### Summary

Loki has received his punishment and now must survive without his powers and Magik. At first he believes he can handle this easily, that it won't get to him. But when he faces the limits of a body made mortal at a crucial moment, he starts to unravel.

This story is very dark in certain chapters containing such themes as rape, assault, torture, mental angst, brutality and so forth. This is not a happy fluffy type of story. If this offends, I offer my sincerest apologies.
The lights turn on. Green emerald eyes open slowly, adjusting to the sudden onslaught of light. He prefers the darkness. The others are quiet for they care more about getting their precious sleep than they do on their efforts to get a reaction out of him. But the silence he has so come to love, is quickly shattered.

"Did our precious Odin get his beauty sleep? Oh, how foolish of me, you are no longer under the guise of Odin. No, you are in your true weak form. Loki, the traitor," one of the fellow prisoners calls out.

Loki sighs as more voices add their opinions and insults. Since being thrown in the cell by Odin himself, they have been at this. He has stopped wondering when they will get bored of this. Apparently his fellow inmates are too dim witted to get bored. Luckily he has developed the needed patience to ignore them. He may have been easily defeated again, but he still has his pride and he will not forsake that for the amusement of these dullards.

Just as he sits up and is about to scheme the day away, he hears the heavy footsteps. There is only one person who would pay him a visit. It's not someone he wants to see. He shifts himself so his back is turned towards the visitor.

"Loki Laufeyson. Turn and face me," the visitor orders, the voice seeming to echo throughout the dungeon.

Loki scoffs at this order and remains as he is.

"Have you traded all your pride for cowardice?" Odin questions.

His anger flares and he turns to face the man he once called father, his emerald colored eyes burning.

"I am not some lowly peasant you can order around!" Loki growls.

"No. You are even lower than that. Loki Laufeyson, I, Odin, have come to deliver your sentence for all the wicked deeds you have done against Asgard," Odin states, his voice void of emotion.

"No need. I already know. I am doomed to spend the rest of my existence within these four walls,"
Loki interrupts with an eye roll.

"That is not the sentence I have determined. You are no longer impersonating me Loki, so it may be good of you to hold your tongue," Odin replies.

Loki scowls at this. He had taken the throne when the mighty Odin had left to handle certain affairs. Affairs that should have kept him away for a long time. During his short reign, he had passed a pardon upon himself in light of his death. But that was all he had done. He foolishly believed he had plenty of time to denounce the throne, leaving it and it's power to a adviser of his choosing. Another guise he had created. So instead for pushing forward with his plan, he allowed himself to enjoy the power, the respect. His greed ended up to be his downfall.

He also underestimated the old man. He thought that if the old man happens to come back earlier than plan, he could easily avoid this fate. He had a dozen different escape plans. All were bound to succeed. But he didn't plan on the old man returning in secret and actually used one of his servants to give him a wine with a sleeping toxin. His face burns with embarrassment from the memory. For those first few days, it was his shouts of rage that echoed through out the dungeon.

"Loki Laufeyson, I sentenced you to be forever stripped of your magik. Your frost giant abilities will be forever dormant. Then, you will be banished," Odin states.

Loki feels a chill go through him. Forever stripped of his magik? His frost giant abilities will be forever dormant? His powers can easily be restricted, for they were at this moment, but never had they been completely taken.

"What trickery is this?" Loki asks.

"There is no trickery here Loki," Odin replies before waving his hand.

Loki hisses as the room he is in fills with the sound of humming. It grows steadily in volume. He tries to bare with it but after a moment, he covers his ears with his hands and lets out a angry cry.

Guards seem to suddenly appear and moving effectively, they soon had him chained. He is pulled to his feet and lead out of his cell. He turns and looks at Odin who has not moved for his position.

"You think you regret the day you found me? You know nothing of regret but I swear, you will!" Loki shouts as the guards continue to lead them away. His anger boils when Odin gave no visible response to his shout.

He is marched out of the dungeon then out of Asgard. Fear fills him as they lead him to the Bilfrost. He couldn't think where they could be taking him. Nor what this had to do with stripping of his power. The ever watchful Heimdall glared down at him from his post. Slowly those glowing eyes lifted and he saw Heimdall give a nod. Odin must be standing behind him. Loki fights the urge to turn around and face him, instead he smiles at the guardian.

Heimdall opens the pathways and Loki braces himself for the pulling sensation. He always hated traveling this way. The guards pulled him along and they all entered the wormhole.

When his bare feet land on solid ground, he gives himself a moment to recover from the disorienting form of travel. His accompanying guards seem to recover quicker and soon he is led forward. Looking around as much as he dares, he finds this strange land covered in nothing but strange metals. He feels the grounds vibrate beneath his feet as if it's alive somehow.

He is led to a dome shaped building that seems to be grown from the grown rather than built. This is when he gets his first glimpses of the beings that reside here. Tall, skeleton like figures in blinding
white robes filled the space, all with a black cloth over what he could only assume to be their faces, if they had any. As he passes them, he hears clicking noises and realizes these noises came from the strange beings. He watches as the guards hand off the chains to certain beings. He is tempted to test their strength and resist them but his curiosity keeps him compliant.

When he see's the raised table with a man shaped imprint, he stops cold. His action isn't even noticed by the beings, for they move to the sides and slowly drag him to the table. Despite his struggles, he is soon lifted and laid face down on the table. Using the chains somehow, he is held down as metal bars are placed over his body, across his legs and back.

"Release me! Release me or I swear you all will be dead before the dawn!" Loki shouts. He knows he is powerless. His magik is too weak to do anything to aid him. But he wasn't going to give them, specially not the man he once spent his life trying to please, the satisfaction of seeing him in terror.

The clicking sounds grow louder and louder. The metal against the skin of his check seems to be growing warm and starts to vibrate. He tries to turn his head, desperate to see something other than the blue grey metal. Something pricks the back of his left hand, then his right. He tries harder to see what is going on. The same pricking sensations are felt on the soles of his bare feet.

He's breathing is rapid and his body break into a sweat. He hates this feeling of helplessness. He continues to make his threats, occasionally throwing insults at the all father.

Then the clicking stops suddenly. He strains to hear something, the sudden silence adding another wave of fear. There is a screech from behind him and just as he strains his neck to be able to see something, anything, he feels a sharp stabbing pain in the middle of his back. He cries out in pain before biting his lip painfully.

Then he feels it. The heartbeat of his magik. To him, it was like a second pulse. At his best, it was as strong as his own heartbeat. But these days it was like the pulse of an old man. Steady but weak. Now though it is building. Pulsing through out him stronger and faster than over before. He smiles, thinking that somehow these lowly creatures have made some sort of mistake. Closing his eyes, he turns his focus on this heartbeat. But just when he feels it start to go to his bound hands, something ice cold is pushed into the back of his neck.

He opens his mouth but no sound comes out. There was no way his voice be heard any how with all the loud clicking that has suddenly started up again. It was deafening.

He begins to struggle while trying to focus his magik again. He knows something is about to begin. A white mist comes from the metal table beneath him. Not sure if the mist is poisonous, he lifts his head back as much as he can bare and holds his breath. It does no good for the vapors seep into his skin, his flesh tingling.

Then he notices the pulse of his magik. It's still very strong but something was wrong. It was as if it was drifting away from him somehow. He closes his eyes and see's her. Frigga. Wife to Odin. The only mother he has known. The one who taught him to use this magik. She stands a small distance away from him, tears falling from her eyes. He wants to go to her. He stretches his hand out, begging it to be enough. But he watches as she fades away as does his magik.

Odin watches this little ceremony in stony silence. He see's the white and green powers rise out of the metal needles in Loki's body. They appear to be like large serpents that twist into each other. The head spiritualist, dressed in gold robes, approaches the misty snakes and lifts a small pearl like stone. Insect like wings come from the ritualist back and start to flutter, creating a whistling sound.

The serpents move away from Loki's body, and slither around the priest. They rise up, as if to strike
then dive into the pearl. Odin hears the heart filled moan from Loki, owing the trickster feels the loss. The priest turns and slowly walks over to the Asgardian. One of the fellow beings stepped forward and opened a decorated box. The pearl, now with green and white markings, is set carefully into the box. Then it is presented to the powerful King. Odin accepts it and gently touches the carvings that decorate the box.

"Thank you, you have provided a great service," Odin tells the priest.

There is some clicking and Odin nods his head.

"Leave him with the gift of a long life. His punishment must be long lasting for anything shorter would be an injustice," Odin states as if answering a question.

There is a few more clicks before the priest returns to Loki.

Loki is shivering now. He's never been without his magik. Now it's gone. It's like some large part of him has died. He feels so empty now.

He gasps when he feels an icy cold liquid being poured over his body. Several buckets were being poured on him at the same time. No longer hiding his fear, he shouts at them to stop and he squirms. But they don't stop. He takes a frantic breath before his face is submerged in the strange liquid.

The priest raises it's four fingered hands into the air then plunges them into the silvery colored liquid. The liquid bubbles around Loki's body as if boiling. Then it slowly begins to defy gravity, floating into the air. It gathers above Loki's body, creating an identical form to the restrained prince. Once it solidifies, it shatters, leaving behind several blue orbs the size of marbles.

The priest plucks these out of the air, one by one. Each one he rolls between his hands, covering them in the silver liquid covering it's hand before pressing it into Loki's body. When there is only one left, the priest takes it but doesn't roll it in his hands. Instead he pushes it into Loki's body.

There is a single shout from all the creatures before they start to leave the dome. The few that stay behind remove the bars holding Loki down then the needles. None seem to pay any mind to the blood seeping from the wounds. Or the now powerless prince's tears.

Nor did Odin. He approaches the pitiful form he once called son.

"Stand up. Your sentence is not yet complete."

The form shivers from the order but slowly complies. Without any aid, Loki manages to get off the metal table and takes a few steps before falling.

"Walk or be dragged from this place, the choice is yours," Odin tells him before turning his back on the man and leaves the dome. The guards do not wait for Loki to become steady on his feet as they move forward. After a few stumbles though, he is able to keep up.

When they are back at the gates, Loki falls to his knees when the guards stop. He had not uttered a word since leaving that strange place. He feels Odin's eye on him as the guards remove the chains and shackles but leaves the metallic collar around his neck. He doesn't dare look up.

"Loki Laufeyson, now you are to banished. Do you have any last words you wish to utter?" Odin asks.

Loki swallows.
"Kill me. Forget about banishing me and kill me. Please, show some mercy," Loki pleads.

"As you had shown mercy?" Odin points out.

Loki lowers his head more. "Please, father! I beg of you! I...I can't live in such a pathetic position. Please....please"

"Your pleas fall on deaf ears, for the cries of those of whom you have brought pain to by your actions far out weighs your own. You will pay for your crimes. May you learn well," Odin replies.

Loki isn't given the time to speak another word before he feels the blast that sends his weak body backwards. He experiences the terrifying sensation of endlessly falling before it stops. There is pain in the impact. But the thick layer of snow manages to prevent any serious harm.

This is the first sight Loki finds when he opens his eyes. White, almost crystal like snow surrounds him. As the sensation of falling leaves him, he finds it being replaced by an icy sensation. Cold, he realizes. He's growing cold.

After a few minutes, he gains enough strength to sit up and look about. Everything he see's is covered in white. It's even falling from the skies. Loki watches the snow for a moment before shivering. How can one be so cold but feel as if his flesh is burning as if it's being pressed against a hot iron?

Then it all hits. His magik is gone. His abilities from being a frost giant have been sealed. He is nothing more than the lowliest of creatures. And he is left in the middle of foreign territory. There is no way to tell where he has been banished to. to add to his predictiment, he had been given nothing to ensure his survival. All he had were the clothes on his back and the collar on his neck. He assumes this was left on to let others know he is being punished. A warning of sorts. He looks at his hands, still bleeding from the metal needles that had pierced him. His exposed feet were the same.

Slowly he gets up to his feet despite the pain. He looks around again, trying to figure out something or a least settle on a direction to go. He decides to head to the left where there is a wall of trees. He takes three steps before he falls face first in the snow. Enraged, he rolls onto his back and shouts into the snow falling sky.

Unknown to him, standing next to one of the thicker trees, a large blonde hair man watches Loki shout and curse. He shakes his head at the sight.

"Father, what are you up to?" Thor asks.
A Fallen God Chapter 2

Sometime later, Loki leans against a tree. He feels so tired. All he wants to do is curl up and fall asleep. But he knows he can't do that. Not until he finds some sort of shelter. Again he curses Odin. Casting away powerless to this cold foreign land without so much as a pair of boots.

He shivers. His loss feeling in his feet awhile back and he hadn't like the color they were in. So he had taken off his tunic and ripped it in half, using each half to wrap a foot. It didn't help much for the cloth absorbed the wetness of the snow. But it was better than nothing. However now his chest and back were exposed to the elements. At least the cold encouraged him to keep moving.

Taking a deep breath, he pushes away from the tree and continues forward. There has to be something here. Something he could as shelter. He won't allow himself to think of anything else. A few more steps. Something will appear behind those trees. This is the thought that keeps running through his mind.

A loud snap makes him stop. He looks down to his feet but just as he confirms that he hadn't stepped on anything, he hears a frightening noise. A low growl. Slowly he turns around. Behind him, slowly stalking towards him is a large wild dog. It's teeth is bared, it's hot breath steaming around it's snout. Loki feels his heart racing. If he had his powers, this wouldn't have even gotten his pulse going. But he doesn't have his powers. He doesn't have anything. He takes a step back, bending over to dig a hand into the snow. He hopes he can find something. When a second wild dog joins the first, he plunges the other hand into the snow.

His back hits against a tree. The dogs move even closer. He can hear another growl, this one closer and he doesn't need to look to know there is a third to his right. His fingers search in the snow frantically. They find something solid and he pulls it out. A thick bit of branch with a sharp end. Not ideal but it will do.

Turns out not to be a moment too soon for the first wild dog suddenly runs towards him and leaps. Loki turns to his left and runs, the dog's snapping teeth barely missing it. He runs as fast as he can, the stick held firmly in his hand. He glances back and see's the three dogs catching up to him. He jumps over a fallen tree, Hoping this will slow them down some.
He glances back and this ends up being his downfall. Had he kept looking forward, he would have seen the low hanging branch before running into it. It's thin branches cuts his face as it sudden knocks him backwards. Loki scrambles to get up but one of the dogs lands on his chest, it's teeth snapping at his face. He raises one of his exposed arms to shield his face. The dog grabs this and with it's sharp teeth, it tears Loki's skin.

Loki scream out from the pain before taking the sharp stick and plunges the sharp end into the dog's eye. The dog releases his bleeding arm and howls in pain. Loki watches it back up, it's paws trying to dig at the stick to make it come out. Then it runs away past the other wild dogs that have caught up.

Loki again gets up, the other dogs circling him. He had just used his only weapon. And there were three jaws full of sharp teeth snapping at him. His arm is dripping blood and the dogs keep sniffing the air for it's scent. He backs up as they move closer until he hits another tree. The dogs continue moving towards him.

So this is how it's going to end. He's going to die. Torn to shreds by a pack of wild dogs. Freezing to death would have been better. Still, just because he is going to die doesn't mean he has to go out like a coward.

"Come at me! Come!" Loki shouts at the dogs. Two back up in surprise of the shout but the third one takes and invitation and lunges itself at Loki's chest. Loki falls back from the sudden weight and hits his head against the trunk of the tree. He feels a moment of gratitude for the knowledge that he won't be conscious as they rip him apart as he blacks out.

The dog on him sniffs his body, specially at the bloody arm. It gives a howl in victory and it about to bite into the exposed flesh of the shoulder when something hits it from the side, knocking it into another tree. The dog cries out in flight but stops upon impact. The other two dogs turn and look at their fallen pack member then slowly at the opposite direction.

A huge form emerges from the line of trees. It stretches out it's hand a hammer that had hit their pack member flies into it. He is glaring at the wild beasts whose tails tuck themselves between their legs. They sense something from this stranger. They know that if they challenge it, they will die to. So when the man hollers, they run for their lives.

Thor watches them take off. Then he goes to his fallen adopted brother. What a sad sight, he thinks. The only colors that seem to stand out from Loki is his raven hair and his blood. With a sigh, Thor grabs a hold of the thick sleeve of his own shirt and rips it off. Then he kneels down and pulls this torn sleeve over Loki's bleeding arm. To secure it, he takes off his belt and wraps it around the sleeve. Finally, he adjusts Loki until the unconscious form is over his shoulder. Standing up, he turns and walks through the woods with familiarity.

When Loki comes to, the first thing he is aware of is the warmth. Warmth that seems to surround him. But before he can truly enjoy it, he feels the pain radiating from his arm. Then the pain from his other injuries that seem to wake up and add their voice to that of the pain from his arm. With a moan, he opens his eyes.

The first thing he see's is fire. Bright, burning fire. Instinctively he backs away from it. The metal clanking draws his attention and he looks down at his hands. Around his wrists are metal cuffs. He stares at these for a moment. What had happened? The last thing he remembers is the snapping of sharp teeth. How did he survive that? And what is his situation now?

He lowers them down and takes a deep breath. At least, he tries to. But something feels like it's covering his mouth. He raises his hands again and touches his face. It doesn't take him long to realize
what is covering his mouth. It was the same as before.

His eyes narrow with suspicion, he slowly looks around. The fire he first saw is burning away in a small stoned fireplace. On one side there is a wooden wall that had shadowed outlines of pictures that once hanged there, the other is the opening to a small hallway. There is a window and door to his right. His left, a kitchen set up and another door in the corner. He turns around and feels his stomach tighten when he see's the large dark brown recliner chair. It's not the chair that is bothering him though. It's who is sitting in it.

"It's been a long time Loki," his blonde haired brother greets.

Loki can only stare at the man he once called brother. Why is he here? What does he want? Why did he put these restraints on? Is he enjoying the sorry sight his adopted brother is in?

"You must have some questions for me. Are they tearing you apart yet?" Thor asks.

Loki glares at the Asgardian.

"I shouldn't be here. Specially not with you. But father made me promise to look after you," Thor shares with a disgusted look.

This sparks Loki's temper. Despite the mouth cover, he screams at the world's savior. He gets up on his feet, refusing to be looked down upon. Thor stands up and walks over to him. Loki doesn't back down and readies himself to fight. When Thor is standing before him, he lunges himself low, aiming for Thor's stomach. Thor isn't phased by this for he steps to the side and grabs Loki by the shoulders before he could fall. He slams the thin frame of a man against the wall and holds the restrained hands above the trickster's head.

"Enough Loki! Enough!" Thor shouts in his face when Loki tries to squirm himself free.

Loki gives him a heated glare for a moment before he accepts the fact he's helpless in this state. He lowers his head in defeat.

"Now you will listen to me. When I'm done talking, I will take this off," Thor tells him, tapping the mouth guard. "I only put it on you to make sure you will listen to me for a change. This is place will serve as your home. There's nothing around here so there's no reason to try to leave. And if you do, and get yourself in trouble again, I won't save you. Everything you will need, will be here. If you trash it, or manage to burn it to the ground, you will have nothing more than the ashes. Because this is all you will get. Do you understand me Loki?"

Loki looks up at the larger man for a moment before lowering his eyes and nodding.

"Good. Now this is how things are going to work. I will stop by here now and then to see if you need anything. But I don't want to speak to you. I don't even want to see you," Thor tells him, his hand raising Loki's higher, causing him a little bit of pain. "So don't try to speak to me. If I hear a single word from that poisonous mouth of yours, I'll leave and not come back. Same thing if you try to ever attack me again. You will keep a list of anything you will need. That list will be waiting for me on that door. If I even suspect you are asking for something that you can use to cause trouble with, you will be on your own. Still understanding me Loki?"

Loki again nods.

