Double Edged Sword

by silver_drip

Summary

Thor and Midgard.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.

Thor was unmoored. The life he had known and felt comfortable in had slipped away in the blink of an eye.

Loki’s sly persuasions and the servants that peppered him with information turned his mind to surrender. It didn’t help that he didn’t have a drink to drown his sorrows. He received a letter from Frigga, bidding him to do so. He wasn’t sure of her motives, or if the letter was fake, but it had been the final thing that broke his resolve.

After two months of wallowing he had finally decided to pledge fealty to Hela. It made him feel like a failure. Odin had wanted him to have the throne, yet he’d given it up in place of getting back his godhood and limited freedom.

Now mother, father, and Mjolnir were gone. His friends were still locked in the dungeon. He wasn’t allowed to visit them or ask advice from Odin’s most faithful servant, Heimdall.

Loki seemed never to have time for him, always with Hela or the dragon that prowled the halls.
The magical tether that once bound him to Mjolnir was gone. There was a hollow yearning in its absence.

More than just his life had changed.

Somethings were minor, statues and tapestries of Odin were destroyed, to larger things like a whole sections of the city being torn down for something new to be built there.

Asgard was shaping into something unrecognizable. Smithies were pluming out smoke day and night, crafting implements of war. Tributes of warriors, food, and weapons were squeezed from every realm Asgard ruled.

Asgard was marshalling her forces, and Thor dreaded what Hela was going to do with them.

At a feast a month after relinquishing his claim, he was given a new hammer, one meant for mining. It was to be another test of loyalty. Jotunheim had been destroyed, exposing rich minerals and rarities. He was sent with miners and peasants under his command to harvest it.

It was not the work of a prince, but the way things were changing that might not be so bad.

He hid on the remains of Jotunheim and tried to block out as much information about Asgard as possible. The promise of war was on every tongue, yet no one knew where it would happen.

Eleven months after Odin had died, Thor was called back to Asgard. He was surprised. He’d thought his unofficial exile would last centuries. Eleven months was the blink of an eye.

As the Bifrost light dissipated his throat constricted. From his far off position he could see that the skyline was different, that the city was teeming with people, and he thought he could hear military drills taking place, but that was surely just his imagination.

He didn’t get time to contemplate it. He had an escort of four ghoul warriors. They were an abomination and contrasted with the vibrance Thor once associated with Asgard.

As they walked through the streets, few took notice. In a moment of clarity Thor realized that without Mjolnir or his finery he was unrecognizable. Likewise, they were unrecognizable to him. Despite his long years, he rarely took to the streets, instead flying above it. He never rode with his friends as they went to the Bifrost for another adventure.

Or perhaps Asgard had already forgotten him.

He saw more than one fresco of Hela and Loki, her ghoul wolf and dragon sometimes in the background. He comforted himself with the knowledge that Odin’s two brothers had never been pictured in the art in the city. The sibling to the ruler was unnecessary once there was an heir.

Maybe he was just being morose.

Thor wished to speak with Loki, but the guards escorting him gave no response. The situation was resolved when he was brought to the feasting hall. He was surprised. His best clothes from Jotunheim were uncouth for the royal setting. He would have preferred washing and changing first, but he wouldn’t turn down an opportunity.

Loki and Hela were sitting at the head of the table. Many others he didn’t recognize populated the other spots.

“Queen Hela.” Thor’s bow was stuttered. “Crown Prince Loki.”
Hela raised her goblet at him, but otherwise didn’t acknowledge him. Loki said a word to her then went over to Thor.

He noticed that Loki looked taller, or at least was holding himself that way. His hair was longer with a slight wave.

His armor was more black than green, the overcoat armor in the pattern of scales.

Most surprisingly was, despite his skin still being pale, he had the raised lines of a Jotun. Thor felt sickened. How could Loki mock all those he killed? He could look like anything, yet wore those lines like they were a prized pelt.

Loki’s expression was unreadable, but Thor’s wasn’t.

“Calm,” Loki said softly while touching Thor’s arm and guiding him out of the room. Wrapped around each finger was a ring made to look like a claw. They looked deadly, black with an undertone of red. “Have you learned nothing?” Loki asked when they were alone. “Giving Hela such a look could reverse all the hard work I did to get you a place back at court.”

Thor showed his teeth, barely stopping himself from shouting. “It is not her I scowl at, but you, brother.”

Loki raised an eyebrow. “What fresh nonsense has clouded your mind now?” he hissed out, startling Thor.

“You are sporting the lines of the people you mercilessly killed,” he said gruffly.

Loki paused before letting out a cackle of a laugh. Thor’s heart sank, feeling the gulf between them only deepen.

