you that make this realm a terrible place. You should be ashamed of yourself.”

The giantess drew back, then, shocked. “Excuse me?”

“Children are meant to be loved and protected, regardless of where they come from, and regardless of how they look.”

The woman pursed her lips, unable to look at Loki.

“You see… I am not a kind man. Having children and getting married has softened my heart, but… I am still a callous monster at my core. And one thing I can’t stand is people abandoning those in need, who are defenseless, and need our help.”

The giantess stood up sharply, beginning to get scared. “I-I think it’s best that you leave, Lea-”

Raising his hand, Loki used seidr to silence her, squeezing his hand and using the seidr to constrict her airways. “You know… I’ve been thinking of what to do to you for some time now. I’ve been thinking of the best way to punish you, and make you regret your actions.”
The giantess gasped for air, clawing at her neck and beginning to turn purple.

“But then, the perfect punishment came to me. I will remove your ability to move, to eat, to speak. You’ll be trapped in your body, and forced to live with the guilt that comes with knowing that the blood of your child is on your hands. You’ll slowly starve to death, and will be unable to do anything about it. No one will know what’s wrong with you, or what happened to make you this way.”

Loki smiled then, waving his hand and using seidr to throw the woman against a wall. “I might as well put you in bed, to avoid suspicion.”

He used seidr to lift the now immobile woman, and brought her to her bedroom, placing her underneath her bedsheets and furs. “Hopefully this will teach you to be more selfless in your next life. Goodbye, you horrid woman.”

Loki closed the door to her bedroom and left her home, not feeling an ounce of guilt for what he did.

Just because his heart had softened over the years didn’t mean he was a completely different person.

He was still fiercely protective over his own, and anyone who crossed his path and challenged him was cut down.

He didn’t think anything of the curse he placed on that woman -and definitely didn’t tell Thor about what he did- until persistent knocking on his door distracted him a month later.

He and Thor were currently playing with all of their children in the living room, so he carefully stood up, cradling Jörd into the crook of his arm, and heading towards the door.

He was surprised to see a frantic man before him, and raised an eyebrow, wondering what he wanted. “May I help you?”

The giant teared up, beginning to plead with Loki. “Something is wrong with my wife, Leader.
Every healer in town has looked over her, and they don’t know what’s wrong. You’re our last hope! Please, *please* save her.”

Loki observed the heritage markings on this man’s body and frowned, seeing that this was Jörd’s genetic grandfather.

He was just as guilty as that woman.

“No.”

The giant stared down at him in disbelief. “What do you *mean*, no?”

Thor had come to stand behind him then, and frowned as well, noticing this man’s heritage marks. “What is the problem?”

The giant looked up at Thor in hope, believing that he could talk some sense into Loki. “Y-Your wife is refusing to heal my ailing wife, a-and I don’t know who else to turn to!”

Jörd made a soft sound then, and Loki brought her to his lips, kissing her a few times. “You dare stand before me, while I hold your grandchild, knowing that it is your fault that your daughter killed herself and that you’re the reason this child was abandoned, and you have the gall to ask me to heal the very woman who played a role in your daughter’s death? No. Just like your wife, you should burn in hell. Now get the hell out of my sight.”

The giant lost his mind then, reaching out to grab Loki and plead with him further, but Thor pulled Loki and Jörd behind him quickly, pushing the man back. “If what my wife says is true… there is no reason I shouldn’t kill you with my bare hands for what you did to your daughter and granddaughter. Scum like you and your wife do not deserve life.”

The frantic giant fell back onto the ground, horrified by Thor’s words. “W-We couldn’t raise the baby! I-I-t’s an omen!”

Hearing this pathetic excuse for a man refer to his daughter as an omen set Thor off, set him off in ways that he hadn’t experienced since marrying Loki, and he growled low in his throat, stalking down the steps and roughly picking up this giant by the collar of his clothing. “*Never* refer to my daughter as such a thing again.”
“She’ll bring your family to ruin! Sh-”

Thor turned sharply to Loki, who was watching with angry eyes from the doorway. “Go inside, Loki.”

Loki held his gaze for a few seconds before nodding, going inside and closing the door.

Now that they were alone, Thor’s eyes began to glow, sparks of lightning jumping off of him. “You deserve a fate worse than death!”

The giant in his hands began to cower with fear, and begged for his life, beginning to sob pathetically.

Thor had no sympathy in his heart though, for a man like this.

To abandon your daughter in her time of need, to cast her out of your heart and home, to disown your grandchild, all for superstition, was unforgivable in Thor’s eyes, and his heart broke over the fact that this man’s daughter felt all she could do was kill herself.

No one was in their cul de sac of their neighborhood at the moment, so Thor used that to his advantage.

He hated giving in to the darkest parts of himself, and he hated letting his anger take control, but in this situation… he told himself that just this once would be okay.

He took the man’s head in his and used enough strength to twist and break his neck, killing him instantly.

He then summoned a fierce storm and dragged the man’s body into the sky, flying over to their city’s morgue, and dropping it from a distance in front of the doors.

He then flew home and opened their door, where Loki was playing with the children still.
The storm outside was still pretty fierce, and Loki and Thor shared a look before Thor sighed, making his way over to them. “What game are you guys playing?”

“We’re trying to help Eden and Eeren talk!” chirped Astrid, beaming up at Thor.

Thor smiled softly and joined in on their game until it was time to lay the children down for their afternoon nap.

Loki sat down at their dining room table after each child was laid down, sighing softly. “Did you kill him?”

Thor sat down and sighed as well. “Did you kill her?”

“... And if I did?”

Thor held Loki’s defensive gaze for sometime before answering. “There are dark parts to us all, Loki. And... as long as whatever you do is done to protect our family... I will never be upset with you for choosing to do something. If... someone has hurt one of our children... or if someone has done something despicable... and you feel that they do not deserve life... then I will stand by you and your decision.”

Loki continued to hold Thor’s steady gaze. “I don’t regret what I did, Thor. And I never will. If I ever meet Adras’ original deneri and his wife, I will do much worse to them.”

Thor nodded slowly, accepting Loki’s answer. “I... do not regret my actions either, Loki.”

He reached across the table then, and took Loki’s hands in his, staring at him gently. “Do you remember when you made Hemming swear fidelity to you? And it concerned me because I had never seen that side of you before?”

Loki nodded slowly, not sure where Thor was going with this.
“Loki… the darkness in your heart didn’t scare me. What scared me was the fact that this same
darkness, this coldness that you have, exists in my own heart. And I worried… I worried what it
would mean, if we stayed together, and allowed this bitterness to take over us.”

Thor sighed again then, looking away from Loki. “Loki… my reputation in this land… is not a lie.
I have been alive for a very long time, and… and before you, I was a very violent man. I had a
temper, and did not think twice about killing someone I was hired to kill, whether they were
innocent or guilty; it was all the same to me. I was a monster. I got into fights every day, I stole
when I needed something, I drank and drank and drank, in a poor attempt to make the emptiness in
my heart go away.”

“When we were wed… I was so scared that I would hurt you, which is why I stayed away. You
were so beautiful and were forced to be by my side, and I couldn’t bring myself to cause you any
undue pain. The closer we got, I always had a wall up, because I was terrified that if you knew me,
if you knew who I really was… this love… this adoration… this respect you have for me… would
vanish. And I was scared of the monster that I would become if this happened.”

He couldn’t bring himself to look at Loki and continued to stare at the floor, not knowing how their
relationship would be after these confessions. “When you agreed to be mine… I told myself that I
would change and become everything you deserved and more, because… you deserve it all. You
deserve to have a husband that gives you the world. And that’s all I want to do for you. I just want
to make you happy. And… I want you to love me. Even the me that gets too upset, or the me that
is moody, or the me that can be selfish, or…”

Loki rubbed the back of Thor’s hands then with his thumbs, wanting to calm him. “I did not lie,
that day that I sat on your lap, and told you that you weren’t a monster. Because you’re not. You’re
a product of your environment, who tried his best to make something of himself, without any
guidance. You’ve been alone your whole life, and… and you’ve been hurting the whole time. And
when we’re hurting, we often do things we’re not proud of.”

Loki scooted closer to Thor then, and reached out, caressing his face. “We both have tremendous
pain in our hearts. And that has caused us to become people we are not proud of. We’re not perfect,
Thor. And we’re going to do things that aren’t perfect. But that’s okay. Because that’s not going to
change my love for you. You are and always will be the person that I am closest to, in this life.
You are my loving partner, you are my greatest friend, and you are the best damn deneri in this
entire universe. I will gladly stand by your side as long as you live this life. If you stray back
towards the hurt in your heart, and begin to become someone you don’t want to be… I will bring
you back. Because I love you, and… and I know you will do the same for me.”

Thor couldn’t help but pull Loki into his arms, hugging him close, and feeling so thankful.
The pair hugged for what seemed like hours before Loki pulled away so that he could kiss Thor. “You hold my heart, Jetoni. And there is nothing you could ever say, or ever do, that would change that. If you fall into darkness I will drag you out, and not let go until you realize that your life is different now, and you have people who will always love you.”

Thor laughed softly, touched by this. “Thank you, my love.”

The pair shared another kiss before separating and smiling at each other.

Loki caressed Thor’s cheek again, wanting to calm him. “You’re not alone, anymore, Thor. We have each other. And we always will.”

Thor did not think it was appropriate to engage in sexual activities with Loki so soon after murdering Jörd’s grandparents, but he wanted to show his appreciation for the Niouvi.

Instead, he kissed him deeply, and stroked at his cheek, reassuring him. “No more secrets. Okay?”

Loki nodded, kissing Thor back. “No more secrets.”

Thor settled back into his chair then. “Have you killed anyone else that I don’t know about since we’ve been married?”

Loki hummed, beginning to think. “I killed the previous leaders of the settlement, once they were forced to leave. I teleported their families to other major cities in the land because they were innocent. I… poisoned or cast harmful spells on the people who were cruel to you, Adras, or Astrid. Nothing that was life threatening of course.”

He grabbed Thor’s hand again then, wanting to placate him. “I’m not a serial killer, Thor. I don’t kill anyone or everyone that has wronged myself or my family. I’m not a witch, either. If talking it out with the person does not resolve the issue, then… I do what I feel is necessary.”

Thor nodded slowly, taking this all in.
He wasn’t upset with Loki for any of this, he just knew that he would have to work harder to reign Loki and his need for vengeance, in.

“Alright. Have you done anything else to anyone, or anything, that you feel I should know about?”

“I threatened a few families that came to me with marriage proposals.”

Thor raised an eyebrow at Loki, then. “ Threatened them how, Loki?”

“Looming threats. Saying I would make their daughters barren, put a curse on their family, things like this.”

Thor sighed softly, pinching the bridge of his nose. “Who has approached you for marriage?”

“Just a few families that have just moved here. They tried to convince me to allow you to take in a second wife.”

Polygamy was not frowned upon in Jötunheim and was actually quite common. It wasn’t encouraged, but it was not surprising to find that the richer someone was, the more wives and children they had.

Polyandry was even less common than monogamy, and usually only occurred if the first husband was impotent or sterile.

Thor wasn’t surprised that families were offering their daughters to him, in the hopes that they would be taken care of, but he wasn’t interested in being with anyone but Loki.

His heart belonged to Loki, and Loki only.

“I’m not interested in us taking in another partner.”

Because Loki was a Niouvi, if he and Thor chose to take on another partner, that partner would be a wife to both of them.
Loki’s shoulders sagged in relief once he heard Thor say this. “I don’t want an extra spouse. I-I can’t share you. A-And I don’t want to be shared. Not again.”

Thor’s gaze softened then, and he took Loki’s hands into his own. “I understand, love. It will just be you and me.”

Although taking in a second wife would allow Loki and Thor to focus more on their careers, and running this city, they both knew that at least right now, it was something they just couldn’t do.

“Have you done anything that I’m unaware of?” murmured Loki, squeezing Thor’s hands gently.

“You know about the fighting… I’ve rejected marriage proposals as well… uh… I think that’s it.”

Loki snorted, a gentle smile on his face. “Alright.”

He looked up then, getting serious. “If… if you ever want us to marry someone else… give me time to process it.”

“Loki… that will never happen. I’ve told you time and time again that you’re it for me. Always and forever.”

Loki nodded gently, feeling better about everything. “Are we okay?”

Thor nodded, bringing Loki’s knuckles up to his mouth to kiss. “We are stronger than ever.”

All three babies beginning to cry caused the pair to laugh softly, and they stood up, heading up the stairs and towards their bedroom.

It had been a few hours since they all ate, so Loki sighed, making his way over to Eeren, who was closest.
Eeren immediately began to gravitate towards his swollen chest, and Loki laughed softly, helping him latch on. “See if you can feed Eden some fruit, Jetoni. He has more teeth than Eeren.”

Thor nodded, gently picking up Eden and shushing him.

Eden began to whine when they walked past Loki, and he reached out for him, beginning to tear up even more.

“Shh… we’re going to try some solid food, Eden.” murmured Thor, kissing his forehead and taking him downstairs.

Loki carefully adjusted Eeren and took Jörd into his arms, helping her latch onto him as well.

Because it was *impossible* to feed all three babies at once, Loki and Thor took turns giving either Eden or Eeren solid food, since they had a few teeth now and were getting older.

Loki thought long and hard about everything that he and Thor discussed while he fed their children, feeling relieved that they’d been honest about some important things, and were now closer.

And he could honestly say that he was looking forward to where the centuries brought them and their family.

Loki and Thor didn’t focus on the expansion of their city until all of their children were over the age of two.

By the time they’d been in this city for five centuries, Adras was 10, Astrid was 5, Eeren and Eden were two and a half, and Jörd was two.

Adras was now 5’7, and up to Loki’s shoulders -the giant was relieved that he was finally tall like his friends- and Astrid was close behind him, stopping at Loki’s hip.
Eeren and Eden were a lively bunch, and there was never a dull day in their household because of them. They were constantly fighting over toys, over Thor and Loki’s attention, over food, and Loki and Thor spent many of their days teaching the two how to get along.

And finally, there was Jörd, who was just the most precious little girl that Thor and Loki had ever seen. She was the sweetest toddler, and always tried her best to keep the peace between her siblings, always sharing her toys, and breaking up arguments between her idri.

Thor and Loki did end up moving closer to city hall, and in a much bigger home, where there was enough space for all of their children.

Hemming and Draeil moved into the same neighborhood as them, as their responsibilities as political leaders were picking up too.

By the time they decided to expand the city again, Thor and Loki had a pretty good handling on the city.

There were politicians, there were leaders of zones in the city, there were councilmen and women, and the city ran much smoother and more cohesively than it ever had.

Now that all of their children were school aged, Loki and Thor could focus more on the running of this city, getting stronger, and working towards their goal of taking down the king.

There had been talks of allying with a major city, and tomorrow, Loki and Thor would be making their way to this city, to speak with its governor.

It was risky, to leave their own city -especially when one considered that they could be going into a trap- but Loki and Thor were both fairly confident that they could escape should that occur.

They wanted to spend tonight with their family before they left, and tonight found them in their living room, playing a game of chase with all five children.

If a psychic had told Loki he’d have 5 kids in the span of 6 centuries, he’d probably have fainted, and never had sex again, devoting himself as a dutiful cuetrati to the Norns.
But running around with his family in their living room right now, Loki couldn’t be happier.

His home was a home of love, of acceptance, and he was thankful that he and Thor were able to provide such a loving environment for their children.

Jörd tackling his leg brought him out of his thoughts, and he fell dramatically, pretending to be hurt. “Norns! You’ve got me, sweet girl!”

The little girl giggled, standing above Loki triumphantly. “I won, Beberi!”

Loki swept her into his arms and plastered kisses against her face, causing her to giggle again.

Eden and Eeren saw that Loki had been tackled, and ran over to him, jumping onto him and knocking him to the ground again. “We got you, Beberi!”

Loki laughed as all three children shouted about their victory, and he opened his arms, taking all of them into his hold, and kissing their faces. “Very good.” He looked up at Thor then, a smirk on his face. “Now we have to get Deneri!”

Thor widened his eyes and pretended to gasp, running away from them as Adras and Astrid leaped off of one of their couches in an effort to tackle Thor.

They missed, and Thor laughed, darting away from Astrid as she leaped up for his legs.

Adras used this distraction to his advantage and jumped on Thor, causing him to fall to the floor. Thor groaned and rolled over, beginning to laugh as his other children dog piled onto him, chanting for another round of chase.

“It’s getting late, everyone. Can we all begin to head to bed?” asked Loki, making his way over to his children.

They all began to groan and gripe about how they weren’t tired, so Thor sat up, beginning to think. “Would you all like a bedtime story?”
Everyone nodded and cheered for this, so Thor grabbed Eeren and Jörd, standing up. “Come on, everyone. We’ll tell you a story before bed.”

Loki grabbed Eden and Astrid and beckoned for Adras to follow them, sitting them all down on one of their couches.

Once they were all settled, and every child was nestled into Thor or Loki, the pair began to think of the story they wanted to tell their children tonight.

“Beberi?”

Loki looked down at their youngest daughter Jörd, humming softly. “Yes, sweet girl?”

“Tell the story when you and Deneri fell in love!”

Thor and Loki shared a look at this before Thor began to recite the tale that they concocted to tell their children. Children always wanted to know about their parents, and Thor and Loki created this story centuries ago when Adras asked the same question.

“When Deneri was growing up in a small village, everybody used to be very mean to me because I was part Aesir. I lived my whole life feeling very lonely. One day, while going to the capital city, I saw a very beautiful Niouvi; the most beautiful Niouvi I’d ever seen in my life.”

Eden gasped, his eyes wide in shock. “Was it Beberi?!”

Thor laughed softly and nodded, pinching Eden’s cheek affectionately. “It was. And all I could do was stop in the middle of the street and stare at him.”

Loki took over next, beginning to share his side of the story. “When I saw Deneri, I was surprised to see someone that looked like him. But I never forgot what he looked like. One day, I was waiting in line for lunch, and the shop owner was being very mean to Deneri.”
“That’s not nice!” grumbled Jörd, beginning to cross her arms. “I love Deneri!”

Everyone else began to add in how much they loved Thor, and the pair began to laugh, their hearts touched by the sweet gesture.

“Seeing Deneri being treated like this upset me. So I told the shopkeeper that I would pay for Deneri’s meal, and let him know that if he ever treated Deneri mean again, I would make sure that no one came to his shop ever again.”

Thor cleared his throat, taking over then. “I thanked Beberi, and we both sat down to eat, finding out that we enjoyed each other very much.”

“And then you fell in love?” gasped Eeren, looking up at them hopefully.

“Not yet, sweet child.” murmured Loki, pinching his cheek. “Deneri and I became friends first.”

“What happened next?” asked Astrid.

“An evil king decided that he wanted to marry Beberi, and I loved Beberi too much to let that happen,” answered Thor.

All of their children gasped, staring at them in horror.

“Deneri asked Beberi if he loved him, and Beberi said yes. So Deneri and Beberi decided to run away from the king, and get married in secret. And then we lived happily ever after, far, far away from the king. And we asked the Norns to give us lots of children to love forever and ever, and they blessed us with all of you.” finished Thor, kissing each child’s forehead. “The end.”

“Beberi?”

Loki looked over at Astrid, humming softly.

“Are you and Deneri gonna ask the Norns for more babies?”
“No.” laughed Loki, emphatically shaking his head. “Jörd is our last princess. Beberi doesn’t want any more children.”

Astrid pouted, not happy to hear this. “But Aunt Hemming just had a baby!”

“Beberi is not having another baby, Astrid. If you want to take care of a baby and give it lots of love and kisses, then you’re free to visit Aunt Hemming and your newborn cousin.”

This made everyone sad, and Loki widened his eyes in shock, surprised with his children. “You all really want another sibling?”

Each child nodded, looking at Loki hopefully.

Loki couldn’t believe that his children wanted another sibling. There were five of them! Five!

He understood that the average number of children in any given household was 7, and he understood that all of their friends had households full of siblings, but Loki would literally lose his mind if he had to take care of a baby right now.

They really needed to focus on expanding their city, gaining allies, and taking down the king, and Loki really didn’t want to put things off longer than they already have.

Having another child would mean he would be out of commission for at least two centuries.

Groaning to himself, Loki shook his head. “I’m sorry everyone, but Beberi is not going to ask the Norns for another baby. All of you are more than enough.”

“But we’ll help take care of it!” pressed Eeren, still hopeful.

“Yeah, we’ll help!” echoed Eden.
“Guys, no more babies. Now let's get you all to bed. It is very late.”

Everyone began to grumble, but Loki herded up his children with Thor, marching them upstairs.

One by one he and Thor tucked them into bed and kissed them goodnight, before making their way back to their room, and changing for bed.

Loki climbed in and nestled against Thor’s side, sighing heavily. “Can you believe they want more siblings?”

Thor chuckled softly and kissed Loki’s forehead, wanting to calm him. “You know how children are, Loki. Today they want a new sibling, tomorrow they’ll want a puppy, and the day after, they’ll ask for a new toy. Don’t take their request to heart.”

Loki knew that Thor was right, and relaxed some, thinking about his children. They truly seemed adamant tonight, and Loki wondered if he could handle bringing in another child.

Odin had kept his promise and stayed away from the family -Loki always had the strangest feeling that Odin was watching their every move, all the way from Asgard- so for the moment, their only threat was King Thrym.

Loki knew that he and Thor would be alive for a very long time, and he knew that once they defeated King Thrym and Odin, there would be plenty of time for Loki to give Thor all the children he wanted.

“Loki… please do not fret over this. I only want more children if you do. And Eden, Eeren, and Jörd are so young right now. As you said, we can focus on killing the king first.”

Loki nodded, pushing the idea of more children out of his mind.

He had his hands full as it was.

He fell asleep with thoughts of the meeting tomorrow on his mind, and woke up at the crack of dawn, shaking Thor awake so that he could help him get the children ready for school.
It generally took them about 30 minutes to wake up all of the children, and then another 30 minutes for them all to get ready while one parent cooked breakfast. Then, after Thor and Loki got ready, they dropped all of their children off at school and made their way to city hall, where they would spend their day working.

Today would be different though, as Loki and Thor would spend it in negotiations with another city. Bjarte told them that this city was interested in allying with them if Loki and Thor were truly as powerful as they said they were, and it was a very large city with millions of giants, so Thor and Loki knew that if they were able to sway this city to their side and get them as an ally, it would change everything.

The plan was for Loki to teleport them to a meeting spot a few years away, and then someone would meet them there, and transport them to this city, where they would meet this governor.

After kissing their children goodbye and sending them off to school, Loki teleported himself and Thor to the meeting spot, waiting for a seidr transporter to pick them up, and take them to the city hall of the city.

Being in a new city after centuries of staying in the same settlement was boggling for Thor and Loki, but they didn’t focus on this, thankful that the governor of this city was discreet.

They were teleported directly to the governor's office, and once they were left alone, Loki took a few seconds to assess the governor.

He was tall -standing at seven feet- and had his back faced towards them, opting to stare outside of a window near his desk instead.

“I appreciate you meeting with me. I understand that coming here was very risky for both of you.”

“And it is even riskier for you to meet with us here. The king would kill you if he ever discovered this meeting occurred,” answered Loki, crossing his arms.

“That he would,” murmured the governor, finally turning around. “But I have never liked the king. And the more cities that agree to band against him, together, the easier it will be to take him down.”
Loki narrowed his eyes once he got a good look at the governor’s face, and his heart stopped when the governor looked at him as well, shock on his face.

Neither of them said anything for what seemed like minutes, and Loki took a wary step forward, not believing his eyes.

He was too scared, too guilty, too broken to believe what he was seeing.

The governor seemed to be in a similar situation as him and also stumbled forward, beginning to tear up. He reached out with a trembling hand, seemingly reaching out for Loki, but too terrified that he was wrong.

Loki studied the heritage markings on this governor’s face, beginning to cry when he realized that they mirrored his own.

“B-Byleistr?”

The governor made a garbled sound and ran towards Loki, pulling him into his arms and beginning to sob. “I-Idri Loki!”

Loki and Byleistr fell to the floor and continued to cry in each other’s arms for minutes, kissing each other’s faces, rubbing at each other’s backs, and apologizing to each other again and again.

Thor wanted to give Loki some personal space to reunite with his long lost brother and quietly sat down on one of the couches in this office, wiping away a few tears of his own.

He felt overwhelming joy, knowing that Loki was able to be reunited with one of his brothers.