"I will be staying here for a few days to make sure your wounds heal. I'm only doing this so I don't have to report your death to my father. This is my final warning, don't try anything or you will regret it," Thor growls out.
Loki keeps his head low. His body is burning with rage. Had he still had his powers, his dear brother would not be enjoying this moment of perfect control over him. He swears he will make Thor pay for this somehow. He feels a hand slide behind his head.

"Not a word from you," Thor mutters before undoing the muzzle piece. He pulls it down from Loki's mouth then steps back, releasing his hold on Loki.

Loki moistens his lips. Then he lifts his head as he straightens up.

"Enjoyed your moment brother? Did you like looking down on me and giving me orders? Or are you disappointed by the fact you couldn't just beat me and leave me bleeding on the floor yourself?" Loki asks with a sneer.

He barely saw the hand before it gave him a hard slap, knocking him to the ground. Thor wasn't giving him a moment to recover for Loki finds the muzzle pulled back up in place and secured a bit more tightly behind his head. Once this is done, Thor grabs the bit of chain between the shackles and drags Loki down the small hallway next to the fireplace. He opens a door and throws Loki down on the floor inside the room.

"I tried to warn you. Now you can dwell on your choices," Thor tells him before slamming the door, nearly breaking it from the force. There is a loud click as the door is locked.

Loki sits up and starts screaming angrily despite the mouth piece. He throws himself at the door, hitting his fists against it despite the pain in his hands and arm. When he can't take it anymore, he goes to kicking it. Then he sinks to the floor, his face covered in sweat.

He examines the room around him. It only has a mattress on the floor with some blankets on it. There is a flashlight next to it. These were the only objects in the room. He shouts again in frustration before he leans against the wall and uses it to stand back up. He stumbles over to the bed, kicking away the flashlight. He feels the urge to tear at the blankets. To litter the floor with their pieces. But instead he kicks them aside before lowering himself down on he bed. With his back against the door, he curls up and curses Thor and Odin. He has to think of some way to get his freedom again. Someway he will get them to pay for this.
Loki didn’t realize he fell asleep until he feels the pain flare up in his arm. Opening his eyes, he looks
and see’s someone holding it firmly while undoing the belt wrapped around it. He never even heard
the door open. He starts to wonder why he hadn’t sense someone else there. Then the horrid
memories of losing his magik remind him. He glares up at the person sitting beside him. He groans
into the muzzle at seeing his brother.

"I'm only treating your wounds. It would do no good for you to bleed to death," Thor tells him.

Loki wants to tell him how generous that notion is. How touching it is. Then challenge him to tell the
truth. To say how much he does want him to bleed to death. That he enjoys seeing him suffer. For all
the things he has done, the lives he has destroyed, the lies he had told. And specially for all the pain
he has caused. He knows these thoughts are there in Thor’s mind. He knows because he has them
too.

He can never say these things out loud but he knows his brother can. But just as he knows his
brother shares these thoughts, he knows he will not speak them. Not this version of his brother. The
one from before would. Before being sent to that lowly planet. The one that challenged the Frost
giants without a second thought. Angry, blood thirsty, wraithful. But that brother is gone.

Realizing this has had been a shock. Thor was greatly known for his stubborn ways. Once an idea
popped into his head, rarely did he deviate from it. It got them into plenty of trouble. More than one
battle. In his younger days, he loved it. There was nothing better than battling at his brother’s side
and sharing the victory. The last victory had been so long ago.

"These aren’t serious. I'll have them bandage shortly. And I'll bandage the other ones as well. If you
agree to be quiet, I'll remove the mouth guard. A single word or a single noise and it goes back on
like before. Do you agree?" Thor asks.

Loki glances over at Thor for a moment before shaking his head. He hates this piece of restraint but
he also doesn't want to give off the impression that he's open to any kind of discussion. No, the
sooner he finishes his task, the better. This is the lie he tells himself repeatedly as his brother sighs
before continuing to work on his wounds.
All to soon he is bandaged but his brother doesn't leave. Loki glances over at him suspiciously. But Thor is staring at the wall away from him. Loki thinks bitterly that he must not be able to stand the sight of him. Something else he doesn't exactly blame him for.

"I will be gone come morning. I will be back before night. I'll...check your wounds then too. You can get your shower then. If there is anything you need, write it on the board. I'll go fetch it for you now," Thor tells him.

Loki listens to him get up, taking the unused bandages and medical kit with him. He shivers from the cold on his exposed skin. He sits himself up and examines the shackles on his wrists. He twists his hands, not surprised to feel it pinch the skin on his wrists. What is the point of these now that he is without his gifts, he wonders. He twists them for a minute more before leaning back against the wall with an irritated sigh just as his brother returns.

"Here. Write what you think you will need," Thor instructs him.

Loki rolls his eyes from the instruction. If he could speak, he would remind his brother that he's not some child he needs to raise. And even when he was a child, he rarely needed instruction unlike the oaf Thor was and still is. He picks up the dry erase board and marker. The smell from the marker when he removes the cap, makes him scrunch up his face in disgust. Why is his brother insisting on using these lowly items from earth? An obsession most likely.

He writes two words and shows Thor the board. It reads "My Freedom".

"Apparently you don't even know what you need," Thor replies with a sigh.

Loki flips the dry erase board over and starts scribbling madly. Thor watches indifferently. When Loki is finished, he tosses the board towards Thor.

"Let's see. 'There is no possible way a lummox like you could even guess as to what my needs are. You only care about how your father see's you, you care nothing for my needs. So stop this mockery. Leave me be.' You will never change will you? Fine, I'll leave," Thor announces. He gets up and walks over to the door. He stops and looks back. "Father believes that your banishment will do the same good it did for me. I want nothing more than for that to be true. If only I didn't know you so well to know it will never happen."

Loki watches his brother leave the room, closing and locking the door behind him. He lowers his head for a moment before again shouting into the muzzle. He grabs the dry erase board and slams it down on his knee in an attempt to break it. When it doesn't, he drops it to the ground and picks the marker up instead. He shifts until he faces the wall. He spends the next hour scribbling his promises of revenge onto the wall.

As the day passes, Loki finds himself wishing he had written a few things on this list. Like something to cover his chest would be nice. Even though he could wrap the blankets around him, his pride wouldn't allow it. The image of himself wrapped like some weak creature was too much to even consider it. So he will deal with the coolness of this room. But the boredom, that bothered him more than the cold he was not familiar with.

Even in the dungeons of Asgard, he had ways to keep from madness. Books mostly. The same books he is craving now. He would read anything at this point. Even the long, drab texts of Asgardian policies of the last several centuries would be a welcomed sight. He would reread such text until it was imbedded into his memory, then read it again after that.

Instead, he had to rely on the creativity that his mind produced to keep the boredom at bay. So far he
had examined every corner of this room for something of interest. There was noting to be found, not even a spider web. Then he sat against the wall, listening for the faintest sound. From the wall opposite of the door, he found he could listen to the wind outside.

At first, he had enjoyed this for a time. But then certain memories seem to stir up. About that cold world. And the battle that helped change his life. The battle that uncovered the lies he had been told since he was an infant. Lies that were better than the ugly truth. Sometimes, during moments when he is alone as he is now, he wishes he only knew the lies. Then maybe things would be different.

He spent a large amount of time trying to summon even the smallest bit of magik. A sliver or a glimmer. Something. He knew it was gone, he could feel it was gone but he had to try. He needed to. So he did until he could no longer bare the weight of the despair. His throat is still a little sore from the anguish screams.

So he needed to do something else. There was only one thing he could think of to do. So he picked up the marker and started in one of the corners. They started with more threats and vows of vengeance. Even going into detail on how he would exact those plans.

His hand kept moving as if it had a will of it's own. He hadn't even realized some of the things he had written until he stopped to read over his work. Phrases like "I only want to be seen as an equal," and "I am the monster parents tell their children." There were even words that he didn't remember writing much less thinking such as "unwanted", "forgotten", and "alone". He was going to cross these out but the marker had dried out. So he is left glaring at the words. Yet he can't help but read them over and over.

When Thor came into the room, Loki felt a wave of relief. As much as he doesn't want the company, he could enjoy the distraction. Seeing his brother's dark expression when he saw the writing on the wall was a nice bonus. So was the plate of food in his brother's hand.

"I see you made use of the marker. You ever make a list though?" Thor asks directly.

Loki starts to roll his eyes but stops himself. Instead he bows his head and shakes it before looking imploringly at him.

"What? Hungry?"

Loki's eyes narrow into a glare. Of course he is hungry. He hadn't had so much a piece of bread since leaving his cell at Asgard. He wonders how he will manage to live with this dolt watching over him. Maybe he had been too hasty concerning the list his brother wanted him to make.

Thor walks over to the mat and kneels down. He sets the plate down on the mat then reads the writing Loki did on this wall. Loki doesn't move as his brother does this.

"If you want to eat, you better come over here. I'm not in the mood to play any of your games," Thor tells him, his voice telling Loki he isn't exaggerating.

Loki feels his temper flare but quickly smothers it. Something he has had years of practice with. The smell of the food helps. He gets up carefully, leaning against the wall to keep some of the weight off of his feet. What they did to him when stripping his magik followed by walking around in the snow without proper clothing has done some lingering damage to his feet. Every step sent shooting pains up his legs. Crawling around had proven to be less painful but he will not crawl before the son of Odin.

He is gritting his teeth by the time he sits down. It's one of the few times he is thankful for the face
muzzle. He closes his eyes and sits back. Thor doesn't say anything, giving Loki the few minutes he needs to recover. When the pain becomes much more tolerable, he looks over at Thor and taps on the metal mouth guard.

"Huh? Oh, I should take that off," Thor mutters, clearly frustrated by being pulled from his thoughts.

Loki made a snort like noise before Thor removed the annoying restraint. In a jest, he opened his mouth as if he was about to say something. When Thor gave him a glare that would bring most people to their knees, Loki smiled and raised his hands in a surrender like gesture. When Thor turned away, Loki picked up the plate and starts to eat quietly.

When he is finished, he sets the plate aside. Thor is still staring off into space. Loki wonders what has the heir of Asgard so distracted. And if it involved him. He decides to face the possibility of spending another day with that accursed mouth guard and is about to ask this very question when Thor turns to him.

"Is there anything you need before I leave?" Thor asks directly.

"Am I allowed to answer that with my mouth or must I fetch that strange pen and board?" Loki asks, his eyes glancing down at the restraint between them.

"You may speak freely. For this moment at least," Thor replies.

"I'll need a supply of basic food," Loki states.

He doesn't miss the glare from Thor.

"Afraid I will allow you to starve?" Thor asks heatedly.

Loki looks away and shrugs.

"There is food here for you. Not everyone is without compassion as you are," Thor tells him. "If that's all you are concerned with..." Thor stands up, taking the plate with him and walks to the door.

"Books!" Loki cries out.

Thor turns back to the trickster. The clear desperation he see's surprises him for a moment. But only for a moment. "I will think about it."

"Please do. You know how often I have been locked away to be forgotten."

"You mean to pay for your crimes you committed against Asgard and Midgard," Thor corrects.

"Yes. To pay for my crimes. Had I not been allowed some books, I would have lost my mind. Please, don't deny me this," Loki pleas, ignoring his own repulsion from the neediness he hears in his voice.

"Don't forget your place Loki. You are still paying for your crimes. If you do lose your mind, it would still not be enough to clear you of the debt you owe. As I said, I will think it over," Thor replies.

Loki opens his mouth to say something more but stops when Thor raises his hand.

"The moment in which you could speak freely has passed. Nothing has changed Loki. If I never hear your voice from this moment on, it would be too soon. Now get up and follow me. I need to change your bandages and you need to bathe," Thor tells him before opening the door and walking out,
leaving it wide open.

Loki moans at the idea of having to walk but gets himself up. He hears water running when he enters the hallway. The door across from the room he's been in is open. Thor steps out of this room and gestures for Loki to go on in. Loki does and notices how small this room is. It barely had space for the toilet and sink, the shower taking up the most space. Steam rolled over the shower curtain.

He remains still as Thor removes the bandages, most revealing little blood on them. The more gory ones came from his arm and feet. As Thor removes the last bandage from his foot, something comes to mind and Loki looks directly at the thunder God.

"Forgive me for speaking but I can't wash myself very well with these on," Loki tells him, shaking his restrained hands.

"Do what you can," the Asgardian replies before getting up and leaving the bathroom, closing the door behind him.

Loki stands there, listening for the sounds of his brother's footsteps fading away. After a moment he realizes Thor is standing outside the door with no intention of leaving him alone. If he doesn't make a fine King, he could one day make a fine warden, Loki thinks before getting to the task of undressing.

He stayed under the running water long after he had cleaned himself. Even after it became more cold than warm, he didn't turn off the water. Instead he had sat down, relieving his feet of his weight. It was how the water ran over his thin body that he is enjoying. With his eyes closed he could almost imagine it is one of his illusions. He recalls the different forms he has taken over the years. He smiles at the playful way he had impersonated the great Captain America. His brother hadn't found it funny. He doubt that has changed.

Such a simple trick to perform. He barely needed to focus to cast it. And it used so little of his power. So little. Yet even this is out of his reach now. He has ended up in some very bad situations. Moments where he honestly couldn't believe there would be a tomorrow. Where fear threatened to overtake him. Where he felt nothing but pain with every breath. Yet never has he ever felt so vulnerable before. So naked. If he had just the smallest bit of magik left... But again he couldn't convince himself of this lie. If he looks into the mirror, he knows he will see his true self. If he steps out of the shower, he will be as naked as he was when he stepped in. It's with this defeating thought he finally reaches out and turns off the running water.

Pulling back the curtain, he finds towels and clean clothes waiting for him. Apparently his brother not only left his guarding position but had entered the bathroom without Loki noticing. This fact disturbs him as it had before and serves to remind him how weak he is now. Weak, weak, weak, he repeats over and over as he dries himself off as best as he could. He stops and sits down, his stomach churning. Taking a few deep breathes, he manages to calm his stomach. He quickly gets dressed, trying to keep his mind blank for the sake of his stomach. He even smirks at the absence of any clothing for his upper body.

Not surprisingly, Thor is standing outside the door as if he never moved. He extends a single arm, pointing to the room Loki was in before. His new cell he thinks fondly. He briefly wonders how he is expected to eat if he will be locked into this room? He walks into his room and see's them right away. A small pile of books. Six, possibly seven of them. It takes everything he has not to run to them and start reading. Instead he looks back and is about to utter thanks when Thor again raises his hand.

"Not everyone is without compassion," he states again before walking away, leaving the door open.
Loki stares at the open doorway. So he isn't being locked in all the time, he thinks. He doubts his company is desired however. He looks back at the books. He may be imprisonment here but at least he now has these to occupy his time, specially after his brother is gone. No longer able to resist, he walks over to them. He doesn't even notice the pain in his legs this time.
When morning comes, Thor stretches and walks out the door. He didn't speak a word to his brother though he wanted to. There were many things he wanted to tell his brother. As he walks through the snow, he thinks of all the things he wants to say. But he swore his silence. At least for the moment. A vow he regrets.

If only that was the only thing he regretted, he may be able to look at himself without disgust. He knew things would not be pleasant. The moment he received word that his presence was needed in Asgard, he felt overwhelmed with dread. It was so evident that even Tony expressed a bit of concern in his witty way.

Following the long winded ceremony of his temporary return, he soon found himself kneeling before his father. After being asked to stand, his father dispensed with the formalities. His father never hesitates getting to the matter at hand. Thor prayed silently that it was not concerning the throne for he didn't want to have to refuse it a second time. But when he heard Loki's name, he was tossed into a state of utter confusion.

Loki, his brother, is dead. So why is his father bringing him up? As the words spilled from ancient lips, Thor felt as if he was a young child again that is struggling to understand the simplest of lessons. Loki wasn't dead. It had been another trick. Possibly his greatest trick. And he had taken on Odin's appearance to take the throne.

This information made him feel ill. He had grieved for his brother. Had wept over him! The whole time, that lying, conniving traitor had been laughing at him. Made him into a fool. When he thought he was turning down the throne to his father, he was actually handing it over to Loki. His brother used him. Manipulated his emotions. And he had been none the wiser.

His unease turned to wraith with this revelation. Wraith that gave way to disbelief when his father revealed to him what he had planned for Loki. How he will see to it that Loki is once and for all stripped of his magik. Not restrained but removed. His Jotun abilities somehow sealed away. He would be reduced to that of a human from earth. Hearing how these things will come to pass, Thor feels a moment of sorrow for his brother. He could only imagine how this will affect him.

The fact his father plans to banish his weakened brother had been no surprise. His actions were too
horrific to entertain the idea of him to even remain in Asgard. He had caused too much shame and 
grievance by his selfish actions. But when his father spoke of the location of where Loki was to be 
banished, he thought he had somehow heard incorrectly. Why in all the nine realms, would his father 
send Loki to Earth? A planet he had brought chaos to in an attempt to rule it. If found, he couldn’t 
imagine what the people of earth would do. Specially the group of fellow fighters he had aided in 
battle.

Thor tried to make his father see reason. Yes, he believed Loki needed to be punished. His actions 
angered him so. But to send him powerless to the very place he tried to dominate...he would be better 
off rotting away in the dungeons. Yet his father seemed to turn a deaf ear to his reasons. Finally he 
silenced Thor by asking if his own personal banishment had not resulted in the changes needed to 
take place before he could become a promising heir to the throne? So it had been decided. His father 
could not be swayed. He had hopes that what Thor had learned, Loki too could learn from identical 
circumstances.

But there would be some differences. Due to the less than favorable view the people of Earth most 
likely had for the fallen prince, Thor needed to prepare a place away from the eyes of others. To 
supply it with the basic essentials Loki would need to survive.

This is where Odin instructed Thor on how the former prince is to be treated. They consisted of a 
few basic rules. Show Loki no sign of forgiveness. Do not give him the opportunity to speak his lies. 
Keep him properly restrained until he comes to terms with his situation and shows no further signs of 
violence. Use whatever actions are necessary to make him acknowledge his new position. Do not let 
him forget that this is his punishment for his crimes.

Although he agrees to each of these, his heart feels like another weight is added to it, slowly crushing 
it. By the time his father requested the vow of silence concerning this meeting, Thor felt emotionally 
exhausted. But the all father was not finished. He instructed Thor to aid Loki in able to survive alone 
for long periods of time without him. That such independence in his lowly state will require the 
trickster to work in ways he had not before and therefore may serve to humble him. As soon as Thor 
believes Loki is ready, he must leave him to his fate.

These words felt colder than the weather around him. He has had his issues with his brother. He 
didn’t agree with his madness nor his dark obsession. He has been enraged by what his brother has 
done. Still, he saw Loki as his brother, even now. For all the lies, treachery, and deceit, somewhere 
derneath all of that is the brother he loves. A brother he can not possibly abandon.

But he also can not challenge his father. Nor deny that Loki needs to change. So the moment he 
watched his brother land in the snow, he tried to harden his heart. His hand still burns from hitting 
Loki. The venom he had to use in his voice left him with a bitter taste. The writings Loki made on 
the wall brought pain to his heart. He had trouble breathing when his brother begged for books. It 
was getting harder. Soon he will have to leave if only to give himself a moment to breath freely. To 
run from this dark path he had agreed to take.

His hammer obediently went to his hand, as it always does. Somehow it feels heavier. He swings it 
for a moment, testing it. Then he spins it, faster and faster. With a jump he is in the air and making 
his escape.

Meanwhile, inside Loki is sitting in the corner of his room. The books were not but a few inches 
from him but he doesn’t reach out for them. Instead he is gazing at the open bedroom door. He never 
fell asleep that night, instead he read into the late hours. Then he listened to the the silence. He would 
have enjoyed it if his mind had not decide to bring up all his ghosts.