“Were you not paying attention when mother spoke of her marriage to Laufey-King? I’m 5/8ths Jotun! Odin was half Jotun! The blood of Jotunheim runs through both our veins!” Blue blossomed on Loki’s skin, and the green of his eyes was chased away by red. Thor involuntarily took a step backwards, remembering the last time he encountered a Jotun. “This is my true face, Thor. Does it scare you?”

Thor mustered up the calmness that his mother had painstakingly tried instilling in him. “No, brother, I merely find myself swept up in this newest revelation.”

“Hmm, yes it is another truth Odin could have easily dispensed, yet he kept it to himself. Imagine if he had told us this growing up. When I saw my true skin on Jotunheim I wouldn’t have felt myself slip into madness. The outcome of your exile would have been vastly different.” Thor found himself at a loss for words. Loki’s tight posture loosened. “Come.”

They walked in silence, nearing Thor’s chambers. Thor’s mind was distant, wondering how things would have differed if he only hadn’t attacked Jotunheim. It was one of his biggest regrets.

Outside of his doors Loki paused. “Ah, I nearly forgot the reason I wanted to speak to you.” Loki ran his metal clawed fingers through his hair. “On our search for treasure to appease Tony we found that three rarities are going to converge on one location,” he paused, “Midgard.”

Thor tensed up. Desperation blanked out his thoughts. “We mustn’t—”

“I knew you’d be opposed to attacking the realm head on,” Loki said, cutting him off. “The realm has little else to offer. I turned Hela’s mind away from total conquest and to a subtler plan. We are to
go to Midgard with Tony to retrieve them.”

Thor let out a stuttered breath.

“There’s more.” Any relief Thor had gotten was swiftly destroyed. “There is no guarantee that lives won’t be lost. Hela, does not understand romance…” Thor was thrown at the odd turn of the conversation. Loki actually looked hesitant. “To ensure you wouldn’t falter in fear of hurting the Midgardians you met, Hela had them brought here.”

“What?!” Thor shouted. His heart raced.

“Only the two females, the elderly man was not captured since he is instrumental in getting the treasure.” Loki said, as if it was a comfort. He gestured to Thor’s chambers. “I suggest you attend them. They were not pleased to be captured.”

Thor wanted to continue shouting at Loki, but knew it would do no good.

He took in a deep breath before turning to the doors. He opened them and was immediately assaulted by raised, frustrated voices. They weren’t in sight. “Lady Jane? Lady Darcy?” he called out meekly. He closed the doors behind him. Like Valkyries, Jane and Darcy descended on his with blinding fury.

“Thor, what the hell!” Jane shouted while throwing her arms in the air. She was dressed scruffily, but Thor was still amazed by her beauty.

“My deepest apologies, Lady Jane, Lady Darcy,” Thor bowed. “These circumstances were only just revealed to me. I will do my best to reverse this incident.”

“Incident?!” Jane shouted in a high-pitched voice. “I was kidnapped in the middle of having tea with my mother! She probably had a heart-attack!” Her face was turning red. “What the hell is even going on?”

“My father, King Odin died. A sister I didn’t know I had took the throne. She has a lust for conquest. It is only through my brother’s actions that she has not attacked Midgard—Earth. You were taken because my sister insists that we retrieve three treasures from Earth. It could be dangerous and…”

Jane let out a noise that was almost inhuman, and purely frustration.

“What about my mom? Selvig and all the other people? Are you going to hurt them?”

Thor gulped. “My brother is bloodthirsty and the dragon that plagues Asgard could alight Earth like dry kindling.” He straightened up. “I will do everything in my power to curb their destruction. I swore to protect Midgard and I meant it.”

Jane crossed her arms and plopped down onto the couch. “This is bullshit,” she grumbled.

Thor looked to Darcy who had yet to speak. Her lips were in a thin line before she said, “I mean, being abducted by aliens was on my bucket list, but this is ridiculous.

She took a seat by Jane, and it was only then that he saw the platter of fruit on the table, apple cores on a plate beside it.

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Steve Rogers was tired. He’d slept for years, but this newest exhaustion came with this new era.
He’d been tossed from one war into a new one. As it was, he was on a sleek plane heading to Germany, as if to further rub in his face how things had changed, how Germany was now an ally.

As he jumped out of the plane his vision was filled with corpses. With his shield he tried to steer away from the carnage, but still landed in blood. According to Fury he was only a few minutes behind the grey, noseless, alien, Ebony Maw, that had stolen the Tesseract from SHIELD.

He felt nauseous as he neared the banquet hall the alien was in. He didn’t want to see anymore bodies, but knew he had no choice.

The stairs were covered in blood and bodies he went in.