“I’m so sorry, Byleistr! I’m so sorry!” wept Loki, holding onto his brother fiercely. “I’m so sorry, my precious sibling! I’m so sorry!”

Byleistr continued to weep, clutching onto Loki in his arms tightly. “I-Idri Loki! Loki!”
Loki pulled back so that he could cover Byleistr’s face in kisses, tears streaming down his face. “I’m so sorry, brother! I’m so sorry!”

Byleistr took Loki’s face in his own and returned his kisses, pulling him close again. “I thought I would never see you again.”

“I thought you were dead!” whispered Loki, shaking his head. “I spent my entire life looking for you and Helblindi, and I couldn’t find you! I thought you were dead!”

Byleistr held Loki even tighter, shaking his head. “We thought you died! You never came back from that politician’s home! We tried to find you before we ran away, but we couldn’t!”

“He wouldn’t let me leave, Byleistr!” wept Loki, breaking down further. “He kept me as a sexual slave for a century! I had to kill him to escape, and when I finally did, I learned that you both ran away because you thought I left you!”

“No, no Idri, we never thought that you abandoned us!” assured Byleistr, kissing Loki’s cheek again. “We never thought that. When we couldn’t find you, we swore that we would become powerful enough to locate the person who had you, and buy you back.”

Hearing that his brothers never thought he abandoned them took the weight of the world off of Loki’s shoulders, and he whimpered in his brother’s arms, shaking his head. “I tried so hard to find you both! I never stopped searching!”

“We never stopped searching either, Idri! Never!”

Loki and his brother continued to cry for some time before finally beginning to calm down, and smiling at each other.

Byleistr finally took notice of Thor then, surprised to see the quarter Aesir in his office. “Norns, Idri…”

Loki sniffed and wiped at his face, beginning to stand. “This is my husband, Byleistr. His name is Thor.”
Thor stood to greet Byleistr as the giant stood, smiling respectfully. “It is an honor to meet you. Loki speaks of you and Helblindi very highly.”

Byleistr’s gaze softened then, and he shook Thor’s hand, nodding. “I must say… I find myself concerned to know that my Idri was the Psemetri that was forced to marry the quarter Aesir.”

Loki wiped at his eyes again, rushing to defend Thor. “Thor is an amazing husband, and would never touch a hair on my head without my permission. He treats me with the utmost respect, and he is a wonderful deneri to our five children. I thought I would never find love or happiness in this life after losing you and Helblindi, but… but Thor changed that for me. And bringing our children into the world only solidified that.”

Byleistr nodded slowly then, grasping at Loki’s shoulder gently. “Then, forgive me, Idri.” He looked at Thor then. “Thank you for taking care of my eldest sibling, when we could not. I am relieved to know that he has found love and happiness in this cruel world. Please forgive me, as… your reputation precedes you.”

Thor laughed softly, understanding. “I understand the reputation that I have in this realm. I am not angry with you.”

Byleistr smiled then, shifting his gaze towards Loki. “You have five children, Idri?”

Loki nodded proudly, pulling out a small painting that he always kept on his person. It was a recent painting of their entire family, and Loki cherished it dearly.

“Our oldest is Adras; he’s 10. Next, there’s Astrid, our princess. She’s five. Then we have our twin niouvi, Eeren, and Eden, and finally, we have our youngest, Jörd.”

Byleistr looked at the picture of his nieces and nephews fondly, a gentle smile on his face. “They’re so lovely. I can’t wait to meet them, Idri.”

Loki nodded happily, putting away the painting. “What of you, brother?”

Byleistr pointed to a large painting behind his desk, smiling proudly. “I have a wife and 10
children. My oldest is 18, and my youngest is 3.”

Loki widened his eyes, walking towards the painting. He observed one of the children for some time, smiling sadly. “Your niouvi child looks just like beberi.”

Byleistr nodded, pulling Loki into another hug. “I named him after you.”

Loki widened his eyes, staring at his brother in shock. “Did you?”

“I did. And every day he reminds me more and more of you. He is a fiercely intelligent adolescent, and he can always be found with his nose in a book or practicing a spell. He is my pride and joy.”

It warmed Loki’s heart to hear this, and he chuckled, continuing to observe his nieces and nephews. “My niouvi twins remind me of you and Helblindi. They argue over toys and my attention, just like you two did.”

The pair laughed together, fond smiles on their faces.

“I’m so happy that it’s you, brother.” murmured Loki, hugging him again. “I’m so happy it’s you.”

Byleistr hugged Loki back just as warmly, agreeing with him. “I agree. And… if you’ll allow me, I’ll send word to Helblindi. He is governor over a city a few years from here.”

Loki nodded quickly, unable to stop smiling. “Please. I would love to see my brothers together again. And… and I want us to finally be a family. We were robbed of that chance when we were younger, but… there’s nothing stopping us now.”

Byleistr returned his smile, agreeing. “I would love for our children to meet, and become close. It would mean the world to me, to see that happen.”

Loki and his brother hugged one more time before making their way back over to the couches, where Thor was sitting.
Byleistr sat up straight then, beginning to get right to the point. “Taking on the king is no easy feat. He has a plethora of supporters, and we cannot forget how strong he is. If we move forward with this, someone will have to kill him.”

Loki and Thor shared a look before Loki sighed, and began to explain. “I would be the one responsible for killing the king.”

Widening his eyes in shock, Byleistr stared at his brother in disbelief. “Norns, Idri! The king has infinite power, power that we cannot even begin to understand, and-”

“And I have surpassed him in strength. I can kill a thousand men with a wave of my hand, I can summon anything and everything, and I have a vast knowledge over the Jötun body. If I wanted to, I could close my eyes, and kill every single person in this city with a simple spell, and expend no more energy than it would take to pick up a book.”

Byleistr was silent for a long time then, assessing the validity in Loki’s words.

Loki could tell he was struggling with wrapping his head around this, so Loki laughed, trying to think of the best way to prove his power. “Let me demonstrate. Each person has a unique essence within them; their own signature. It is very easy for me to connect to that essence, and diminish it. It is like a spider’s web; everyone is connected. If you’d like me to, I can kill every single violent criminal, rapist, or monster in this city right now. And then in 24 hours, my husband and I can return, and by then there will be proof that I am as powerful as I say.”

Byleistr’s face darkened then, and he began to tap his foot, weighing the options. “If you are this powerful, Idri… why haven’t you taken down the king?”

Loki snorted, waving his hand. “I’ve been pregnant off and on for the past 5 centuries, little brother. I can’t fight the king while I’m with child.”

Byleistr’s face softened, and he began to laugh, understanding. “Forgive me, Idri. I had not considered this. Please do not take offense.”

Loki smiled softly, love in his eyes. “I could never be mad at you, little brother. I love you too much.”
Byleistr and Loki smiled sweetly at each other before Byleistr sighed, considering Loki’s offer. “There are over 5 million people in this city. Of that, there are 50,000 giants in our jails. At least 100,000 giants are these violent criminals you speak of… are you telling me you could rid the land of them immediately?”

“I am. And I will. Of course… this is a very dark thing to do, and unlike myself, my husband has a good heart. So if he asks me not to do this… then I won’t.”

Byleistr and Loki both shifted their gaze to Thor, who was frowning deeply.

Thor loved Loki, and over the years, he’d even accepted that Loki had a dark streak within him, as… he had one as well. Of course, he did everything he could to reign in that dark streak in himself, but he’d accepted that this was also who Loki was, and it didn’t change his love for him.

Loki had gotten better with his cruelty or coldheartedness over the centuries, and he now checked with Thor before doing something that might be considered too “cruel” or “heartless”.

“Aberi… must you kill people? Can you not heal all of the sick instead? Please?”

Loki made a face at this, not understanding why Thor was so against this, but knowing that his husband had a big heart. If Thor didn’t want him to kill them, then he wouldn’t.

Turning back to face his youngest brother, Loki sighed, deciding to do what Thor asked. “My husband would like me to heal the sick of this city instead. Is that alright?”

Byleistr nodded slowly, thinking deeply on it. “Won’t this take too much of your essence?”

“It will take a lot of my essence, and it will take a few hours to do… it will definitely be more complex than killing all the criminals. It would take a lot out of me to heal every illness in this city.”

Thor frowned again, not happy to hear this. He didn’t want Loki overworking himself, just to make him happy.
There had to be another way.

“What if I made every criminal violently ill? I can give them the same illness. It will not be life-threatening, but it will be on such a grand scale that it will be proof of my abilities. Does this work for both of you?”

Thor nodded, relieved that Loki found a way to prove his power without killing anyone. “Yes, Aberi.”

Byleistr nodded as well, looking forward to this. “I agree with this as well. I will send soldiers out later tonight, as well as tomorrow morning, to check our hospitals, our healing centers, and the known whereabouts of these criminals, to verify that they are sick.”

Loki nodded definitively, and closed his eyes, spreading out his essence, and beginning to cast the spell.

It took him a few minutes to do it, but once it was done he opened his eyes and nodded, sitting forward. “It is done, little brother. I have set it so that in three days time, their illness will go away. This illness is not contagious, and will not infect the other citizens of this city. It is a specific, contained illness.”

“Thank you, Idri.” murmured Byleistr, leaning back into his couch. “May… may you take me to your city? If only to see your children?”

Loki nodded without hesitation. “Of course!”

Thor raised an eyebrow, not exactly sure how he felt about it. He was happy that Loki had been reunited with his brother, but he didn’t know if they could trust Loki’s brother with the location of their city.

“What do you know seidr?”

Byleistr looked over at Thor in confusion. “... I do not. Why? Is this important?”
Loki narrowed his eyes at Thor, knowing exactly why he asked this question. “It is not important, little brother. Disregard it.”

Loki stood up then, and waved his hand, teleporting them all to their home.

Byleistr looked around Loki’s home, smiling softly at all of the paintings of their family. “This is a lovely home, Idri.”

Loki beamed, feeling overjoyed. “Thank you, Byleistr.”

Thor looked up at the clock, seeing that it was time for the children to get out of school. “I’ll pick up the children, Aberi.”

Loki thanked him and led his brother to the couches in their living room, sitting them both down.

They began to both speak of their lives since they were separated, and what they’d been through in the centuries since.

Loki’s front door bursting open interrupted their conversation and Loki laughed as all five children barreled into the living room, pulling him off of the couch so that they could hug him and smother his face with kisses.

Loki hugged his children tightly and hummed, always feeling a particular calmness enter him when he held his children in his arms. “Did everyone have a good day?”

His children nodded, each of them beginning to yammer about their days.

“One at a time, everyone.” laughed Thor, sitting on the floor as well so that some of their children could climb into his lap.

The toddlers were obsessed with his beard and with Loki’s hair, and always pulled at it when they sat in their laps, which the pair found amusing.
Eden and Eeren immediately made their way into Thor’s lap and grinned, hugging him tightly.

Astrid and Jörd climbed into Loki’s lap and plastered kisses against his face, and Adras wrapped his arms around the back of Loki’s torso, kissing his cheek.

Byleistr laughed softly as his nieces and nephews showered their parents with hugs and kisses, which caught their attention.

Adras was the closest to him, and he rested his head atop of Loki’s, quirking up an eyebrow. “Beberi? Who’s he?”

“This is your uncle Byleistr. We were just reunited today, and I wanted you all to meet him.”

All of their children widened their eyes, and stared at their uncle, suddenly nervous.

“I don’t bite, precious children. I swear.”

Adras was the oldest, so he stood up protectively and crossed his arms, looking down at his uncle. “Are you really Beberi’s brother?”

Byleistr nodded, a gentle smile on his face. “You must be the oldest. Adras, yes?”

Adras nodded, taking in Byleistr’s heritage lines. “Are you going to live here, now?”

“No, precious child. But I will visit, and I will bring your cousins so that you can all play together.”

Adras perked up here. “Do I have boy cousins?”

“Yes; I have 5 sons.”
Adras cheered, getting happy about this. “Awesome!”

Loki laughed at this, affectionately pinching at Adras’ hip. “He’s just lonely because he doesn’t have any brothers.”

Byleistr chuckled, staring at his nephew with a twinkle in his eyes. “You and your cousins will get along great, Adras.”

One by one, each of Thor and Loki’s children made their way over to Loki’s brother and began to ask him a million and one questions, all of them finally ending up in his lap or in his arms.

Loki noticed that it was getting late and that his brother needed to get home to his family, so he stood up, motioning for his children to get out of his lap. “Your uncle needs to return home to his family, everyone. Say goodbye.”

The children grumbled, and hugged their uncle tightly, each of them begrudgingly saying goodbye.

Thor stood up as well and kissed Loki, a gentle hand on his hip. “I’ll stay here with the children, Loki. Please, return your brother home.”

Loki nodded and returned Thor’s kiss, rubbing at his side. “Thank you, Jetoni.”

Loki then waved his hand, teleporting he and his brother away.

Once he was gone Thor sighed, running a tired hand through his hair. “Alright, Adras. Help me get your siblings to bed.”

Adras nodded and clapped his hands, catching everyone’s attention. “Alright, guys! You know the drill! Bedtime!”

Thor snorted as his children followed Adras upstairs, and he made his way into Astrid and Jörd’s room first, knowing that Adras would help Eden and Eeren change.
After changing Astrid and Jörd into night clothes, Thor kissed them goodnight and snuffed out the candles in their room, wishing them sweet dreams.

He then went to tuck in Eeren and Eden, and kissed them goodnight as well, snuffing out the candles in their room and wishing them a good night’s rest.

Adras was last, and although he said he was too old to be tucked into bed each night, Thor still did it and kissed him goodnight, knowing that he would do this until Adras was truly against it.

It made his heart hurt to see his children grow up.

Finally, he made his way to his room and showered, changing into bedclothes. Loki still wasn’t back, so Thor figured he was meeting his nieces and nephews.

Thor honestly didn’t know how he felt about Loki’s brother.

He was happy for Loki, but… he just didn’t know if they could trust him. Loki hadn’t spoken to his brothers in millennia, and he had no idea who they’d become over the years.

He wanted Loki to be happy, but… he wanted Loki to proceed with caution as well.

He waited up for Loki and decided to read over some important documents that needed signing, pushing them aside when Loki appeared in their room at the stroke of midnight.

Thor had never seen Loki so happy before, and although he had his reservations about Loki’s brother, he was overjoyed that Loki had been reunited with his loved one.

“I’m going to take a quick shower, Jetoni.” yawned Loki, heading towards their bathroom.

Thor waited for Loki to come out, and pulled him against his side once he was in bed, holding him close.

Loki hummed and nestled against Thor’s side further, unable to stop smiling. “Byleistr said I can
return in a month, and meet Helblindi again.”

Thor rested a calming hand on the crest of Loki’s hip, making a noncommittal noise. “And the treaty?”

Loki frowned when Thor said this. “That’s not what’s important, Thor. Being reunited with my brothers matters more to me.”

Thor sighed softly, pursing his lips. “Love… I am ecstatic that you have been reunited with your family again. Your joys are my joys, and my heart is practically soaring in pride right now. But that doesn’t change the fact that we are in a precarious position regarding the king.”

Loki knew that Thor was right, but he continued to frown, trying to not get upset. “What is a month or a year to us, Thor? Give me time to enjoy being a family with my brothers, give me time to enjoy having a family again, and after we’ve rekindled, we can focus on the treaty. It’s not like I’m planning on spending centuries upon centuries frolicking about through fields of roses!”

“Loki… that isn’t what I meant.”

“Then what did you mean, Thor?”

Thor sighed softly. “I just want you to be careful.”

Loki reeled back at this, glaring down at Thor. “What is wrong with you? Why can’t you be happy for me?!”

Thor gently pulled Loki back into his arms, not wanting him to think the worst. “Loki, that’s not what I’m saying, I promise. Just… think about this from my point of view. Both of your brothers are governors of prominent cities, with absolute ties to the king. We have to work carefully because we don’t know if they are trustworthy.”

Thor knew Loki was practically radiating with anger, but he did bring up some valid concerns that Loki couldn’t deny.
But he also knew that saying these things would irreparably hurt Loki, and that was the last thing he wanted.

Sighing softly, he sat up and pulled Loki into his lap, thankful that Loki didn’t protest. Had this been a few centuries ago, getting Loki to calm down and see his side of things would’ve been like pulling teeth.

“Love… I am happy for you. I truly am. Seeing this smile on your face warms my heart, and to know that you once again have your brothers in your life, after spending so long searching for them, makes me happier than anything. I guess… I guess a small part of me is too scared to hope that this is a blessing, because we’ve been betrayed and let down by everything and everyone in our lives. You’ve had so many things happen to you in your life, and… and I guess I’m just protective over you, Loki. Your heart is so precious, and I don’t want anyone to ever break it again.”

Loki relaxed in Thor’s arms after the giant confessed this, knowing that he spoke the truth.

He hugged Thor tighter and pressed a warm kiss against his neck, forgiving him. “I understand now, Jetoni. I am not upset.”

Thor kissed Loki’s cheek softly, relieved that Loki understood where he was coming from. “I love you. And your happiness means everything to me. So if you trust your brothers, then… then I do too.”

Loki stretched up to kiss Thor’s lips, not upset with him anymore. “Thank you, Jetoni.”

The pair shared another kiss before settling into bed and falling asleep.

Loki was practically buzzing with excitement that he would be reunited with Helblindí in a month and that he and his brothers would finally be together again.

Loki and Thor teleported back to Byleistr’s office a month later, after dropping off each child at school. Loki had never been this excited in his life -well, with each child, he’d been just as happy to
either bring them into this world or adopt them-and once they arrived Loki tackled Byleistr into a 
hug, smothering his face in kisses. “Hello, little brother.”

Byleistr laughed softly and hugged Loki tightly, picking him up and spinning him around. “Good 
Morning, Idri Loki.”

Loki placed a final kiss against Byleistr’s forehead, continuing to grin up at him as his brother set 
him down.

“Sheblindi is on his way. He should be here any moment.”

The door to Byleistr’s office opened then, and everyone turned as a giant identical to Byleistr in 
every way except he had a beard, made his way into it.

“Byleistr, what was so important that you requested my appearance immediately? You know we’re 
too busy to see each other so frequently.”

Loki made a garbled sound and ran over to his brother, jumping into his arms and beginning to cry.

Sheblindi seemed confused and raised an eyebrow at his twin, who was smiling proudly. 
“Byleistr… why is there a strange Niouvi clinging to me?”

“It’s me, little brother! It’s me!” wept Loki, hugging onto Sheblindi and wrapping his legs around 
his waist even tighter.

Sheblindi patted Loki’s back awkwardly, looking to his brother for help. “Byleistr…”

“Oh you’ve always been so stupid, ‘Blindi!’ laughed Loki, pulling away so that he could stare into 
his brother’s eyes. “Do you really not recognize your Idri?”

Sheblindi took a few seconds to study Loki and his heritage marks, making a garbled sound once he 
realized that they matched his own.
He began to cry heavily and wrapped his arms around Loki, hugging him tighter than he’d ever hugged anything or anyone in this life.

They sobbed in each other’s arms for minutes, reassuring each other that they loved each other, that they weren’t upset, that they were sorry, and kissed each other’s faces, unable to let go of each other.

“Why didn’t you call me back sooner, Byleistr! I would’ve dropped everything to see our Idri Loki!”

“You were with the king, dear brother. Considering who our Idri is to the king, if I would’ve requested that you leave the conference of the southwestern governors, it would have been very suspicious.”

“I don’t care! He’s my Idri! Why didn’t you tell me?! You know what he means to me, what he means to us, I—”

“Blindi,” murmured Loki, pressing a warm kiss against his face. “I’m here now. And I love you. And I always have. And I always will.”

Helblindi’s hardened face softened, and he stared at Loki much like a young child, eyes full of hope. “Where are you, in the kingdom? I don’t want you ever leaving my side again.”

Loki laughed gently and rubbed circles into his brother’s cheeks, touched by this. “I’m currently hiding from the king. I was the Niouvi that refused to marry him, and... he forced me to marry the quarter-Aesir as punishment. But, my husband and I have fallen in love, and are happy together. We’re the leaders of the resistance movement against the king.”

Helblindi removed his hands from under Loki’s thighs, helping him to the ground. “Are you serious?”

Loki nodded, motioning for Thor to come over. “Yes. I love him very much, and he is very good to me. He opened up my heart when I thought no one in this life could, and he loves every single part of me, and always will. I don’t know what I’d do without him.”

Thor couldn’t stop the smile that spread across his face as Loki defended him, and he moved to his
side, placing a warm kiss against his cheek. “Hello, Helblindi. Loki has always spoken highly of you and your brother.”

Helblindi smiled warmly, shaking Thor’s hand. “Any man who can make my Idri happy and bring him joy is a man that is just fine in my book. Welcome to the family, Aesir.”

Loki’s eye twitched when he heard his brother refer to Thor as an Aesir, and he grabbed his forearm, catching his attention. “Please do not call my husband this, dear brother. It bothers him greatly. And our children share his features, so… I don’t want them to think they are not Jötnar.”

Helblindi widened his eyes slightly, nodding then. “Of course, Idri Loki. Forgive me, please. The last thing I want to do is offend anyone in our family.”

“Please do not trouble yourself over it, Helblindi,” answered Thor, resting his hand on Loki’s shoulder. “I am not offended. I know you did not mean any harm.”

Helblindi nodded in relief then, turning his gaze back to Loki. “You said you have children?”

“Yes. We have five children.” smiled Loki, pulling out his treasured painting of them all, and handing it to his brother.

Helblindi stared at his nieces and nephews fondly, beginning to tear up again. “They look so lovely.”

His eyes narrowed in on Jörd though, and he frowned, a pained expression on his face. “Your youngest is albino?”

“Yes. Someone in our city left her on our doorstep, and we knew that if we didn’t take her in… she would live a hard life. And because my husband and I know what it’s like to not experience a parent’s love… we couldn’t turn her away. She looked right into our eyes with so much innocence and… and we knew she was ours.”

Helblindi smiled fondly, touched by the selfless act. “I can’t wait to meet them. I’ve cleared out my entire week, just as brother said. I want us to spend every waking moment with you, now that you’re in our lives again.”
Loki beamed at his brother, grabbing his hand. “It would be safer if you both stayed with Thor and I, in our home. We have more than enough room, and your nieces and nephews would love to meet you.”

Helblindi nodded immediately, agreeing with this. “Of course. My wives already know that I’m on a “business trip” and won’t be back for some time.”

Loki widened his eyes, surprised to hear this. “Wives?”

Polygamy was not frowned upon in Jötunheim, and although it wasn’t encouraged, it was widely accepted.

Loki would never agree to a polygamous union with Thor though; they were it for each other, and Loki did not share.

At all.

“Yes… I’m married to a beautiful giantess, and an enamoring Niouvi. Together, we all have 12 children.” answered Helblindi, pulling out a small painting of his family. “Here they are.”

Loki took the painting gingerly, smiling warmly. “You have a lovely family, little brother. Your eldest twins look just like you.”

Helblindi offered Loki a proud smile. “Thank you, Idri.”

He pulled Loki into his arms then, kissing his cheek. “I love you so much, Idri. I thought I’d never see you again.”

Loki hugged him back just as fiercely, stepping on his tiptoes to kiss his brother’s cheek. “I love you too.”

Releasing Loki, Helblindi beckoned everyone over to the couches in his brother’s office, sitting
down. “Hearing that you and your husband are the leaders of the resistance movement scares me, Loki. The king is a powerful man; he can wipe out a hundred men with the wave of his hand. If he finds out this movement exists, he will kill you.” His gaze softened then. “I can hide you and your family, Idri.”

Loki was touched by the gesture, and sat down next to Thor, absentmindedly intertwining their fingers. “The king is no longer the strongest seidr user in this land. I am.”

Helblindi widened his eyes in shock, not understanding. “Idri, the king has practiced for millennia, no one can do what he can!”

“Idri told me that he would display his power as evidence, when I met him a month ago. He told me he would make every criminal or deviant in this city horribly sick for three days exactly. And this was done.” answered Byleistr, sitting down next to his twin. “I don’t know how, but… our Idri has become very powerful, Helblindi.”

Helblindi turned his gaze back to Loki then. “Norns… can you truly take on the king?”

Loki nodded confidently. “I wanted to wait until all of our children were walking and talking before I took him on. I can kill him easily, but… the issue of his lineage and his supporters remains. I cannot kill an entire army by myself. And although my husband is powerful beyond reason… I don’t know if he can take out legions of an army by himself.”

Thor really didn’t like that Loki was speaking about his gift, but he accepted that if they were going to do this, that if they were going to ally themselves with other cities and districts, that everyone involved would need to know about his abilities.