The sound of the main door closing nearly made him gasp. Hours spent hearing nothing, the door
closing seemed to sound almost like an explosion. It took him a few minutes to remember what Thor had said yesterday. That he would be leaving. For some reason he can not understand, he felt himself panic at the thought of being left alone. But he quickly buries it and focuses on what that could mean.

Without Thor, and the door to his room being left unlocked, means he has some more freedom that he didn't have before. With a smile, he gets up and walks over to the door. He listens for any sign that his brother is about to return for whatever reason. After a few minutes, he enters the hallway.

He focuses on the door next to the one he knows goes to the bathroom. This must be the room his brother has been using. What secrets could his brother have behind this door? More importantly, what keys? He tries to turn the knob and finds it locked. He's almost impressed. Before, his brother wouldn't have given a second thought to such tiny details. He would have not only left the door unlocked but most likely wide open.

He moves on to the main living space. His eyes watch the front door for a few minutes before he starts to examine the nearest surface, the fireplace. He checks the mantle, finding nothing but a nice layer of dust. His bound hands even feel out the foundation. He tries not to let his frustration overtake him. There's other locations to search. He eyes the fire poker and stack of wood besides it briefly before moving to the coffee table against the wall. He could tell it hadn't been used in a long time but still he gave it a quick search, specially the papers left on it. Blue prints to some sort of machinery, newspapers and even some crossword puzzles were the results of his search. He wants nothing more than to flip the small table but instead he storms off into the kitchen.

The kitchen as it turns out, ended up either surprising him or confusing him. The large ice box was nearly empty, containing only a loaf of bread, some package of strange meat links, another package of cheese that seems to be pre-sliced and wrapped in plastic. Then a hideous container of something called Bologna. Lastly, a box of something called pizza that he decided against opening to see what it is exactly. If the other contents were a clue, it was nothing he wanted to see if he stands some chance of eating this day. Closing the fridge in disgust, he goes to the cabinets.

This is the source of most of his confusion. The first cabinet was packed with small boxes with the label 'pop tarts' on them. Upon further inspection, they were all different flavors from known fruits to strange contents such as S'mores, Confetti Cupcake, and Chocolate Chip. As strange as these were, they certainly looked more appetizing than what he found earlier. He selects a box with a fruit he is familiar with, Cherry.

After opening it and then opening another package where the food item is hidden, he takes a bite. His green eyes widen. He chews it, observing the taste. The outside is a bit too dry for his liking but the inside...is delicious. Taking another bite, he continues his investigation.

Two cabinets were filled with nothing but round tins with same label that read 'coffee'. Curiously he opens one of these and finds the contents have a strong bitter smell and look to be nothing more than dirt. With a shake of his head, he closes it and puts it back on the shelf. After that he finds a large box of various flavor tea bags. He reads the box and finding that it's a drink, he leaves it out to try. Second to last cabinet contains smaller tins then that of the coffee, these being various soups. At least he won't starve, he thinks as he finishes the pop tart in his hand.

On the counter there is a coffee pot that Loki ignores, strange white cups, and a few packs of paper plates. He was hopeful at the sight of drawers but found nothing but flimsy plastic utensils and a can opener. He wonders where are the metal plates, the stone cups? Mortals are truly a weak, sorry race. Just look at what they use to eat. As if stone is too heavy for them to use.

He sighs with defeat. There's nothing he can remotely use to get out of his cuffs. It's as he thought,
he's in another cell. Larger than those in the dungeons of Asgard but a cell regardless. He looks at the front door. Will it too be locked? Or would it even matter? If the outside is still so bitter cold, he can't risk going out in it. Specially since his search didn't discover any warmer clothing. Or boots.

He drops the remaining pop tart onto the counter and lets himself sink to the floor. Another cage. Cage after cage after cage. How many more are in his future? Or should he surrender now? This is a nicer cage after all. If he stays out of Thor's sight and remain silent, Thor will most likely not bother him. Much less anything else. And he has dealt with loneliness and silence before. Had years of experience in fact. So why not?

The answer is a simple one. Because he still has his pride. He is a prince. If not of Asgard then of Jotunheim. What right does the Alfather have to imprison him? His actions were justified! His actions were the result of that man's own lies and treachery! If had only told him the truth. If only he had known that the throne he was raised to desire wasn't the throne of Asgard. If he wasn't the monster the Asgardians feared. If, if, if...there were so many ifs. Yet his own desires were not as complicated or as vague as all these if's.

All he wants is to be out from beneath their shadows. To stand in the next to them. Not to be the disgrace, the mistake, the failure, the worthless son. Specially in Odin's eye. Such a goal seemed out of his reach. But he had been willing to try. He didn't have his brother's strength, his charisma, or the bond with the Alfather. But instead of giving up and remaining in the shadows, he used the very shadows to his advantage. He used his strategic mind, his silver tongue, his charm. His strongest quality being his determination. Even if he had to crawl, he would find a way to rise to his father's expectations. He would prove himself to be an equal to Thor. That he is just as worthy of Odin's name.

Having built himself up, he gets up and storms to the front door. He doesn't even bother to test the knob as he grabs hold of it and turns it. He barely registers that it turns easily in his hand before swinging the door open. He stands there for a moment, blinded by the white snow. When it passes, his green eyes examine the outer surroundings before he takes a single step outside.

The instant, almost burning cold sensation that swallows his bare foot, he expected. He also expected to hear a crack of thunder. But silence only greets him. Despite the cold, he takes another step, submerging his other bare foot in the snow. He feels the cold soak into his skin, almost like he in a block of ice. He knows he can't bare to be out here much longer. But he will push himself. Force himself until he can no longer feel the cold. He will not stay caged.

Five days later and Loki is laying close to the fireplace, a blanket wrapped around him. He is in an agitated state. It wasn't that he was alone. Thor had come back that night five days ago but then suddenly had to leave again. He's been gone ever since then. Loki assumes his brother, the God of Thunder is running around saving the world with his friends again. Wearing that ghastly red cape. No, the loneliness is truly comforting.

It's the blasted cold that is getting to him. Or at least how it's affecting this weakened body of his. Instead of being able to bare it more, he finds himself standing out in the cold for less time than the day before. He couldn't stop shivering now. His body always feels weak. His feet ache endlessly. And since waking this morning, he has been coughing now and then. Coughing that leaves him feeling exhausted when it finally subsides.

Which is why he is laying in front of the fireplace wrapped in his blanket. He added some new things to the strange board Thor had given him. Blankets is listed at the top. He also requested to be allowed to wear tunics or something. He doesn't care if the shackles on his wrists get put back on as soon as he is dressed. He is too cold to care. He hadn't even tried to go outside today. The very idea
of opening the door makes his shiver.

Instead he spent the day dozing, drinking tea, or reading. When he got up, he walked with the blanket wrapped around him. Most of the time, he remained laying down. Now and then, he would stretch his hand out to the fire. The warmth reminds him of his magik. Sometimes, he can almost see the shimmer of it. But he knows that it's just his mind playing the ultimate trick on him.

He had been dozing when he heard the strange motorized noises. It reminded him of humming only louder. His eyes remain close as he listens, hoping the sounds will fade away. They snap open when the noises stops suddenly. There's a moment of silence before his ears pick up faint conversation and crunching snow. He sits up, his body tensing.

The door swings open and Loki shrinks back instinctively. Three men in winter gear come in, their faces hidden by the helmets they wear. The helmets bob and seem to look around before facing him. He glares at them, ignoring the dizzying sensation that threatens to overcome him. The men move in unison and remove their helmets.

The first thing Loki hears is laughter coming from the man in the middle. When the helmet is removed, he see's dark greasy looking hair, a round face, and small black eyes. He is the biggest of the three. The man on his left has similar features, Loki assuming that he is related to the larger man. The one on the right is sickly thin compared to the other two, his face red as if sun burned, the left eye covered in a milky film, signaling blindness.

"What we have here Danny?" The man on the left asks.

"Not sure yet Paul. Who you are?" The man in the middle named Danny asks.

"Lo...Logan," Loki answers quickly, managing to catch himself from giving out his real name. He had been assuming he had been sent to Earth. These men confirmed it. He gets to his feet and slowly goes for the fire poker.

"Logan? We don't know no Logan. Why you here?" The third man asks.

"That is none of your business. I advise you to leave. Now," Loki orders. He reaches down until he touches the poker. There is a small clink as the metal on his shackles hits the poker.

"Leave? Our buddy owns this place. Said we can hang out here anytime. You are not the welcome one," Paul replies.

"You doing some kind of kink play?" Danny asks.

"Doing what?" Loki asks, not understanding the choice of words.

"Yeah, I think he is one of those perverts. Likes being tied up looks like. Right Ricky?" Paul asks.

Loki remains silent as they talk amongst themselves. He wishes they would go away. But he smells the scent of alcohol on them. They are drunk. And he knows all to well how what drunk men are capable of. Thanks to the many feasts of Asgard that often ended in drunken stupors. So telling them they are at the wrong place will do no good. Maybe keeping a firm stance will make them get bored and they will leave.

"You are not wanted here. Leave now!" Loki orders, pulling out the fire poker and glaring at the unwanted guests.

To his dismay, the men begin to laugh at him. He opens his mouth to express his rage when a helmet
is thrown at him. He easily knocks it aside but it's followed by two more, one hitting him square in the face. He kicks the helmets aside, glaring dangerously at the men as they approach him. If they want a fight, he plans to give them one.
Despite not having his magik, Loki is still a trained fighter. It seemed that the men were starting to see the error in their ways with each successful blow Loki landed with the fire poker. His confidence was building in him and for a moment, it felt like old times when he fought beside his brother. As if he was indeed the God they claim he is.

But then it happened. His body had betrayed him. He suddenly couldn't breath, sending him into a coughing fit. The men he had been fighting off saw their opening and took it. The largest of them tackled him back. He had a moment of fear, thinking he was being sent back into the fireplace, into the fire. But his back smashed against the stone side before he fell to the ground, landed on by the same man who knocked him down.

They didn't give him anytime to recover. Hits and kicks rained down on his body. One of them picked up the fire poker and used it against him as well. He tried to move, tried to crawl. He made the mistake of stretching his hand out to try to pull himself across the floor, away from them somehow. He cried out when it was stomped on over and over. Loki heard the bones crack.

When they finally stopped, catching their breathes, all he could do was curl up into a ball and hope that now they got their fill of violence. He wanted nothing more than for the door to open and see Thor. He was still watching the door when they grabbed his legs and dragged him to his room. He knew he should have stayed silent. But his words were his last weapon.

He warned them, threatened them, and insulted them. They laughed until he did that. That's when they decided he needed to learn his place. To humble him. That's when they did that 'thing' to him. The thing with the fire poker. It still hurts. And he knows he is bleeding. They watched him cry. They heard him scream then begged then when nothing more than whimpers left him. When it finally stopped, they left him in the room. The last thing he heard was the lock click into place.

The first thing Thor finds a few hours later is the snow mobiles. Not familiar with these, he examines them closer. Foot prints in the snow go to the forgotten cabin. His heart is racing when he runs to the door.

"Brother?!" Thor shouts as soon as he throws the door open.
He stares at the three men who do stare back. He notices the gash on the smaller one's forehead on the left side. Another is holding his ribs.

"Who are you?" He asks them, his voice threatening.

"Easy there buddy. Name's Paul. These are Danny and Ricky. The other guy is your brother right?" Paul asks.

"Where is he?" Thor asks.

"In the other room. He...he attacked us," Paul answers.

"Attacked you?" Thor repeats, his confusion seen only in his eyes.

"We got lost. Our friend has a cabin like yours near by. We stopped by to ask for directions. But your brother...he went ape shit," Paul explains.

"Tell me everything," Thor demands.

Loki's eyes spring open the minute his door slams back into the wall. He struggles to roll over and sit up. He quickly wraps his self with his blanket. The pain flares up as he does this but he decides it's worth it when he see's Thor.

"Thor..." He whispers his brother's name, his lips lift slightly in the corner.

"When will you finally let go?" Thor asks.

Loki tilts his head, not understanding what the God of Thunder is referring to. "Let go?"

"Your hatred for these people! Your hunger for a throne! Why did you attack those men?!" Thor questions.

Loki's eyes widen. Attack them? "I didn't attack them. They...they attacked me!"

"Don't lie to me Loki! They told me what you said. That you will make them kneel. That they needed to be ruled. Tell me you didn't say those things!" Thor challenges.

Realization settles in. The men told Thor he had attacked them. Used his own threats and insults against him. Thor believed them. He had to tell him the truth.

"Thor, those men attacked me. They showed up drunk. Said this was their buddy's place. Then they..." Loki freezes at this point. Thor turned away from him, his focus on something laying on the ground. Loki follows the gaze to the fire poker.

"Is this what you used?" Thor asks as he picks up the fire poker.

"Thor, please. You must listen to me," Loki pleads.

"Is this what you used?!" Thor asks, his voice filling the room, throwing the poker at Loki.

Loki flinches when it hits the wall next to him. He looks down at it but when the memory of how those men had used it surfaces, he struggles to push himself away from it while keeping the blanket wrapped around his waist.

"Your actions betray you brother. It seems you can't even be trusted to be left alone," Thor mutters, turning away from Loki.
"Thor...brother...you must hear me out. Those men lied to you," Loki tells him, ignoring the desperation in his voice. The pain is beyond unbearable.

"Claims the lie smith," Thor states.

"Thor...look at me. See what they did!"

"I see them Loki. The results of your crimes against those men. Did you truly expect them to kneel before you while you attacked them? You have much to learn about these mortals," Thor states.

"Thor..." Loki speaks his brother's name in desperation. He knew that due to his own actions, he has destroyed the level of trust they once shared. But he never thought it would be completely gone. Here were the fruits of his actions, his brother siding with those who had hurt him.

"Your stubbornness to remain on this path of becoming a would-be king will be your undoing," Thor mutters before storming out of the room.

Loki wipes the sweat from his face. He is becoming light headed. He watches dully as his brother returned and knelt down. For a moment, Loki thought his brother had changed his mind. Loki could feel his hand slide around his neck, gently pulling him forward. Loki closes his eyes, expecting his forehead to touch his brother's. So when he feels the muzzle cover his mouth, he sighs with disappointment. He doesn't bother lifting his head to watch his brother leave again. He doesn't even flinch when the door is slammed shut.

Thor storms over to his bedroom door, his frustration growing as he had to search his pocket for the key. He nearly breaks it off when he turns it in the lock. Once he slams it shut behind him, he sinks to his knees and takes several deep breaths to try to calm himself.

The sensation of failure is threatening to choke him. He knew he was hoping for too much. That his brother would submit to the punishment. Start the process towards change. Give him something to hope for. Thor didn't like the dark marks he saw on his brother. His first instinct was to hunt down those men and ensure they will need a month of recovery. But he can't forget what they had told him. Nor his brother's past actions that support what the men claimed. He is at a loss.

With a heavy sigh he stands up and opens a nightstand next to the bed. He pulls out the hidden cell phone. He stares at the tiny device for a moment. Then he hits the set of keys he was taught and puts the phone to his ear.

"Greetings my friend. Yes, I am well. Listen, I am in need of assistance. It's...concerning my brother, Loki," Thor tells the other person on the other end.

Hours later, Thor is standing outside, not at all phased by the cold. He could hear the strange motorized vehicles. Soon he can see their headlights shine out from between the trees. He walks forward to meet them when they come into view. Two snow mobiles stop a foot from him. The drivers dismount and walk towards the Asgardian.

"Welcome my friends and thank you for coming." Thor greets them.

The helmets are removed almost in unison. The man in front takes a deep breath of fresh air, running his hand through his dark hair.

"Ahh, fresh air. I miss my workshop already," Tony Stark comments.

"I really could have found the place on my own Tony," the second man replies, digging into his jacket to produce a pair of glasses. Bruce Banner offers Thor a small smile once he puts them on.
"Yeah but who would want to take the chance of you getting lost then getting frustrated then going all green?" Tony asks with an amused smile.

"Face it Tony, you are here only because you want to see Loki."

"Hey, who wouldn't want to see what a powerless God of mischief looks like? Specially after the whole Manhattan thing. I mean really."

"It's good to see you both. My thanks for your assistance," Thor tells them.

"Not a problem big guy. It'll be nice to go a few days without hearing Fury chewing me out," Tony replies.

"I'm just here to take advantage of the peace and quiet. At least that was the idea before I found out Stark was tagging along," Bruce adds, smirking at the over the top reaction Tony gives to this.

All three go into the cabin and Thor waits for the other two men to get out of their winter gear.

"Really homely place you got here Thor. There is electricity here, right?" Tony asks, looking at Thor with a near pleading look. He can handle being away from the city. In the middle of the woods in a simple cabin, not a problem. No electricity...that would be a nightmare.

"There is power, yes. Everything that could be needed is here," Thor tells the two men.

"So, what's the deal with your power mad, adopted brother?" Tony asks.

"It's as I said. He has been stripped of his powers and magik. The Alfather has banished him. I have been ordered to provide him enough aid for him to survive then leave him to his fate," Thor states.

"That doesn't sound like an easy order for you to follow," Bruce comments.

"No, it is not," Thor admits.

"So why were we asked to baby sit him?"

"He attacked some men while I was away," Thor informs them.

"Oh," both men reply.

"My apologies for having to make such a request but if he is determined to act with such violence, it would be foolish to leave him to his own devices," Thor continues.

"So even though he's without all his special mojo, he can and is still causing trouble. And you are concern he will continue to do so. I think we get the picture. So that leaves us with when you will be on your way. The Ol' Captain said you have to return to Olympus for some family thing," Tony asks.

"Asgard."

"Right. So when are you leaving?"

"I will take my leave once you both are settled," Thor answers.

"That's going to take a bit. Bruce packs like a married woman. So how about you go on your way and leave your brother to us," Tony replies, patting Thor on the shoulder and gesturing to the door.
"Stark, he may be weakened but if these recent events mean anything, he still has fight in him. He was trained in fighting as I was. Do not make the mistake of underestimating him," Thor warns.

"Don't underestimate the trickster, got it. Thor you need to relax. If anything happens, I'll put on a suit. If that isn't enough, Bruce could always reunite the God of Mischief to his better half. So go and tell your dear ol'dad I said hi."

Thor looks from Tony who has an expression of a cat who is waiting for a moment alone with the canary to Bruce who simply nods as he pulls the coffee table away from the wall.

"Alright, I will take my leave," Thor tells them with a sigh. He knows his fellow Avenger members are more than capable of handling his brother. If he still had his abilities and magick, there would be cause for concern. But as he is, these two were more than enough. He needed to stop worrying.

Bruce and Tony watch him take his leave. After a few minutes, they turn to each other.

"Think it's just us. Time to check on the kiddie," Tony smirks, already making his way to the room Loki is in.

"This is going to be a long weekend," Bruce mutters as he gets up and follows.

Loki looks over when the door opens. When he see's who enters, he presses himself against the wall. He bites his lip hidden by the muzzle when this sends a flare of pain throughout his body.

"Welcome back to earth," Tony greets. "Want a drink?"

"Tony..."

"Too much? Hard to tell since he isn't saying anything," Tony replies, kneeling down to get a closer look.

Loki turns his head away. Of all the people who he would see again in this accursed situation, it had to be the arrogant avenger and the man with a beast that could come to the surface at any moment. Both were responsible for his defeat when he tried to take over the lowly planet. Both brought him pain and shame.

"Hmm, it looks like you had a night. Specially for attacking three big guys. Did you really do that?" Tony questions, the tone in his voice growing serious. For someone who had gone crazy and attacked some random guys, he was covered in more than a few bruises for Tony's liking. And the. There was the shivering despite the sweat rolling down the pale face. "Something isn't right here."

"No, I think you're right. Something isn't right," Bruce agrees, moving closer to get a better look. He accidentally bumps into Tony, knocking him to the side slightly. Tony steadies himself with a hand before falling completely over.