He was blasted backwards by an invisible force. He smashed through a window and to the to the street. Blood slicked his back.

Ebony Maw floated out through the window. He was holding a decapitated head by its hair.

A flash of light, then the scent of burned flesh.

Steve glanced to the right and saw three new people. There was a pattern under their feet that marked the ground and dead bodies.

The first to step forward was a man wearing a helmet with glossy black horns. They matched his black fingers. He slashed his hand through the air, knocking back Ebony Maw.

The second of he trio ran forward, blond hair fluttering and giant ax in hand.

Steve didn’t have time to contemplate them, joining in the fight against Ebony Maw instead.

Maw lifted bodies from the ground with an unseen force. Steve almost felt sick as the blood was sucked from them, forming spheres of dark red. He launched them. Steve raised his shield. The ball of blood hit it dead center with the force of a tank missile. Blood splashed all over him and into his eyes.

The fight was a haze, the two warriors working in tandem against Maw. Steve tried to keep pace, but mostly dodged and deflected all the rubble Maw threw his way.

Maw disappeared with nothing but death in his wake.

Steve futilely tried to wipe the blood from his face, to spit the taste from his mouth. He saw Natasha land the plane just outside of the carnage.

“Prince Thor,” Natasha shouted while coming closer. She didn’t react to all the bloodbath around her. “Welcome back to Earth.”

The blond, Thor, placed his large ax on his back before bowing. “You know my name, but I do not know yours, fair lady.”

“I am a SHIELD agent, code name: Black Widow. I work for Agent Coulson, the man you were in contact with last time.” Her eyes flickered to the other two.

The dark haired one had ambled over to the one that hadn’t moved out of the circle.

“Ah, yes, that is Crown Prince Loki Helason, my,” he cleared his throat, “nephew. The other is Tony.” He furrowed his brow. “I believe he has no last name.”
“Are you here to help us?” Natasha asked cautiously.

Steve tried not to tense up. He already had his hands full. Three more aliens—one of which he didn’t see the combat abilities of—would tip the scales.

Thor looked at the ground.

Loki smiled. It was slick and something Steve could never trust. “Yes, we are here to help. It has come to our attention that this alien is in possession of one of Asgard’s relics.”

Natasha didn’t pause before responding. “We should get you all to SHIELD. We can help each other.”

Loki glanced towards Tony, showing who was really in charge. Tony made no discernable movement, but Loki had found his answer.

“A temporary alliance would benefit both of us. Lead the way.”

In a twist of of smoke Tony disappeared then reappeared by Loki. The scent of sulphur almost covered the scent of blood.

They walked to the quinjet, Steve keeping the three aliens in his vision. None of them paid him any mind. He wondered if it was arrogance on their part, or they didn’t see him as a threat. Both were equally likely.

In the quinjet Natasha tossed him sanitary wipes from the first-aid kit. He was grateful. The drying blood on his skin was what nightmares were made of.

He cleaned himself in the cockpit as Natasha took off, their guests in the back of the plane. She filled him in on SHIELD’s encounter with Thor nearly a year ago. It wasn’t comforting.

Reluctantly, but with a sense of duty, he joined them.

Thor was looking even more downtrodden. His ax was in his lap so that he could lean back in the chair.

Loki and Tony were sitting by each other, thighs pressed together. Up close, Steve now could see that Loki’s fingers weren’t black, but he was wearing some sort of claw jewelry. Each one looked deadly sharp and had a thin chain chain connected to it that met at a bracelet that was adorned with emeralds. It was gaudy, but for all Steve knew such things could be commonplace in the new world he found himself stranded in.

In contrast with the defensive armors Thor and Loki wore, Tony was bedecked in silk. He had a long shirt on that reached mid-thigh. It was red and, if such a thing was possible, had designs made of gold thread in it. His pants were silk and he was barefooted. He had no blood on his feel or the hem of his pants. He wore gold earrings that wrapped around the shell of his ear and dripped with rubies.

His skin was tan and his goatee elaborate and sharp.

As if sensing Steve’s observation, he looked at him and smiled with demon sharp teeth.

No, Steve was not happy to have these three in his midst.
Tony was looming over Dr. Banner, despite them being of a height. Steve wanted to yank him away, but Natasha was at his side. She would stop him, and Steve wouldn’t risk anymore lives to confront a bully, even though it went against all his instincts.

Dr. Banner perked up and he started to talk with Tony, Steve only recognizing every fourth word. After an exchange of smiles, Tony drifted back to Loki.

“I think it’s about time,” Tony said. Steve could only barely hear him from his distance.

Thor tensed up.