Loki’s brothers raised their eyebrows in confusion, staring at Thor strangely. “What do you mean, Idri?”

Loki shared a look with Thor, wanting to make sure that he was okay with him speaking about his abilities. After getting a nod, Loki answered his brothers. “My husband… because his father is Odin… he can control the weather, has complete mastery over lightning, and can fly.”

Loki’s brothers’ eyes widened even further, and they stared at Thor in incredulity. “Norns… can you truly do these things?”
Thor nodded slowly, still uncomfortable with speaking about his gifts. “I can.”

He sighed softly then, beginning to frown. “I suppose you’re needing to see proof of this, so… what would you like me to do?”

Helblindi and Byleistr shared a look before Byleistr spoke. “Do something with the weather, if you can. A fierce storm perhaps.”

Thor didn’t like being told to do anything, but he understood that this was necessary for them to gain Loki’s brothers’ cities as allies.

“I can’t do anything too dangerous within the city limits. I don’t want to hurt anyone, or destroy any properties.”

Loki hummed, understanding that Thor didn’t like causing chaos and destruction. “I can teleport us all to a mountain that overlooks a vast forest, where Thor can demonstrate his power. Then, I can heal everything that was destroyed. Will this work?”

Everyone nodded, so Loki teleported them to a desolate mountain top that overlooked a vast forest, and waved his hand, placing a protective spell over each of them. “I’ve placed a protective spell over all of us, so that any rain, hail, or lightning will go around us, and not hit us.”

Loki turned to Thor then, placing a gentle hand on his chest. “Do what you feel comfortable with, Jetoni. You will not harm us. I promise.”

Thor nodded and bent down, kissing Loki. “Thank you, Aberi.”

They kissed once more before separating, and Loki made his way over to his brothers, nodding for Thor to begin whenever he was ready.

Taking a deep breath, Thor rose into the air, getting high enough to where Loki and his brothers looked like ants.

He then focused on the storm deep inside and called upon mighty black storm clouds, which
brought along the gale force winds.

Because this was an abandoned area, Thor knew that he could test the limits -if there were any- of his power, and did just that, the gale force winds causing trees to snap, the hail battering down upon the forest and the ground in droves, and the rain coming down so hard and so fast that it was blinding, cutting the leaves and the bark of the trees.

Finally, Thor called upon lightning, and struck down every tree in this forest, lighting it aflame.

He pushed the envelope just a bit further, and spread the influence of his lightning miles and miles away, charring everything within sight.

He truly did not like to cause chaos or destruction though, so after a minute or two of this, Thor ceased this hellstorm, and stopped his lightning, lowering himself to the ground.

Loki knew that Thor was powerful, but actually seeing the true extent of his power was humbling, and Loki couldn’t believe that someone so powerful existed.

It was one thing to speak of Thor and Odin as gods, but seeing their power on full display was aweing.

Loki’s brothers seemed to be in a similar boat as him and began to laugh as Thor lowered himself to the ground, pulling Loki into his arms protectively.

Loki didn’t mind Thor being this way anymore, and melted into his touch, smirking at his brothers. “Now, I will heal this forest, and make it what it once was.”

To do this, Loki wouldn’t draw on his own essence. The sun was out, so he would use the essence from the sun instead, as that was endless, and would allow him to do this in a few seconds.

Right before everyone’s eyes, the forest began to heal, lush leaves and plants and trees sprouting right before everyone’s eyes.

The forest was now as beautiful and plush as it was before, and Loki stretched, looking up at the
sun’s position.

“Our children will be out of school soon, so Thor and I must head back. You both are more than welcome to spend a few days at our home.”

Helblindi nodded immediately. “Of course. I’m not leaving your side again, Idri.”

Byleistr nodded as well, agreeing. “I would love to spend the week with you. We can all discuss taking down the king later.”

Loki beamed and tackled his brothers into hugs, overjoyed. “Norns! To hold you both in my arms again!”

His brothers laughed softly and each wrapped strong arms around him. “It’s good to see you again too, Idri.”

Loki pressed warm kisses against the cheeks of his brothers, letting go of them.

He then teleported them all to their home, and Loki offered for his brothers to sit down while he and Thor went to go get their children from school.

Loki was overjoyed that his brothers were not only alive, but were doing well, and had created lives and families of their own.

He just hoped that now that they’ve seen he and Thor’s power, they’d be on board with joining them to fight against the king.
Chapter Notes

Hello!

First and foremost, I am SO SO sorry for the long hiatus.

Because I do this as a hobby, I'm not the most skilled writer, and writer's block often gets to me. With this story, I really love it, and the last thing I wanted to do was ruin it because I wasn't sure about the direction to take the plot in.

Nevertheless, I thank each and every one of you for sticking with me, and being patient.

This chapter clocks in at about 10.4k, so I can only hope you enjoy it.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The week that Loki spent with his brothers and his newfound family was one of the best weeks of his life.

Knowing that his brothers were alive and doing well returned a piece of Loki’s heart that he thought would never be there again, and it made his heart soar with pride to see Thor attempting to get along with his brothers.

He knew that Thor didn’t really trust them, but to see the giant trying meant a lot to Loki.

He and his brothers all planned to meet again in a year, so for now, Loki and Thor were back to focusing on the settlement, and planning the safest and most effective way to take down the king.

Loki’s brothers wanted to work on their treaty with Loki in phases, and they also needed to get those that were politically under their control to agree with their plan of allying themselves with Loki and Thor, so Loki gave his brothers the space and time to do this, knowing that it all couldn’t happen overnight.

Thor and Loki’s city hadn’t focused on expansion efforts in quite some time, but the city had managed to grow to that of 20,000, so when Thor and Loki weren’t raising their children, practicing their powers, or running their town, they barely had time for each other.
Loki usually initiated the sex between them when it’d been quite some time since their last romp, but with how busy they’ve been lately, it’d slipped his mind.

During a particularly busy day in their settlement, Loki was shuffling through dozens of papers on his desk, trying to make sense and order out of them all.

He’d been in meeting after meeting today and just wanted a break.

The calendar in his office had the Monday of next week circled, and Loki gazed over at it, a fond smile spreading across his face. The Monday of next week would be he and Thor’s anniversary - they didn’t count the day of their actual marriage as their anniversary, but instead considered the day they broke down all of their walls, as their true anniversary- and he still didn’t know what they would do to celebrate it.

He knew they’d be too busy to actually do anything noteworthy on their anniversary, but he hoped that after killing King Thrym and Odin, their lives would be more peaceful.

The door to his office opening made him look up from his paperwork, and he smiled softly when he saw it was only Thor, a large part of him quite excited to see him unexpectedly. “Hello, Jetoni. Is everything alright?”

Thor sighed and made his way over to Loki, sitting down at one of the chairs in front of his desk. “I miss you.”

Loki laughed to himself at Thor’s boldness and began to blush, putting down his quill. “We just saw each other this morning.”

Loki blushed even deeper when he saw the look in Thor’s eyes, and he smirked, beginning to stand up. “I have a meeting in an hour, and these papers are due to my councilwoman by this evening.”

Thor watched Loki with a lust-laden gaze as the niouvi made his way over to him. “I won’t be long.”

Loki settled himself in Thor’s lap, taking his lips with his own. “Everyone will wonder where you are.”
Thor pulled Loki closer, beginning to press warm kisses into his neck. “They can wonder.”

Loki closed his eyes and made a soft sound, holding onto Thor. “What if someone comes in?”

Thor licked up along the length of Loki’s neck and to his earlobe, nipping at it. “Then they see us.”

Loki loved how bold Thor was being today, and reached down, beginning to palm him through his pants. “What do you want to do?”

Wrapping his arms around Loki, Thor pulled him further into his lap, and sucked at his jugular fiercely, making sure that he left a mark. “I want you to ride me right here, until you get tired.”

Loki let out another soft sound, continuing to stroke at Thor. “And then what?”

“I want to bend you over your desk and fuck you until you’re gasping for release.”

Loki let out a groan, the image of this exciting him. He stretched up to kiss Thor again, and ran his tongue along the length of the giant’s, running his thumb over the clothed head of Thor’s cock. “Hold me against the wall as well.”

He’d always wanted Thor to do this to him, but the giant had always been so shy over the centuries.

Nipping at Loki’s neck again, Thor shook his head, reaching to unzip and unbutton his pants. “Only after you’re so far gone, you can barely stand.”

Loki reached down and shifted the bottom of his loincloth to the side, revealing himself so that he could begin to sink down on Thor.

The pair let out guttural groans as Thor entered Loki, and the niouvi bit his lower lip, trying to stifle his moans.
Very carefully, he rose up in Thor’s lap, before lowering himself again, and getting used to Thor’s size and shape before he made his movements more insistent.

Thor held onto his hips and guided him, supporting his movements.

He kissed and sucked at Loki’s neck while the niouvi moved, running his hands across his smooth, bare skin, and coming to rest on his rear.

Loki rode him for a few minutes before his thighs began to shake from exertion, so Thor picked him up, carrying him over to his desk and setting him down unceremoniously, not caring about the numerous papers cluttering the surface.

Loki wrapped his legs around Thor’s waist and moaned as Thor moved into him more forcefully, his nails dragging along Thor’s back. “**Harder, Jetoni.**”

Thor snapped his hips into Loki a bit rougher and took his lips with his own, stifling his cries.

He reached down then and pulled down Loki’s loincloth, revealing his straining cock.

With a large hand, Thor began to jerk Loki in time to his thrusts, grunting every time Loki constricted or pulsed around him.

Loki arched in Thor’s hold as he climaxed from both sexes, beginning to twitch and shudder in his arms.

Thor picked Loki up again and slanted his lips against his, walking them over to a wall and placing Loki against it, and beginning to thrust up into him.

Loki felt so sensitive, and he could barely hold onto Thor or keep his legs wrapped around his waist, but he held on, drowning in the pleasure that Thor was offering him.

He couldn’t hold back his voice anymore, and clutched onto Thor tightly, clenching around him. “**Don’t stop, Jetoni!**”
Thor hoisted Loki up a bit more and shifted his hold on him, beginning to move more earnestly.

He felt his climax building within him and groaned loudly as he came, spilling into Loki.

Loki climaxed again soon after Thor, and trembled in his hold, going slack in his embrace.

They each took a few moments to catch their breath before Thor carried them over to the chair behind Loki’s desk, sitting them down.

Loki sucked lazy kisses into Thor’s neck, his hands underneath Thor’s shirt and exploring his skin.

Thor basked in Loki’s touch, and massaged at the globes of his ass, holding him close. “I hope you’re not mad at me.”

Loki shook his head, nestling his face into the crook of Thor’s neck. “Not in the slightest, Jetoni. I want you to touch me. This… this was a nice surprise. I like seeing you like this.”

Hearing this put a smug smile on Thor’s face, and he laughed, continuing to stoke at Loki’s rear. “I’ve always imagined doing this to you.”

Loki raised his eyebrows in surprise, looking up at Thor curiously. “What else have you imagined doing to me?”

“Things that will make us want to take a day off to do them.”

Loki snorted, closing his eyes and hugging Thor tighter. “What are we going to do about our anniversary, Thor? It’s next week.”

Thor hummed softly, beginning to think about it. “I want to travel with the children to a beautiful spring. I want us to all be a family and enjoy nature for the day.”
Loki didn’t mind this *too* much, but he really wanted to just spend time with Thor.

Thor sensed this, and laughed softly, pinching at Loki affectionately. “We can’t go travel or do something surrounded by people, Loki. We’ll be recognized.”

Loki was silent for some time, then, beginning to think. “What if I used seidr to change our appearances?”

Thor perked up here, surprised that this was an option. “Can you truly do this?”

“I can. I can use a guise created by seidr, and make us appear as anyone or anything. We can use this, and… and enjoy being “free”. We can eat out, we can attend shows, we can shop… for a week we can pretend that we’re just normal citizens.”

Thor thought about this for some time, liking the idea of this more and more. “Where would we go?”

“We could go to one of my brother’s cities, to be safe. Heading back to the capital is too risky.”

Thor nodded, agreeing with this. “I like this. We shall do this, then.”

Loki smiled, beginning to look forward to this trip. “Now the big question is who will watch the children? Hemming just had a baby, so I don’t want to task him with this.”

“My aunt? She shouldn’t mind too much.”

“No… I always feel bad for asking her to watch the children. She does it so frequently.”

The pair pursed their lips, thinking about who could watch their children.

“If we want to do this, I do not believe my aunt would be against watching the children for a week, Loki. She admittedly thought she’d never see the day where I’d have a family to call my own, so she always feels happy to help.”
Loki hummed in reply, starting to agree with Thor. “I suppose you’re right… I just feel nervous about doing this. I’ve never gone this long without our children.”

“They’ll be fine. Adras is 10 already, and can help my aunt with getting everyone else ready for school and ready for bed.”

“I suppose you’re right,” murmured Loki, biting a lower lip when Thor’s fingertips began to venture into dangerous territory. “Careful… I’ll want to go again if you continue your ministrations.”

Thor smirked and moved a finger just a bit lower, running it along the lips of Loki’s drenched cunt. “When is your meeting?”

Loki stifled a moan, clutching at Thor’s shoulders. “15 minutes.”

“Perfect.” murmured Thor, sliding two fingers into Loki. “I’ll make this quick.”

Loki spread himself a bit more in Thor’s lap and nipped at his ear, encouraging him. “Another.”

Pressing in a third thick finger into Loki, Thor angled them in a way he knew would drive Loki insane, and sucked at his neck, covering it with a deep purple hickey.

“A-Ah! Deeper!” demanded Loki, tightening his hold on Thor’s shoulders.

Laughing softly, Thor thrust his fingers a bit deeper into Loki and angled them again, moaning when Loki clenched around him and climaxed.

Loki twitched in his lap and shifted so that he could rest his head against Thor’s chest, panting heavily. “Norns, Jetoni…”

Thor pressed a warm kiss against Loki’s cheek, looking over at the time. “Clean yourself up, Loki.”
Loki sighed, waving his hand and using seidr to clean himself and Thor up. “I don’t want to work today.”

A loud knock on his office door made him groan, and he begrudgingly climbed out of Thor’s lap, pressing a quick kiss against his lips. “Come in!”

His assistant Selkie opened his door, surprised to see Thor sitting in Loki’s chair. “Oh! Leader! What a surprise it is to see you here.”

Thor nodded, standing up and discreetly fixing Loki’s loincloth, covering his nether regions and rear completely. “Hello, Selkie. I was just leaving.”

Loki swatted Thor’s hand away when he pinched him affectionately on his rear, blushing deeply. “Go! You’ve done enough.”

Thor laughed softly and leaned down, placing a loving kiss against Loki’s lips. “I’ll see you after work in a few hours, Aberi.”


Loki was never one that was comfortable with PDA of any kind, so Thor stopped teasing him, running a calming hand through his silken hair and kissing him again before leaving Loki’s office.

He’d put his own work to the side to fool around with Loki, and made his way back to his own office, ready to deal with everything he’d left behind.

Their anniversary wasn’t for another week, and he would admittedly have to pile on the work, so that he wouldn’t fall behind during the week they took off for their trip.

Loki and Thor’s children were not happy that the pair were going on a trip outside the settlement without them, and pitched a fit, begging and pleading for Thor and Loki to take them with them.
Of course, no such thing could be done—taking their entire family out of the settlement was too risky, too bold, and \textit{way} too dangerous—so Thor and Loki placated them by telling them that they would travel as much as their little hearts wanted once it was safe to travel again.

Offering to bring them back souvenirs from their anniversary calmed them down, so after giving strict instructions to Adras that he was to help Thor’s aunt watch and take care of his siblings, Loki and Thor packed their bags and teleported to Helblindi’s city, so that Loki could greet his brother and his wives before altering he and Thor’s appearance, and enjoy being “free” for the first time in centuries.

Helblindi let Loki know it was fine to arrive in the foyer of their home, so Loki was surprised to see that Helblindi and his wives were waiting for them when he and Thor arrived.

Helblindi smiled warmly when he saw Loki, and pulled his sibling into a big hug, kissing his cheek. “Norns, Idri! Everytime I see you my heart grows fonder.”

Loki smiled softly, hugging his brother back. “Thank you for letting us stay here for the week, brother. Thor and I haven’t been outside the settlement in centuries.”

Helblindi released Loki and shook Thor’s hand, greeting the giant as well. “Our home is your home, Idri.”

Loki politely hugged his brother’s niouvi wife before reaching out for his giantess wife in greeting, surprised when she shirked back and offered a stiff nod and strained smile.

Helblindi and his niouvi wife shot her a look in warning, so she gave Loki another forced smile, obviously uncomfortable. “Hello, Idri.”

This was Loki’s first time meeting Helblindi’s giantess wife—she always refused his company beforehand—and he did \textit{not} like how he was being treated.

He assumed it was because she was nervous about her husband interacting with a wanted criminal—nevermind the fact that Loki was Helblindi’s long lost sibling—but he refused to let it bother him. In his mind, she was not important.
“Thor and I will be back in time for dinner tonight.” continued Loki, stepping away from his sister-in-law and addressing Helblindi and his niouvi wife, Asten. “If you need help cooking, Asten, please let me know.”

Helblindi’s niouvi wife rolled his eyes, pushing for Thor and Loki to go. “You will do no such thing, Idri! This is your anniversary, and we want you to do nothing else but enjoy it.”

“Yes, Idri. Please enjoy your day with Thor.” laughed Helblindi, gesturing for servants to take Loki and Thor’s bags upstairs to a guest room.

Loki smiled softly and reached out to touch Thor, altering his appearance so that he wouldn’t look suspicious. Hair that was once blonde was now black, and blue eyes were now red.

He also darkened Thor’s skin so that he would blend in, and altered his familial etchings, making them as inconspicuous as possible.

After he was satisfied with Thor’s appearance, Loki altered his own, giving himself copper hair, and faint freckles.

He kept his familial etchings the same -if someone wondered why he and Thor were staying with Helblindi, they’d be able to see that Loki and Helblindi were related, and would assume that Loki was just a family member visiting- and debated about giving himself a pregnancy bump.

Two giants without children on the city streets would draw attention to themselves, and Loki wanted to blend in as much as possible, so after a moment’s hesitation, he gave himself a bump, not making it too big or too small.

Finally complete with their transformation, Loki turned around, showing himself to his brother. “Well?”

Helblindi widened his eyes in disbelief, staring at Loki and Thor with wide eyes. “Norns, Idri! You both look completely different! I-I can barely recognize you.”

“And you’ve even given yourself a bump…” murmured Asten, rubbing at Loki’s stomach strangely. “It looks and feels so real. I had no idea seidr could be used for these purposes.”
“Neither did I,” added Thor, looking at Loki with a strange look in his eyes.

Loki was pleased with his display of his seidr, and hugged Helblindi and Asten goodbye. “We will return for dinner then.”

The pair hugged Loki goodbye, so Loki turned away, not addressing or acknowledging Helblindi’s second wife.

She would learn soon enough that he was someone you did not mess with.

Thor didn’t miss the tension, and shot Helblindi an understanding yet apologetic look before following Loki out of the doors of his brother’s home, unable to stop smiling.

For the first time in his life, no one was staring at him.

He admittedly began to laugh when Loki led them out of his brother’s neighborhood, and noticed that people were nodding politely at them, instead of staring at them in fear and disgust. “Norns, Loki… I never thought I’d see the day where I could be stared at like a regular person.”

Loki made a soft sound, taking Thor’s hand and intertwining their fingers.

This was something they hadn’t been able to do in public outside of the settlement, and although it was something small, it still meant a lot for the pair, to be able to hold hands without anyone gawking or pointing at them. “I must admit… this does feel nice. I’ve forgotten what it’s like to have people pass by me without staring, glaring, or whispering.”

The pair walked hand in hand out of the neighborhood and began to explore the wealthier side of the city, stopping at its markets.

Loki’s clothing was admittedly a few centuries outdated, so he dragged Thor over to a large stall full of sashes and coverings that would drive any niouvi insane. “Jetoni, I need to get some new clothes for us.”
Thor hummed, allowing himself to be pulled towards the sashes. “That’s fine. I think the whole family needs new clothes, so we can spend today shopping for everyone.” He picked up a deep green colored loincloth, sash, and mesh top, beginning to imagine Loki in it. “What will our names be, love?”

Loki couldn’t believe he forgot to craft fake names for he and Thor, and he hummed, looking at the outfit Thor was holding out for him. “I’m not sure… give me a moment to think.”

The outfit Thor was holding for him was alluring, so Loki added it to the pile of clothes he was getting for himself at this stall, touched that Thor picked out an outfit for him. “Do you like Svad?”

“For myself?”

“Yes. I was thinking I could go by Fjorn while we’re here. Very simple and common names.”

Thor continued to help Loki shop, a sexy outfit catching his eye. “Then we are Svad and Fjorn.”

Sneaking over to the outfit, Thor saw that it was nightwear, and was fitted in ways that Thor loved to see on Loki.

“Would you like me to wear that tonight, Jetoni?”

Thor jumped, embarrassed that Loki caught him thinking about this. “Would you really wear it?”

Loki hummed, not surprised that Thor liked this nightshirt. “I would.” He added it to the pile of clothes that he’d managed to push into he or Thor’s arms, and decided that this would be the last outfit he bought for himself right now.

After paying for his items, Loki waved his hand, using seidr to send all of his new clothing back to their room in Helblindi’s home, and changing his outfit to the green one that Thor picked out for him.

Thor blushed when he saw Loki do this with seidr, and took his hand, letting the niouvi lead them around the vast marketplace, buying jewelry, makeup, and clothing for their family.
They spent about 5 hours shopping, and after Loki used seidr to apply makeup and jewelry that matched this green outfit, to himself, and dressed Thor in an outfit that he picked out for the giant, Loki led them to a restaurant, sitting down at their outdoor terrace, and gratefully taking a menu. “Norns… this is wonderful, Jetoni.”

Thor hummed in agreement, unable to keep his eyes off of Loki. “You look stunning, Aberi.”

Loki shot an unusually bashful smile Thor’s way, tucking a section of his long hair behind his ear. “Thank you, Jetoni.”

“It is odd to see you with copper hair, though. I like you with raven hair better.”

Loki snorted, waiting for the waiter to take their orders before responding to Thor. “You having black hair makes you look more mysterious.”

Now it was Thor’s turn to laugh, and he rolled his eyes in amusement, attempting to look dark and mysterious for a moment. “Like this?”

Loki was doubled over with laughter now, and he threw a cloth at Thor, causing the giant to laugh with him. “Your facial expressions are always so titillating.”

Thor reached out and took Loki’s hand, kissing his knuckles. “Titillating, you say?”

Loki winked, looking up as their food arrived. “Very.”

“Well, the next time I want to have sex, I’ll just smirk in your direction.”

Hearing Thor speak so freely and openly really made Loki happy, and the pair went back and forth, joking and speaking with each other in a way they’d never experienced.

Here, no one was judging them, no one was watching their every move or looking up to them for guidance.
Here, they could just be themselves, and enjoy what it felt like to be *normal*.

Their late lunch went by quite nicely, and after that, Thor found a nice show for them to attend.

Loki hadn’t been to a show in so long, and enjoyed the performance thoroughly, walking back to his brother’s home with Thor as the sun set in hues of orange and red in their sky.

If the rest of this week could be as pleasant as this day, then Loki would be content for years and years to come.

The pair finally arrived back to Helblindi’s home after a quick makeout session in an alley, and entered, just in time for dinner.

Thor had never met Loki’s nieces or nephews, so to see them all sitting down for dinner made him miss their children.

Helblindi had so many kids, and Thor found that he was slightly jealous.

A large family was one of his biggest dreams, but he was thankful for the children that he had now, knowing that after they killed King Thyrm and Odin, they would have plenty of time for more.

Loki used seidr to take away he and Thor’s guises, and sat down at the head of the table next to Helblindi, thanking everyone for gathering here to have dinner.

After food had been distributed, Helblindi began to speak, presumably wanting to know about Loki’s day. “I assume today went well, Idri?”

Loki nodded, enjoying the meat that was cooked for dinner. “It went very well. It was nice to be able to enjoy life without being stared at and whispered about.”

Helblindi’s niouvi wife hummed, shooting Loki a sympathetic look. “You being treated that way won’t last forever, Idri.”
“Well you’re right about that.” murmured Helblindi’s second wife, frowning and looking away.

Loki raised an eyebrow at the giantess, annoyed that she believed she was above being called out on her behavior. “Do you have something you would like to say, Bjorn?”