"Sorry."

"No worries. What..." Tony replies when he notices his hand is wet. It is touching the flood besides Loki. He lifts his hand and examines it, finding it covered in blood.

"Tony?"

"It's blood. His blood," Tony replies, his eyes looking down at the puddle on the floor besides Loki's body.
The two members of Avengers didn't say anything as they got up and leave the room. Both let out a breath once the door is closed.

"Should we be leaving him alone?" Bruce asks.

"I'll be back in there in a moment, have to get something," Tony mutters as he goes to his boots. "Need anything brought in?"

"Yeah, my medical bag. He needs treatment. I'll see what Thor has around here but something tells me It won't be much," Bruce replies, moving towards the bathroom.

Tony only nods before making his way to the door. When he closes the door, he let's out a deep breath as the cold sinks into him. Almost refreshing. He storms over to Bruce's snowmobile and pulls out at the large medical bag. The thing weighs a ton but Tony doesn't care. He goes to his snowmobile and after a few minutes, he pulls out a silver flask. Setting Bruce's bag down for a moment, he quickly unscrews the top and takes a quick drink. As the drink burns, warming him up, he sighs and closes it.

It was suppose to be a quiet weekend filled with poking Bruce and maybe getting some revenge on Loki by giving him a hard time. Just rub his nose in his failed attempt to take over the world Pinky and the Brain style. But nothing like what he's obviously been through. His stomach turns when he thinks of the blood. Where it was pooled at, he silently prays it's not what he thinks. Shaking his head, he realizes he is wasting time and quickly screws the cap on and grabs the medical bag.

"Got your bag!" Tony calls out once he's inside.

"Okay, good," Bruce replies from the kitchen, pulling out a large bowl from under the sink. He gathers a pile of towels and the small pile of medical supplies he did find and sets them in the bowl. "With that, we should have everything we'll need."

"Bruce...what could be causing..." Tony starts to ask.

"Won't know until we examine him. Tony, we need to be prepared for him to not let us..." Bruce
gestures to the bowl of medical supplies. He looks over at Tony who only nods and goes back into Loki's room.

Tony freezes when he see's Loki who has slumped over to his side, thankfully opposite of the pool of blood. Tony drops the bag, noticing the sad form flinch from the sound. So he isn't unconscious. "Damn," Tony curses as he kneels down close to Loki's head.

He see's how Loki quickly closes his eyes when he brushes the damp hair from his face. Tony feels the heat emitting from the pale skin. He let's his fingers touch the face muzzle, recalling the last time he saw it. It was after the battle with the Chitauri. When Thor took him and the tesseract to Asgard.

He feels a wave of rage wash over him when he thinks about the so called God of Thunder. He recalls when Thor had threaten them to watch their tongue when they talk about his 'brother'. He had defended him even though he was a threat to the world. They believed Thor cared for Loki. Maybe they were wrong because what person who cares for another could overlook this?

Tony's fingers follow the edges of the muzzle to the back of the God's head. Tony doesn't even give notice that Bruce sat some of the things he has gathered down beside him and had taken the bowl into the bathroom. Instead his focus is on that accursed muzzle. His fingers find the straps and soon is pulling it away from the trickster's face.

Loki keeps his eyes closed tight when Tony does this. He wants to shout at the Iron man, to tell him to leave him alone. But he feels too tired to even open his mouth though the muzzle is now gone. He tries to take a deep breath but only ends up in a coughing fit. He feels the hands withdraw from him and Loki feels relief. He wishes the man to be too disgusted to touch him again. He never wants to be touch again.

His eyes fly open when something is pressed into his lips. Strange, bitter liquid pours into his mouth.

"Either drink it or choke on it," Tony states firmly.

Not given much of a choice, he quickly drinks the foreign liquid. After a few swallows, Tony pulls the flask away from his mouth. The man seems to ignore the heated glare he gives him.

"What did you just give him?" Bruce asks as he sits down on his knees next to Tony, setting the bowl of warm water besides him and starts to roll up his sleeves.


"Whiskey huh? That might actually help. Alright, time to get started. Loki?" Bruce draws attention from the God of lies.

Loki doesn't reply, watching the pair closely.

"You are losing a lot of blood. We have to stop it or you could bleed to death. Do you know where you are bleeding?" Bruce asks.

"Leave me. Let it happen," Loki replies quietly, his words seem strained with pain and exhaustion.

"Loki, you know we can't do that. Just tell us where you are bleeding," Bruce repeats.

Loki shakes his head weakly.

"Have it your way," Bruce mutters, nodding to Tony.
Loki's eyes widen when both men do their best to restrain them, Tony using his weight to hold Loki's upper body down, a firm grip holds his restrained wrists down and another gently presses his face against the mattress. Loki doesn't give in, struggling to twist out of Tony's hold. He doesn't see the shake of Tony's head after quickly examining the trickster's exposed back. He freezes for a moment when he feels Bruce work on his pants.

With a terrified cry, he kicks out, missing the gamma specialist by mere inches. He doesn't care about the burning pain this causes. He can't let them see. Not that. He can't bare the thought of that. No one can know just how much he has fallen.

So he fights, kicking and shouting. He could hear Tony's grunts of effort to keep him still.

"ENOUGH!" Bruce roars out, finally pinning his legs down painfully.

Despite feeling like he was burning up just a moment ago, Loki suddenly grows ice cold. His heart is racing. He fights the urge to look back and see if the small man is changing into the thing that which has caused him more than a few sleepless nights. Instead he closes his eyes tightly and turns his head in an effort to hide his face against the mattress.

Tony feels a similar wave of fear as he looks at his fellow team mate. His eyes search the man's body for any signs of green, specially his eyes when Bruce turns to him. He almost sighs with relief when Bruce gives him a humorless smile. It was a ruse to get Loki to cooperate. There will be no special appearance of the Hulk. At least not right at this moment. So Tony turns his attention back to the fallen God who is shaking beneath him.

Bruce takes a deep breath to calm himself. Then he gets a hold of Loki's pants and slowly pulls them down. It was clear that the source of the blood is not from his legs. Bruce lets out a sigh. The majority of the blood is at the dark haired man's hip area. With a grave expression, Bruce starts to pull down the blood soaked under garment.

In that moment, it seemed as though Loki had forgotten about the threat of the green beast or no longer cared. "Release me! Release me or I swear I'll kill you both!" Loki screams at them as he twists his body so he's on his side. He again tries to kick at Banner while trying to hit or claw at Stark.

"Fine, go ahead and kill us but not until after we stop the bleeding, so just stay still!" Tony growls back, giving up on he idea of being gentle with the Trickster. He grabs Loki's arm and jerks him over, forcing him to roll back onto his stomach. He is almost sitting on top of the God, an arm pressing down across the back of Loki's neck. Glancing over, he finds that Bruce is actually sitting on Loki's legs, looking a little breathless.

"Sorry Loki, but you are not giving us any other option," Tony mutters as he feels Loki's body straining beneath his.

He gives a nod to Bruce who again works to remove the final bloody garment. Tony feels the bruised body shiver then remain a steady tremble.

"Don't look! Please, please don't look! I'll...I'll give you what ever information you want, I'll tell you my secrets, just please, don't look!" Loki starts to plea. He no longer cares how he sounds. All he is focused on is convincing them to stop. Stop before they see. Before they know. Because if they know, then the rest of the Avengers will know, as well as SHIELD, Thor, and who knows after that. They will all know and when they look upon him it will be in either disgust or with a sense of justice as if he deserved this. They will whisper and point. They will no longer remember him as the cause behind the Chitauri attack but as the fallen God that had not only been beaten but used as one might
use a woman. He will never be able to lift his head up in pride much less meet another's gaze. It would be as if they could all see his shame.

"I'm terribly sorry Loki but I must see the damage and stop the bleeding. If I don't, you may die. I can't let that happen," Bruce Banner tells him, his face twisted slightly from unease. He hates that he can't abide by the man's wishes but knows he will hate himself more if he let's Loki die. He carefully slides the garment further down then follows the source of the bleeding.

Loki let's out a heart wrenching sound, something between a sob and a whimper when he feels the source of his pain becoming exposed. Tony glances over and see's the same sight Bruce see's.

"Loki..." Tony mutters the name, his eyes seem to be glued to the blood. When Bruce soaks a small dish towel and starts to wipe away the blood, Tony finally tears his gaze away and instead focuses on Loki's long black hair. Letting up on his hold of the broken man, he gently strokes the long hair in a way that Pepper use to do to him, hoping it's given a bit of comfort.

When Bruce has wiped away most of the blood, he moans at what he see's. The brutality of what Loki must have endured makes him sick. How the man is still conscious, surprises him. It also gives him a glimpse of how this may affect the once proud God. Gritting his teeth, he works on washing away more of the blood to get a clear view. Once this is done, he reaches over and pulls his bag closer to him.

"Tony, if there is anymore whiskey in that flask of yours, give it to him now. He's going to need it."

Later when Bruce announces that he is finished, Loki does nothing more than sob quietly, his body shaking as the pair of Avengers get off of him. After Bruce examines him for other injuries and treats the infected wounds on Loki's feet, Tony helps pick up the used items and medical supplies and follows Bruce out of the room.

"That mattress is covered in blood. We can't let him sleep on it," Tony mutters.

"We'll set him up in front of the fireplace. Not sure how since there is no way he can walk right now," Bruce replies.

"You set it up and I'll worry about getting him out there," Tony tells him. "Thor has a lot of explaining to do when he comes back."

"Yeah, yeah he does," Bruce agrees, watching his fellow team mate with concern. He understands why Tony wasn't his usual playful self. Nor was it the first time he saw the fellow Avenger in this state. When Agent Coulson's death was announced, Tony had not taken the news well. He recalls Natasha making the comment that for all of Starks' playboy attitude, it was a cover for a darker version of Stark. This darker version was who he was with now.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out the key Thor had given him for the key to the spare room. Casting a small glance at Tony who busied himself with the fireplace and has been muttering about where the darn fire poker was at. He considers mentioning it's location then notices that Tony wasn't actually looking at the fireplace. It was more like he was looking through the fireplace and into the room behind it.

Several minutes later, Bruce has finished covering the space with pillows and blankets he found in the spare room. He had given Tony clean clothing he had found also for Loki before telling him to go and get the trickster. He sits down by the makeshift bed, taking his cup of tea when he hears Tony walk into the room. His eyes widen in surprise at seeing the famous playboy philanthropist physically carrying the God of lies. He starts to wonder how Loki is allowing this when Tony
carefully lays him down, revealing that the trickster is unconscious.

He watches silently as Tony seems to take extra care in covering Loki with the warm blankets before meeting Banner's gaze and nodding his head in the direction of the kitchen. Bruce gets up, taking his cup of tea with him, and follows the fellow genius into the kitchen space.

"He was passed out when I went in. Never had whiskey I'm guessing. Honestly he doesn't look like the drinking type," Tony shares, his gaze not meeting Bruce's.

"I see. The stress probably didn't help him any either," Bruce adds, sipping on his warm tea.

"I think we should take him to the tower," Tony states.

"The tower? But we agreed to stay here and..."

"Forget what we agreed to. We agreed to watch Loki to prevent him from attacking anyone else. Clearly he didn't attack anyone, he was attacked! Which means we weren't given the real story here. So Thor can take our agreement and stuff it as far as I'm concerned," Tony ranted, letting his anger how slowly, not wanting to wake up the sleeping God.

"Alright, can't argue with you there. But we can't move him around too much right now. He needs a few days staying as still as possible," Bruce tells him.

Tony sighs, not liking this but also not planning to argue. He wants Loki to recover, not get worse. He glances around. He suddenly needs to get out of the cabin.

"I'm going to do some shopping. Thor has this place stocked with nothing but pop tarts and coffee. I like sweets as much as the next person but I prefer to have a few more choices to wrestle with. Actually, I hate make choices. Usually I just have Pepper decide on something. Well, use to. Anyway, I'm out. Need anything?" Tony asks.

"Ah, no, I think I'll be okay for now. Try not to bring too much attention to yourself," Bruce replies with a knowing smile.

"Sure thing," Tony replies with a grin.

Bruce goes to the chair while Tony walks out into the cold. Bruce happens to notice Tony's pile of neglected winter gear and is about to get up to investigate when he hears a loud boom sound. He shakes his head. "At least it'll be quiet for a few minutes."
When Tony returns, he is not empty handed. In fact, Bruce finds himself impressed with how much the fellow genius can carry and wonder how much of it is because of the red suit he is wearing. He chuckles at the sudden mental image of an Iron Santa Claus.

"Need a hand?"

"Nope, I got it," Tony replies as he sets the countless bags down on the floor. Bruce watches as the suit starts to fold off of Stark, as if he's shedding his skin. Within moments the suit he was wearing now appears to be nothing more than a red and gold metal case between his feet.

"Did you go shopping like that?" Bruce questions.

"Why not? Have you seen what people wear when they shop at Walmart? Seriously, there are videos on YouTube I could show you. No one even gave me a second glance. Except the old lady at the register," Tony makes a disturbed expression and shivers.

"Oh? Wanted an autograph for her grandkids or something?" Bruce asks as he glances back at Loki who is still sleeping, mostly the alcohol in his system helping him sleep through Tony's arrival.

"No, that I can handle. Being asked if she can polish and oil my suit on the other hand...she was like ninety years old!"

Bruce snickers at this and tells himself to remember to pass this tale along to Steve at a later date. Steve has about as much luck with the older women as Tony.

"So...still out I see," Tony comments, looking past Bruce at Loki.

"Yeah. He didn't wake up once since you left."

"Hmm. Well, think you can spare a hand to help me put all this away?" Tony asks.

"Sure but I have to ask, how long are you planning on us staying here? Looks like we don't have to shop for food for a few months at least," Bruce comments, picking up one of the bags and peering inside.
"I may have gone a little overboard. Also not all of it is food. See?" Tony replies, pulling out a box which contains an air mattress.

"Don't want to sleep on the dusty bed?" Bruce asks, referring to the spare room.

"More like I'll let you have dibs on the chair. Unless you plan to sleep in that room?"

"Chair will be fine, thank you," Bruce replies, taking the bag of food with him.

Nothing further is said as they work to put the groceries together. When they got to the fridge, it was Tony who pulled out the box of pizza and looked inside.

"How long do you figure it takes for a piece of pizza to turn into this lovely shade of grey?" Tony asks, showing the Bruce the contents of the box.

"Don't even want to know," Bruce replies.

Tony pulls out a box of trash bags and throws it away. He glances back over where Loki is and finds the God of mischief sitting up and staring at the fire.

"Bruce," Tony says the name quietly and when the scientist meets his gaze, he gestures over to Loki.

Both stop and watch the trickster slowly sit up, glancing around him briefly before focusing on the small fire burning away in the fireplace. Bruce looks over to Tony who nods and continues to put away everything he had purchased.

Bruce walks slowly over to Loki, watching for any signs of a violent reaction. But Loki remains still, his eyes reflecting the orange flames. He kneels and after a moment, he reaches out to touch Loki's shoulder.

Loki catches the movement from the corner of his eye and draws back soundlessly before the doctor's hand could touch his bare skin.

"Easy, easy," Bruce tells him, holding his hands up in a 'see no harm' gesture. "Sorry about that. I should have thought about that before acting. How are you feeling though? How is the pain?"

Loki shakes his head, his eyes remaining down cast. Bruce notices the lack of eye contact and is growing concerned. He decides to give the God some space, hoping the behavior is just the result of the whiskey.

Tony watches the gamma specialist stand up, give him a shrug then sits back in the chair, picking up a notebook and pen but it was clear that the man's focus isn't on the notes he is making but on the God. He sighs with irritation. Apparently their effort to help Loki had possibly done more damage than good. He could see that by the strange almost lifeless expression on the trickster's face as it faces the fireplace. Add the reaction to Banner's attempt to touch him and the fact that Loki hadn't spoken a word made his guess seem to be more along the truth of the situation.

He wonders how long will their charge be like this. And how long he can handle it? And finally, when will that God of Thunder return so he could have a much needed chat with him though he doubted his own rage would allow for much talk.

Nine days later gave him all his answers. He knew before he even got up to stumble to his first cup of much needed coffee that Loki is already awake. He wasn't even sure if the black haired man even slept that night. He knows he didn't sleep well previously, for both Bruce and himself would get woken up by the sound of his pleading.
Pleading that disturbed them both. It wasn't just pleading the men to stop, to not use the fire poker. Those were bad enough but they had heard Loki plea to his brother, begging to be believed and forgiven, to Odin to be accepted as Thor's equal, to acknowledge all the hard work he has done to be seen as worthy, to an unknown being, to whom he begs for mercy and death rather than to fight his brother and the avengers again. What turned their stomachs was when he would plea to them to not look.

These were also the only time they heard Loki's voice. When the trickster would wake, he would not utter a single word. He was almost catatonic. His eyes still have the glazed over look, as if he was looking inwards rather than outwards. He would remain sitting in the same position for hours. He only reacted if Bruce or himself tries to physically touch him. He wasn't even eating or drinking on his own. Tony had started to force him to at least drink water, grabbing his wrist and pushing a bottle to his lips, promising to let the trickster go the moment he takes a drink. Tony hated having to be so rough with him. The only other action he did on his own was showering. Though they were concerned of about these hours long showers, they didn't stop him nor interrupted him.

He sits up and looks over. Sure enough, there was Thor's younger brother sitting on his knees and staring at the fireplace. How can someone possibly stare at something for hours on end like this? There isn't even a painting hanging over it or some mildly interesting trinket on the mantle. There was just brick and currently a pile of ash. Ash that someone, most likely Bruce, will sweep up before putting in new logs and starting a new fire. But right now there is nothing. So why does Loki keep staring at it?

No longer able to resist, Tony gets up and makes his way to the coffee pot. He sighs as he listens to the sound of the coffee starting to perk. Lately he has been craving something a bit stronger than coffee. Something that will slow his thoughts down. Relieve him of the weight he always seems to bare. The great thing about liquor, it helps you believe your own lies, he thinks.

Like he did come here only because he wanted to see the same vilian who threw him out a window. To see if there was any noticeable difference now that he's on the same footing as any mortal. That it had nothing to do with the break up with Pepper. Or that she has already moved on. Not to mention that there has really been no threat to the planet lately so no Avenger action. And don't forget that because he chose to take on a more active role with the Avengers, his company no longer needs him since he put Pepper in control. It had nothing to do with the fact that right now, he is feeling very much alone and exposed somehow. So when Thor said he needed someone to watch the trouble maker, Tony was already packing. Hearing that Bruce was going made it even better. A few intelligent conversations can be had.

Yet as his luck would have it, the reality of the situation was even worse than the truths he had been avoiding. He is now in Canada of all places with Bruce Banner which was good but also a clearly broken Norse God which was not sitting well with him. Sure the guy tried to take over the world with the silly idea of having people kneel before him. And he did throw him out a window. Stabbed Thor. Mind controlled Barton. Killed lots of people. And from what Thor had told them, he caused similar issues on his own home world. Still, one couldn't help but feel for the guy after putting together what happened to him. And that made all of Tony's issues seem insignificant.

Still, the eerie silence and that darn blank look can get on ones nerves. Specially after several days straight of it. It needed to change. Even if it is just to stare at something else for awhile. Tony thinks this over as he pours his first cup and drinks it down quickly before filling it a second time. His throat and mouth burns but he doesn't care. He needs to wake up completely before Bruce does.

When the second cup is down and he feels more alert, he walks quietly over to Loki.
"Get up and follow me," Tony instructs Loki, grimacing as the man stands up in out arguing. He hopes that what he has in mind will snap Loki out of whatever daze he's been in. He leads Loki to the room where Loki had been in when they arrived. Not surprisingly, when Tony glanced back, Loki is frozen at the doorway. His greenish blue eyes were wide, his head shaking slightly. He was staring past the mechanical suit wearing Avenger to the fire poker still laying on the floor.