Loki cocked his head to the side. “Nay, we are the ones who should do the work for you,” Loki said carefully.

They had some sort of non-verbal exchange before Tony disappeared in a puff of smoke.

“What has he gone to do?” Thor asked, his voice strained.

Loki smiled. “Only that which is in his nature.”

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In a cruel twist of fate, they were heading towards the arctic. He wondered if this time he’d really die as they flew in that direction.

They were already getting reports of aliens coming in waves from a large portal. Steve gripped his shield tighter, wondering if his sub-zero gear would hinder his movement. It was just one more thing stacked against him.

Only Thor had bundled up. Loki was in his same armor.

Steve openly gaped as Loki’s skin turned blue and his eyes turned red. He wondered if Thor could do the same, but he only seemed to shift in his seat.

They weaved through the oncoming aliens. Steve was rearing to fight them, but they had to get to the Tesseract to stop the onslaught before it became too much to handle. All the nations of the world were on alert. He just hoped that would be enough.

Before they could reach it, they were shot out of the air. On impact the archer, Clint, was thrown around the plane and knocked out. Steve didn’t have time to help, aliens pouring into the quinjet.

Loki let out a demented laugh before disappearing. Thor hefted his ax and jumped into the fray.

Dr. Banner transformed, shearing the metal as he jumped from the quinjet.

Steve struggled to get his footing, cold air hitting him.

Outside, Loki and Thor were clearing a path. Steve followed them, trying to keep up, but falling behind.

The sun was blotted out, with only the distant glow of the Tesseract guiding him.

The aliens were coming at him from all sides. He was knocked around and the weight of it almost sent him to his knees. Claws and weapons tore at his clothes and skin.

His shield was his last defense. He was being crushed alive.
A wave of hot air knocked back the aliens, allowing Steve to catch his breath.

“I can end this, save your people,” a calm voice said. Tony was standing beside him, undaunted by the cold. They were surrounded by a gold-hued bubble that kept the other aliens out.

“Please,” Steve said, gasping and with the taste of blood on his tongue. Red was coloring his vision. “Please help us!”

Tony gave him another smile, sharp teeth as white as the snowflakes falling on them. He cocked his head to the side. “What’s in it for me?”

Steve felt lightheaded, not understanding what he meant, before the realization punched him in the gut.

“Asgard could always use another warrior.” Somehow his grin became wider. “Pledge yourself to Asgard and I’ll save this world.”

Steve’s mouth felt dry, but he had to do whatever it took. He nodded. “I swear it.”

The bubble around them expanded, burning all the aliens that encountered it to ash.

Tony’s skin rippled, a dragon of legend taking form. It kept growing, red scaled muscles defined, horns of curling gold sprouting. His wings expanded, blotting out the sun.

Steve had never felt so small before.

Snow and ice melted in an instant as Tony breathed out fire.

Steve saw Loki and Thor in the distance fighting Ebony Maw. He stowed his amazement in favor of putting an end to the invasion.

As he ran towards them a gust of air knocked him down. The ice was quickly freezing, almost locking him in place. He looked up at the source of the wind.

He gaped. Tony had taken flight, but that wasn’t what gave him pause. In the sky was a pitch black hole rimmed in electric blue. Aliens were gushing out of it, and despite its enormity, Tony still couldn’t fit through it.

The dragon clutched at the sides of the hole, tearing at it like he could bend reality to his will. And like the sky was falling, the hole widened and Tony flew to the other side.

Steve focused back at the battle at hand. Loki stood in front of the glowing machine that housed the Tesseract. He couldn’t see Ebony Maw, but Thor was attacking any alien that got close to Loki. He ran to help them.

With the thinning opposition he was able to use his shield to attack. He fell into a rhythm with Thor. He couldn’t tell how much time had passed until Tony appeared again, Loki broke the machine, and the aliens all fell dead at once.

Natasha and Clint caught up with him. He’d forgotten they’d been there and felt immensely bad for it. Natasha was battered and bruised, and Steve knew he couldn’t see the worst of her wounds through her pitch black winter coat. Clint was staring at the ground, favoring his right side.

In the distance the Hulk was throwing around the dead aliens like rag-dolls.

In a strange hand movement, Loki disappeared the Tesseract.
“That’s SHIELD property,” Natasha said, sounding breathless.

Tony gave her a look before turning to Steve. He had a blue-glowing scepter in hand and was wearing an odd amulet in the shape of an eye. The promise he made came back to mind.

“You’re mine now, Captain,” Tony said before they were swept up by the Bifrost.

End Notes

I couldn’t find a smooth way to add in that New York was on fire not long after Tony disappeared from the Helicarrier...

Let me know if you have any ideas you’d like to see in this series!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!