Helblindi’s second wife seemed shocked that Loki called her out about her rudeness, and scoffed, attempting to match his cool gaze with one of her own. “Must I remind you that you are in my ho-

“I am in my brother’s home. Not yours. You are the second wife, and your opinion or wishes will never carry the weight that Asten’s will. And as long as my brother and his first wife are perfectly fine with me staying here, I will.” He took a bite from his meal then, giving the facade that he was unbothered, and dismissing her like a child. “Now, if you would like to act like the adult you are, and have a nice dinner with us, you are more than welcome to. But you being my brother’s wife does not give you the safety or protections you believe it does, when it involves me. Is this understood?”

Helblindi’s wife looked full of indignation, and scowled at Loki, throwing her cloth down on her plate. “How dare you speak to me like this! I am a governor’s wife! You will show me the respect that I am due!”

Thor could already see where this was going, and reached out, gripping Loki’s thigh and holding him in place. “Loki… do not engage her.”

Loki pursed his lips in frustration, turning to his brother and trying to resolve this peacefully -if only for Thor, as the giant didn’t like when Loki escalated situations. “Helblindi. If Bjorn is this upset about my presence, why am I here?”

Helblindi shot his second wife a withering look, silencing her objections. “I have already spoken to her about her behavior. And she will stop this immediately.”

Loki really didn’t want to sully his trip because of his horrid sister-in-law, so he hummed, continuing to speak to Helblindi and Asten about peaceful, trivial things.

After dinner, the children were all sent to bed, and the adults gathered in one of the living rooms of the home, wanting to drink and relax before bed.
Now that the children were not around, Loki felt that it would be appropriate to figure out why Helblindi’s second wife was so rude, and nestled into Thor’s hold, sipping at his wine. “Brother?”

Helblindi hummed, wrapping a strong arm around his wife Asten. “Yes, Idri?”

“Is there a reason Bjorn feels negatively about me?”

The room went deathly silent then, so Loki fought back a smirk, knowing that he was being absolutely terrible and pettish right now.

A large part of him didn’t care that he was being mildly problematic though, so he continued to speak, acting as if they were speaking about calming things like the weather. “I just feel that because we’re a family, we should all get along. When our children are finally brought together, I don’t want them being treated poorly by their aunt or their cousins because they see how Bjorn feels she can treat me.”

Thor sighed and pulled Loki closer, shooting him a look of warning. He just wanted to enjoy this week, and not have it turn into something that it didn’t need to be.

“Bjorn is a young, spoiled court noble, Idri.” sighed Helblindi’s niouvi wife Asten. “She only has 3 children, and all of them are under 5 centuries old. She has never worked hard for anything in her life, and is used to getting her way. You being here threatens -in her mind at least- the livelihood of herself and her children, because you and your husband are still wanted by the king.”

“Asten!” hissed Bjorn, glaring at him fiercely.

“Oh hush, Bjorn. I don’t have the desire to put up with your childish attitude tonight.” replied Asten, sipping at his wine. “You’re so focused on your status and what others think of you, that you can’t even be happy that your husband has been reunited with his Idri that he assumed died millennia ago. You shame yourself.”

“Alright, that’s enough.” sighed Helblindi, beginning to get annoyed. “If you are going to ruin the mood of the evening Bjorn, you are more than welcome to stay away from my Idri and his husband while they’re here.”
The young giantess frowned deeply and continued to silently simmer, shooting daggers at Loki.

Loki figured that since he caused the drama, he should divert their attention to something else, not wanting to be the reason everyone went to bed miffed or upset. He’d had his fun. “Have you gotten any luck getting those underneath you to agree to our plans?”

Helblindi sat up, quickly looking over at his second wife Bjorn. “She knows nothing, Idri. And it should remain that way.”

This was the last thing Thor wanted to hear, and he sat up a bit in his lounge chair, frowning. “Is there a reason she knows nothing of our plans?”

Asten sighed, trying to vaguely tell Thor and Loki why. “She is… related to the King’s 11th wife; they are cousins.”

Loki inhaled sharply, beginning to get worried. “Helblindi!”

“She knows nothing, Idri!” placated Helblindi, trying to calm Thor and Loki down. “And she has sworn to me that she will not speak to her cousin about the both of you being here.”

“And you expect me to trust her after how she’s treated me since we found each other?!” countered Loki, setting his wine glass down on a nearby table. “You should’ve told us sooner! This puts so many things in jeopardy!”

“I know more than you think,” answered Bjorn, smirking over at Loki. “There’s a heavy bounty on the heads of you and your husband.”

Everyone in the room froze then, and Loki’s heart dropped. “You didn’t…”

Helblindi’s second wife cackled, downing her wine glass. “Just think of how rich we’ll be when the king arrives. Helblindi will probably be promoted to Psemetri, we’ll get to live in the capital, and all it took was alerting the king that you’re here.”

Asten shot up off of the couch he was sitting on and slapped Bjorn, causing her to fall to the
“You idiot! Do you really think the king will let us live?! He will kill us all, and burn our entire city to the ground! What have you done?!”

This has been the exact scenario Thor was terrified of living, and he pulled Loki up and off of the couch, knowing that they needed to get out. “Loki, we need to go; now.”

“And let everyone in this city die because of her?! Thor, if I take my family and leave, the king will kill everyone here!”

This was the giant’s worst nightmare, and he pinched at the bridge of his nose, trying to think of the best way to save everyone, and get out of this. “Loki, send your brother, his wife, and all of your brother’s children to the settlement. We’ll teleport to Byleistr and do the same for him. After that, we will return here, and… and we’ll fight the king.”

Loki’s face paled considerably when Thor said this, and he knew they didn’t have any other choice, but to know that they would be fighting the king today, without an army of their own terrified Loki to no end.

He looking over at his brother, who was currently regarding his second wife in contempt. “Helblindi… you need to gather all of your children, and leave. I will get you to the settlement; the king has no idea where it is, and you and your family will be safe there.”

“Absolutely not!” shouted his second wife, rising to her feet. “My children will not follow you to that traitor’s city!”

“Shut up, you horrid woman!” shouted Helblindi, grabbing at his wife’s shoulders and shaking her. “I will not let my children get killed because of your selfish actions!”

She tried to break out of his hold, but he tossed her aside, running out of the room and going to wake up all of his children with Asten.

Loki didn’t even have time to worry about his traitorous sister-in-law, and turned to Thor, looking up at him in a panic. “Jetoni! Fly above the city, and see if you can spot the king or his army!”

Thor nodded, quickly kissing Loki before rushing out of the room and the home, flying high into the night sky.
He was horrified to see that the king was only a few miles away, and flew back down, running into the home. “He’ll be here within the hour, Loki! The city won’t stand a chance! He’s going to kill everyone! He has a massive army with him!”

Loki knew he had to get Byleistr and his family out of their city ASAP, as they had no way of knowing if the king was attacking both Helblindi and Byleistr’s cities, or just Helblindi’s city. “I’m going to alert Byleistr. By the time he’s gathered everyone, I’ll be back to get Helblindi and his family out of here! We should be able to get to the king and stop him before he reaches the city!”

Helblindi’s wife began to laugh, catching their attention. “No one can withstand the might of the king.”

Loki honestly didn’t have time to worry about her or what she said, and snapped his fingers, getting to Byleistr’s home, and alerting him to get his family ready to go.

Now that Loki was gone, Thor believed it would be best that he did everything in his power to hold the king back, and rushed out of Helblindi’s home, getting himself high enough in the sky to bring about a fearsome storm.

He didn’t want to get too close to the king without Loki -if he was captured, it was over for him- so Thor focused on making this storm as deadly as possible, striking down the soldiers that he could see, with lightning.

He continued to strike soldiers in the king’s army with lightning, and was amazed to find that they were dropping like flies, his lightening spreading farther and quicker than he anticipated.

The king literally had an army of hundreds of thousands of soldiers with him, and Thor knew that if he did nothing else, he needed to diminish this army’s numbers.

Loki was the only one strong enough to break through the king’s protective spells, so until it was time for the two to battle, Thor did what he could, from where he was.

He didn’t want to stay up here too long though, and kept the storm going while he returned back to Helblindi’s home, relieved to see that Loki was back.
The niouvi looked up at him as he entered the room, relieved to see him as well. “Byleistr and his family are already in our home at the settlement. I’m about to send Helblindi’s family there now.”

“I’m working on whittling down the king’s army. He has a few hundred thousand soldiers, and I’ve been able to put a dent in the sizable army from my vantage point.”

Loki felt better when he heard this, and turned back towards his brother, making sure that they hadn’t forgotten anyone. “Are you ready?”

Helblindi nodded, tightening his hold on the two toddlers in his arms. “We are.”

Loki waved his hand, sending his brother, his first wife, and all of his brother’s children to he and Thor’s home in the settlement, leaving behind his brother’s second wife.

She brought her fate upon herself, and Loki refused to allow her refuge at the settlement, when she was the reason they were in this mess.

His brother seemed to feel the same, and did not object to Loki leaving her behind, so after sending his brother and his family away, Loki turned, beginning to leave the room. “We need to attack the king before he gets to the city, Thor. I don’t know if I’m strong enough to place protection spells around millions of giants, and we need to prevent as many deaths as possible.”

Thor nodded, agreeing with this as well. “I can get us closer to the king, but you’re the only one strong enough to fight him, love. If you focus solely on the king, I will take care of his army.”

“You’re wasting your time!” shouted Helblindi’s second wife, interrupting their conversation. “When the king finds out where you’ve taken my children, I will personally see to it that your children are—”

“Oh for Norns sake!” shouted Loki, waving his hand and casting a paralyzing spell on her. “Just shut up! Shut up! You have done enough!”

Now that she had been taken care of, Loki’s mind went right back to how he was going to defeat the king, and he rushed out of the room and the house, Thor right on his heels.
“I think it would be best if I showed you what I saw, Aberi.”

Loki had never taken Thor up on his request of seeing the ground from the sky -the thought of
being in the air made Loki feel sick, and he didn’t know how Thor or Astrid felt so at ease in the
sky- but he knew that he needed to, tonight.

Wrapping his arms around Thor’s torso, Loki nodded, closing his eyes and fighting back a scream
as they shot into the sky.

“There. I’ve taken out a good 6th of the king’s army, but I still have a lot of work to do. Should I
try and get us closer?”

Loki slowly opened his eyes, trying to ignore the queasiness he felt from being so high up. “P-
Please.”

Thor nodded, and flew he and Loki out of the city, closer to the king and his army.

Now that they were closer, it was easier for Thor to see what he was working with, and he
summoned more of his power, determined to shrink this army down into nothing.

He used this opportunity to truly test the limits of his powers -if there were any- and struck down
every soldier still alive and marching, with lightning.

Loki was awed to see Thor’s powers on full display, and he could only imagine how it would be to
fight Odin, since he had the same powers as Thor, on a grander scale.

In only a matter of seconds, the king’s entire army had been reduced to ash, and Loki gapped,
turning to look at Thor. “Did you use all of your strength?”

Thor blinked, looking down at the carnage that he caused. “I… I don’t know. I tried to use
everything, to see how strong I truly was, but… there’s no one left. And I don’t feel tired in the
slightest, Loki.”

Loki nodded slowly, making a mental note of this. If Thor could use his powers endlessly, that
meant that Odin could too, on a grander scale; and that bode well for no one.

Now that the army had been taken care of, Loki asked Thor to end the storm so that they could fly down towards the king, and end this once and for all.

Before flying them down there, Thor pulled Loki closer and kissed him deeply, letting him know that he loved him.

Because as strong as he was, it meant nothing if he couldn’t break through King Thrym’s protective spells.

Taking a deep breath, Loki let Thor know that he was ready, and sent a silent prayer up to the Norns, asking them for their mercy.

Loki knew he was strong, but he still didn’t know if he was just as strong or stronger than the king, and because of that, he had to enter this situation with caution.

Thor stopped his deadly storm, and set himself and Loki a few yards away from the king, trying his best to reassure Loki that this could be done.

King Thrym took notice of them immediately, and regarded Thor in contempt, stepping off of his llugem. “And here I thought the power of the gods was a myth.” He narrowed his eyes at Thor then. “Had I known you held this power within you, I would’ve killed you and your beberi when Odin left you.”

Hearing his mother being spoken about like this upset Thor, and he growled, glaring right back at the king and refusing to back down. “Your hubris shall be your downfall, you wretched giant.”

King Thrym scoffed, beginning to stalk towards the pair. “You may have killed my army, but you cannot touch me. I will put an end to this silly rebellion, and make an example out of you.”

“You can certainly try,” interjected Loki, crossing his arms and glaring up at the king as well. “But you won’t succeed.”
“So the prized niouvi finally finds his tongue?” laughed the king, deciding to humor the pair for a moment. “Your precious Aesir cannot save you from me anymore, my dear.”

Loki refused to back down, remaining strong. “He is not here to save me. And he will not be the one to defeat you. I will be the one to bring you down. And I’ve already thought of the perfect way to do this.”

This got a rise out of King Thrym, and he shook his head in amusement, ready to end this. “You always brought a smile to my face right into your dying days, Loki. What a shame it is that you never became mine. You are as beautiful as ever; even in death.”

King Thrym waved his hand then, and turned around, ready to climb back on his llugem. “After I destroy this disobedient city, I will think fondly of you.”

“You would have to strike me dead first, My King.” laughed Loki, amazed that his protective spells had been strong enough to deflect King Thrym’s spell. “And that’s something that you haven’t done successfully.”

King Thrym inhaled sharply, spinning around and widening his eyes in disbelief when he saw that his spell had no effect, and Thor and Loki were still very much alive. “Impossible!”

Loki watched King Thrym cast another spell, and cackled when it didn’t work, suddenly confident about how this battle would turn out. “Have you not heard that you’re no longer the strongest user of seidr in the realm?”

King Thrym grew more and more upset as each of his spells had no effect on Loki, sweat beginning to pool at his brow. “You traitor! You’ve turned on your own, and allied with the Aesir!”

Loki snorted at this accusation, taking a step towards the king. “I’ve done no such thing. Odin is still very much our enemy.”

“Enough of this!” shouted King Thrym, reaching out a hand and beginning to recite a very powerful spell.

Loki knew the exact spell he was casting -it was one Loki memorized because he wanted to cast it
on the king himself- and reached out, not even needing to mutter the counter spell.

He couldn’t believe that he was this much stronger than the king, and managed to weave in a damaging attack in his counter spell, widening his eyes and grinning darkly when the king was knocked off of his feet, blood beginning to drip from his mouth.

“My, my, look at this. I never thought I’d see the day where the king was beneath me.”

King Thrym spat harshly and sat up, glaring at Loki. “If I have to kill you with my bare hands, you wretched niouvi, then I will.”

Thor intervened here, knowing that seidr protection spells generally didn’t protect against physical bodily harm. Loki was not trained in combat, and although he was very powerful with seidr, if the king quickly struck him, he’d be done for.

Quicker than King Thrym could process, Thor had grabbed Loki, pulled the niouvi behind him, and kicked the king square in his chest, sending him flying.

Hearing the king wheeze let Thor know that the king had a few broken ribs, so he looked down at Loki, wanting to know what he wanted to do. “Love… this is all you. Whatever your decision is, I will support.”

Loki nodded, looking over at the king. “I know exactly what I’m going to do to him. Killing him would be too kind of a gesture.”

Reaching out his hands, Loki began to mutter a powerful spell, wanting to make sure that he cast it perfectly.

What he was doing was a dark spell that required massive amounts of seidr, a dark spell that he’d never cast before, and he didn’t want to mess up.

A dark purple energy was shot towards the king, and wrapped itself around him before seeping into his being, and once he laid limp, Loki knew it was over.
Gesturing for Thor to follow him, Loki made his way over to the king, and looked down, kicking the king roughly to make sure that it worked.

When the king didn’t move, Loki sighed in relief, turning back to look up at Thor. “I have taken away every single protection spell that he had placed on himself, as well as every member of his family, and every giant in this realm that he was protecting. I have taken away his ability to use seidr, and I have also taken away his ability to move and speak. He will not die, as I have made sure that no matter what is done to him over the next millennium, he will remain alive. This was done so that he could be paraded around the kingdom, as proof that he has been defeated, and so that anyone who feels they were wronged by the king can take it out on him physically.”

Thor shook his head in disbelief, awed by Loki’s prowess. “Norns… I never thought this would happen.”

Loki hummed in agreement, using seidr to lift the king’s body in the air. “Now the question is… what do we do? This entire realm still believes that it is under the king’s rule. Absolutely no one has a clue that the king has been deposed.”

Thor frowned, beginning to think about the best way to do this. It would take them years to clean out the king’s supporters from around the realm and the capital, and it would take even longer to establish themselves safely as the new rulers of this land.

Thor knew that he didn’t want his children around any of this, as their safety meant everything to him. “We take him back to the settlement with us, as proof that he is defeated. Then we craft a plan with those in the settlement. During the day, we travel around the realm, working on bringing it under our control, and at night, you and I return to the settlement, to be with our family. They will remain here until it is safe for us to all reside in the palace.”

Loki hummed in agreement, waving his hand and teleporting them all to the settlement. He made sure to send the king to a hidden spring near the settlement -he needed to focus on calming everyone down, and planning before he showed them the king- and was relieved to see that the settlement wasn’t in a state of chaos or disarray.

Unlocking his front door, Loki was startled to see all of his children crying and panicking, Hemming and Thor’s aunt trying to calm them all down.

“Norns have mercy! What has happened, children? Beberi and Deneri are fine.”
Everyone gasped and looked up at the sound of Loki’s voice, their shoulders sagging in relief.

All at once, Loki and Thor’s children ran over to him and tackled him into a fierce hug, causing him to stagger and fall to the ground.

Warm kisses and comforting hugs were distributed equally, and once each child was in the warm embrace of Thor or Loki, the pair could finally focus on the dozens of giants in their home.

The youngest three were still loathe to be outside of Loki or Thor’s embrace, with Jörd in Loki’s arms and Eden and Eeren in Thor’s arms, so Loki walked over to Hemming, Thor’s aunt, and his brothers, relaying the news to them. “The king rules this realm no longer.”

Everyone present inhaled sharply, looking at Loki in awe.

“You took down the king… and his army… all alone, Idri?” breathed Byleistr, shocked that everything was truly over, and no chaos or innocent lives being taken had occurred.

Loki shook his head, looking up at Thor. “No. Thor took down their army, and I took down the king.”

“So… he’s dead? Just like that?” murmured Hemming, in complete disbelief.

“He is very much alive. I’ve just taken away his ability to use seidr, and have paralyzed him. I cast a very powerful spell that will keep him alive for a millennium, regardless of the physical torture he receives. Death would be too kind for him.” explained Loki, knowing that this was all hard to believe.

Everyone present thought that it would take centuries to take down the king, and believed that it would be much harder and much more taxing on everyone involved, than it actually was.

The adults present stood in silence after Loki simple explanation of what had occured, each of them trying to make sense of what they were being told.

To know that such worthy foe had been taken down was hard to believe, and yet… Loki and Thor
would not be standing before them if they had not taken down the king.

Finally Byleistr sighed, shaking his head and stroking at his chin. “Norns… I guess the question is what do we do now?”

“Sleep,” answered Thor, kissing Eeren’s forehead. “All of our children are tired, and it is late. It’s been a harrowing night, and we’re all running on fumes. In the morning, we can all come together and discuss what to do from here. The king isn’t going anywhere, and the realm will not fall apart overnight. We have time.”

Everyone agreed with the giant, so Loki directed his brothers and their families to a nearby hotel, and let them know that they were more than welcome to come over for breakfast in the morning, so that they could all discuss what they should do.

Hemming let Loki know that he would stop by in the morning as well with his husband, and that they would talk more then.

Loki felt as if he were living in a strange dream when he laid his children down to sleep that night, and it wasn’t until he relaxed in the bath, that the gravity of what he did, hit him.

He took down the king.

His reign was over.

And it had been easier than he ever dreamed of it being.

Their bath was big enough for both him and Thor, and he made room when Thor slid in behind him, nestling himself in his embrace, and leaning back against his shoulders, finally allowing himself to relax.

His mind still felt like it was running a million miles a minute, and he was still on edge, fearful that somehow, someway, the king would break out of Loki’s spell, and wreak havoc on the realm.

He knew that this would never happen - the spell that Loki cast was very powerful - but he still
couldn’t accept that taking down the king had been as anticlimactic as it was.

Thor kissing his cheek brought him back to the moment though, and he sighed, closing his eyes and trying to allow the water to soothe and relax his muscles. “I can’t believe it’s over, Jetoni… just like that, our lives have changed forever.”

Thor sighed as well, feeling the same. “A part of me is worried that we’re in a dream, and that I’ll wake up, and find out this all isn’t real.”

Loki looked at his hands in the water, still trying to make sense of everything. “I know that there is much to be done, to bring the realm under our control, but… I find myself wondering just how strong we are together… and how much stronger we can become. If you can take down hundreds of thousands of soldiers in a matter of seconds, and not feel drained or exhausted from it… and if I can defeat the most powerful user of seidr this realm has known for millennia, with a wave of my hand… how strong are we truly?”

Thor took Loki’s hand and intertwined their fingers, sighing again. “As strong as we are together… Odin is stronger. We could have this entire realm at our command, and it would mean nothing, in comparison to Odin.”

Loki frowned deeply, knowing that Thor spoke the truth. “He said that he would leave us alone until our children matured… but will he really do this? The longer he waits, the more powerful we become. And this is something that he doesn’t want.”

They remained silent for sometime after this revelation, and Thor held onto Loki just a bit tighter, not wanting to say what was in his mind, but knowing he needed to. “Love… I think you need to reach back out to Odin.”

Loki went rigid in Thor’s arms, immediately beginning to protest. “No! What if I do this, and it jeopardizes everything we have planned?”

Thor kissed Loki’s neck gently, wanting to soothe him. “We don’t know what Odin is planning. And because he rules all nine realms, he is privy to what occurs on each realm. He might’ve never anticipated us ruling Jötunheim, and defeating Thrym. Now that we’ve done it, he might realize that we are a threat to his reign. We need to know what he’s thinking, so that we know how to go forward. I admittedly cannot rest easy if I don’t know if my father is planning on raining hellfire on this realm now that we’ve defeated Thrym.”
Loki remained silent for quite some time, mulling over Thor’s words, and weighing their options.

The last thing he wanted was to reach out to Odin, but he knew that Thor was right. They didn’t want to be caught by surprise, and lose everything that they loved and cared about in this world.

“After bathing… I will cast a spell that will put us to sleep, and get our souls to Odin, to speak to him in the realm of dreams. I cannot promise that it will be safe, as I’ve never performed this spell before; I’ve only just learned it a decade or two ago.”

Thor kissed Loki’s neck again, agreeing with this. “Thank you for doing this, love. I know our lives are uncertain right now, and… I know it’s terrifying. But we can do this. We’ve come so far, and we can’t give up now.”

Loki kissed Thor’s knuckles in return, looking up at him. “I just want to live in peace, now, with our children, and my family. And I will fight for as long as I need to, to ensure that this goal of peace is achieved.”

“And I feel the same. Whatever I can do, I will. And… as long as we have each other, I know we’ll be okay.”

Loki smiled softly, relaxing a bit more against Thor.

They remained in this bath until they felt ready to attempt to reach out to Odin, and dried off and dressed in silence, making their way over to their bed, and getting comfortable.

When they were under their covers, Loki took Thor’s hand, looking over at him. “Are you ready?”

Thor nodded, letting out a shaky breath.

He hadn’t seen his father in millennia, and knowing that he would see him again, scared him.

He didn’t know if them doing this would jeopardize everything, but he knew that they needed to try, as they couldn’t afford to be blindsided; there was too much at stake.
Gulping nervously, Loki closed his eyes and began to mutter the words for this spell, praying to the Norns that he was casting it properly, and praying for their protection.

He knew this was a risky move, but like Thor said, this was something that they needed to do.

He just prayed that when they saw Odin, everything would be okay.

Thor woke up in an unfamiliar environment.

It seemed that they were in a study, and as he looked around, he realized that there were strange paintings and words on the walls, papers strewn across a desk haphazardly.

Shifting next to him made him quickly turn, and he was relieved to see that it was only Loki.

He bent over and helped Loki up, looking over him to make sure he wasn’t hurt. “Are you alright?”

Loki nodded, looking around and frowning.