With a hiss, Tony quickly grabs Loki's restrained wrist and pulls him into the room, slamming the door behind him. Loki stumbles for a moment but manages to keep himself up right and turns towards Stark.

"I've had enough Loki. Time to call it quits with the silent treatment already," Tony mutters, watching the Norse God. "Come on, say something! Insult me, threaten my life, something."

Loki doesn't reply, instead he looks away. With a groan, he see's the fire poker and instinctively he takes a step away from it. He wants Stark to leave him alone, to let him out of this room.

"Hey! Don't ignore me!" Tony shouts with annoyance. He is willing to bet that Bruce is up by now and hopes he doesn't interrupt. Tony can't stand the idea of this continuing. "Is this some game you are playing? One of your tricks?"

Loki suddenly looks up, meeting the man's gaze for the first time.

"What's your end game this time? If it's taking over Earth again, you might as well call it a day. Or is it just to drive us crazy? Or make us feel bad for you and let you get under our skin? You know, take us a part from the inside? What is going on in that crazy mind of yours Lokes?" Tony questions. He isn't really giving much thought to what he is saying. He just hopes that something he says will trigger some reaction.

"A...game?" Loki whispers, "You actually believe this...this is a game? That I somehow planned this? To be stripped of my powers? To be cast back down to this lowly world? To be under the watch of that oaf then of you? And I suppose those men were also part of my plan then? How they attacked me..." Loki rants his rage as he storms over to the fire poker and picking it up before storming back towards the Avenger. "How they beat me with this? And how they used it? They forced this in me!"

Tony swallows nervously. Maybe he over did it there just a bit. He was relieved when the trickster started to go off. That the annoying silence will finally be over. But he hadn't planned on this part. He didn't expect to learn more of Loki's nightmare. Maybe he should not have pushed the dark haired man.

Loki stops a foot from the Avenger, his eyes burning with rage. Rage that quickly fades when he recognizes the expression on Stark's face. It was a stricken expression. This confuses him for a moment before he looked at the fire poker in his hand. A small gasp leaves his lips as he drops the fire poker and steps back. He hadn't meant to reveal that. He thought the two men already knew or at least suspected how he got those injuries. But he had just confirmed it. Or judging from the Iron man's expression, told him more than he had possibly imagined. Horrified, he drops to the ground.

Tony watched the God of Mischief sink to the ground. He mentally kicks himself. This was not one of his better ideas. Next time he will just scribble notes like Bruce. Maybe doodle some naughty pictures or something. But first he needs to figure out something.

"Umm, look, I was being...well..." Tony tries to apologize but is cut off when there is a loud boom of thunder. 'Great, just great,' Tony thinks to himself. He rubs his face for a moment when he hears Loki start to laugh. It wasn't a joyful laugh. It was more desperate and filled with bitterness.
"Looks like our little chat is getting cut short," Loki comments, glaring at him when the laughter subsides. "Go and tell my dear brother what you learned. Then the rest of your team. Then SHIELD or does that lady of yours get to hear the news first?"

"Why would..." Tony starts to ask, his mind unable to wrap around Loki's comments and just how did they get from silent Loki to this when he hears the familiar booming voice of the Thunder God announcing his arrival. "We'll talk later."

"Why talk? You will not believe a word that leaves my lips any more than my dear brother did," Loki replies, the glow in his eyes fading as he turns away to stare at the writing he had done on the wall.

Tony didn't like that statement but in a small way he was glad Loki said it. It lit his own fire as he turned and stormed out of the room. He didn't pay Bruce any mind, the fellow genies appearing to make a cup of tea, his eyes holding the slightest tinge of green. The blonde God is standing by the door, smiling kindly. At least he was until Tony's fist caught him on the right side of his cheek.

Thor blinks his eyes, staring dumbfoundedly at the fellow avenger who lets out a hiss of pain and is shaking his now sore hand. He didn't feel the hit as much as saw it and now he couldn't grasp why he had just been punched.

"Son of a... Man that stings!" Tony mutters.

"Stark? Why did you just try to hit me? Are you...intoxicated?" Thor questions, knowing all too well of the man's lack of control when it comes to liquor.

"Intoxicated? No Thor, I am not intoxicated! I'm pissed off!" Tony shouts.

"Hey!" Bruce shouts, glaring at the two as his tea cup smashes on the floor, forgotten. "I won't stop you Tony but do this outside. Now, unless you want me to get involved," Bruce threatens.

"What is going on my friends?" Thor asks, alarmed by the tension building in the air.

"Tell you what, I'll fill you in outside," Tony replies, grabbing his suit as he walks out the door.
Thor wonders what madness has taken place since he's left. Were his friends angry with him for being away so long? He had thought they understood that the matters on Asgard may require his absence to be longer than normal. Or had something far more nefarious be taking place? Did it involve Loki somehow? Maybe Loki used his silver tongue and turned his friends against him once they removed the gag so he could eat. Whatever transpired, he needed to find out and correct it immediately.

He thinks all this as he follows Stark out of the cabin and into the woods, watching with a bit of awe as the man's iron suit fitted itself over his body with each step he took.

"Stark, what is the meaning of this? Why are you putting on your armor?" Thor questions when Tony finally stops at an opening.

"So I can do this," Tony replies just before his faceplate closes. He raises a hand and fires his repulsor at the Asgardian, hitting him full force in the chest. Tony watches as the great and powerful Thunder God crashed into not one but two trees.

Thor gets up slowly, shaking his head. He glares at his friend. Someone is occurring here. But what?

"I do not wish to fight you Stark! Tell me the reason behind your attack!" Thor demands.

"How long is it going to take you to speak normally?" Tony asks, rolling his shoulders before turning towards Thor. "As for the reason, it's because you are a lousy brother."

Thor's eyes widen. So his brother is behind this! He glances back at the direction the cabin is, now concerned for his other comrade. What was Loki doing right now to Banner? What had he done to Stark? "Stark, you need to listen to me. I don't know what my brother has done but I swear it can be undone."

Tony growls within his suit as he suddenly lifts up and dives forward, hitting Thor into the chest. The power sends them through several trees that snap and fall in their wake. Tony has the amusing thought of not needing firewood for a while just before Thor rolls them both and lands hard on top of Stark.
"Enough Stark! Come to your senses my friend!" Thor shouts.

"Oh, I have my senses! How are yours?" Tony fires back before smashing his elbow back into the thunder God's head. Tony uses the moment of surprise to quickly roll away and get up to his knees. So far he has had the upper hand since Thor hasn't pulled out his big hammer yet. An advantage he realized is gone as Jarvis informs him that his suit is at forty percent power while he watched Thor stretch out his hand in the tell tale sign. He had to act fast.

With a jump, his repulsors on his boots kick off, sending him up through the trees. For a moment he hears nothing but the scratching sound of the branches scrapping against his suit. Then suddenly it stops as he flies above the trees.

"Jarvis, location of Thor," Tony orders his AI.

"Three feet to your left sir," the AI replies.

"Time to play a little baseball," Tony comments before turning and blasting a nearby tree. He catches it by the top and gets himself into position.

Lightening lit up the sky and Tony got ready.

"Sir, I hate to interrupt but..."

"Not now Jarvis," Tony hisses at his AI.

"Sir, I'm afraid I must insist. There are three S.H.I.E.L.D helicopters approaching the location of the cabin. It seems they are aware of Loki being back on Earth," his AI informs him.

Tony is about to utter a few choice words as he releases the tree. But before he could fly back to the cabin, Thor's hammer slams into, knocking him further up into the air. Just as quickly as he was sent into the air, he was suddenly falling, the hammer somehow acting like a magnet to the chest section of his suit. The air rushed out of his lungs upon impact and he saw flashes of light. The weight on his chest told him that the hammer is holding him in place.

"Jarvis...Thor's location?" Tony manages to ask between breathes.

"He approaching you now sir," the AI informs him.

"And Shield's?"

"They have landed sir and currently positioning themselves around the cabin."

Meanwhile, Loki is still sitting where he was when Tony had left. He is still looking at the wall with his writing but no longer reading it. Instead he is mentally belittling himself. He can't figure out why he had gotten so enraged when Stark accused him of orchestrating another scheme. It wasn't surprising, not after what he has already done. So why did he get so angry and therefore ended up revealing more than he intended? Why could he not remain within his own mind like before?

These last several days all he did was remain within his thoughts. It was easier than facing this life. Facing his guards. Facing the damage and pain in his body. Facing his now obvious weakness. Whenever he felt like he was about to break, he went to the shower. Thankfully, his guards never stopped him or bothered him when he did this. He had managed to hide his weakness from them. That was until he let his anger take hold of him.

By now his brother must know what happened. He spares a moment to wonder how his brother will
react. Knowing Thor as he does, he knows the proud warrior will be devastated and would seek out forgiveness. And he would be even more overbearing, trying to protect his weak little adopted brother. Something Loki knows he will be unable to stand. He already feels smothered, as if the walls were getting closer and closer.

He's afraid to know who else knows the disgusting truth. About what he was unable to stop. Unable to protect himself from. It reveals exactly how weak he is. With a heart breaking moan, he pulls his knees up and rests his forehead against them. When will he stop falling, he wonders. It's almost as if he is again falling into the abyss.

A memory that will never leave him. The falling endlessly, the fear of it never ending almost enough to drive one into madness. There were more than a few times he had silently hoped he would come into contact with something, just to feel something besides the weightlessness. He remembers the relief when his body finally hit the strange planet of the Chitauri. To know that it had finally ended.

When will this plummet end? How much lower must he fall before it stops? How much more pain will he have to endure? Will he ever get used to the emptiness that has been left behind when his magik had been taken? The answers to his questions seem beyond his reach.

This adds to is fustration and anger. Anger at Odin for giving him such a sentence instead of leaving him forgotten in the dungeons of Asgard. Anger at Thor for leaving him in such a vulnerable state, as if throwing meat to the wolves. Anger at himself for failing to prevent himself from all of this.

He knows this is all his undoing. He has always known. Had he remained quiet, had he not given into his vain attempts to please Odin, none of this would have occurred. A line of thought and admittance he has had before. In his other fall. During that fall, just before he stopped, he had been considering giving up his hunger for the throne and he would willingly accept whatever place he will be given in Asgard. A line of thought that was banished when he met the Other.

He takes a sharp intake of breath when he thinks of that strange being. And the last words he had told him. "If you fail, if the Tesseract is kept from us, there will be no realm, no barren moon, no crevice where he can not find you. You think you know pain? He will make you long for something as sweet as pain." The words make him shudder. What will happen if they find him now while he is like this?

If he was to have any luck, it would be that he is forgotten by Thanos. Or that Thanos knows of his blight and is deeming it a worthy punishment for his failure. If not, Loki doesn't want to let his mind even imagine what will happen. No, he hated to admit it but he was safer here. Safe while he is under the watch of his brother and his brother's comrades.

Every time he believes he is taking steps forward, he finds himself falling back. The only thing that has fueled him to continue moving forward was his anger. But right now, the heat of his rage is missing, leaving him feeling the coldness of his despair. Maybe it's time to just stop. Give up. Surrender. He knows he will never get his magik or abilities back. He had his training but it gave him only a slight edge. And the event with those men showed that it can only help him only so much.

Compared to those of his own race, Loki was considered a runt and had been tossed away by his father. To those of Asgard, he was considered weaker physically and more fair not to mention how physically different he appeared compared to his brother. Now, compared to mere humans, he was proven to be even less somehow. The skills that had made up for what he lacked had been stripped away.

All he has left was his lies. Lies that have no power here. Lies that will, if they are not already,
unravel in time. A tool he had mastered is now useless. As he is, he realizes. He reads over this threats of revenge that he had wrote on the walls. He now see's them as hollow words for he doesn't have the power to make them a reality. He closes his eyes and takes in a shaky breath.

"I am powerless. Weak," he whispers, saying the words out loud.

He shivers from the coldness the words bring. He's finally accepts it. So where does this leave him he wonders. What could his future possibly hold for him? More pain? Humiliation? Or will he be left alone? As much as he would have liked that, now he isn't so sure. He finds himself admitting that this punishment will be the one that will give Odin and Thor the outcome they want. The end of his wicked ways. The end of all his plots and mischeif. The end of Loki.

When his bedroom door gets kicked open, he doesn't flinch. When the men in familiar uniforms surround him, he doesn't give them much notice until one all to familiar voice spoke to him.

"Look who has decided to grace us with his presence," Nick Fury comments.

Loki finally looks up, meeting the smug gaze of the leader of S.H.I.E.L.D. What he see's confirms his fears. There will be no light in his immediate future. Not with this man.

Back in the woods, Stark is cursing under his breath as he tries in vain to get the hammer off of him. He finally see's Thor walk towards him from his left.

"Tell me what the meaning of this is," Thor demands.

"Thor, you have to get this hammer off of me. We need to get back to the cabin right now," Tony replies.

"Tell me why you attacked me!" Thor shouts, his voice echoing.

"Listen to me! Shield is here! They are here for Loki!" Tony shouts at the larger man.

He watches the blonde go through several emotions, each expressed clearly. He saw the man turn and look back to the cabin. He saw the bite of the lower lip, the narrowing of those blue eyes. Then he see's the Asgardian sigh and shake his head sadly.

"They can have him," Thor mutters.

"Wh-what?"

"He owes them a debt. It's become apparent that I am not enough to set him on the right path," Thor replies.

"Did you hit your head? Maybe got blasted through too many trees?" Tony asks, his mind scrambling to make sense of this. "Do you not realize what Fury will mostly like do to him? Considering the Manhatten thing not to mention the mess he caused on the Helicarrier. And the death of Agent Coulson!"

"He needs to pay for his crimes. Despite not having his powers, he still poses a threat. Look what he has caused here," Thor points out.

"You think this is because of him? This is for him!" Tony shouts.

"For him?" Thor asks in confusion.

"For a supposed God, you are really clueless! Your brother didn't attack those men! They attacked
"I told you Stark, be careful with him. He is a liar. He is unable to speak the truth," Thor replies.

"He didn't tell us anything. His body did. After you left, Bruce and I went in to check on him. We saw the bruises. The fist prints, shoe marks, even the bruises caused by the damn fire poker that covers his back. We saw them all," Tony tells him, struggling to keep his temper in check. Here he is, stuck under Thor's magical hammer and having to fill in the Asgardian as to what happened to his adopted brother while more than likely the Hulk was leveling the cabin and Loki being taken into custody. They were wasting the time they could possibly use to help both their team mate and the fallen God.

"Those were the result of them defending themselves," Thor replies though not with much confidence.

"Bullshit! Those were the result of getting his butt kicked. How much longer are you going to stand there and try to blame your brother for what those men did? He may have been a real dick, in fact he was, but that was then and this is now! He has a lot to answer for but treating him the way you have isn't going to help him," Tony tells him. It is on the tip of his tongue to tell the Asgardian about how else the fire poker had been used but decides against it. Why, he isn't sure exactly but it feels right to hold this bit of information back. At least for now.

Thor paces for a moment before stopping, looking back at the direction of the cabin. To Tony's relief, Thor summons the hammer to his hand.

"We need to hurry," Thor mutters before swinging his hammer.

Tony gets up and stands next to Thor.

"Race you there," he says before taking off towards the cabin. He tries to ignore the urge to ask Jarvis for a report on the situation or the dread that they are too late. The AI doesn't wait for the request.

"Sir, they have Mr. Laufeyson. They have just left, Dr. Banner accompanying them. It seems they are heading directly to the Helicarrier."

"How long will it take for the suit to build enough power to get there?"

"Three hours."

"And if powered by lightning?"

"Instantly."

"Good to know," Tony replies as he lands in front of the cabin, waiting for the Thunder God.
Steve Rogers finds himself wondering what exactly he is about to walk into. Glancing at his current company he could tell that the he isn’t the only one thinking that same question. Natasha appears stone faced as she flicks various controls but the occasional backwards glance in his direction told him she had some questions. Clint was not so subtle.

In fact Steve expected him to turn around and ask again in three...two...one...

"Okay, run this by me again. Why are we on our way to the Helicarrier?"

"Tony said he needed us to meet him there."

"Tony said he needed us to meet him there."

"And for what?"

Steve lets out a wary sigh. When he had called them to ask them to pick him up and take him to the Helicarrier, he hadn’t given them any details. To be honest, he didn’t have any. "Look, Stark said he needed us there. I figure we owe him at least a few minutes of our time, okay?"

"So you don't even know what is going on," Natasha states.

"No, no I don't. I'm sorry. It's just, how often does Stark...does Tony ask for help?" Steve asks.

He watches the pair look at each other. He hadn’t realized it but he brought out a good point. Tony Stark doesn't ask for help. And if he needs some, well, he tends to build his help. Thankfully, neither say anything further as they go to the Helicarrier.

After landing within the loading dock of the Helicarrier, the trio find Tony Stark and Thor waiting for them. Thor is pacing a few feet from Tony who keeps glaring off to the side. When they get closer, they see a few Shield agents standing guard in front of the door that would allow them inside.

"Alright Tony, we're here. What's going on?" Steve addresses the billionaire.

"They have my brother. They have Loki," Thor answers before Tony can.

"Good!" Clint replies.
"Is he putting up resistance?" Steve asks.

"What is his master plan this time?" Natasha asks with an eye roll.

"Whoa, guys! He's not the bad guy here! Shield is!" Tony tells them, his voice carrying an edge to it. The two assassins look at each other while Steve rubs the bridge of his nose.

"Did...did you just say that Loki is not the bad guy? Seriously?" Clint asks.

"Clint..." Natasha whispers, knowing Clint is getting riled up.

"No, I want to know what is going on here. Specially if that whacked job is behind this!" Clint hisses out.

"Mind how you speak concerning my brother," Thor warns.

"Same brother that stabbed you? Or tried taking over the world? Or killed hundreds of people?" Clint throws back.

"Come on Legolas, you're upset because he turned you into a puppet," Tony comments.

"Says the guy he threw out of a window! Why did you bring us here, Stark? And what does it have to do with Loki?" Clint demands.

"So you want to hear the story finally?" Tony asks, knowing this will tick the archer assassin off more but not really caring.

"Yeah, yeah, I want to hear the story. Starting with why he's back. And it better be one hell of a story because if it ain't," Clint all but growls out, reaching for his bow.

"Okay, that's enough. Stand down. Thor, how about you fill us in on that part. Tony can explain why we're here after that," Steve instructs while keeping his eye on the archer. He doesn't blame the fellow team mate after what he went through thanks to the trickster God but he too wants some answers and a fight will do them no good.

Tony, who had been ready to knock a certain assassin into the steel wall behind them, turns away and takes up the pacing Thor had been doing when the rest of the team had arrived. While waiting for Thor, he had called Steve and told him the Avengers needed to assemble on the Helicarrier. And that was as far as his planning went.

Honestly he was still trying to figure this out. Clint had a good point. Several in fact. He also couldn't argue that Shield didn't have the right to take Loki into custody. As Thor had stated earlier, Loki owes them a debt as well. The God of Mischief had a lot of debt to repay. Had he not spent the last several days with the fallen God, most likely he would be standing besides Barton and just as ticked. But he had spent the last several days with Loki. And he found out what he had been through shortly after returning to Earth. He saw how it affected the once proud if not egoistical being. That he was breaking, be it slowly. He knows because he had nearly done the same. He too had fallen and tried to hide it. The hours spent in the workshop and the countless suits he created were proof of that.

But he had spent the last several days with Loki. And he found out what he had been through shortly after returning to Earth. He saw how it affected the once proud if not egoistical being. That he was breaking, be it slowly. He knows because he had nearly done the same. He too had fallen and tried to hide it. The hours spent in the workshop and the countless suits he created were proof of that.

This was why he was standing here before his team mates, moments away from asking them to help him convince Fury to give Loki up. Because he was seeing too much of himself reflected in the trickster. A truth that is not sitting well with Stark. Yes, Loki had a lot to answer for but as far as Tony is concerned, any debt Loki owed to him is forgiven. Little did he know that the other Avengers would feel the same when they saw the trickster themselves.
Meanwhile, Fury strides into a large room, his face in a scowl. His only eye looks to the center of the room to the newly made round cell. It was just like the one they had built before to contain the Hulk. The same one they ended up putting Loki in. He smiles at the irony. It seems that the so called God of Mischief is fated to be locked away. He remembers the strange looks he received when he ordered this cell to be rebuilt with a few added features. They didn't understand why they were given such an order but dared not to go against it. This was appreciated because he didn't want to voice his intuition that Loki would in fact return one day. And now, here he is.

He slows his stride, watching the man like being inside the cell. One of the modifications was the chain bolted to the floor that connects to the collar the trickster is wearing. The chain isn't very long, in fact it keeps Loki in his current position, on his knees with his forehead just about a foot from touching the floor. To Loki it is very uncomfortable, nearly painful. To Fury, he enjoys this position, for it forces the so called God into a more humble position. The wrist cuffs he had been in were undone and now held his wrists together behind his back. With Loki's head lowered, his long hair is covering parts of his face. Loki shows no sign of acknowledging Fury's presence.

"So, how do you like your new cell? Look familiar?" Fury asks.

There is no visible response from the Asgardian. Fury doesn't mind for he didn't expect one.

"We made some modifications just for you. But the basic idea is still there. Let me show you," Fury offers as he pushes a button. He smiles as the bottom of the ship opens beneath the circular cell, revealing how far above the ground they are.

Loki's green eyes widen as he looks down at the large body of water beneath them. He tries to shift, so he may not be dead center of the cell but he's held firmly in place.

"As you can see, we are pretty high up. The master minds behind warned me that with the way you are restrained, if I was to drop you, your body would naturally fly up. But with that around your neck, keeping you to the floor, your body would go up but not before possibly decapitating you. So try to keep that in mind," Fury tells him before pressing the button again, closing the opening. "As I said, I had some modifications added. Like these."

With a flip of a few switches, the glass walls of the cell began to get covered in sheets of thick metal, reducing the natural light within the cell. Soon there is only one panel not covered and it is the panel Fury is looking into.

"This is to keep you from trying to manipulate anyone outside your cell. When I leave, I'll close the last panel. Oh, you are not afraid of the dark, are you?" Fury asks, hitting another button that turns off the interior lights in the cell. "I heard monsters have a thing for the dark, so hopefully you are more comfortable?"

Loki again remains silent, the only sound from within the cell is the chain as Loki tries to shift again before giving up.

"Let's get down to business, I don't like wasting my time with all these pleasantries. Why are you back on Earth?" Fury questions, his voice empty of any warmheartedness that was in his voice moments ago.

"I was banished here," Loki replies quietly.

"Banished huh. Let me guess, for all the wicked you have done? Seems like Odin went easy on you. Or is this a bullshit story?" Fury questions.
"He was without mercy. He made sure I no longer pose a threat to this world."

"Oh really? How so?"

"He stripped me of my magick and my Jotun abilities."

"What the heck is a Jotun?" Fury asks, taking a seat in a chair nearby. He is surprised at the lack of threats, insults and just how willingly Loki is with answering these questions. Fury is growing more suspicious as time goes by.

"Frost giant."

"Wait a second, I thought you were, what do they call themselves? An Asgardian?"

"I was adopted. My real origin is Jotun," Loki explains. A small voice tells him he shouldn't speak so freely, it asks where his pride has gone. He tells the voice that his prideful days are behind him. If he wants to somehow survive this with little pain, then he will talk. His secrets are no longer useful to him.

Fury laughs suddenly for a moment before wiping his eye. "Sorry, I just realized that you said that you are a giant. I don't know what your people believe but here Giants are large beings, believed to be several stories tall. What, the other species the size of ants?" Fury asks.

"They are massive in size. I...I'm considered a runt and therefore was thrown away. That is how Odin found me."

"A runt huh, well they got that part right. Alright, so Odin stripped you of your powers and dropped you off here. What next?"

"I don't know."

"Well, I ain't buying it. Maybe you were stripped of your powers. Maybe you were cast down to our world as punishment. Then again, maybe you are full of it. Trying to get me to underestimate you so when I give you a second of doubt, you can bring this entire Helicarrier crashing down. Not going to happen," Fury tells Loki.

A door opens and one of his agents walks in.

"Did I not give the order that I am not to be disturbed when interrogating the prisoner?" Fury asks without looking at the agent, his voice eerily calm.

"Sir, the Avengers are here. They want to have a meeting with you," the agent replies.

"About what?"

"The prisoner, sir," the agent answers.

"I wonder what they want with you. Maybe they want to ask you a few questions themselves. Tell them I'll meet them in the conference room," he tells the agent who leaves without a word.

"As for you, I am going to give you a few minutes to gather yourself because when I get back, I want as much information about the Chitauri and your involvement as much as possible. I expect to get answers."

Fury gets up from the chair and goes to the control panel. He flips one more switch and the final metal wall falls into place, locking Loki in darkness. He walks over to the door and pauses for a
moment. "You have fifteen minutes. He is to be able to speak when I come back. Screw up and I will personally toss you off the ship."

He leaves the room as a door opens and half a dozen Shield agents walk into the room, their eyes covered with night vision goggles. One of the men go to the console and open a wall behind Loki so he is unable to see the men enter his cell.

But he heard the door open and felt the rush of air against the skin of his back. Maybe Fury is trying to mess with his mind, Loki thinks. If only the director knew he didn't need to waste his efforts. When the first punch connects to the right side of his face, Loki realizes this isn't a mind game. This is revenge. Another debt being collected.

As his men work Loki over, Fury takes his time to get to the conference room. It is no secret that his rage is boiling, started the moment the agent had informed him that the Avengers were here. If the Avengers are here, that means Thor, the great God of Thunder is here. Probably expecting them to hand Loki over again. He is going to be very disappointed. From Intel he learned that Loki had been at that cabin in Canada for over a week. It became clear that Thor was trying to hide one of the world's greatest threats. And he wants to know why.

"I can't help..." Fury starts as soon as he walks into the room, not bothering to wait to gain everyone's attention and certainly leaving no one the time to start speaking, "but to wonder why Earth Mightest Heroes have assembled when I did not give the order for them to assemble. Did I miss something?"

"Besides your morning coffee?" Stark asks. Fury gives him a disapproving look which Stark responds with a half smile that says 'like I care about your approval'.

"Sir, there is a matter concerning Loki Laufyson," Steve interjects.

"Matter? Has he escaped? Running havoc? If so, he must be very fast because I just left him in his new cell just before coming here," Fury responds.

"You will release my brother immediately," Thor demands.

"Or you'll what? You might be the God of thunder where you come from but you are not a god here. If anyone is to make demands, it will be me!"

"Sir, we are just concern about him being taken into custody," Steve tells the director.

"Is that not common process of criminals, specially alien psychopaths who try to take over the world?" Fury asks.

"Amen," Clint mutters under his breath.

"He's no longer a threat," Bruce states, surprising the director by suddenly speaking up though his dark face doesn't reveal this.

"No longer a threat? And do tell how you came up with that," Fury challenges.

"Because he's been reduced to that of an average human. He's even weaker than Stark," Bruce replies.

"Hey..."

"No offense Tony. The bottom line is he is no longer the threat he once was. He doesn't need to be
handled as such,” Bruce continues.

"Why Dr. Banner, you make us sound like we might treat a criminal in an inhumane manner," Fury replies, acting surprised by this accusation.

"Exactly," Bruce replies firmly.

"Do I seriously need to remind you what he has done?"

"That is not necessary Sir."

"Then what is the point of this meeting? I am failing to see why I am wasting my time here when I could be doing something more productive," Fury challenges.

"You mean interrogating Loki, right?" Stark asks.

"Tony. Sir, we have a request we would like to make," Steve states, starting to stand up.

"Request denied."

"You haven't even heard it..."

"I don't need to," Fury cuts in. He is very close to tossing them all off the Helicarrier if not locking them up.

"If you do not want to destroy the truce we have with Asgard, I would listen to him, Stark points out.

Everyone glances over at Thor who is wearing a dark expression.

"What is the request?" Fury asks.

"Release him to us," Steve tells him.

"Come again?"

"We request that Loki Laufyson be released into our care. We will keep at Stark tower. He will be under constant supervision and be on permanent lock down," Steve explains.

"And how exactly do you plan to keep him under constant supervision with your Avenger duties? Or do you plan to abandon the earth's needs so you can babysit one of it's deadliest foes?" Fury questions.

"Um, let's see, I have the world's smartest AI that responds to me and me only?" Stark points out.

"One that we hacked?"

"One that hacked you, yes. One that is still hacked into your systems, might I add," Stark replies.

"I think you are exaggerating..." Fury starts to reply with a laugh.

"Jarvis?" Stark calls out.

"Yes Sir?" The AI replies from the room’s intercom.

"Where is Loki Laufyson right now?"

"He's in the new constructed holding cell on the east part of the ship sir. Would you like the punch
codes to gain access sir?" The AI asks.

"I don't think that will be necessary Jarvis," Tony replies with a smirk.

"Very well sir."

"There is information we need from him," Fury mutters, "he stays until I believe he gives me all the Intel he has. Then I will consider your request."

"No," Stark replies.

"No?" Fury questions, glaring at the genius billionaire.

"Yeah, no. You can question him. But if he does or does not give you any Intel by morning, he is handed over to us. No little Shield tricks or I'll have Jarvis wipe every file Shield has, making you start from square one," Stark states firmly.

"I don't get you Stark. If I remember correctly, he tossed you out a window and used your own personal tower to bring about an army to destroy the world. The very tower you plan to keep him in. Have you lost your mind?" Fury asks.

"Possibly. So, which is going to be? Should I ask Jarvis to set the coffee pot or to start deleting files?" Tony asks, folding his fingers behind his head, his smirk still on his lips.

"You are aware that if he does anything, anything at all, it will be on all of you," Fury growls.

"See you in the morning Fury," Tony replies.

They all quietly watch the director storm out of the room. They remain silent for a few minutes before Natasha let's out a sigh. "That was impressive."

"Did we discuss Stark towers?" Steve asks.

"You're welcome," Stark replies.

"I thought we agreed to return to the cabin," Thor comments quietly.

"Yeah, well, there's no Jarvis there. Or workshop. Security is just awful. Really not an ideal place to hide a danger to society," Tony replies with an eye roll. "Besides, do you really want Shield to be able to waltz in there at any time to nab your brother for tea?"

As the others slowly accept what Tony had set in place, Loki is laying on the cell floor biting his lip. He isn't alone for there are three agents still there with him. He keeps his eyes closed tight to keep from seeing the strange blue glow from their eyes or the figure standing in front of him, smiling. The agent behind him gives out a long moan, pushing forward against Loki's body before pulling back. The man stands up, does up his pants and walks out of the cell. Once he is out of the room, he will not remember what he had just done. By the next day, he won't remember this day at all.

The next guard automatically takes the place of the guard before him. Loki pushes himself to open his eyes and look at the laughing form. The figure's robes blends him into the darkness of the cell but somehow the golden mask stands out. Now and then, Loki catches the glimpse of a golden eye.

The Other arrived as the men were beating him. How long he allowed the men to continue their brutal attack, Loki doesn't know. When he decided it was time to make himself known, the agents suddenly stopped. They became like mannequins, their fists or legs frozen in mid air. Loki had a
moment of confusion but when he saw the blue in their eyes, he knew.

The Other wasted no time in digging into his wounds. Addressing his horrible failure and telling him how displeased Thanos is with him. When Loki had remained silent, the Other touched him. His icy cold fingers seemed to go right through his skin and bones, straight into his mind. Loki had screamed out in agony, for this caused a searing white pain within his mind. Then he saw images, his memories of what has taken place since the failure of his conquest. He knew the Other was seeing these as well.

When the memory of the cabin and the three men came, Loki had made a desperate cry like sound. It was music to the creature's ears. He saw how the loss of power affected Loki and the slow mental cracking that had started when those men used the former prince. These cracks threaten to shatter his very will. It would be the perfect price for him to pay for his incompetence.

So he used the men to break the former God, shatter any hope that may hide itself. Thanos had ordered pain. The Other was sure this will please his Lord. He doubted Loki the former Prince of Asgard will ever know a day now without this memory. Yes, he will know pain. The pain of his weakness, the pain of his incompetence, the pain of his very existence.

He watches with pleasure as the light fades from Loki's emerald eyes. Loki had tried to hold on, tried to fight. But it was all nothing more than a wasted effort. Their eyes meet despite the darkness that surrounds them. The Other grins as the final cracks show in Loki's eyes. When the agent finishes, Loki's head lowers to the ground, his eyes staring at nothing. It is done. His Lord will be very pleased.
There are bad days then there are really bad days. Fury's life seems to be filled with the later. Days like this remind him that he doesn’t get paid nearly enough. He hears the whimper when he paces in front of the public enemy. It's the only sound the alien has made.

Just how did this happen? His men were ordered to soften him up a bit. Judging from the security footage he watched and the newly forming bruises shows that his orders were followed. So what went wrong? Whatever it was, it occurred when the video footage suddenly goes black and the sound turn into nothing more than static.

He already questioned one of the agents. He nearly lost it when the agent told him that the last thing he remembers is eating in the dinning hall for lunch. After making sure that the agent was not in fact lying to cover his ass, Fury had to accept that somehow his men had been compromised. But by who?

"You need to work on your acting skills. It's not even good enough for a soap opera," Fury comments, hoping to provoke the supposed God.

Loki doesn't as much as twitch to this statement. His face remains hidden against the floor.

"Alright, keep the act up. I don't really care," Fury states as he walks around behind Loki, listening to the bound man take another deep breath and knows he will hold it until he returns within eye sight. He stops walking, making Loki struggle to hold his breath. After a minute, Loki releases the breath and starts coughing.

"Let's try this again. Where are the Chitauri?"

Meanwhile, the Avengers are still in the conference room. Tony is bouncing a ball of the wall. Natasha is wiping down her gun. Clint has legs up on the conference table, his body leaning back against the wall, his eyes closed as if trying to take a nap. Steve keeps glancing at the door, his nerves building from the lack of direction. Thor's attention is on his hammer, staring at it as if it will become a crystal ball. Bruce is watching Tony with a hint of curiosity.

"Are you sure this is the right thing to do?" Steve asks finally.
"Mr. Morals is asking me, who is known to have next to none, about the right thing?" Tony questions.

"I'm still on the 'why we are doing this' stage," Clint mutters without opening his eyes.

"Because that is what we are suppose to do. It says so in the heroes manual," Tony replies without missing a beat.

"You reading a manual?" Natasha questions.

"Cliff notes. Anyhow, what is everyone's deal? Thor told you how he is being punished. Bruce and I have told you how bad the guy is because of it. What more do you guys want?" Tony asks.

"He needs to be left in whatever cell Fury's got him. There's no reason for us to babysit him. So what that he's without his powers. Means he can't escape. That he is one less problem we have to deal with. So let's tell the director we changed our minds and get out of here," Clint suggests.

"It's not just that he is weaker physically. He's been growing weak mentally as well," Bruce points out, ignoring the heated glare he is receiving from Thor.

"What do you mean?" Steve asks.

Bruce doesn't reply, instead he meets Tony's gaze, mentally asking him which one gets the job of telling the others.

Tony swallows. He hadn't had a chance to talk to Bruce about what Loki confirmed. But judging by the look on Bruce's face, that conversation is not necessary anymore. His throat tightens and he looks away, breaking eye contact with the gamma specialist. He can't say it.

"While at the cabin, Loki had been attacked by some men. They beat him. Hit him with a fire poker repeatedly. Then they raped him with it," Bruce states.

It seemed that everyone took in a sharp breath at the same time. Tony included. They also all jumped when Thor slams his fist into the conference table, cracking it.

"What is the meaning of this? Why do you insist on lowering my brother's status?!" Thor demands.

"Thor..." Bruce says calmly, knowing full well who he is dealing with.

"He isn't make this up Thor. Loki told me this directly," Tony jumps in, his eyes burning holes into the wall.

"No...no, he must have been lying," Thor argues weakly.

"He wasn't."

"Loki...was raped?" Steve asks tentatively, his face in a mixture of confusion and shock.

"He needed stitches. After I treated him, both Tony and I observed a drastic change in his behavior. Becoming mute, not eating, drinking only when Tony pushed him to, staring at nothing for hours, and taking very long showers," Bruce shares with the rest of the team.

"Is it possible that it was all an act?" Natasha asks.

"I can't say no to that but if it was an act, it's the best I have ever seen. Think about it this way. All your life you had these powers. They were a part of you. They were what made you stand out
despite lacking in other areas. Now imagine having them suddenly taken and the. You are abandoned in the middle of the one place that hates you. From what Thor has told us, Loki has severe inferiority issues. His only edge was his abilities," Bruce tries to explain.

"My brother was trained as a warrior Banner," Thor grumbles.

"Yes, I don't doubt that. But is he a warrior?" Bruce asks.

Thor opens his mouth to say that his brother is of course a warrior. But then he closes his mouth. Loki had always lacked a bit in strength and certain other skills. He was stronger than the mortals of Midgard but weaker than many of the Warriors of Asgard. To cover for this, Loki was taught magik. Combined that with his inherited Jotun traits, and he became an equal if not a greater force on the battlefield. But without those, Loki is left vulnerable with his weaknesses evident for all to see.

"So you are saying that he is..." Steve tries to find the right words.

"Breaking. And yes, he is. I know the signs better than anyone. If Fury puts too much pressure on the guy, I believe the guy will fall to pieces," Tony replies, unknowing how true his words are.

"Something isn't right," Natasha comments, a deep frown forming on her lips. "You said he told you verbally that he was raped. Yet Dr. Banner stated he had gone mute."

"He did. Until I cornered him and well, I may have pushed a few buttons which got him to lash out. That's when he told me," Tony explains, ignoring the look he receives from Bruce concerning the pushing of the buttons part. Apparently the good doctor is also good at eavesdropping.

"So you are worried about him getting worse if he remains with the director? Why? This still sounds funny, specially the guy he threw..." Clint starts.

"Out a window, yeah he did that. And it was me, not you, that he did that to. So let's stop bringing that up, okay? You can go about whinning how he mind controlled you but that's you. Personally I think you need to man up and get over it. Thor was stabbed by his own brother yet I don't hear him whine about it. Yes, I got tossed out of a window, one of my many near death experiences, but I got over that. So stop bringing it up! As for why, I personally know what it's like to be broken down. I don't wish that on my own worse enemies. Incarcerate them, sure. Kicking them while they are down or out right torturing them is another thing altogether," Tony replies heatedly.

"Okay guys, I think we need to..." Steve interrupts before any further verbal exchange can take place until he too is cut off.

'Sir, there is a message from Director Fury for you," Jarvis announces.

"Hit it," Tony groans.

"...can't believe I am talking to a frickin robot. Stark, if you are listening, there has been a change of plans. Someone is to come get him and get him off my Helicarrier this instant! That is an order," the message plays.

Tony looks at his other associates and see's the same look of shock on each and everyone of their faces. "So who gets the honors?" He asks.

A few minutes later, Bruce walks into the jet with the Norse deity. Or what looks like him, thinks Tony. After a few minutes of arguing which consisted of Thor wanting to get his brother but everyone agreed that was a bad idea, Tony down right refusing for reasons he will not reveal to them, and no one else really wanting the job, it was decided that in case medical attention would be
needed, Bruce Banner was their choice to fetch the world threat from the cell Fury put him in. Had he known what he would be walking into, he would have stubbornly refused alongside Tony.