He knew Odin would appear, and frowned even deeper when their environment changed to that of a garden, a large stone fountain in its center, illuminated by the moon’s glowing light.

“Is there a reason you have called out to me, Loki?”

Loki and Thor both turned sharply, their hearts beginning to race when Odin appeared from the shadows.

“I would love to hear your reasoning.”
Thor honestly didn’t know how to feel about seeing his father again, after all of this time.

He unfortunately bore a striking resemblance to him, and hated the cold, dark tenor of his voice.

He wasn’t sure if he should speak first, and looked down at Loki, who nodded and took over.

“I’m sure you’re aware of what has happened on our realm?”

Odin frowned, walking closer to the pair. “I am not. Even a god has to sleep, Niouvi.”

“We have taken over the realm.”

Odin seemed shocked to hear this, and observed the pair for sometime, unnerving them even more. “Thrym has fallen?”

“By my hand.”

Odin’s eyes shifted up to Thor then, and the giant felt immensely uncomfortable, not knowing what to say, or how to react to his father’s gaze. “You are truly one of my most surprising children.”

Hearing that he had siblings shocked Thor, and he didn’t know how to respond to this, choosing to remain silent instead.

Odin looked back to Loki then, a pensive look on his face. “This changes things.”

Loki’s face darkened with emotion upon hearing this. “Changes them how?”

Odin pursed his lips, turning around and walking towards the fountain in the garden, staring up at the moon. “Give me time to think, niouvi. I will come to you when I’ve decided what to do.”
Loki shook his head, not liking the sound of this. “No. If you decide to betray our agreement, my threat still stands. I’m not leaving until I am certain that my family is protected, like we originally agreed.”

Odin turned to look over his shoulder, staring at Loki strangely. “No?”

“No. It is no secret that there is no trust between us. You want to kill my husband, and my children. I’m not leaving until I have received assurance that they will be safe.”

The Asgardian king turned back around to face Loki, his face pinched in a frown. “Putting me in a corner is a dangerous thing, Niouvi.”

“And putting me in one is a foolish thing to do. If my family is harmed in anyway, I will ruin your plans.”

Odin’s face darkened considerably, but Loki refused to back down, knowing that he and his niouvi children were integral parts of Odin’s plan to continue his legacy.

Finally, Odin seemed to decide on something, and smirked, putting Loki and Thor on edge once again. “If you give me a child, I will leave you and your family alone, and I will leave Jötunheim to its own devices. You will be free to do whatever it is you wish, as long as you don’t challenge my reign. My son will be kept alive as well.”

“I refuse to carry a child for you, Odin.” hissed Loki, trying to come up with a plan of his own.

“You don’t have to carry the child.” murmured Odin, continuing to stare at Loki in that cold, dark gaze that made him feel as if he would lose everything he ever loved, if he wasn’t careful. “I will.”

Thor and Loki inhaled sharply, eyes wide in disbelief.

Odin seemed amused by their reactions, and laughed, continuing to explain. “Even beings that carry just a fraction of Jötun blood can be dual-sexed.”

Loki and Thor’s minds were whirling, and neither of them knew what to make of this information,
knowing that they were at a stalemate with Odin.

“I will come to you in a century, Loki. And your answer will determine my next actions.” Odin waved his hand then, dismissing Thor and Loki. “Now leave. I must rest, and think about the best way to still achieve everything I desire. My son’s power coupled with your prowess in seidr is something that I now know to not take lightly.”

Loki knew he should listen to Odin about leaving the Aesir alone -Loki had pushed the envelope numerous times during this conversation, and did not want to upset the king further- so he nodded, waving his hand, and ending this spell.

He and Thor woke back up in their beds on Jötunheim mere seconds later, and breathed out a sigh in relief, immediately pulling each other into a warm embrace.

They didn’t speak for minutes, and were just relieved that they made it out of this situation safely.

They had a century to think of a plan of action regarding Odin, and while that wasn’t much time, it was enough.

Loki wasn’t sure how he was going to work on getting the realm under he and Thor’s control, while crafting a way to take down Odin without harming his family, but he knew that above all us, he would figure out a way.

He and Thor were so close to achieving their peaceful life, Loki was so close to getting everything he ever wanted, and he’d be damned if it all fell apart because of Odin.

Chapter End Notes

It took me weeks and weeks to decide how I wanted Thrym taken down. The last thing I wanted was for it to be anticlimactic since I spent this whole story building it up, but because Loki and Thor are so strong now, it took me some time to figure out how to realistically progress this story in a way that wouldn't leave a bad taste in your mouth.

I also wrote this chapter in like 5-6ish hours, so... if there are any errors, I apologize. I
just wanted to get it posted because I know I haven't updated in over 2 months.

Thank you again for sticking it out with me! I really appreciate it!
Like many long, harrowing nights before this one, Loki couldn’t sleep.

Their talk with Odin concerned him greatly, and as Thor snored blissfully unaware next to him, Loki felt that his time would be better spent thinking of a plan of attack.

Of course, the kingdom becoming theirs was a prominent issue, but Loki knew that his brothers and Hemming would help him decide on how to proceed with that.

Only he and Thor could determine the best way to defeat Odin.

Waving his hand and lighting the candle next to his side of the bed, Loki summoned one of his seidr books that contained the history of Borr and Odin, studying every word and every phrase more intensely than anything he’d ever devoted his attention to in his life.

He read the chapters in this book and summoned a seidr quill to begin taking notes in a notepad, copying down anything and everything that could be expanded upon at a later time.

When he felt he took down everything that he could about their history, their powers, and their prowess, Loki sat up in bed, looking over what he jotted down.

Borr originally had two children with Frode, who theoretically should’ve been the strongest beings in the universe; stronger than their parents even.

But somehow, someway, they were both taken down by Odin.

These books didn’t describe how Borr died, so while Loki wanted to assume it was old age, he felt that the issue of Borr’s death went much deeper than that.

Summoning another one of his seidr books, Loki flipped to an obscure page that didn’t make any
sense to him when he read it a few decades ago.

Skimming the page, Loki’s finger finally landed on the phrase, and he read it again and again, gasping when it finally hit him.

“A stolen power is destined to pass from the father to the son. And when the third son overtakes his father, an even greater power will awaken, and the realms shall know true fear. It is only when his first son overtakes him, that the realms will finally know peace.”

Reading this phrase again and again, Loki believed he finally understood why Odin was so desperate to kill Thor, and create an heir of his own.

“Thor! Wake up! Wake up!”

Thor rushed to sit up, looking down at Loki in concern. “What has happened, love?”

Loki waved his hand, using seidr to light the candle on the nightstand of Thor’s side of the bed. “Here! I understand now! Read this!”

Thor blinked in confusion a few times before looking down at the sentence in the book Loki had in his lap, not understanding what the phrase meant. “What is this, Loki?”

“Thor, this is how we defeat Odin!” insisted the niouvi, pointing at this paragraph. “A stolen power is destined to pass from the father to the son. In the books that I have, Borr’s death is not described. No one knows how he died. All anyone knows is that Borr disappeared, and Odin came in his place, stronger than his half-brothers, when he should’ve been weaker than them, since he is not of Frode’s blood. This leads me to believe two things; 1, a child of a god can only become as powerful as their godly parent if their godly parent sacrifices themselves, and gives their child all of their power, in addition to the power that they already had due to being part god. Or 2, the child of a god can gain the complete power of their godly parent by killing them.”

Loki pointed at the next sentence in the book then. “And when the third son overtakes his father, an even greater power will awaken, and the realms shall know true fear.’ This leads me to believe that my 2nd theory is correct. Odin is most likely as strong as he is, because he killed his father. This allowed his “greater power” to awaken! And it explains why he needs a willing heir to pass his legacy to. If he uses me and my blood, he will theoretically be able to create the strongest being that has ever existed. If he can’t use me, you will remain one of the strongest beings in the
universe, and would always be a threat to his heir. This is why he feels the need to kill you and our children; all of you pose a threat to his legacy.”

Thor frowned and rubbed at his temples, trying to make sense of all of this information. “Loki… Odin said that he has other children. Now whether they are of Jötun blood I do not know, but that means that there are other beings out there with the potential to become powerful like me. If Odin wants to kill me and all of our children, he will theoretically have to kill my siblings as well, and any children they might have. And that doesn’t make any sense to me. Why would he have other children, if they could turn on him at any moment, and steal his power, just like we can?”

Loki bit a lower lip, furrowing his brow in thought. “Unless… he learned from his mistakes with you? Or rather… he’s just learning that if you can unlock your gifts and become this powerful, his other children might as well. What if you’re the oldest; it would make the most sense. Since Odin was so surprised about your mastery of your power, I’m willing to bet that none of his other children are as strong as you; they were most likely experiments to see how his power could be passed on. And I’m certain that he never imagined that any of his children would ever pose a threat to him. I think you’re the first one to make him feel this way.”

“So what do we do?” murmured Thor, wishing that he and Loki didn’t have to deal with this. All he wanted was to live with Loki and their children in a time of eternal peace. “Let’s say I’m the strongest of my siblings, and that my father never expected us to become so strong. Besides being experiments to see how his power was passed on, why would he have us, and keep us alive for as long as he has?”

“Maybe… maybe he didn’t know his child needed to be of Frode’s blood? Odin’s beberi was not of Frode’s blood, so he was not as strong as his brothers, and yet after killing Borr -if that is indeed what he did- he defeated them both, and that only makes sense if by gaining Borr’s power through one of the two of my theories, he became more powerful than his brothers. Unless…”

Thor inhaled sharply, understanding what Loki was getting at. “Norns! We’re sacrifices, Loki! That’s the only reason my siblings and I exist! For my father to sacrifice us and steal what power we can awaken!”

Loki flipped hurriedly through the pages of his seidr book, knowing that there was a passage that spoke about something like this. “That would explain why Odin is so strong, even though he is not of Frode’s blood. If he killed his father, stole his power, and then killed his brothers and stole their power, that would explain why he’s so powerful. Odin told me that finding a descendant of Frode was like finding a needle in a haystack, and I can only assume that you exist because Odin wrongly assumed that he only needed to produce a child with a Jötun, to create someone that was just as powerful as him. When he realized that he was wrong, he abandoned you, and most likely experimented with how to create his perfect heir, by having more children, with beings on other realms. Odin is dual-sexed like myself, so he could’ve experimented with impregnating other
beings or actually carrying the children himself, to see if they would gain his power. And when he found me, he realized that he didn’t need any of his children anymore… all of you became failed experiments. If he uses my blood, Thor, and creates his heir, you and your siblings, and any children that any of you have, would be threats to their rule, and could theoretically be sacrificed to your sibling that Odin has created to be his heir, thus creating the ultimate being.”

“So… if Odin gets what he wants, which is a child of your blood, myself and our children, as well as all of my siblings, are dead. This means that the only way we can prevent that from happening is defeating Odin ourselves, while it’s not too late.”

Loki nodded slowly, recalling the first conversation he had with Odin. “Thor… Odin told me that not even a god could live forever. Odin has been alive for a very long time… defeating him now might be our only chance at saving our family. He is weakened by age, and although powerful, he does not have the knowledge contained in these books that I have. Frode was strong enough to fight Borr with seidr alone, so… if you and I work together, our combined efforts could be what it takes to kill Odin.”

“And if I kill my father, I gain all of his power… effectively making me the strongest being in the universe…”

Loki knew this was the last thing Thor wanted, and his heart broke for his husband’s fate, as he really didn’t have a choice about having to kill Odin. If they didn’t take down Odin, their family would be killed, and Loki would be taken away, forced to give Odin a child.

“Jetoni… this is all under speculation. It is late… and we learned many things about Odin tonight. I will put away my books and my notes, and we will do our best to think on this subject and come up with more concrete plans as time passes. I will reread these books, to see if I find anything that hints at a way to take down Odin, and… and we will go from there.”

Thor sighed softly, staring at the wall of their bedroom blankly. “I just want my family to be safe and happy, Loki. And I never imagined that my life would ever take this turn.”

Loki’s gaze softened, and he tutted, stretching up to place a reassuring kiss against Thor’s lips. “If we have to fight like hell to get a lifetime of peace, then we will do it. I know that as long as we do this together, we can win.”

Thor searched Loki’s gaze, and pulled him close, basking in the comfort of his embrace. “I will do whatever it takes to kill my father, and end his reign over the realms. We’ll work on coming up with a strategy together, but… I would like us to keep this between ourselves for as long as
possible. I don’t want anyone else knowing about this until they have to.”

Loki hummed in agreement, kissing Thor softly once more. “I agree, Jetoni. I know that today has been one of the most terrifying and taxing days of our lives… I don’t think I can sleep, but you definitely should. There is so much to discuss in the morning.”

Thor didn’t want Loki staying up all night—he knew he’d used a lot of seidr to take down the king, and would undoubtedly need numerous days of rest to replenish his essence—and wanted Loki to repair what he could through sleep. “Will you at least try, love? I would like you to sleep; even if its only for a few hours.”

Frowning slightly, Loki nestled down into Thor’s embrace, wrapping his arms around the giant and inhaling his comforting scent. “... For you, I will try.”

Thor kissed Loki’s crown, pulling him even closer. “Thank you, love. Everything will turn out as it should. All we can do is just try our best.”

Loki hummed softly, and relaxed, trying to let the rise and fall of Thor’s chest lull him to sleep.

Surprisingly, he was able to rest, and woke up at dawn, feeling an unnerving sense of dread.

The compulsion to check on his children was strong, so Loki climbed out of bed and made his way down the hall to Adras’ room, quietly opening the door.

Thankfully, the child was blissfully asleep, so Loki smiled and made his way into the young boy’s room, pressing a gentle kiss against his crown, and tucking him in before quietly closing his door, and heading to Astrid’s room.

To his surprise, Astrid was wide awake, floating in the corner of her room, and thinking to herself.

“Astrid? What is wrong, dear child?”

Astrid jumped slightly when Loki spoke to her, and whirled around, relaxing when she saw it was him. “Hi Beberi…”
Loki padded over to her bed and sat down, patting the spot next to him. “Come, child. Speak to Beberi.”

Astrid lowered to the ground and made her way over to Loki, getting into his lap and nestling her face into his neck. “I couldn’t sleep…”

Tutting softly, Loki began to rub soothing circles into her back, hoping to calm her. “What prevented you from sleeping, dear girl?”

“I… I’m scared that someone will hurt you and Deneri if you leave here again.”

It broke Loki’s heart to know that his daughter was scared of losing them, and he hugged her close, kissing her softly. “No one will ever hurt myself or Deneri, sweet girl. I promise.”

Astrid looked up at him then, unshed tears in her eyes. “Uncle Helblindi and uncle Byleistr were crying yesterday, because they were scared. And it scared me too.”

“Astrid… Beberi is very strong. There aren’t many people that exist that could hurt me.”

Wiping at her eyes, Astrid sniffed, the look on her face breaking Loki’s heart even more. “Beberi… I don’t want you to get hurt again. It makes me sad when you’re hurt.”

Loki tutted again, pulling Astrid closer and rocking her gently. “I’m sorry that I scared you, beloved. I’m sorry I scared you.”

Astrid made a pitiful sound, so Loki continued to rub at her back soothingly, wanting her to feel better. “I’m sorry, dear child. Beberi’s sorry.”

Astrid sniffed again, and burrowed further into Loki’s neck, not wanting to let go. “Can I sleep with you and Deneri?”

Loki sighed softly, standing up and readjusting his hold on his daughter, who was beginning to
shoot up like a tree now that she was 6. “Of course, sweet child.”

This seemed to make Astrid feel better, so Loki walked them back to he and Thor’s bedroom, helping Astrid under the covers, and sliding in behind her.

Once she was nestled in between Loki and Thor, Astrid calmed down completely, and began to fall asleep, tears no longer in sight.

Loki wasn’t very tired, but he knew that if he left the bed, Astrid would be worried, so it was here that he remained, a comforting arm wrapped around her.

The bedroom door opening a few minutes later made Loki sit up, and he was concerned to see Jörd at their door, tears streaming down her face.

Loki quickly moved out of bed, and scooped their youngest up, kissing her adorably round cheeks. “Sweet girl… what has happened? Did you have a nightmare?”

Jörd nodded, beginning to cry even more when Loki tutted and began to pat at her back. “Here, sleep with Deneri and Astrid. Would you like this?”

The toddler nodded again, so Loki kissed her softly, and climbed back into bed, setting Jörd between him and Astrid.

The two girls were very close, and when Astrid took in bleary notice of her sister, she wrapped her arms around her and kissed her temple, telling her that everything was okay.

The sight melted Loki’s heart, and he wrapped an arm around them both, placing reassuring kisses against their faces, and wondering how he and Thor could do everything they set out to do, without hurting their children.

Because when he and Thor worked to rebuild this realm, their children wouldn’t be right next to them, seeing it all happen.

No, Loki didn’t want his children leaving this settlement until the kingdom was securely under he
and Thor’s control, as the last thing he wanted was them getting hurt by those that didn’t want Thor and Loki ruling over them.

Knowing that their children feared for their parents’ safety every time they left the settlement killed Loki inside, and he thought long and hard through these morning hours about the best way to bring this realm under he and Thor’s control, without scaring his children or making them feel abandoned.

He finally decided that he and Thor could spend 12 hours a day working on calming things down in the kingdom, before retiring to the settlement, to be with their children. This way, each child would know that Thor and Loki would return each day to see them, and spend quality time with them before bed.

Loki must’ve dozed off after coming to this conclusion, and woke up a few hours later, surprised to see Eden and Eeren nestled into his sides.

He sat up a bit and saw that Jörd was now resting atop of Thor’s chest, Astrid nestled into one of his sides, and Adras in the other.

He couldn’t help but laugh softly, and lied back down, pulling the twins a bit closer, and rubbing at their backs.

The clock on the wall told him it was 9am, so he sat in bed with his family until 10, before carefully sliding out, and getting up to make breakfast.

His brothers, their families, and Hemming and his family would be over before 12, so Loki got to work, making breakfast for everyone.

Of course doing it alone was a herculean effort, so he used seidr to make five clones of himself to ease the burden.

Making a clone of himself was something he learned how to do centuries ago, but he didn’t do it often, as it made his family understandably uncomfortable.

Right at 11, Loki had finished breakfast, and gathered enough plates, bowls, and utensils for 40+ giants, heading upstairs to wake up his family.
His brothers, their families, and Hemming and his brood would be over at any moment, so after getting his children downstairs and helping them with their plates, he rushed upstairs to put on appropriate attire, not wanting them to see him in his nightshirt.

By the time he made it back downstairs, Hemming, Draeil, and their family were already there, so Loki greeted them, and made a plate for himself, sitting down next to Thor. “Thank you for getting the door, Jetoni.”

Thor hummed softly, gently squeezing Loki’s thigh. “Of course.”

By the time they were finished eating, Helblindi arrived, so Loki and Thor cleared the table, making room for himself and his brood.

And by the time Helblindi’s family finished, Byleistr’s family arrived.

Everyone was finished eating around 12, and after all of their children were herded outside into Loki and Thor’s massive backyard to play, the adults settled themselves around the dining room table, staring at Loki and Thor, and waiting for them to speak.

Clearing his throat, Thor looked out at everyone, wanting to go more into detail about the king’s defeat. “Hello, everyone. As we all know, Loki defeated King Thrym yesterday, and the rest of this realm has no idea this occurred. That being said, we need to work on a plan to bring the realm under control, as peaceful as possible.”

Byleistr frowned then, raising an eyebrow. “Bring the realm under the control of whom?”

“Well myself, of course.” answered Loki, raising an eyebrow at his brother. “I wanted the throne, and now I’ve got it.”

Byleistr remained silent, seemingly mulling over something for a few seconds before speaking. “You want the throne, Idrí?”

“I don’t want the throne, brother. I have it. And I am not relinquishing that ownership to anyone. Do you believe yourself to be a better candidate?”
The giant didn’t say anything, so Loki straightened up in his chair, narrowing his eyes dangerously at his brother. “Do you?”

“It’s not that I feel I’d be a better candidate, Idrî…” murmured Byleistr, finally meeting Loki’s gaze. “But you’ve been out of the loop for so long. You’ve-”

“I am the only one at this table who has actually been a Psemetri. And I was the only one in this land that was strong enough to defeat the king, and I am the only one that is strong enough to defeat those who still support him. I am taking the throne, and I will not hesitate to strike down anyone who stands in my way.” Loki shot everyone a cool look then. “While you all are the most important people in my life, I refuse to allow you to get in the way of me ruling this realm. Before we discuss how to fix this realm, I need to know that all of you support my endeavor.”

Thor exhaled deeply then, extremely frustrated with Loki’s delivery. Loki could be so cold sometimes, and Thor hated it, but he knew that this was just how Loki was. He could reign in Loki sometimes, but ultimately the niouvi did whatever he wanted; sometimes in complete disregard of how his actions or words would affect others.

He seemed to notice Thor’s frustration though and sighed, softening his tone. “I do not say this to attack you, brother. Taking the throne is something that I have wanted my whole life, and it is the only way to protect my family. Because I am the strongest user of seidr in the land, if I did not rule, I would always be looked at in scrutiny. I wouldn’t be trusted. Someone would always attempt to take me down, and if not me, my family. If I am queen, I can protect my family, on a grander scale. I am not willing to give this opportunity to anyone -not even my own brother- and I can only hope that everyone here will stand with me, and support me.”

His brother Helblindi sighed softly next, sharing a look with his wife before answering. “Asten and I will support your desire to rule, Loki. We understand that you will be able to protect us in a way that couldn’t be done if you weren’t ruling. We will stand with you.”

“Draeil and I will stand with you as well, Loki.” murmured Hemming, sending Loki a gentle look. “I swore fidelity to you centuries ago, and that has not changed.”

Everyone’s gazes were on Byleistr and his wife now, and Loki waited patiently, praying that his brother didn’t go against him.

He’d just gotten him back.
After much contemplation, Byleistr looked to his wife, who nodded and urged him to speak. “We… will support you as well, Idri.”

Now that he had everyone’s support, Loki relaxed, looking back over at Thor, and hoping that the giant felt better about the situation now.

Thor was understandably relieved that Loki was able to resolve this issue peacefully, and began to speak again. “No one else in the realm knows the king has been defeated. We are the only ones that are aware of this information. I believe it would make sense if Loki and I alert this settlement, and Helblindi and Byleistr, you all relay this information to your subordinates. Then, the news will spread like wildfire. I assume that Loki and I can storm upon the capital and start taking it over, but this would all occur over a span of weeks. If we do this too quickly, I think that would be more chaotic for everyone involved.”

Hemming frowned and leaned forward, trying to make sense of their plan. “Doing it this way would undoubtedly start a war, Thor. Absolutely no one is going to be okay with the ruling class changing. King Thrym has dozens and dozens of children that are in line for the throne. His wives are still alive, and technically his oldest son would take over now. Everyone in the capital is loyal to the king, and would strike you and Loki down the second you attempted to storm upon it yourself.”

“Well the king is in my possession. He isn’t dead.” answered Loki. “Storming upon the capital would be reckless, but the capital does not have my husband’s power. And when I defeated Thrym, I removed every protection spell that he had around his family, and those that dutifully followed him. Technically, my husband and I can shake up the capital in just a few mere hours. I can kill all of his sons, any wives who swear fidelity to the king, and anyone who stands in the way of me taking the throne.”

“But you don’t want to be a tyrant, Loki,” sighed Helblindi. “If you storm upon the capital like this, then you will be hated far and wide.”

“By whom?” scoffed the niouvi, his face pinched in a frown. “I’ll immediately end oppressive laws and taxes that the king has implemented. It might take a few centuries to gain the people’s trust, but there’s no sense in waiting.”

“Idri, if you and Thor storm upon the capital, think of your children, and think of us.” answered Byleistr, sitting up and crossing his arms. “Where will we all live? What if you taking the capital violently causes those in it to revolt? What if all of the major cities in the realm choose to go against you because you killed everyone? What then? Will you kill the millions of giants that might
disagree with you, too?"

Loki’s face darkened, so Thor sighed, interjecting himself into this conversation before Loki could say a cutting remark that couldn’t be taken back. “Loki mentioned that the king will remain alive in this paralyzed state for a millennium. He did this so that the king could be paraded around the realm, as proof and evidence that his reign was over. What if Loki and I head towards the capital, with the king in our possession? We’ll walk the streets of the capital up to the palace and the king will be on display, shown as being tyrannical and powerful no more. Loki and I can defeat those in the capital easily if this isn’t enough proof for them, and… we can work on taking over the capital first, and concentrating our efforts there. Once the capital is overtaken, it should be a bit easier to bring every city in the realm under our control. As for you and Helblindi, Byleistr, if you can work on bringing your cities under our control, that would be a tremendous help. And you have allies that would undoubtedly follow your decisions; especially after Loki and I prove ourselves to everyone with our power. So yes, while this cannot happen fluidly overnight, we can all work together to make sure that we create a safe realm for our families. Does this sound okay?"