He takes in a deep breath in efforts to calm himself. He remembers how Fury kept plenty of distance between them. The Director of Shield hadn't been pleased to see who came for the God of Mischief. Probably expected the Captain. But not the small man whose eyes tinted with green when they came upon the sight of Loki.

The fallen God is still on his knees, the restraints on his wrists remain but the collar has been removed. He didn't move when Bruce approached. His emerald green eyes stare blankly forward. With the steel walls gone, the light makes the bruises stand out more against the pale skin. Bruce had quietly spoken the dark haired man's name a few times but Loki remained silent. When he approached him, Loki whimpers but didn't move. When he pulled Loki up to his feet, Loki didn't resist. The last words he exchanged with the director of Shield was to get the tricking cuffs off of his wrists.

Now on the jet, Loki remains silent with his gaze on the ground. He appears unaware of the watchful eyes of the Avengers. Once the jet is in the air, Steve breaks the silence. "Is this what you were referring to earlier?"

"Yes," Bruce confirms.

Steve frowns and takes a step forward, kneeling down in an attempt to meet Loki's gaze. After a moment, Steve reaches a hand out to touch Loki's knee.

Suddenly, Loki snaps out of his feeble state. A painful scream spills out of him as he throws himself back, his legs kicking at Steve.

"What the..." Clint cries out, looking back.

No one replies. Bruce scrambles for the emergency first aid kit that is on the jet while Tony forces himself between Loki and the wall and is attempting to wrap his arms around Loki's thin body from behind, pinning his arms in the process. Loki throws his head back, smashing against Tony's nose. Steve tries to restrain the kicking legs while dodging kicks to the face. Steve see's the fear in Loki's eyes as he continues to fight and scream. Just as Bruce finds what he is looking for, both Avengers are able to get a hold of the struggling man.

"Hold him still!" Bruce orders him.

"Trying!" Tony replies, his voice sounding muffled.

Bruce kneels down beside the men and grabs Loki's arm. He quickly plunges the needle into the God's arm and pushes the plunger. Loki makes a small hiss noise and continues to struggle but slowly the energy fades from him. In another minute, the trickster is out cold. Slowly both Steve and Tony lowers him to the floor of the jet.

"Okay, I think I believe you guys," Steve comments breathlessly. He is relieved that Thor decided to use his own methods of traveling after losing the argument to be the one to get his brother. They didn't need the jet to be striked down with lightening. "Has he done that before too?"

"Something similar. Here Tony," Bruce replies, handing Tony some guaze for his bleeding nose.

Steve looks as the pair of assassins, not surprised to see them looking back, then to each other. Natasha nods before turning her attention to piloting. Clint however has a dark look in his eyes and shakes his head in disbelief. "Will you examine him once we reach Stark towers?"
"Yeah, I think that's a given," Bruce replies with an exhausted sigh.

When they land on the roof of the tower, it's Steve who carries the unconscious God off of the jet and to the newly added medical section of the tower. The assassins do not enter the tower, instead they take off with the jet, claiming they received a call that is top secret. The others wouldn't dare say it out loud but they are relieved that they are not staying. Natasha might not have tried to kill Loki every five minutes but none of them were in the mood to dodge arrows. What did surprise them was the fact that the God of Thunder had not yet arrived.

Once Loki is laid down on one of the medical beds, Tony and Steve are ushered out of the room despite Tony's attempts to be allowed to stay. They didn't go far, both leaning against a wall and looking at nothing in particular.

"How is your nose?"

"Fine. Wish I could say it was the only time it's been smashed," Tony replies with a wishful smile.

"I remember, before I got the super soldier serum, whenever someone punched me in the nose it would bleed for a good hour. Now, it might make me sneeze but that's about it," Steve shares for no particular reason.

"So you have a super nose?"

"Super nose?"

"Like a bloodhound? If it's wet, does that mean you're sick?" Tony questions.

"How hard did he hit you in the head?" Steve asks with concern since nothing Tony is saying is making any sense to him now.

Tony laughs but is cut short when Bruce sticks his head out from the door. "Tony, can I have your assistance please?"

Tony and Steve exchange looks before Tony follows the not-officially-a-doctor-but-is-the-best-they-have. Once they are a few feet from the door, Bruce plops down in a chair that is still a little ways from where Loki is resting.

"It's not good, is it?" Tony asks, not really wanting to hear the answer.

"No, it's not," Bruce growls, making Tony take a cautious step back. He realizes the man is shaking, a sign that he is fighting to control his other side.

"Maybe you need a break? A really long one? Nap?" Tony suggests, looking around for something to wield in case the Hulk wins the inner struggle for control.

Bruce suddenly goes still and Tony swears his heart skipped a beat. Then the smaller man takes a few deep breaths before removing his glasses and pinching the bridge of his nose. "No, no, I'm fine. Almost lost it there. Almost," Bruce mutters the last word.

Tony doesn't say anything, choosing for once to keep his mouth shut.

"It happened again," Bruce says quietly.

"Hey, don't sweat it. We all have bad days. And you always get the worse jobs around here and..." Tony rambles a bit, hoping to placate the man.
"Not that. I mean with Loki. He...he was..." Bruce starts to explain.

Tony stares at him with confusion for several minutes. Then Bruce could actually see the light come on inside Tony's head. "No, no way! Fury is a Class A dick but he wouldn't go that far! Roughing him up, that I was hoping wouldn't happen but was expected! But that?! No way!" Tony shouts.

"Tony, calm down. Yelling won't help..." This time it's Bruce trying to placate his teammate but his efforts get ignored.

"Jarvis! Get me any and all security footage they have from when they brought Loki to the Helicarrier!" Tony orders the AI.

"At once sir," the AI replies.

Bruce opens his mouth to say something but closes it. He wants to see the footage just as badly as Stark. Or at least see as much as he can handle before the big guy says it's enough. He follows Stark to a near by desk and a holo screen pops up.

"Playing security footage now sir," the AI announces before the footage plays out.

At first they see nothing strange, just various cameras recording Loki being led through the Helicarrier to the new cell. Tony notices that Bruce had followed as much as he was allowed until about half way through. He is about to ask about it when Bruce started to explain.

"When they came into the cabin, they made it really clear they were there for Loki. I was warned that if the other guy made an appearance, they would lock both of us up. If he didn't I would be allowed to accompany him. He never fought. He just went along quietly. If he had fought, he wouldn't have fought alone," Bruce tells him.

Tony didn't have to ask what he meant. Dr. Banner held off hulking out and went along in case that was needed later. They watch as Loki is shoved into the cell then how he is chained by the neck to the floor then redo the cuffs on his wrists, so his hands are restrained behind his back. Both men glare at the screen when Fury appears.

"Jarvis, sound," Tony mutters.

"We made some modifications just for you. But the basic idea is still there. Let me show you. Let's get down to business, I don't like wasting my time with all these pleasantries. Why are you back on Earth?"

"I was banished here."

"Banished huh. Let me guess, for all the wicked you have done? Seems like Odin went easy on you. Or is this a bullshit story?"

"He was without mercy. He made sure I no longer pose a threat to this world."

"Oh really? How so?"

"He stripped me of my magick and my Jotun abilities."

"What the heck is a Jotun?"

"Frost giant."

"Wait a second, I thought you were, what do they call themselves? An Asgardian?"
"I was adopted. My real origin is Jotun."

"Sorry, I just realized that you said that you are a giant. I don't know what your people believe but here Giants are large beings, believed to be several stories tall. What, the other species the size of ants?"

"They are massive in size. I...I'm considered a runt and therefore was thrown away. That is how Odin found me."

"A runt huh, well they got that part right. Alright, so Odin stripped you of your powers and dropped you off here. What next?"

"I don't know."

"Well, I ain't buying it. Maybe you were stripped of your powers. Maybe you were cast down to our world as punishment. Then again, maybe you are full of it. Trying to get me to underestimate you so when I give you a second of doubt, you can bring this entire Helicarrier crashing down. Not going to happen."

They watch Fury turn to the right, ms peaking to someone not on the screen.

"Did I not give the order that I am not to be disturbed when interrogating the prisoner?"

There is a faint voice but they can't make out what the other person is saying. They assume it's someone announcing the rest of the teams arrival when they hear...

"I wonder what they want with you. Maybe they want to ask you a few questions themselves. Tell them I'll meet them in the conference room. As for you, I am going to give you a few minutes to gather yourself because when I get back, I want as much information about the Chitauri and your involvement as much as possible. I expect to get answers."

They watch Fury get up and walk away. They think he has left to go to the conference when they hear something being muttered.

"Jarvis, can you play that again but with increase volume?"

"Certainly sir."

"You have fifteen minutes. He is to be able to speak when I come back. Screw up and I will personally toss you off the ship. They hear Fury order off camera to someone.

"What the...he was answering your questions!" Tony shouts at the screen. He takes a mental note to personally hack and add several computer bugs into the Shield's system before the end of the day.

The cameras switch to the back of the cell and they watch as six agents wearing the night vision gear enter the cell. Again cameras change and despite the inner cell being pitched black, the camera shows them what is going on as it suddenly lights up with green light. Both watch as the men hit and kick Loki before everything goes black and the only sound they hear is static as Fury earlier experience.

"What the heck is this Jarvis?"

"I'm not sure, sir. Apparently there had been some electrical interference," the AI replies.

"How long does this last?" Bruce answers.
"Thrity seven minutes and forty nine seconds Mr. Banner."

"Could that be when..." Tony asks.

"It has to be. But is the interference part of Shield's plan to cover up what they did to him?" Bruce asks in return.

"Fury order gave them fifteen minutes. The way Fury bosses us around, I don't think his men have the guts to disobey him. Something is up," Tony points out.

They both walk away from the desk and over to the sleeping Loki. The former Prince doesn't have any type of expression on his face as he sleeps.

"I used a tranquilizer on the jet. I'm not sure though how long he will be out. He may be reduce to a mortal concerning strengths but his DNA is anything but human. So I don't know really how it will affect him," Bruce reports quietly.

"How did you know?" Tony asks, the words having to work their way past his dry lips.

"When I was examining his ribs on his left side, I noticed some bruising on his hips. It's from there that I found the obvious physical trauma," Bruce answers.

"Why did it have to happen again?" Tony asks, knowing he won't receive an answer.

"I'm afraid we need to restrain him for the time being," Bruce says quietly.

"Restrain him? Why?"

"Because of what happened on the jet. We know better than anyone else what his mental condition was like before Shield took him into custody. Tell me Tony, if you went through what he has, what would you be like?" Bruce asks.

"I'd want to lock myself away from any and every living being. Get drunk and stay that way. Alright, tell me what to do." Tony says with a sigh.

After a few minutes, they have restrained Loki's wrists to the sides of the medical bed and his legs to the bed. Neither were happy about this but both agreed it was necessary. Thankfully Loki remained asleep as they did this. Now their concern was what state the former Prince of Asgard will be when he wakes up.

"I just remember leaving the good captain out there waiting," Tony comments.

"We should tell him," Bruce shares, watching for Tony's reaction.

Tony sighs and thinks this over. Never in his wildest imagination would he have thought that a trip to a cabin would result in him being in this particular predicament. Often he did his damnedest to stay out of such situations. Yet here he is, smack dab in the middle. At least he isn't alone. "Can't hurt. I think our dear capickle plans to hang around regardless so if something were to happen... Heck, he can be the one to tell Thor whenever he gets back."

"Any idea where Thor is? I really thought he would beat us here," Bruce comments.

"No idea. But you know what, I wouldn't want to be in his shoes for the world," Tony replies as the two leave the medical center to fill in their team mate, both agreeing that misery loves company.

A few minutes later while the trio are on another floor having drinks, Loki stirs. His green eyes open
slowly, blinking to adjust to the brightness in the room. He tries to lift an arm to shield them but for some unknown reason he finds them unresponsive. Looking down at himself, he becomes confused to see himself on an elevated bed. His bed is only a mattress on the floor. ‘Wait’, he thinks, ‘that isn’t right’. He doesn’t have a bed anymore. There isn’t one in the large round cell that he is in. ‘None of this is right,’ he thinks. He shouldn’t be able to lay on his back. He should be on his knees, his neck chained to the floor...

Then it all comes back to him. The chat with the man who runs both Shield and the Avengers. The men that came in after he left. Then the Other showing up. A cry leaves his lips. He see’s the blue eyes when he looked to his sides and the few times he looked behind himself. And he remembers what they did to him.

He pulls hard against the wrist restraints, bruising the skin of his wrists. His mind is screaming at him, telling him he needs to run, to escape. But after a few minutes he realizes it's no good. He looks around, his head whipping from side to side as he is almost panting for breath. There is a moment of relief when he acknowledges that he is no longer in the cell. But the moment is short lived when he tries to shift his legs, finding them restrained as well. And that he is naked under the white blanket. His stomach twists in fear, his body breaking into a sweat.

Unable to do anything else, he lays there as his mind fully wakens. He recalls everything. Not just the act in the round cell but what happened at the cabin as well. Why did these things happen to him? Why is it in his fate? Never before had his body experienced such pain and humiliation. Such degradation.

No one in Asgard would have dared try to use his body in such a manner. Even in the dungeon, all they did was throw their petty insults at him. Some hinted at his sexuality, specially when his origin became basic knowledge. But that was only to try to shame him. To make it known to him how disgusting they truly find him to be. They may have threatened to harm him but he had remained untouched.

Until he came back here. Staring up at the ceiling as he tries in vain to calm himself, he wonders if the Allfather knows. He must, Loki decides. Nothing escapes Heimdall's sight. And if he has seen, then Odin knows. Possibly all of Asgard knows. Not only that but the Other is sure to have also reported these terrible acts to Thanos. They all know. They all know how Loki, the once proud Prince of Asgard, had been used not only a single time, but several times now, as a common whore.

He turns his head and fights the urge to vomit. Tears flow from his eyes. That ugly word repeats itself in his mind. Whore. He had wondered how far he would fall. Now he knows, for how can anyone fall any lower than that? Enslavement possibly. But he has heard that slaves also get used like this and their bodies are also broken. The difference is that they are expected to follow the orders given to them by their masters. He wonders if this too will be forced upon him. Then he decides it doesn't matter anymore. For now he understands his punishment. It's not simply to repay the debts that he owes. He wishes it had been.

His stomach that a moment ago had been twisting, now fills with the icy cold of dread. There are others he realizes must know about what happened. Those agents, those men, they worked for Director Fury. They must have reported it by now. He could see them bragging about it, even though they were under the influence of the Other's influence. He could see Fury's approving nod.

His mind doesn't stop there though he wishes it did. But it seemed like it was under another's control, which terrifies him. Some one else that was determined to make him suffer. And there are so many that would want that.

His mind plays out a scene where the Avengers are gathered. Fury informs them of what had
happened. And he see's them in his mind's eye cheering. Celebrating. Expressing their approval, saying it is the least he deserves for his actions. Some saying they wish they had seen it. That they had done it. Barton's voice being the loudest. Then he hears their whispers. Whispers that fill him with fear. It's not only the voices of the Avengers he hears. No, he hears the Other making promises of further pain of further humiliation.

Loki finds himself wanting something that before would enrage him. He wants to curl up, make himself so small that he may go on unnoticed. To beg for leniency. Beg them to leave him be. Willing to promise to do anything just to remain untouched. These thoughts make him sick again.

When he hears a door open, he goes still. He hears voices, familiar voices. The Avengers. He starts to tremble. They have him. They are the ones that have him restrained to this bed. It's going to happen! He again starts to struggle against the restraints, soon breathing heavy with effort.

Bruce, Tony and Steve approach him and they instantly know something is wrong. The former trickster is straining against the restraints, obviously experiencing a fit of panic. The men hurry over, Steve being the first to get to Loki's side.

"Hey, easy! You are okay! You're safe," Steve tries to calm him, placing a hand on Loki's shoulder.

Loki flinches from the contact and looks up at the blonde hero. His eyes widen when he meets the set of blue eyes gazing into his own. Blue eyes with hunger, Loki thinks. "No, no, no, please no!" The words spill out of him as he turns his head away from the Captain's concerned gaze, closing his eyes shut. "Please, please, no."

"Loki, Loki, calm down. We need you to calm down," Bruce tells the fallen God. He glances over at the nearby heart monitor, seeing the high heart rate. "Come on Loki, work with us. Take a deep breath. Try to calm down."

Loki seems either not to be hearing him or unable to comply with the gamma specialist requests. If anything, he struggles more. His pleas grow in volume, the men sharing concern looks. Bruce sighs and walks away, muttering for the other two to try to keep him still. When Tony and Steve both touch him, Loki cries out, his emerald eyes opening in fear.

When he see's the shorter man return with a syringe, Loki's eyes widen. "Please, no. I...I won't fight. I'll give in. Please," Loki pleads, his eyes glued to the syringe.

"Loki, this is just to help you rest. It won't hurt. No one will hurt you," Bruce tells the frightened God quietly, moving next to Steve and injects Loki in the arm.

Loki whimpers when he feels the prick. The men step back from him and Loki feels as if they looking at him the way wolves would look at a lame lamb. He looks at their faces and moans. They all have blue eyes. He closes his own in despair. Soon, he gives into the warmth of darkness.

"Will we just keep putting him under?" Steve questions.

"No. Hopefully next time he wakes, he will be more...clear minded," Bruce replies.

"I wouldn't bet on that," Tony mutters.

"Anyway, someone should stay with him for the time being," Bruce suggest.

The men look at each other for a moment before Tony sits himself down in the chair and picks up a old magazine. The fellow team mates stare at him.
"Look, I might not have much bed side experience, but I can at least watch him. And if I get bored, I'll ask Jarvis to get me some video feed," Stark tells them with a dismissive wave. He watches the two men nod and leave the medical floor. He waits several minutes before speaking.

"Jarvis, send a gift basket to Shields computer system. Give them the worse computer viruses we have. And delete their files on Loki Laufyson," Tony orders.

"Doing so now sir. Is there any other requests?"

"Make sure we have the copies of those files. Send them to my I pad for me to read over later," Tony replies.

His AI says nothing more. Tony looks over at the sleeping God for a few minutes, watching the thin chest rise and fall.

"You really have a knack of flipping the world upside down don't you Reindeer games?"

Meanwhile, back in the almost forgotten cabin, Thor is sitting in the room where had originally kept his brother. He reads the writing on the wall again, stopping at the words Loki noticed earlier. He burns them into memory. He could not believe what happened to his brother. What he had not only allowed to happen but had punished his brother for it. His guilt has been eating away from it the moment he learned the truth. Why had he not listened?

He knows by now that Loki must be at the tower. But he can't bring himself to go and see him. It's not his brother's rage or accusations that keep him away. In fact he hopes that when he does go, he will witness both of these. It's the least he deserves. No, what keeps him away is seeing that defeated expression Loki had when he saw him last. He had never seen that expression before. In fact he doubted very much that Loki is all to familiar with defeat. Yes, they defeated him in New York, but that expression wasn't there. No, Loki had looked defiant, his expression swearing he isn't done yet.

Never would he have thought that this sentence would be the one to possibly destroy his brother. He believed his brother would remain defiant. That his pride would remain in tact. Thor sighs as he thinks back to how he thought things were going to go. That after a few days, no more than a few weeks at most, his brother would accept though begrudgingly, his sentence. He would accept being taught how to survive. That his brother would embrace the solitude given to him. Then Thor would have left him to his own devices. He would have checked on is brother now and then, maybe after some time the two can spend time without the jealousy and hate that plagues their relationship now. But that plan quickly fell apart.