“"It does not,” answered Draeil, finally speaking. “All of you seem to forget that if people do not agree with your reign, it won’t be as simple as killing everyone, or forcing them to bow their heads. If you and Thor kill everyone that disagrees with you ruling, then the whole realm would be dead. You both need to display your power to the people of this realm, and work city by city, and region by region, to gain control. What if certain cities or regions of the realm don’t want you to rule over them, and want to be independent? Will you kill them? Or allow them to be independent? We’ve had a tyrant ruler for millennia, and the people of this realm don’t want another one; I sure as hell don’t.”

Loki took extreme offense to Draeil’s statements, and scoffed, a fearsome scowl on his face. “You dare call me a tyrant for trying to protect my family?”

“If you are planning on storming into the capital and killing everyone who doesn’t agree with you, and if you are planning on going city by city, and decide to kill those that don’t want you to rule over them, then yes , you are a tyrant , and I will not stand for it! I want a concrete plan; one that means unnecessary bloodshed is avoided at all costs.”

Thor admitted that he didn’t like Draeil speaking about Loki in this light, and cleared his throat, defending him. “My friend, my wife is not intending to come across as a tyrant, I can assure you of that. You’ve known Loki long enough to know that he will cut down anyone and everyone that stands in the way of what he wants. With that being said though, you also know Loki has a big heart, and doesn’t do anything to anyone that is harmlessly living their lives. In our minds, if we don’t kill the supporters of King Thrym, they will attempt to kill us and our children, and I know you are fully aware of this. If, like you’ve mentioned, there are cities that want to run independently of Loki and my reign, and will not challenge our reign or plot against us, then of course they wouldn’t be punished for exuding a right that they have.”
Draeil remained silent, so Thor sighed, trying to clear up any confusion or misunderstandings about Loki’s intentions regarding their rule further. “Let me go over what I believe to be the non-negotiable deaths. First and foremost, any of Thrym’s sons who believe it is their blood right to be next on the throne, and will challenge myself and Loki for it. Then, any of Thrym’s wives that will support him even now, and want him or their sons to rule. After this, any psometri that want the throne for themselves, or support the king, any government officials or politicians who want the throne, and decide that they will stand against us, and go to war over their right to fight for the throne, and any noblemen that believe they could take a shot at the throne as well. Loki and I ruling is, in my mind, non-negotiable. We are the strongest beings in this realm, and if we don’t rule, our family is always at risk of being attacked. Any sane ruler will not want someone that can destroy an army of hundreds of thousands of soldiers, alive. And if Loki and I rule, we are ensuring that our family is protected.”

“Now, as I said earlier, if there are cities and entire regions that want to rule over themselves independently, then this is fine. I unfortunately have an extremely long lifespan because of my Aesir heritage, and Loki can slow his aging to match mine with seidr, so there will be plenty of time to slowly make treaties and bring these cities and regions back under our control, peacefully. So, there will not be insurmountable bloodshed once Loki and I storm the capital. If someone is a threat to our rule and our family, we will not hesitate to take them down. But if they side with us, or decide to live in the cities and regions that don’t want to be under our rule, they will not be killed. Does everyone understand and agree with what I’ve just said?”

Thor clarifying this for them all seemed to help, and after a few seconds Draeil nodded, and looked to Loki, who still had a bitter look on his face. “Loki… please do not take offense to what I said. It was not my intention to make you feel as if you were inept or not the right choice to rule this realm. I can only hope you can forgive me for my misunderstandings.”

Thor could tell that Loki definitely didn’t want to let this slight go, and his wife would undoubtedly “pout” about this slight for the rest of the day, but he also knew that Loki knew he was being childish about continuing to be upset over being called a tyrant.

If this had been early in their marriage, this mostly would’ve escalated into a physical altercation, with Loki attacking Draeil, and Thor having to hold Loki back and try and calm him down, but Loki had honestly grown much more patient and rational throughout their marriage; especially after becoming a parent.

Reaching out to rub Loki’s thigh encouragingly, Thor could only smile when Loki sighed and accepted his apology.

“I… understand that you were only voicing your concerns. Everyone is allowed to do that. I am not upset.”
Everyone around the table let out a breath they’d been holding, and Loki tried his best to not feel offended by his family’s relief that everything had been smoothed over peacefully.

He wasn’t *that* aggressive or volatile.

At least… he didn’t think he was *anymore*.

Looking up at everyone, Loki cleared his throat, hoping that they were now on the same page. “Well, does everyone at least feel more comfortable about our plans, moving forward?”

“What will come of your children, Loki? You can’t possibly be considering taking them *with* you while you’re working on bringing the realm under your control?” asked Hemming, heavily concerned for his friend.

Loki looked to Hemming, knowing that he only wanted to make sure everyone involved was safe and okay. “They will stay here until it is safe for them to come to the capital. Thor and I will teleport back to the settlement before school gets out, and remain with our children until the next morning, when it is time for them to go to school again. This is the most feasible option, as I do not want my children in an unstable environment.”

“Send them to my house until nightfall,” replied Hemming. “I’ll watch them until the evening. Every hour counts now that your dreams have come to fruition, so I will watch your children after school until you and Thor return in the evening.”

“Hemming…”

“It’s quite alright, love.” assured Hemming, reaching across the table to squeeze Loki’s hand. “I always swore that I would do anything and everything I could do to help you, because you’re my friend, and you mean a lot to me.”

Hemming was literally a godsend, and Loki didn’t know how to repay him for all of his kindness over the years.

“Don’t even think about paying me back, Loki. I do this because I want to.”
Now that he knew his children would be safe, Loki turned back to the table, addressing everyone. “Now my question for you all is how soon should this occur?”

“... I think the sooner the better, Idri.” murmured Helblindi. “If we wait and days or weeks pass, people will know something is wrong, and that could potentially cause more chaos. We need to do everything we can to nip rebellion in the bud. If Byleistr and myself return to our cities, we can quickly bring them back under our control. We can also convince our allies, which should make you and Thor’s jobs a bit easier.”

“How does tomorrow sound?”

Everyone gathered seemed to be surprised about how soon Loki was wanting to do this, but agreed, knowing that it was now or never.

Now that they had a concrete plan, Loki felt more comfortable teleporting his brothers and their families back to their cities, and once this was done, Loki let Hemming know that they should gather the citizens of this city for a town hall, to let them know they were liberated.

They agreed to do this around 6pm, so once Hemming left, Loki collapsed onto one of his living room couches, laughing to himself when the toddlers tried to make their way into his arms at the same time.

Thor sat down next to him, and wrapped comforting arms around Adras and Astrid when they jumped up to sit next to him, kissing their temples. “Everyone… Beberi and I need to discuss some things with all of you.”

Their children looked up at them expectantly, so Loki cleared his throat, beginning to explain. “Everyone… remember the evil king who didn’t want Deneri to be married to me?” He waited for them to nod before continuing. “Well… last night, Deneri and I were able to put this evil king in jail, so that he can’t be mean or hurt anyone else anymore.”

“Did he hurt you?” whispered Jörd, beginning to tear up.

“No, no sweetheart.” assured Loki, pressing a dozen loving kisses into her cheek. “Beberi and Deneri were not hurt. We’re okay.”
“Promise?” asked Eeren, also looking up at Loki in concern.

“I swear.” murmured the niouvi, pinching his cheek fondly. “But this means that some things will change for our family.”

Adras gasped, sitting up and beginning to get excited. “Does this mean you and Deneri are the new King and Queen of Jötunheim?!”

Thor was surprised Adras caught on so quick, and nodded, smiling softly when all of their children gasped and began to prattle on about everything they could do now. “It will take some time for the rest of the realm to be happy with Beberi and I ruling, so until then, all of you will have to stay here.”

His heart hurt when he saw the happiness leave them so quickly, and rushed to explain, not wanting them to think that he and Loki were leaving forever. “Children… Beberi and I will be here with you every night, and every morning. We will only leave when you’re at school.”

“But we want to go with you!” insisted Adras, crossing his arms. “It’s not fair that you and Beberi get to leave all the time! We want to go too! I want to see things just like you!”

“Adras… we don’t want anyone to hurt you.” murmured Loki. “We’re trying to protect all of you. We swear that when the giants of this realm get used to Deneri and I being king and queen, you will all leave this settlement, and be able to travel as much as you want.”

“As much as we want?” asked Astrid, her eyebrows furrowing into a frown. “Forever?”

“I don’t know about forever, sweetheart, but we can definitely travel across the realm for a few years when it's safe.”

Their children seemed to mull over this for a bit, before begrudgingly agreeing, making Loki and Thor promise to take them wherever they wanted, once it was safe.

It did make Loki sad, to know that his children had been through so much in the course of their short lives, but he could only pray that once they defeated Odin, they would finally be able to live
in the peace they’d all been yearning for.

Hearing that Loki and Thor brought down the king was the last thing those of this settlement expected to hear.

Disbelief crossed their faces, and once Loki showed the immobile body of the king, they began to rejoice, praising the Norns that they’d finally been saved.

To the pair’s relief, no one in this town was opposed to Loki and Thor taking the throne for themselves, and Loki and Thor were able to spend a peaceful night with their family, knowing that in the morning, everything would change.

Loki and Thor dropped off their children at school early that morning, and then teleported to the secluded location that Loki was keeping the king, taking him with them when they teleported to the city gates of the capital.

Thor was beyond scared about doing this, and although he knew that no harm could truly come to he and Loki, knowing that their lives would forever be changed forever made him feel nervous.

He wasn’t used to the political life like Loki was; he was raised on a farm, and never imagined that he would ever be king of this land.

Loki seemed to sense Thor’s nervousness, and reached out, taking his hand and reaching up to caress his face. “Everything will be okay, Jetoni.”

Thor kissed Loki’s palm and pulled him into a hug, holding him close. “I know. I just worry.”

“We can only take this day by day. The king has been taken down, so that makes things much
easier.” Loki placed a gentle, reassuring kiss against Thor’s lips then, rubbing at his side.

Thor returned his kiss, and let him go, taking a deep breath before following Loki through the city gates.

Loki was using seidr to display King Thrym before them, and cast a spell to make him float and follow Loki wherever he directed, so that they wouldn’t have to carry him.

At first, people didn’t notice them, but the further they walked away from the city gates, and deeper into the city, the more and more people began to take notice, pointing and gasping in fear.

To see their proud, strong king resorted to the sight before them was shocking, and the masses parted for Thor and Loki, the streets of the capital eerily quiet.

Guards in the streets didn’t know if they were supposed to apprehend Loki and Thor, and watched them in confusion, wanting to save their king, but not at the risk of losing their lives.

By the time they made it to the palace steps, they were stopped by generals of the king’s army, with an ample amount of cuetrati in their midsts.

Loki decided to humor them all, and stopped, looking up at them and fighting back a smile. “The new Queen of Jötunheim demands you to move.”

Speaking seemed to put everyone on edge, and the generals drew their weapons, holding them towards Loki menacingly. “Release the king at once!”

Loki pursed his lips then, crossing his arms. “I will allow everyone here to make a decision about whether they will serve me, and work to create a better realm, or will remained allied with your incapable king. I must warn you though; allying yourself with the king will only result in your deaths. I’m sure you all have families to return to, so I would choose wisely if I was you.”

The generals didn’t seem to take him seriously, and rose their weapons towards Loki, suddenly freezing and turning purple.
The cuetrati looked at the generals before them in horror, beginning to pale in disbelief when they saw what Loki was doing to them.

With a wave of his hand, Loki used a very simple spell to kill the generals - a small blood clot in their brains took very little effort and almost no seidr to cast - and turned towards the cuetrati, knowing that the religious leaders all believed themselves to be strong seidr users. “Well? Will you all choose the same fate as them?”

The most high-ranking cuetrati of this group cleared his throat, staring at Loki strangely. “If this display of power is any indication of your mastery of seidr, then we will stand with you. I believe we all value our lives more than our pride, and our only purpose is to serve the Norns, regardless of who the ruling body of our realm is.”

Thor was shocked to see these cuetrati elders bow low before he and Loki, and widened his eyes in shock, looking at Loki with bewilderment.

Loki just couldn’t fight back a dark smile and cackled, not believing that all of this was so easy. If the capital’s cuetrati pledged their loyalty to him, it would be a matter of months before cuetrati across the realm did the same.

And where religious leaders went, the masses followed. Seeing their religious leaders support Thor and Loki would only make it easier for the pair to take control over this realm in a matter of years, and Loki grinned, trying his absolute best to not become too greedy about how easy this process was becoming. “You have chosen well.”

Now that the capital city’s cuetrati pledged themselves to Loki, he made his way up the palace steps, relieved when the cuetrati followed him.

Soldiers guarding the main entrance of the palace pointed their weapons at Loki and Thor once they reached the top, refusing to let them come nearer.

“Halt, traitors! We have you surrounded! Release the king at once!”

Loki looked around him, seeing that there were soldiers in windows and balconies all around him, arrows that were ready to be shot already notched in their bows.
He didn’t want Thor displaying his power just yet - Thor was very private about his gift, and didn’t like using it unless absolutely necessary, so Loki always did his best to respect this aspect of Thor - and sighed, closing his eyes and using seidr to mark the location of every soldier that had a weapon pointed at the ready, towards he and Thor.

There were a little over 300, and Loki made a face, opening his eyes and trying to determine the best way to take them down, without exerting too much seidr.

Of course, he was infinitely stronger now than he was when the bandits attacked their settlement all those centuries ago, and could take down these soldiers without it affecting him much, but he wanted to be smart about how he used his seidr in the coming weeks, as he didn’t know how much he would have to use to bring the capital under their control.

Over 30 million giants lived here, and it would definitely take time to bring everyone under their reign.

Waving his hand, Loki used a simple spell that pinched off blood vessels to the heart, watching the soldiers before him and around him fall to the ground, convulsing before finally going still.

Masses had gathered around the palace’s steps by then, all of them gasping when they witnessed each soldier fall dead.

Once he was sure the soldiers were dead, Loki stepped over their bodies, gesturing for Thor to follow him.

There were even more soldiers here, and Loki frowned, wondering if they were going to divert their entire royal guard to protect King Thrym’s family.

“What’s wrong, Loki?”

“If I kill all of the royal guard, who will protect our children when we bring them here? If I kill them all, that will impact thousands of families that would always hate us, and would spend their lives trying to take revenge. As much as seeing people bow before my feet makes me smile, I have accepted that I cannot take over the city and make it safe, by killing everyone who goes against us.”
“So show them mercy, love. Use a paralysing spell on them for now, so we can get to King Thrym’s family. Once-”

“Release the king!”

It took everything in Loki to not roll his eyes, and he used seidr to bring the king before them all, putting him on display. “I have taken down the king. If you would like to lose your lives, then attack me. If you are smart enough to realize that you can live if you stand with me, then please drop your weapons. I truly do not want to kill any of you, but if I am attacked, I will.”

Loki figured giving them a choice would be more morally just than outright killing them, and waited to see if anyone would take his offer.

“Enough of this!” shouted a head guard, raising his weapon to attack Loki.

Loki decided that if he was going to kill people, he would at least drain their essence from them, and use it to replenish his own, so he waved his hand, draining this guard of it, killing him instantly.

He then looked up at everyone else, seeing that they were now uncertain. “Again, I offer you the chance to stand with me, or against me. And I’m sure you can all see what will happen when you stand against me.”

It took only a few soldiers lowering their weapons before they all did the same, nervously bowing in front of Loki and Thor, and pledging their allegiance.

“Splendid. Now, if you could relay throughout the palace that King Thrym rules this realm no more, that would be lovely. I would also like every member of his family brought to the throne room.”

The palace guards nodded, and stood up, off to carry out Loki’s commands.

Thor could only shake his head as these guards ran off to do Loki’s bidding, and sighed, wondering if everything would really be this easy. “Loki… what will we do now? Certainly there are more guards who will not be swayed to our side.”
“We’ll wait in the throne room. Anyone who wishes to challenge us will most likely be there, which prevents us from having to move throughout this vast palace. I don’t expect this city to be fully under our control in a few mere hours, but I will accept anything and everything that makes our job easier.”

Thor could only sigh and nodded, noticing that the cuetrati were still standing behind them. “Um… Loki? Are they supposed to remain behind us the entire time?”

Loki looked over at them, laughing softly. “Yes. This happens when a new ruler is chosen. Receiving the blessings of the cuetrati make it significantly easier to sway the masses towards someone’s reign. They will remain by our side until the palace has come under our control.”

He motioned for Thor to follow him through the vast hallways and to the throne room, noticing that palace servants, various politicians, and businessmen were staring at them in confusion when they saw the defeated king for a few seconds before bowing politely at Thor and Loki, and continuing on about their days.

Having the cuetrati with them seemed to make it much easier to bring the palace under their control, and Loki sent a thankful prayer up to the Norns, hoping that things would continue to be this easy.

By the time they made it to the throne room - the palace was a vastly large building, and one could walk through its halls for hours and still not have seen every room - there were royal guards lining the hallway leading up to it, each of them spotting the king, looking at Loki, seeing the cuetrati, and realizing what occurred.

Loki chose to remain silent and watched the palace guards determine if they would stand with the decision of the cuetrati, or go against it.

To his relief, the guards bowed low, and parted, letting Loki and Thor into the throne room.

The niouvi was pleased to see that all of King Thrym’s wives and children were gathered here, as well as the spouses of his adult children, and his grandchildren.

“Wonderful! You’re all here. That makes my job that much easier.”
One of Thrym’s older sons growled and stepped forward when he saw that Loki had his father under a spell. “You dare attack our deneri? A pathetic niouvi like you has no right to the throne of Jötunheim!”

“Well, this pathetic niouvi managed to defeat your deneri, steal his power, render him useless, and storm upon the capital with only my husband. I think that’s pretty impressive.”

The giant reached out to physically apprehend Loki quicker than he could react, and he inhaled sharply, his heart beginning to beat a million miles a minute before he realized that Thor was now between them, a fearsome grip on the forearm of this giant.

“Do not touch him.”

Thrym’s son spat and attempted to yank his arm out of Thor’s grasp, but Thor held on, digging his nails into the giants skin. “If anyone attempts to harm my wife again, you will lose your life.” He tossed the giant back then, causing him to fall down to the ground, and addressing the room. “If anyone lays a single finger on my wife, you will lose everything you love. I can assure you of that.”

Loki admitted that seeing Thor like this did make him feel as if he might swoon -Thor was always so calm and level-headed, so whenever Thor lost his temper defending Loki, it always made him feel… special - but now was not the time to focus on that.

He had every member of Thrym’s family in this room -some of Thrym’s children were even older than himself- and knew that he needed to determine what to do with them.

Although he didn’t mind killing every single one of Thrym’s children over the age of 18, it would make things so much more complicated for him. He’d have to deal with members of Thrym’s family seeking retribution, and that was a headache that he and Thor did not have time for.

Deciding on a plan of action, Loki turned, addressing everyone in the room. “I will give everyone above the age of 18 a chance to ally themselves with me and live, or stand with Thrym and die. And I ask that you choose carefully. If I can take down your deneri and still live to tell the tale unscathed, just imagine what I can do to you.”

The room was deathly silent then, so Loki took his time to observe everyone, a part of him feeling torn about Thrym’s younger children.
His youngest seemed to be Adras’ age, and Loki turned away, unable to look at him.

There was no victor in this situation.

Finally one of Thrym’s sons spoke, and Loki saw that it was the same son who attempted to attack him earlier. “I will never stand with you! My deneri’s proud legacy-”

Loki waved his hand, killing him with a spell.

His wife screamed and caught his lifeless body, falling to the floor with him and beginning to sob.

Thor admittedly couldn’t watch the scene before him, and sighed, not prepared for what was going to happen.

He knew that Loki was going to kill the family members and members of the government that stood in their way and prevented them from ruling, and he knew that these people and lives and families of their own, but to see it happening before him was still hard.

He also knew that it was necessary.

Anyone with political power or influence that went against he and Loki could potentially start wars and riots throughout the realm, and this would lead to a level of unrest that would take centuries to quell.

Shouting and outrage brought Thor back to the present moment at hand, and he inhaled sharply when he noticed 10 of Thrym’s adult sons storming towards he and Loki, in an attempt to attack and overwhelm them.

There wasn’t any time to grab a weapon from a nearby guard, and Thor’s experience with physically fighting the people that were attempting to overwhelm him to get to Loki was not one that proved successful, so he summoned lightning, and caused it to stretch across in arcs, striking Thrym’s sons that were attempting to overwhelm them.
A gentle hand on his forearm caused him to look down, and seeing Loki’s worried face let him know to calm down, and stop.

One of Thor’s greatest fears was returning to the dark person he once was, and it was the main reason he now hated resorting to violence or killing. He spent so much of his life handling his issues that way, and now that he had people to live for, and an actual purpose, he was always terrified that giving into his anger or violent impulses would cause him to spiral down into becoming someone that he just didn’t want to be anymore.

Seeing Loki stare at him calmed him, and he remembered then that he and Loki were a team. They both had parts of themselves that they didn’t like and didn’t want to become again, and it was up to them to work together to make sure they didn’t return to that vast darkness.

Everything would be okay.

Ending his attack of lightning, Thor sighed, his face pinched into a frown when the wives and children of Thrym’s sons began to scream and cry for the fates of their husbands and fathers.

Although it saddened him to see this, Thor knew that he would choose the safety and protection of his family above all else, whatever that meant, and whatever the circumstances.

He cleared his throat to address the room then, a dark expression still marring his face. “I warned each of you what would happen if you tried to attack my wife. So I will ask one more time for everyone above the age of 18 to decide if they will stand with us, or against us. If you stand against us, the same fate that your brothers faced will be your downfall as well.”

“How could you do this?!” screamed one of the wives of Thrym, horrible sobs wracking through his body. “Do you have no heart?! No mercy?!”

Hearing this caused something to snap within Loki, and he growled, raging back at the niouvi. “You dare ask for mercy?! Where was your mercy when your husband tried to kill my children and my husband?! Where was your mercy when King Thrym was ready to kill the entire city of Grástein, two days ago?! You stood by and did nothing to save anyone throughout your husband’s tyrannical reign, and you now beg for mercy?!”

The niouvi sniffed and fell to his knees, continuing to sob over the children that he lost today.
“What will happen to us, if we stand with you?” asked one of Thrym’s other wives, nervously looking over at his paralyzed and defeated husband as if he would suddenly break free from Loki’s spell and kill him.

“Then you and your children will live. You won’t live here at the palace of course, but you’d be free to live unrestrained, and do whatever you wanted. After swearing an oath of fidelity to myself and my husband, you will be free. You will not be jailed, your children will be safe, and you have nothing to worry about.”

“How can we trust you?” called out another wife, pulling his children closer.

“If I wanted all of you dead, you’d be dead right now. But I understand just how cruel King Thrym was, and I understand that many of you were forced to marry him and bear his children, and because I almost shared your fate, I feel sympathy.”

This seemed to make Thrym’s niouvi wives rethink their stance, and one of them stepped forward, pulling his teenage children up with him. “We will stand with you! If you can promise me that my husband will never break free from your spell, and that he’ll never hurt us again, we will stand with you!”

Loki nodded, walking towards the niouvi and his 6 children. “I just need each of you to swear fidelity to my husband and I, and swear that you will never be responsible for any harm to my family. I am placing a binding spell on you that is unbreakable, thus making it impossible for you to betray us. Are you okay with this?”

The niouvi nodded, looking over at King Thrym in fear. “And you swear he won’t hurt us?”

“He will not lay a finger on you or your children, anymore.”

“Then I-I swear fidelity to you! I will never knowingly cause harm to you or your family! Just keep my children and I safe!”

Loki cast the binding spell, and nodded once it was complete, letting the niouvi know that all was well. “You can stay here until things calm down in the kingdom.”

The niouvi’s body sagged in relief, and he nodded, thanking Loki profusely before leaving the
throne room with his children.

When the other wives saw that Loki and Thor didn’t kill him, and were true to their word, they rushed up to Loki, pledging fidelity to him, and allowing him to place a binding spell on them and their children.

Out of the 36 wives that King Thrym had, only 25 of them pledged fidelity to Loki and Thor. The remaining 11 wives were fiercely devoted to Thrym, and refused to see reason, honestly believing that King Thrym would break free from Loki’s spell, and save them.

And out of his 115 children, only 65 chose to stand with Loki.

It admittedly pained Loki to see that so many members of Thrym’s family were ready to die for him, but every single member that chose to stand with Thrym was an adult, so he refused to feel any pity for them, knowing that if they were left alive, they would do everything in their power to bring Loki and Thor down.

Casting a spell that would cause a painless death, Loki watched their bodies fall to the floor, limp and lifeless.

The palace guards in this room seemed pale from the display of power, and gulped nervously, undoubtedly praying to the Norns that Loki or Thor wouldn’t do the same to them.

And now that the palace was theirs, Loki sighed, turning towards the cuetrati of the capital city. “Thank you for choosing to stand with me. I would very much appreciate it if you helped spread the word in the temples and places of religious function that my husband and I are the new rulers of this land.”

The cuetrati present bowed low in front of Loki and Thor before leaving, off to do Loki’s bidding.

Loki addressed the palace guards present then next. “And I need all of you to spread throughout the palace, alerting anyone and everyone present that the rulers of Jötunheim have changed to Thor and myself. Please let everyone that has fault with this news know that they are free to come to this throne room, to contest it.”

The guards bowed low before the pair and left, so Loki sighed, finally turning around towards
Thrym’s foreboding throne. “I suppose I can get rid of this throne and use seidr to craft new ones for us.”

“Is there nothing left for us to do, Aberi?” asked Thor, watching Loki get rid of Thrym’s throne and replace it. “All of that was… less complicated than I believed it would be.”

New thrones completed, Loki sat down, gesturing for Thor to do the same. “The palace and the capital city are too large for us to traverse across it all, announcing that we’re the new rulers. It’s much easier to have everyone else do our bidding. We still have plenty of time before we need to return to the settlement, so sitting here and allowing everyone to come to us is better.”

Thor exhaled softly, his eyes bring drawn back to the dead bodies in the room. “Are you going to kill more people?”

“Only if they are a threat to our family and our rule.”

Loki knew that Thor was bothered by this answer, so he sighed, turning to face him. “Jetoni… if we don’t swiftly take control of the capital, we will be stuck in endless wars with unnecessary bloodshed. That will also take up most of our time, which means more time apart from our children. That also means that we’d have less time to formulate a plan to take down Odin. Everything we do needs to be done in a way that is most efficient, and cuts down on the potential rioting that could occur.”

Thor frowned, not wanting to spend years fighting and killing people. “How soon do you believe we can overtake the capital?”

“Honestly? I give it a few months. With the way things are going, any unrest that the city feels should go away once they realize we’re not tyrannical rulers like Thrym.”

Thor wanted to believe that everything would be as Loki said, but this was all so new and uncertain for him.

Being a leader over the settlement had been huge for him, and had shaped him and taught him numerous things that he never imagined he would learn, but now that he was king?

He was terrified.
He wasn’t just leader of thousands of people anymore, he was the ruler of an entire realm; a realm that would look up to him on how it should run, until his dying days.

He didn’t know if he could do this.

Loki noticed that Thor seemed to be going through an internal battle of wills, and reached out, gently taking his hand. “Jetoni… everything will be okay. You won’t be responsible for every minor detail of this kingdom. There are politicians to do that for you.”

Thor couldn’t help but frown, and rubbed at the back of Loki’s hand with his thumb, still feeling apprehensive. “Aberi… I fully understand that if we didn’t take over, our family would always be at risk. Someone would always want to take us down because of our power, and a ruler would never trust anyone as strong as us. But… I’m not a politician. And I don’t have any experience with this sort of thing. I-I don’t know what I’m doing!”

“And we have plenty of time to learn how to do this, Thor.” assured Loki, squeezing his hand affectionately. “Just like you learned how to lead the people of our settlement, you can learn how to be the king that this realm needs. Just be patient with yourself, and give it time.”

Thor knew Loki was right, and he could only sigh, thoughts of how they would do this flitting through his mind.

All he could do was pray, and trust in himself and Loki that everything would be okay in the end.

Chapter End Notes

So I plan on having 2-5 more chapters before this story ends, so if there's ANYTHING that you feel you haven't seen yet that you want to see in this story, please let me know. I'm always very open about adding things into my stories that make my readers happy, as LONG as it goes along with the plot and flow and mood of the story.

Anyway, have a great rest of the week! <3
Hello!

So yes, this is the final chapter.

I truly believed that it would have a few more, but... I tried so hard to prolong the story, and it just wasn't working.

I hope that you all enjoy the final chapter, and thank you for being on this journey with me.

The psemetri present in the capital stormed into the throne room in droves soon after Loki told the palace guards to alert everyone, and Loki couldn’t help but smirk when they realized that he and Thor were the new rulers of this land.

There were only a few hundred psemetri in the realm, and a majority of them resided in the capital and worked for the king in the palace, so Loki sat up when they entered the large throne room, addressing them. “Well, hello. I bet none of you thought you would ever see me again.”

The psemetri took notice of the dead wives and children of King Thrym and paled considerably when they saw that Loki had King Thrym apprehended, trapped in a spell that he would never break out of.

“Mm, yes, I see you’ve taken notice of the king and his wives and children who did not ally themselves with us. And you will share their fate if you attempt to go against our rule. If you don’t want to accept my husband and me as the new rulers of this land, but you will also not ally yourselves with the king, you are more than welcome to wait and see if any cities or regions break away from the capital’s rule, and then join them. Though I must inform you, the cuetrati have already blessed our rule. It’ll only be a matter of time before everyone else does too.”

He could see the calculation on their faces, and patiently waited for them to decide what they would do, knowing that it was extremely unlikely for them to choose the first or third option.

Psemetri were the highest political rank in the land and only came second to royalty. Because of this, those who became Psemetri were loath to give up their position and did everything they could to stay in a ruler’s good graces. If they didn’t work for the king or queen of Jötunheim, they
effectively didn’t have a job and thus had no political influence.

Loki knew that all of them valued their rich and lavish lifestyles, as well as their political influence and that they would never give this up for anything.

“... If we swear allegiance to you, you won’t harm us or our families in any way?” asked a psemetri, obviously suspicious about Loki’s offer.

His old fellow psemetri knew him all too well and were right to be suspicious of him because of who he used to be in the past.

Thankfully, he wasn’t that person anymore.

“If you ally yourself with us, you and your families will be safe, and you will all be free to do as you please, just as you’ve been doing. You will keep your jobs and your political influence in this realm. The only thing that is changing is the ruling parties of Jötunheim, and a few tyrannic laws. No harm will come to you or those you love if you swear fidelity to us.”

Loki could see that they still didn’t trust him, so he sighed, debating about the best way to handle this. “If I wanted all of you dead, you’d be dead right now. You’ve seen what I’ve done to the king and his family, and you would all be like that now if I truly wanted you dead, and wanted to replace you. If I killed all of you, it would make things much harder for myself and my husband. I don’t have the desire to uproot every politician in this realm and replace them.”

After a long minute of silence, a few psemetri begrudgingly bowed low in front of Loki and Thor, swearing their allegiance to the pair.

This seemed to convince many of the other psemetri, and before Thor and Loki’s eyes, they all bowed low, swearing their allegiance to them as well.

Loki grinned, forcing himself to not laugh at the irony. “Splendid! Now, I would like all of you to return to your districts that you’re responsible for, and inform those beneath you that the rulers of Jötunheim have changed. I would like the process of this deposition to be as fluid as possible, and I’m certain that you all feel the same, as none of us want to sink money into useless wars that won’t change a thing.”
“Yes, My Queen,” answered the crowd of psemetri, bowing low before Loki and Thor again.

Being called a queen excited Loki more than it probably should’ve, and he couldn’t help but cackle, knowing that if things kept going this way, the realm would be under he and Thor’s control in a matter of years.

The psemetri filed out of the room then, and once they were gone, Thor sighed, still feeling uncomfortable with the pace of everything that had occurred today. “Love… have you considered how the public will feel about having a king that isn’t fully Jötun? And, I’m Odin’s son. They don’t know that I’m not allied with my father. They’re not going to trust me. And what of our children? Astrid, Eden, and Eeren have Aesir features, just like myself. What are we going to do about the public’s acceptance?”

Loki frowned before exhaling softly, turning to face his husband. “Jetoni… the kingdom cannot be changed in a day. Just like you won the hearts of those in the settlement, you will win the hearts of the people in this land. Bringing this kingdom under our control will take time and lots of effort, and it will be hard, but it is something that can be done. Trust in yourself.”

He reached over the arm of his throne to take Thor’s hand, rubbing his thumb over the back of Thor’s hand. “We can do this, Thor. We take it day by day, and we push on. Just think of the peace we can achieve once we get this realm under our control, and defeat Odin. Millennia of peace. It’s just up to us to make it happen.”

Even though he knew Loki was right, Thor was still nervous.

And admittedly?

He was scared.

And as he and Loki remained in the throne room for the duration of the day, he could only feel the fear in him rising.

He didn’t want to be king, but he knew that if he wasn’t, whoever took his place would never feel comfortable with someone as powerful as him, being alive.

He wasn’t sure if he would even make a good king, but what he did know was that he would try.
Letting fear rule him or control how they did this would only hinder them, and it would only make it harder for everyone in the long run.

He refused to be the reason this didn’t work and swore right then and there that he would see this to its end.

This *would* work.

It took about a year to bring the capital city under their complete control.

There were many minor politicians and district governors that disagreed with Loki and Thor ruling, but they soon bowed their heads, knowing that allying themselves with Loki and Thor would be beneficial for everyone involved.

And once the people of the capital all saw what King Thrym had been diminished to, and saw that the cuetrati and psemetri of the realm accepted Thor and Loki as their new rulers, they too fell in line.

It seemed that no one liked the king very much -he’d gotten much more cruel and more strict over the centuries- so once the capital was brought under Thor and Loki’s complete control, Loki felt that it would be best for he and Thor to bring their children here, and felt that it would be a good time to make their first public speech as the new rulers of this realm.

He knew that he and Thor would most likely travel around the realm in the coming decades to all the major cities, in an attempt to bring them under their control peacefully, and believed that it would be good for the children to see the realm for what it was, and what it truly had to offer.

Thor agreed with Loki’s desire -they’d calmed the capital down enough so that everyone was in agreeance with Thor and Loki’s rule- so a year and a half into bringing the capital under their control, Loki brought everyone from the settlement that wanted to now live in the capital, as well as Thor’s family, and their children.
The children were *ecstatic* to finally be out of the settlement and were brimming with excitement the morning that Thor and Loki were set to bring their family to the palace.

Loki made sure to dress them in new outfits, and kept pacing back and forth in their foyer at their home in the settlement, more nervous than he’d ever been in his *life*.

His children had never been outside the settlement, and the capital was still getting used to its new rulers. Loki couldn’t help but worry that once the children saw that they had enough space to explore and do anything and *everything* they wanted, someone somewhere would try and kidnap them, or hurt them, or-

“Come *on*, Beberi! I wanna be a princess now!” insisted Astrid, pulling at the sash on Loki’s hip impatiently. “*You promised*!”

Loki pursed his lips and looked down at his daughter, his heart-melting when he saw the hope and optimism shining in her eyes. “You can be a princess, Astrid. Just… here, always keep this on. *Never* take it off.” He linked a very beautiful necklace with a gemstone on it around her neck then, placing an extremely powerful spell on it. “Once you and your siblings do this, we can all leave and you can all be princes and princesses.”

Astrid raised a confusing eyebrow up at Loki, eyeing the gemstone and trying to understand why she had to wear this. “What’s this?”

“If you or your siblings are ever scared or if anyone ever tries to hurt you, rub the back of this gem, and it will teleport you to my side immediately.”

Astrid shrugged her shoulders and pulled at Loki’s sash again, stomping her feet. “Now can we go?”

“No, Astrid. Beberi needs to give necklaces to your siblings.”

The young girl huffed and rolled her eyes, stomping over to Thor, who was sitting on their couch. “I wanna be a princess…”

“And you’ll be one, my child. In a few short minutes, you’ll be a princess for the rest of your life,” answered Thor, wrapping a stable arm around her and kissing her temple.
“Adras, let me give you a necklace to wear,” murmured Loki, gesturing for Adras to stop playing with the toddlers.

The boy groaned and stood up, not happy about having to wear a necklace. “Necklaces are for girls and niouv, Beberi. Can’t I have a bracelet or a ring?”

Loki didn’t trust Adras with a ring for a second -the child would take it off absentmindedly when he wanted to play, and they would never see it again- so he sighed, summoning a bracelet with a gem on it that wasn’t too flashy. “Never take this off Adras.”

“I won’t, Beberi.”

“Promise me, Adras. It is very important that you always wear this.”

Adras made a face before rolling his eyes, promising Loki that he would never, ever take it off.

Now that the older children were taken care of, Loki made his way over to their toddlers, sitting down on the ground and pulling Eden into his lap. “You’re next, Eden.”

Eden pouted and began to fuss in Loki’s lap, not happy about having to wear jewelry. “No! I don’t wanna wear it!”

“Eden…”

“No!”

Loki thought of the best way to keep a piece of jewelry on toddlers -they were so unpredictable, and always stripped off their clothing to run around whenever they had a chance- and decided that small, studded gemstone earrings would be best.

It was normal for female and niouvi children to have their ears pierced at a very young age, and the toddlers already had their ears pierced, so Loki summoned two small gemstone earrings, and
replaced them with Eden’s current ones, casting a simple spell that allowed only him or Thor to remove these earrings. “Fine, fine, you don’t have to wear a necklace or a bracelet, child. But if you ever get scared, rub at your earring, okay?”

Eden nodded, tantrum thankfully avoided.

“Alright Eeren, your turn.”

Eeren’s face scrunched up in a frown, and Loki shot him a fearsome look, putting an end to his tantrum before it even began.

Silently, Eeren climbed into Loki’s lap, pouting while Loki changed his earrings. Thor admittedly thought this was the most adorable thing ever -the child seemed to have inherited Loki’s tendency to pout when he had to do something he really didn’t want to do- but kept this observation to himself, wanting to keep the peace in the home today.

Once Loki was done putting Eeren’s earrings in, he plastered kisses over the toddler’s face so that he knew Loki wasn’t mad, and let him go once he began to giggle, pleased to see him happy once again.

Now Jörd was the only one left, and the young toddler happily sat down in Loki’s lap, hugging him and beginning to giggle. “I want a pretty necklace, Beberi!”

Loki smothered her face with kisses, laughing along with her. “What color, sweet girl?”

“Blue! Like Deneri!”

The biggest smile spread across Thor’s face when he heard this, and he began to laugh. “You’re so sweet, dear girl.”

Jörd beamed at Thor’s praise, beginning to hum while Loki placed the necklace around her neck. “I wanna be pretty like you, Beberi!”

Loki’s heart absolutely melted at this innocent statement, and he hugged his daughter close, kissing
her face a dozen times. “You’re already beautiful, sweet girl.”

“Yeah, Jörd! You’re already really pretty!” assured Astrid, jumping out of Thor’s lap to hug her sister. “You’re so pretty, and I bet you’ll be the most beautiful princess!”

Jörd began to giggle again and hugged Astrid back, a slight blush to her face. “You’re pretty too, Astrid! You have pretty eyes like Deneri!”

Seeing their daughters affirm each other and lift each other up was a highlight moment in Loki and Thor’s life where their parenting was concerned, and they both shot each other smiles before standing up and gesturing for their brood to follow them.

Thor’s family, and Hemming and his family, as well as those of the settlement who wanted to live in the capital, were already moved in, so Loki sighed softly and turned to stare back at their home, feeling bittersweet about leaving.

He knew it was for the best though and smiled up at Thor as the giant wrapped a loving arm around him, a bittersweet smile on his face as well. “Norns…”

“Yes, yes, you’re sad we’re leaving. Can we go, Beberi?” groaned Adras, rolling his eyes dramatically.

Loki widened his eyes in mock indignation, playfully swatting at Adras’ side and causing the young boy to laugh. “I swear, you will all be the death of me.”

Taking one final look at their home, Loki waved his hand, teleporting his family to the enormous king and queen’s suite in the palace.

Originally, King Thrym had the palace redesigned in a way that gave a king and queen’s suite to each niouvi wife, and then he had his own personal suite.

Loki and Thor decided though to have the royal living quarters reorganized before bringing their children here, and designed it so that the king and queen’s suite had a master bedroom, a large dining room, a kitchen, a spacious living room, a playroom, and 10 bedrooms, each with their own attached bath. Loki didn’t know how many children he and Thor would have once they were able to take down Odin and wanted to plan accordingly.
Of course, he didn’t think that he and Thor would ever have 10 children under the age of 18 at once, but the Norns have proved themselves to be very mysterious. Loki never imagined that he and Thor would have the five children that they have now.

He’d also placed numerous protection spells in this suite, and felt very confident that no harm would come to his children while they were here.

The second they arrived in this suite, their children gasped and began to shriek with childlike glee and amazement, running around and freaking out over the elaborate design of the suite that would now be their home.

It put a soft smile on Thor’s face to see how happy his children were, and he nodded at some palace guards that were positioned at the entrance to their suite, looking around as well.

“Norns…”

Loki sighed softly as well, a gentle smile on his face.

Seeing the children so happy made him happy, and he could only hope that as time went on, he could continue to experience moments like this.

Of course, the impending threat of Odin was always looming over their heads, but for now, Loki wanted to focus on doing what he could to fix this realm.

They still had a little under a century to come up with a plan.

After they’d been in the palace for a few years -and after they’d been established as the rulers of this realm for 15 years- Loki and Thor believed it would be a good idea to begin their trip around the realm, to the cities and regions that were still hesitant to accept their new monarchs.
Luckily, no one had declared war over their right to challenge the throne, and it seemed that the cities and regions of the realm that were hesitant to accept Loki and Thor as their rulers wanted to attempt to resolve things peacefully, so for this, the pair were thankful.

Their children were excited to explore the realm, and Loki and Thor were looking forward to being able to show their children the beauty of this realm, so the night before they were set to leave found Thor and Loki out on their veranda, smoking a common herb found in their realm, glasses of wine in their hands.

The sky was quite clear tonight, and the moon shone brightly, illuminating the pair in a brilliant light.

Loki always believed that Thor’s skin was most beautiful under the moon’s light, and he laughed softly as he began to trace over Thor’s faint heritage lines, marveling at how intricate they were.

The giant didn’t mind Loki doing this, and basked in his touch, inhaling a bit more of the herb they were sharing. “You’re always so fascinated by my familial etchings.”

Loki placed a soft kiss against Thor’s jugular, a faint smirk on his face. “I’m just fascinated by you.”

It seemed the effects of this herb were causing Loki to be a bit more forthcoming with his words than usual, and Thor couldn’t help but laugh, kissing Loki softly. “You’re fascinated by me?”

Loki returned Thor’s kiss, a drunken smile on his face. “Of course I am.”

Playfully kissing Loki’s lips again, Thor pinched at his side, causing Loki to laugh again. “Why are you so fascinated with me?”

“Because I love you…”

Hearing Loki say this so openly caused Thor to smile, and he blushed deeply, closing his eyes and kissing Loki softly once more. “And I love you.”
The niouvi set his wine glass down on the terrace wall and draped his arms around Thor, beginning to laugh when Thor snuffed out the herb and pulled Loki closer in his lap. “How much do you love me?”

“I could be given eternity to tell you all the reasons I love you, and it still wouldn’t be enough time.”

Loki widened his eyes and blushed deeply, an uncharacteristically bashful smile on his face. “I love you, Thor. I truly, truly do. And you mean so much to me. I-I know that we aren’t sure about how to take down Odin, but… we will find a way.”

The giant always loved hearing Loki whisper sweet nothings to him, and hugged him tightly, a soft smile on his face. “You mean everything to me as well, Aberi. You’ve truly made my life something that I never thought it could be, and every day that I’m able to spend by your side, I fall more in love with you.”

“What a shame it is, to have to be the one to destroy this unexpected union.”

Thor and Loki inhaled sharply and jumped, their hearts dropping when they saw Odin step out of the shadows of their veranda.

The pair immediately moved to react, with Loki teleporting to get their children and Thor’s family out of here, and Thor standing up, facing his father for what he hoped would be the last time. “Why are you here?”

Odin smirked, stopping a few feet away from Thor. “I got tired of waiting. I realized that the longer that I wait for your imprudent wife to give me a child, the more powerful the both of you will become, and I cannot risk being overtaken. This ends, now.”

The last thing Thor wanted was to fight his father in the capital and put everyone’s lives at risk. If his own power was as grand as it currently was, he knew his father’s would be even greater.

“Not here, Odin.”

Odin began to laugh, his eyes glowing brightly as sparks of lightning began to crackle around him. “You have the gall to demand I do something? That niouvi has certainly given you confidence that
you shouldn’t have.”

Thor summoned his power as well, lightning beginning to spark from his body. “If you are here to kill me and my children, as well as take Loki, I will say and do as I please. You’re in my realm, threatening my family.”

A portion of the castle was struck down by lightning then, and Thor’s face darkened, his heart beginning to race.

He needed to figure out how to get Odin away from the capital so that no one would be harmed in the midst of their fighting.

If he was nothing else, he was a very skilled fighter, and he decided to use this to his advantage, rushing at Odin and striking him in the center of his face, catching him off guard.

In rapid succession, Thor struck Odin in his solar plexus a few times, causing the man to stagger on his feet and become slightly disoriented.

Thor used this disorientation to his advantage and grabbed Odin around his abdomen, picking him up and lifting them into the air.

When he first learned how to fly, he learned that he could fly quite fast, and travel across great distances in a matter of minutes.

His goal with Odin was to fly them as far away from civilization as he could while the Aesir was disoriented, and managed to get them pretty far before Odin came to.

The Aesir began to struggle in his hold, so Thor released him, knowing that if he could fly, Odin could too.

Odin had a fearsome scowl on his face and wiped at the blood dripping from his nose, the skies beginning to blacken. “You’re more foolish than I believed you to be, boy. There is not a man alive that has struck me, and lived.”
“Then I will be the first.” called back Thor, summoning his own storm clouds. He wasn’t sure if Odin’s lightning could hurt him now that he awakened his own powers, and wasn’t sure if he would even be able to hurt Odin.

A large bolt of lightning made its way across the sky then, and struck Thor, causing searing pain to radiate throughout his body, much like it did when he was 15, and met his father for the first time.

He swore to himself though that this time would be different.

Roaring out into the night, Thor summoned as much lightning as he could, and sent it Odin’s way, trying to determine how to protect himself from Odin’s barrage.

Odin’s lightning felt cold and callous, and as he fought against it, he realized that Odin didn’t seem to be affected by Thor’s lightning at all.

In fact, his father seemed to be smiling, and upped the power of his lightning assault, rendering Thor immobile.

The Aesir flew a bit closer to Thor then, seemingly reveling in his son’s pain. “I bet you’re wondering why I’m not affected.”

Thor honestly didn’t have time to give into Odin’s taunting and instead searched within himself, trying to figure out how to deflect Odin’s barrage.

He got the idea of surrounding himself with his own lightning, to block Odin’s, and was relieved when this seemed to work, Odin’s lightning no longer rendering him immobile.

Odin narrowed his eyes and upped the power of his lightning a bit more, getting more and more frustrated when Thor learned how to repel his lightning.

Thor spat blood from the side of his mouth and glared at Odin, knowing that he needed to do whatever he could to take him down.

He just couldn’t let Odin get back to the capital, and reached out, punching him in the face again.
Odin was ready for this though and retaliated by striking Thor, knocking his head back and striking him again in the throat.

Thor blocked Odin’s third punch and hit him square in the jaw, going into the deepest parts of himself and causing a concentrated arc of lightning to simultaneously strike Odin.

His father seemed to have a similar idea and struck Thor with his own lightning, the collision of the two forms of energy causing a mass discharge that sent them both flying.

Thor was admittedly burned and scraped up, but he was relieved to see that Odin didn’t leave their collision unscathed; his father was a bit burned and scraped up too.

Thor knew he didn’t have time to react or tend to his injuries though, and rushed up, flying towards Odin and tackling him to the ground.

The two fought fiercely, trading punches and blows in rapid succession, each of them knowing that they couldn’t make the same mistake of trying to strike each other with lightning at the same time, again.

Thor knew that he had to time his lightning to strike Odin perfectly, as if Odin tried to strike him with his own at the same time, it would only cause another explosion.

Odin continued to get more and more frustrated with Thor as their brawl dragged on, but it was too risky for them to try and use lightning at the same time, this close together.

The mighty black storm clouds that they summoned rained hellfire down on the pair, hail and fearsome winds pelting them and tearing at their skin.

If this had been an ideal situation, Thor would’ve had a weapon, and could’ve used it to bolster his chances of winning.

Unfortunately, all he had were his fists, and they would have to do.
“Why the hell are you so strong?!”

Thor sensed the lightning strike that was heading towards him, and summoned his own lightning, using it to counter Odin’s.

The collision of their lightning in such close quarters decimated the surrounding forest, and every tree in a 10-mile radius was either reduced to ash or charred black.

Thor felt light-headed and disoriented when he hit the ground after being flung away by the explosion, the ringing in his ears beginning to become overwhelming.

He knew he had to get up, he knew he had to make the first move, he knew he needed to do something, but his body wouldn’t move, wouldn’t listen, wouldn’t react.

He grunted and tried to force himself to remain conscious, knowing that he would lose everything if he lost consciousness now.

He took bleary notice of Odin, and was able to glare when the Aesir growled at him, obviously disoriented as well.

“I have gotten everything I have ever wanted in this life! And I will not let a fucking runt take it from me!”

Thor was able to weakly toss Odin’s hands away from him, and it took everything in him to sit up, and stagger until he was standing unsteadily on his feet. “If I have to kill myself to ensure that you die, then I will do it.”

Odin staggered to his feet as well, lightning beginning to crackle around his body. “This is over.”

Thor knew that he most likely wouldn’t make it out of this -he knew that Odin was going to use everything in him to take out Thor- so he used the last of his strength to summon lightning as well, knowing that if he did this, he at least had a high probability of taking Odin out when their lightning collided.
It seemed as if time slowed down when their arcs of lightning collided, and Thor almost didn’t feel anything when he flew back from the explosion, the blinding white light from it the last thing he saw.

His last feeling was one of overwhelming guilt for failing to protect Loki and their family, and when he finally hit the ground, he accepted that he wouldn’t make it.

The impact undoubtedly broke a few of his ribs, and as it got harder and harder to breathe, Thor decided that this wasn’t it for him.

He refused to just die without being certain that Odin was dead, and sent a prayer up to the Norns, begging them for the strength to do what needed to be done.

He couldn’t count the bruises and scrapes and burns on his body, and as he rolled over in the snow, he forced himself to stand, and make his way towards Odin.

His vision was blurry, he felt impossibly weak, he knew that he was losing a lot of blood, but he couldn’t give up, and risk leaving Odin alive.

His father was surprisingly staggering towards him as well, and the Aesir spat at he got closer, radiating pure ire. “Your bitch of a wife is the only reason you’re alive right now! And I will relish in taking him from you, slaughtering your children, and causing this entire Norn-forsaken realm to fall to ruin!”

Thor and Loki both knew that Odin knew seidr, and because Loki didn’t want to take any chances with the possibility of anyone ever hurting Thor or their children with seidr, he had numerous powerful, protective spells around them that prevented them from being harmed by any seidr attacks.

He was relieved that Odin wasn’t able to use seidr to harm him, and forced himself to power through his pain, beginning to run towards Odin.

The pair collided, and Thor made sure that he was able to punch Odin in his nose once again, relieved when he heard his nose break.

Odin, unfortunately, struck his throat, and Thor gasped, his already labored breathing becoming
more difficult.

Using his elbow to hit Odin’s jaw, Thor knocked the man off his feet, and rushed to choke Odin, wrapping his hands around his neck, and squeezing with the last of his strength.

Odin began to choke and turned purple, clawing weakly at his neck in a poor attempt to get Thor to stop.

Thor didn’t stop until his vision began to fade, and it was then and only then that his grip weakened, and he began to fall back.

His last thought was a prayer to the Norns, asking them to protect Loki and their children.

He tried his best, and he truly had nothing left in him to fight anymore.

He was comforted by the fact that Odin was just as weak as he was, if not more, and that he wouldn’t make it out of this.

Right before he collapsed, he managed to send out a final arc of lightning at Odin and hoped that it was enough to ensure his death.

And with his final breath, he apologized to Loki and their children, praying that he would see them again, in Valhalla.

Loki cast a quick spell to erase the effects of the alcohol and the herb he and Thor used when Odin appeared.

He didn’t know how much time he had to get their children and Thor’s family as far away from the capital as possible, and teleported to Adras’ room, shaking him awake. “ADRAS! Get up, child, get up!”
Adras jolted awake, looking at Loki in fear. “Beberi?!”

Loki hurriedly pulled Adras out of bed, grabbing his wrist and teleporting to Astrid’s room, shaking her awake as well.

It took him no more than 2 minutes to wake all of his children up, and once they were gathered he teleported them back to their old home in the settlement, grabbing at Adras’ face quickly. “Sweet child, you must protect your siblings! Do not leave this settlement until Beberi or Deneri returns for you!”

Adras began to tear up, looking into Loki’s eyes. “B-Beberi, I-I don’t understand!”

Loki couldn’t help but tear up as well, and he kissed Adras’ face in the hopes to calm him, wiping at his tears. “Beberi loves you, Adras. I love you so much. If Deneri or Beberi don’t come back, never leave this settlement! Always protect your siblings, and keep them here!”

Adras began to break down when Loki said this, understanding that Loki was about to do something that he might not come back from. “Beberi you can’t leave, you promised! You promised me! You promised!”

The other children crowded around Loki and began to sob as well, starting to understand that they might not see Loki again.

Loki wrapped his arms around all of his children and began to weep, letting each one know just how much he and Thor loved them.

Pulling away from his children was the absolute hardest thing he had ever done in his life, but he knew he needed to do it.

If Odin managed to kill Thor, Loki had to hold true to his promise to kill himself, and every other descendant of Frode.

If it came to this, he would craft a powerful spell that shrouded his bloodline from Odin so that he would never be able to find them, before doing everything he could to stop Odin.
“Beberi don’t go!” screamed Astrid, grasping at Loki’s shirt and sobbing into it. “Please! Please!”

Loki couldn’t hold back his tears and continued to break down, pulling his daughter into his arms. “I have too, sweet child. Everything will be okay. Just stay here. I’m going to get your aunt and cousins, and everything will be okay.”

The toddlers began to pull at him next, each of them pleading with him to not go.

Kissing each child again and hugging them close, Loki sniffed, standing up and waving his hand, teleporting back to the capital to get Thor’s family.

He sent them to the settlement to be with his children, and then teleported to Hemming’s suite, alerting him to what was happening.

Loki asked that Hemming take over if anything happened to him and Thor and that he made sure his children were always taken care of.

He then teleported to Thor, his heart stopping when he saw Thor collapsed in the snow, not moving.

He couldn’t stop the tears that fell from his eyes or the scream that tore from his throat when he pulled Thor into his arms, and he sobbed over his body, using seidr to see if there was any spark of his essence left.

To his relief, there was something there, and he held onto that small spark with his entire being, pouring every healing spell that he knew, into Thor.

He didn’t stop until Thor was breathing again -it was faint, but he was breathing- and wiped at his tears, looking a few feet away at Odin.

The man was not moving, and Loki felt a fierce rage within him when he sent out a pulse of seidr, and saw that Odin was still alive.

He used a vast amount of his seidr saving Thor, and knew that he most likely didn’t have enough to
break through Odin’s protective spells to harm him with seidr.

What was once a forest was now a charred battlefield, and because it was night, he could not use the energy from the sun.

He sniffed and wiped at his tears, looking for anything that could be used as a makeshift weapon to make sure that Odin was dead, once and for all.

He spotted a roughed piece of bark that hadn’t been too charred and grabbed it, wiping at his tears with a shaky hand once more, and making his way over to Odin.

The Aesir was faintly breathing, and Loki hated that he might lose Thor because of this man’s greed.

Getting onto his knees, Loki forced this bark into Odin’s jugular, his heart beginning to race when Odin snapped awake, letting out a choked gasp.

Loki tried to run away, but Odin caught his wrist, dragging him towards him as he put pressure against the wound on his neck, blood spilling from his mouth.

He tried to speak but he couldn’t, the blood now spurting from the wound on his neck.

Odin coughed out more blood then, and Loki shook away his fear, grabbing the bark and digging it even further into Odin’s neck.

The Aesir continued to cough up blood, his hold on Loki’s wrist weakening as he began to bleed out.

Loki continued to dig this bark into Odin’s neck until he saw the light begin to fade from his cold, blue eyes, and once he sensed that all of Odin’s essence had dissipated, he let go, shaking Odin’s cold hand off of him, and stumbling back over to Thor.

The giant was still breathing, and Loki let out a garbled sound, pulling him into his arms, and beginning to weep.
He sent a clone back to the capital to alert Hemming, and asked that the niouvi come to this location with a few hundred of their strongest soldiers and a large number of healers.

He knew Odin was dead but didn’t want to take any chances. He didn’t know if his power allowed him to return from the dead, and revive himself, so he hoped that the soldiers would be able to do something to Odin in his weakened state.

A soft sound from Thor made Loki snap his gaze to his face, and tears spilled from his eyes when Thor managed to crack open his eyes, taking bleary notice of Loki.

“Aberi?”

Loki sniffed and nodded, his voice trembling with emotion. “He’s dead, Jetoni.”

Thor relaxed in his hold, a soft smile gracing his lips. “Good.”

The giant had a pained expression on his face, and Loki sniffed again, caressing his cheeks. “Jetoni… everything will be okay. Just, just keep breathing.”

“Loki… I need you to know that I love you.”

The niouvi shook his head quickly, not wanting to hear this. “No! Y-You’re going to be okay, Thor, I healed you, Jetoni, everything will be okay-”

“Aberi… I’m really hurt. And… I know I’m not going to pull through.”

Loki let out a choked cry, beginning to sob against Thor’s chest. “Don’t say that! Hemming is on his way, there are healers coming, y-you can’t leave me, the children need you, I need you-”

Thor couldn’t help but let out a few tears of his own, and he hated that this was happening. He always knew that he might die if he defeated Odin, but to know that it was happening still hurt his heart.
He wanted to be there to see his children grow up, he wanted to be there for Loki and their family, he wanted to make this realm a better place, but... this fight with Odin took everything out of him.

And he knew he was barely hanging on.

“Love... I'm sorry.”

Loki scrambled to pour more of his seidr into Thor, refusing to let him die in his arms.

He didn’t care if he used his entire essence to save Thor, he just knew that he couldn’t live without Thor in this life.

“Loki!”

Loki’s shoulders sagged in relief when he heard Hemming call out to him, and he continued to pour seidr into Thor, sniffing and wiping at his tears when Hemming and the requested healers began to pour seidr into Thor as well, in an attempt to heal him.

Loki didn’t tear his gaze away from Thor the entire time, pleading with the giant to hang on, and not give up.

He could see the exact moment in Thor’s eyes when the giant began to fade, and shook his head, beginning to use an extremely dangerous and controversial spell in an attempt to save Thor.

He didn’t care what this spell would do to him, he didn’t care that he would never be the same, all he cared about was Thor, and he needed to save him.

Hemming saw what he was doing and tried to stop him, but Loki refused, pouring his essence into Thor.

He didn’t care that everyone was begging him to stop, he didn’t care that they were pulling at him and telling him to give up, all he knew was that Thor would make it out of this; even if he himself
The first thing Thor noticed upon waking was that he was comforted and supported by a bed.

He had a huge headache, and his entire body felt like lead, leaving him unable to even make a sound.

Still, he fought through it, and groaned weakly, forcing his eyes open.

He could see that Loki was passed out over him, fingers intertwined with his own.

He hated that Loki looked so gaunt and so sick, and managed to run a hand through his hair, seeing that it now had faint streaks of gray.

The niouvi stirred when he felt his hair being stroked, and sat up, looking down at Thor and beginning to cry.

The biggest grin spread across his face, and he reached out to gingerly hold Thor’s face, unable to hold back his sobbing.

Thor held him to the best of his ability as well, and cried with him, knowing that it was a miracle that he was even alive to see his beloved once again.

Loki wept in Thor’s arms for what seemed like hours, too overcome with emotion to speak, and stroked at his face when he finally pulled away, unable to stop smiling. “Let me get a healer, Jetoni.”

Thor nodded, releasing Loki and watching him run off to go get someone.

A few healers returned with him and began to assess Thor, making sure that there were no pressing
concerns that needed to be addressed.

“I see nothing concerning, My Queen. We predict that it will take anywhere from one to two decades for him to make a full recovery. It will be tedious, to recover from his injuries, but… we do not see any indication that recovery is impossible.”

Hearing that Thor would make a full recovery made Loki’s shoulders sag in relief, and he nodded, thanking the healers. He then told his personal servants to fetch their children from their instruction, and bring them here immediately.

Once they were alone, Loki returned to Thor’s side and sat down in a chair next to him, caressing his face gently.

He didn’t know where to begin, or what to say, but Thor beat him to it, reaching out and taking Loki’s hand in his. “I’m sorry, love. I’m so sorry.”

Loki shook his head, not wanting Thor to think this. “It’s alright, Jetoni. It’s alright. You’re here now, and you’re safe and awake, and… and that’s all that matters.”

The pair stared at each other gently then, their gazes conveying what their words couldn’t.

Placing a soft kiss against Thor’s forehead, Loki helped Thor readjust in bed comfortably, running fingers through his hair. “The children… they’ve been through a lot in the past three years. And… it will take a long time to repair this family, and become okay again. But it can be done. As a family, we’ll take this day by day, Jetoni.”

Thor blinked weakly in confusion, trying to process what Loki said. “Three years, Loki?”

Loki offered him a painful nod, then, wiping away a few stray tears, and hoping that Thor didn’t see. “It’s been about three and a half years, Thor. You’ve been in a comatose state until today…”

Hearing that he missed so much time broke Thor’s heart, and he began to tear up, taking Loki’s hands with his. “I’m so sorry, love. I’m so sorry.”
The niouvi closed his eyes and shook his head, biting a lower lip and trying to hold back even more tears. “You saved us, Thor. You protected your family, your realm, and defeated someone that was infinitely stronger than you. You shouldn’t have survived as long as you did, considering how many times you were stricken by Odin. I-I healed most of the burns from your body so that they wouldn’t become scars like the one on your chest, and I…”

Thor wiped at Loki’s tears when he broke down, shushing him gently, and not wanting him to think that he hadn’t done enough. “Loki… Aberi, you’ve done so much for me, and for our family. You did everything you could. The last thing I saw before collapsing was your genuine love for me and… knowing that this was the last thing I saw comforted me more than you will ever know. I don’t know how I’m still here, but… I am certain that it’s because of you. And… and I need you to know how thankful I am, and how much I love you. You and our children were what gave me the strength to keep fighting Odin, and… you were all the final thought on my mind.”

Loki allowed himself to be pulled into Thor’s arms, and wept silently, knowing that he needed to tell Thor what he did, in order to save him. “Jetoni… to save you… I did something that you wouldn’t have wanted me to do.”

Pulling back a bit, Thor looked into Loki’s eyes, feeling terrible about causing Loki so much pain and strife. “What did you do?”

“I… gave half of my essence to you. When you lost consciousness… you did die. And… in order to bring you back, I sacrificed half my essence. I-It should’ve killed me too -the spell was a life for a life- but because I had an almost complete mastery of seidr… I was able to only use half. So… I will never be as strong as I once was, but… I don’t care. You being here with me and our children is more important than any power I could ever have.”

Hearing that Loki did this for him broke Thor’s heart, and he pulled Loki even closer, overwhelmed by this information. “Aberi…”

“I can still protect our family, and I can still defend myself, but… I’m back at the strength that I was when the outlaws attacked our settlement. Hemming is actually the one keeping up the protective spells around our family now…”

Thor knew just how much seidr meant to Loki -the niouvi had dedicated his entire life to the mastery of it, and giving up half of his entire essence was equal to Loki cutting off both arms or both legs, just so Thor could live- and he kissed his cheek, not wanting him to worry.

“Loki, everything will be okay.”
Loki nodded hurriedly and rubbed at Thor’s back, knowing that with time, everything *would* be okay. “I love you, Thor. You mean everything to me, and I just *can’t* imagine living without you. You’re the other half of my heart, the second half of my soul, and…”

Thor hugged Loki tighter, inhaling his comforting scent and beginning to tear up again. “Thank you, my love. Thank you.”

A loud knock at the door of the room they were in let Loki know that their children were here, and he sniffed, pulling away from the giant. “I want to give you some time with the children if that’s okay. I… I know that you’re impossibly tired, but… it would mean so much to them if they were able to see you awake.”

Thor nodded, knowing that he would fight his exhaustion for as long as he needed to so that his children knew he was okay.

Placing a soft kiss against Thor’s forehead, Loki stood up, opening the door, and guiding their children into the room.

He let out a choked cry and turned away when the children saw Thor was awake and heard them break down and run over to his bed, tackling him into a loving embrace.

Hearing his children whimper or sob in his arms was the most painful thing he’d ever witnessed, and he held them all close, reassuring each one, kissing their faces, and letting them know that he would be okay.

It took about an hour for their children to calm down - their toddlers all cried themselves to the point of exhaustion - and only Astrid and Adras remained awake.

Loki held Jörd in his arms while she slept, and Eden and Eeren rested in Thor’s lap, Astrid and Adras tucked under each of his arms.

It broke Thor’s *heart* to see that his children were suffering because of him, and he wiped at his tears with a shaking hand, beginning to apologize to the oldest two. “Adras… Astrid… I’m so sorry for scaring you. Hurting you both… hurting your younger siblings… that is the last thing I wanted to ever do to you.”
Adras took in a shaking breath, his voice beginning to crack with emotion. “We were so scared, Deneri…”

Thor kissed his son’s temple, and rubbed at his side, reassuring him that everything would be okay now.

“That’s what you said last time!” accused the boy, glaring up at Thor through his tears. “You and Beberi both promised you wouldn’t leave again, and you lied! You lied!”

Hearing how hurt their children were over the events of the past few years made Thor and Loki feel as if their hearts had been torn out of their chests and dashed upon the ground, and they knew that this pain was only a fraction of the pain that their children were feeling.

All Thor could do was apologize to his children over and over again, and reassure them that he and Loki loved them with all of their hearts, and only wanted to protect them.

Adras knew a bit about Odin -Astrid knew even less- and Thor shared a look with Loki, the pair silently agreeing that it was time to let each child know a bit more.

“Astras… Astrid… Deneri and Beberi are so sorry for hurting you…”

Astrid’s lip began to quiver, and she wiped at her tears, looking up at her father. “We were scared, Deneri… everyone said that you were going to die!”

“Astrid… do you remember the evil man in your nightmares?”

The young girl nodded, waiting for an explanation.

“And Adras, do you remember when your Beberi and I told you that my father was a very dangerous man?”

Adras nodded, nestling back into Thor’s warm embrace.
“Beberi and Deneri tried our best to protect all of you from him… and… we made an agreement with him, that he decided not to follow. I love each of you so much, and… and I could never let anyone harm you. Beberi and Deneri will always do everything we do, to protect you all. And we’re so sorry that this led to us hurting you.”

Adras frowned, not happy to hear this. “You and Beberi said it's not right to break a promise.”

“Yeah! You always said we have to have integrity!”

Loki’s face pinched into a pained frown, and he wished he could help his children understand that he and Thor tried their best to protect them. “Adras… Astrid… Odin wanted to hurt all of us… and he was very, very strong. Deneri fought as hard as he could, to protect us.”

“But you broke your promise!” accused the young boy, glaring at Loki. “You said you would never leave again! You promised me!”

Loki wiped at his tears, trying to determine the best way to help heal Adras’ broken heart. “I’m sorry that I broke my promise to you, Adras… may Beberi make a new one?”

Adras remained silent, so Loki scooted forward, and rubbed at Adras’ side. “Adras… Beberi and Deneri will always do whatever we can, to love you, keep you safe, and protect you. And no matter what happens to our family, or anyone in it, Beberi and Deneri will always love you.” He turned to look at Astrid next. “And the same is true of you, sweet child. Deneri and Beberi love you so much, and we will spend our entire lives loving you and protecting you.”

Their oldest children began to cry again and nestled back into Thor’s sides, calming down the more and more Thor and Loki reassured them that everything would be okay, and that they loved them.

Loki knew that Thor was exhausted by the time the oldest children cried themselves to sleep, and looked at him sadly, knowing that it would take years to recover from what happened to their family.

“Let me take the children back to their rooms, Thor. I know you need to sleep.”
Thor shook his head, knowing that their children were loathe to leave his side. “Let them stay here, Aberi. I… admittedly don’t want to be away from any of you right now either.”

Hearing this put a soft smile on his face, and he rubbed at Jörd’s back when she began to stir, humming softly so that she would be lulled back to sleep.

The family sat in silence for quite some time, and Loki watched Thor fall in and out of sleep, quietly letting palace servants know to bring dinner up to them all.

Once dinner was brought up, and the children began to eat and see that Thor wouldn’t drop dead in front of them, they began to relax, updating Thor about all of the fascinating things they’d done or saw.

Knowing that he was able to experience his children and his family again, and knowing that he would be able to see them grow up, and spend his life with Loki, meant the world to him.

Their children all wanted to spend the night in the royal medical suite with Thor, so after cots were brought in, and their children were laid down to sleep, Loki began to update Thor about what occurred once he entered his coma.

“How certain are you that Odin is dead?”

“There is no doubt in my mind that he is dead. After… after I found you both, I managed to get you breathing again, and noticed that Odin was still alive. He was incredibly weak, but… I managed to make a makeshift dagger out of a rough piece of bark and stabbed him. I watched the life fade from his eyes, and after you were taken to the capital for recovery, I had our soldiers burn his body… and… a very strange thing happened.”

“Oh?”

“When his body was burned… it seemed that this released all of the power contained within him. I assume that our previous theory about how power is passed from father to son, was correct and because there was no one there for the power to go into, it detonated the entire area; those of the capital were dozens of miles away, and the light from it all was so blinding that there were thousands that had their sight damaged. Luckily, Hemming was there when it happened, and was able to protect all of us, but… I can say that he is dead. In the three years since, no one has come for him. There aren’t any children from other realms, there are no dignitaries of the Asgardian
courts demanding war, and... and the soldiers and healers there that witnessed this realized how you saved everyone+ when they saw the decimated land. Word quickly spread throughout the realm about how you saved us all from Odin... the last thing anyone feels towards you is disgust.”

Thor was shocked about this news and wondered what would happen as time went on, and the Asgardians realized that Odin never returned. “Norns... and you’ve been running this realm by yourself?”

Loki shook his head, reaching out and taking Thor’s hand in his own. “Please don’t worry yourself over this, Jetoni.”

They stared at each other for sometime before Thor nodded, letting it go.

He’d missed a lot, and... and Loki had sacrificed so much for him to be here, today.

He knew he needed to recover first, but he swore within himself that he would never put Loki or his family in a position like this again.

They needed him, and... and he needed them too.

Just as the healers predicted, it took about two decades for Thor to recover.

And just as Loki said, the people of their realm were supportive of his recovery efforts.

He was relieved to know that all of the regions and cities that originally decided to not ally with Thor and Loki, came under their control willingly after they learned how Thor saved the realm.

And slowly but surely, things began to look up for the better.

As the decades and then centuries passed, Loki began to study the books of Frode even more
intensely, and with the help of Hemming, was able to restore his essence to full capacity once more. He did the same to Thor, and began to go through the books of Frode, trying to determine the safest spells to release to the public.

Knowing that they were still here to raise their children and that they still had the ability to fix this land, and make it into a proud realm, meant everything to them, and now that Odin was defeated, they looked forward to their prospectively peaceful future, knowing that whatever came, they would be ready for.

Chapter End Notes

It's always really hard for me to end my stories.

I'm always worried about disappointing you, the readers, so as always, if this ended in a way that was underwhelming or disappointing to you, I apologize.

I like how I tied things up though, and want to thank all of you for being here with me, along this journey. This was by far one of my favorite stories to write so far, and I'm so thankful to have the support that I had, throughout this story.

Thank you, once again,

-Nyna

End Notes

Thank you so much for giving this story and this idea and interpretation a chance!

Because I have so many other stories I'm working on at the moment, please don't expect rapid-fire updates from this story. I plan on updating at least ONCE a month, but of course, my life comes first, as well as my health.

Please feel free to comment anything and everything below, and I will get back to you ASAP.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!