Slowly he gets up and walks over to the small pile of books he had given to Loki. He gathers them up carefully. He hopes Loki will be happy to have these. There is nothing more that Loki loves than his books. Maybe he could ask Stark to finish the library section he had planned to add to the tower. A place for his brother. Despite everything that has happened to their relationship, he can't help but want to at least make his brother comfortable in his new situation.

Once he has the books, he turns and starts to walk out of the room. His foot kicks something, sending it spinning across the floor. Thor looks down at the object. It's the fire poker. He bends down and picks up the fire poker. He examines it, slowly turning it in his large hand. With a growl he goes to the front door and kicks the door open, breaking it off it's hinges. He whips the fire poker, watching it embed itself into a tree from the force of Thor's throw. He stares at the fire poker for a few minutes before retreating back inside, hugging Loki's books to his chest as if they were actually his brother's body. Minutes later, he leaves the cabin with a pair of duffel bags filled with clothes. The books still held firmly in his arms.
Chapter 11

A Fallen God

Chapter 11

A Thor-Loki-Avengers Fanfic

Disclaimer: I don't own the characters, movies, comics or anything else. All that belongs to Marvel and the creators. I don't even know the actors, though I'd like to.

Warnings: Since this is a story in progress, Not sure what to warn ya about. I do tend to write pairings so I might do it here. Or not. There will be some cussing and angst. Some violence. There are references to past rape as well as rape and improper use of a fire poker. So be careful while reading.

Hope you enjoy and please leave comments! Thank you all for reading this and the support!

He's falling again. Then he realizes that he has never stopped. He opens his eyes and see's nothing but darkness. He knows what this is. It's the void. Instead of despair that he usually feels when he realizes this, he feels relief. He is still falling. That means everything else was a dream.

He never landed on the strange world of the Chitauri. He never made the agreement with the Other. He never led an army to invade Midgard. He never fought his brother or the Avengers. But that's not all that means. That means he's not responsible for the lives of hundreds of people that he ended with his actions. Above all, there would be one person that is still alive. Frigga. His mother. She is alive. This makes him smile gratefully.

Everything that has happened was nothing but creations of his damaged mind. They didn't happen. The fact that he is still falling is proof of this. He thinks about the dreams. Nightmares. They were so realistic. Maybe it's because of his craving to do something other than this endless nothing he's experiencing now. But he had done terrible things. And he paid a steep price. His magik had been stripped from him. He felt empty in the dreams. He had been sent to Midgard. Thor had been justifiably cruel to him. He didn't blame him. Then those three men at the cabin and the agents of SHIELD. He shudders from those images. He reminds himself that they are not real. Just nightmares. It didn't happen.

With a deep breath, he closes his eyes, wondering what he will dream next. Then he feels something strange. Opening his eyes, he realizes that his decent has slowed somehow. And something is coming. A strange, blue grey shape. The closer he gets, the more it becomes clear. It's the strange planet of the living metal from his nightmares. Where the creatures who took his magik live. But they can't be real. It was only a dream he thinks in panic.

Yet there they were, looking up at him with featureless faces. Waiting. Anticipating. He realizes they are not alone. There are humans among them. He see's the men from the cabin dream. He see's the Avengers. He see's Director Fury and those agents. And that's not all. Behind them is the Other and in the shadows is the Lord he serves. What terrifies him is seeing the Chitauri who are cheering at the sight of him, along with countless humans.

He see's the grey table from his nightmares and knows he's falling straight toward it. He raises his
arms to shield his face when he lands. There is a lack of pain and at first nothing happens. Slowly he rolls over, looking around at the endless number of beings around him. The sudden silence makes him break out in a sweat. He detects movement to his left and he turns towards it. His green eyes widen at the sight of his brother and adopted father.

They stride up to the table he is laying on. He quickly tries to sit up but finds his body refusing to obey his mental command. Instead his arms stretch out on either side of him and remain that way. Then his legs do the same. He feels the terror fill him, like ice water is being pumped from his beating heart rather than warm blood.

He looks to his only known family. Thor moves to his right while Odin remains on his left. He utters a whimper as he watches their eyes begin to glow an all too familiar shade of blue. It didn't stop with them, for Loki notices that the eyes of those standing behind them also begin to glow. Then whispers start to develop. At first it was too muffled to make out. But then he could hear it. They were were whispering his name. And the titles they have given him over the centuries. Lie smith. Silver tongue. Traitor. False son of Odin.

Odin then steps forward and stretches a hand towards Loki. Loki wants to pull away, to make sure that hand never touches him. But he can't. He can't move at all. Odin's hand touches the leather covering his chest. At the point of contact, the leather crumbles and turns to dust, falling away to reveal Loki's pale flesh. He cries out in fear. Odin withdraws his hand. Thor takes a step closer.

Loki locks his eyes with Thor's glowing pair. "Thor...Brother...please help me," he pleads.

Thor reaches his hand out as Odin did a moment ago. Loki shakes his head, knowing his brother isn't reaching out to help him. He watches in terror as his brother grabs the skin on his chest and pulls. His mouth opens to scream but no sound comes out. Instead he is left to hear the horrible sound of his skin ripping apart. The pain is unbearable. But he can't close his eyes. He can't scream. He can't do anything. All he can do is watch as his brother tears a chunk of his flesh. When Thor raises the bit of Loki's flesh to his mouth, that is when Loki is suddenly able to scream. And at the sound of his scream, the hoards around him suddenly move towards him.

This is when Loki wakes with a gasp. He looks around, expecting to see the hordes surround him. He feels a moment of relief at the absence. Until his eyes find Stark who is looking at him with a curious expression. He nearly cries out at the sight of the man but manages to strangle the sound when he closes his lips. Instead he turns his head away and closes his eyes.

"Welcome back to the land of living," Tony greets. "So how are you feeling? Not going to freak out again are you?"

Loki remains still for a few minutes before he shakes his head. He opens his eyes but refuses to look in the direction of the Avenger.

"Not really talkative are we? Then again, after what you have been through, I wouldn't want to talk to anyone either," Tony comments. He hears the sharp intake of breath that Loki takes. He also hears the restraints jingle as Loki slowly tugs on them. "Easy there Dasher. I don't want to have to get Bruce to put you under again."

Tony can see how Loki's body become stiff at that comment. Loki also stops jerking at the cuff restraints. Tony shifts in the seat, sitting up a bit more so he can see Loki's face despite the fact the trickster is facing the other way. He regrets this when he see's the terrified expression on the usually smug face.

He tries to think of something to say to the broken God. But what can he possibly say that will bring
some relief or comfort? What can anyone say? He tries to think of what was said to him when he came back from the caves of Afghanistan. He had been greeted by Rhody, as he recalls but he can not remember what Rhody had said. Something about riding with him. There had to be more to that because he felt relieved and secure when he saw his friend.

Then it hits him. Rhody hadn't said anything that comforted him. It was Rhody himself being there, a familiar face, a friend. Rhody had grounded in the reality that he would be safe. That there was no longer a possibility of being caught and sent back to those accursed caves. It's why he appreciated their friendship. Even more so at this moment.

But he also feels for Loki more than he ever thought he would at this moment. Is there anyone the God of Mischief can even call friend? Anyone who can make him feel safe and secure? He knows the God has plenty of enemies but he can't think of a single person who would even be willing to be friendly with the would be ruler. He wonders how much damage that single truth has caused the trickster.

He thinks about what he does know about Loki Laufyson. Before the cabin, he knew the guy had a massive ego and was power hungry. He not only wanted to conquer the planet but he wanted all to see him as the God he is. Confidence didn't seem to be an issue. But then again, Loki is the God of lies and trickery. Maybe it was all an act. One that was so good, that Loki believed it himself.

In truth, he knows very little about Thor's adopted brother. Not even a paragraph worth. Now the destruction and mayhem could easily be turned into a novel. His motives seem to be obvious. It is so easy to say he is just a bad egg, an evil prick. That's exactly what Tony himself thought of Loki. He saw him as a spoiled kid acting out because of daddy issues. But maybe there is more to it? He rubs his face for a moment. He can come up with a ton of questions but still can't think of what to actually say to the broken God.

Loki is also lost to his own thoughts. Thoughts that bring him no form of comfort. They tell him that the dreams he thought he had were not dreams at all. He did those terrible things. He brought war and destruction and death. He killed the one person who loved him without expectation nor cared if he was in the shadows. And he personally destroyed the relationship between him and his brother. He made a mess of his life and now he has nothing left but the ruins he's responsible for.

The nightmare replays in his mind, making him shiver. The terrifying scene of the countless beings that wanted their pound of flesh from him is still clear in his mind. So is the image of Thor actually eating the bit he took from Loki. They won't leave his mind. He pulls again on the cuffs but only for a moment and almost without realizing he's doing it. Then he just stops.

A realization hits him, the dream making sense. It was his minds way of reminding him painfully that he owes a large debt and his fallen status is not enough to repay it. No where near it. No, the only possible payment is with his flesh. His body. He had been denying this, fighting against it. Even after the attack at the cabin, he still stubbornly fought. Didn't he even consider for a moment to attack Stark, the very man sitting next to him, back at the cabin? When he was enraged by those comments. By the accusations.

A long sigh leaves him, his body going almost limp. He is letting go. Surrendering his strength. What go will it do him, he decides. He has no choice. He couldn't fight them in the dream. He can't fight them in life. He is powerless. It's time for him to not only think it but live with it. It's what he deserves for his actions. Loki the God of Mischief has died. He needs to quit trying to hold on. Let go. No more pride. No more lies.

He feels his eyes sting with tears but he won't let them fall. He doesn't deserve to feel sorry for himself. It's his punishment. He feels the pain in his body. He also feels the cold steel of the fire
poker. And the hands touching him. He feels them entering him again and again. His stomach turns. He wants to clean himself. He needs to. But he also tells himself he needs to get use to these feelings.

Because it's not over. The Avengers have him now. He owes them as well. Maybe he owes them the most. A small glimmer of hopes developed in him. He wants to extinguish it. But he can't. The idea is too appealing. The idea that if he gives himself willing to Earth Mightiest heroes, to do whatever they want and allow them to do whatever they want to him, maybe just maybe, he can begin to even things out. Even if there is nothing left of him at the end.

"Loki?" He hears Tony Stark say his name quietly.

Taking in a shaky breath, he turns his head to face the Avenger. He keeps his eyes low though, not wanting to face the blue glowing orbs. If he does, he fears he will lose his conviction.

"Hungry? I can get you just about anything. I know I am starving," Tony tells him.

Loki shakes his head even though he knows he is hungry. His mind whispers warnings. If he troubles them, then that will be another mark against him, something else he has to pay for. The idea is to pay, not increase the debt. He needs to pay.

"Hmm. Look, you need to eat. It does no one any good if you get sick or something," Tony tells him.

Loki thinks about this. It makes sense. No one would want to use him if he’s sick.

"How about this, I'll go and make you a smoothie. It's a cold drink with fruit in it. If you finish it, I'll convince the others to take off the restraints and give you some clothing. Then I'll take you to your new room. Sound feasible?" Tony suggests.

Loki nods only slightly, his eyes never meeting with Tony's. He hears Tony get up but knows he hasn't left. He could feel the man's eyes look him over. Loki closes his own and tries to keep his body still despite the trembling. After a few agonizing moments, he hears Tony walk away. He lets out a shaky breath but keeps his eyes closed. He only opens them when he can no longer stand the nightmarish images of Stark taking advantage of him.

A few hours later, Loki finds himself sitting on a single bed. His hair is dripping water down his back from the long shower he had been allowed to take. His pale skin is red from the heat of the water and some parts of him has raw skin from the scrubbing. Keeping his eyes lowered, he focuses on the black sweat pants that are not quite long enough for his legs, the bottom on the pants reaching nowhere near his ankles. He had refused the shirt that was offered along with the pants. He doesn't see the point of it since he is sure it will be torn off of him later.

The three members of the Avengers are nearby, two are watching him while the third gives him the run down of the rules for his stay here. He nods when he thinks it's required but that is the only response he gives. The rules are very direct. Do not leave the tower under any circumstance. Do not attempt to attack anyone who happens to be within the tower. The medical section, workshop, and labs are off limits. He will be monitored closely by something called Jarvis at all times. There are other rules but Loki gets the general gist of it. They were to be expected after all for what he has done.

What they don't realize is that Loki has no intention of leaving this room. Once the men finish this talk and do what they will to him, he plans to go to the corner of the room and remain there. That way he can watch the door, see them coming instead of leaving himself vulnerable. In fact he wants them to know they don't need to use such methods to get what they want. To know he won't fight.
He won't even make them have to look for him for he will always be here.

Steve Rogers goes quiet after listing the rules and Loki tenses. He tries to prepare himself for the feel of the three men when they come to him. He bites his lip so he won't make any noise when they touch him. Bruce Banner steps closer to him and Loki watches his feet move themselves closer to him. So it will be the good doctor that goes first.

He closes his eyes when he feels weight on the bed beside him, his mind telling him repeatedly to remain still.

"These are your books right?" Bruce Banner asks.

Loki opens his eyes and turns, looking at the pile of books on the bed next to him. They are the same books from the cabin. Books he thought he would not see again since he will not be returning to the cabin. The corners of his lips curl upwards just slightly. He has to fight the urge to grab them, hold them close to his body. When they are done with him, if he has any energy left, maybe he could read them. But he has to deal with this first.

He gives them a nod, both in admitting the books are his and for them to go ahead with whatever they will do to him. At least when they are done, the books will be waiting for him.

"Loki...try to get some rest. One of us will bring you something to eat later," one of the Avengers tells him. Then he hears them get up and leave the room. The last sound he hears is the click of his door closing. He doesn't move for several minutes. Maybe they will come back. One of them is going to come back. Then it will happen. He will wait. He will be ready.

Meanwhile, the three Avengers walk down the narrow hallway till they are standing in the suddenly open space of a living room like space. There were two long black leather couches and a matching recliner, all facing the glass walls that display the city. As if sharing the same mindset, they go for the furniture, Steve and Bruce on the couch while Tony steals the recliner.

No one says anything for a few minutes.

Not until Tony breaks the silence. "So should we get big brother here?"

"No. Thor said he wanted to be alone. I think he feels responsible for what happened to Loki," Steve replies.

"I wonder why? Oh, yeah, because it is his fault," Tony states, his voice showing how on edge he is despite his flippant behavior.

"Tony..." Bruce mutters.


"He could have argued with his dad, tell him what a bad idea it would be to send him to earth. Or at least made sure he wasn't left vulnerable so any hick that comes across can have his way with him. Or at the very least treated his wounds before Bruce and I had to. Trust me, he could of helped a lot more than he did," Tony replies with an even glare.

"That's your own guilt speaking," Steve says with a chillingly calm voice.

"Say what?"

"Why did you agree to go with Banner? Loki was locked up and without powers. He wasn't a threat. Worse he could do is mouth off. Something Banner could handle. So why did you go? You went to
see Loki in his new state. You wanted to gloat. Rub it in a little. Not something I agree with but considering what he has done personally to you, I can't blame you. If Barton had gone for the same reasons, I wouldn't blame him either. But when you got to the cabin, you found out things weren't as you imagined, didn't you? So you feel guilty for wanting to get revenge on a guy that had been...raped," Steve says the last word quietly, his face showing the disgust the word makes him feel.

Tony glares at the legendary Captain America for several minutes before angrily getting up and stalking off.

"You know he means nothing by it," Bruce comments.

"He shouldn't be pointing the finger at others if he can't face his own faults."

"And what are yours?" Bruce asks quietly.

"Not knowing how to even begin to grasp this situation. Loki Laufyson is an intergalactic enemy. He tried to make humanity bow to him. He is responsible for hundreds of lost lives. Maybe I should not feel anything for the guy. Maybe I should not have had suggested him being brought here. Maybe I should of let Fury lock him away for good," Steve replies with a sigh.

"You think being the good guy, even to a villain, is a fault of yours?"

"Something like that. There are times when things seem to be clearly define as good or bad. But then there are these gray areas. Loki is a villain. He doesn't deserve any kindness for the things he's done. But that goes against the idea that everyone deserves kindness. And knowing what happened to Loki...what should I be doing? Should I be wanting him to be punished for his crimes regardless or show leniency? I just don't know," Steve shares, rubbing his hands in his short blonde hair.

"Yeah, it's not easy. When Thor asked me to watch him, I thought he was crazy. I couldn't wrap my head around the idea. I must have asked him a dozen times why Loki isn't in a cell where they come from. Or why he was asking me of all people to watch over the God of mischief. It wasn't until he told me that Loki had been reduced to that of an everyday human being and promising me that he will be locked away in a room. All I would have to do is let him out for the bathroom needs and leave him with food and water. There was suppose to be no issues. Even when I found out Tony was coming, I actually felt even better about the situation. I was going in thinking that I would be doing no more than baby sitting the Norse god. I can't explain what went through my mind when I saw the condition he was in. I understand how Tony feels. Thor didn't tell us how bad he was. I felt he should have. Whatever issues they have, Loki needed treatment. At the sight of the blood, I forgot all about him being an enemy of ours. He became just like anyone else at that moment," Bruce shares.

Steve doesn't say anything but nods his head in understanding. A few minutes of silence passes between them as each thinks over the situation. Steve takes in a deep breath and looks Bruce in the eyes. "So what do we do now?"

Bruce smiles. "We take things one day at a time. We wait and see what happens. Nothing more we can do for now."

"But how do we treat Loki? As a villain? Or as a victim?" Steve asks, his voice revealing the need for an answer.

"As someone who no undoubtedly is broken."
Chapter 12

Five days later, the four Avengers are eating lunch in silence. Occasionally one of them would look towards the hallway where their guest bedroom is. After a few minutes, they all stop eating at once, their food soon becomes forgotten. Finally, Steve stands up.

"We can't let things keep going on like this," Steve comments, rubbing his hands as if they are stiff.

"There's nothing we can do Steve. We can't force him to come out," Bruce replies.

"He's been in there five days straight. He doesn't look like he's sleeping well. He barely eats. And he hasn't said a word. The guy needs therapy," Steve shares with frustration.

"I doubt it will do him any good. Therapy works only as long as the person wants help," Bruce points out.

"Are you suggesting that my brother wants to stay this way?" Thor asks, glaring at his team mate.

"What I am suggesting is that therapy would be a waste of time if he refuses to speak. That's what most of therapy is Thor, talking," Bruce explains.

Steve glances over to Tony as Bruce begins answering Thor's questions about the Midgardian version of therapy and how talking can help anything. A conversation they had a few days ago. A conversation they repeat for the sake of breaking the silence and therefore possibly break the stress that has been growing. He doubts Thor is actually listening. He's asking the same questions as before. Thankfully, Bruce is calmly answering them again though not asking many of his own as he had done last time they had this discussion. They all learned that in Asgard, people with issues similar to Loki's get sent away to the outer edges to Asgard to live quiet lives. They all understood what that really meant. They were sent away to be put out of sight. To be forgotten.

This didn't sit well with any of them. Specially not Tony. Since that conversation, Tony has been just as quiet as Loki. He greets them when they gather for meals like they are now but that's about it. Often he sits there, drinking his daily dose of caffeine with a look as if lost in thought. Is he thinking about Loki or some project in his workshop is anyone's guess. None of them had dared to ask. Until
"So what has the self acclaimed brilliant Tony Stark so distracted?" Steve asks, hoping the quiet jab will get a response.

"Genius, not just brilliant," Stark replies.

"There's a difference?" Steve asks, clearly confused.

"There is," Tony replies with a smile. Despite what's been on his mind, he can not help but mess with the Captain. Specially when he is practically begging for it. The smile is short lived though as his mind returns to it's previous line of thought. But this time he doesn't remain quiet. "We can't leave the Asgardian Prince in there brooding like that, can we?"

"You have an idea as to how to get him to come out? Because honestly I can't think of anything we haven't tried," Steve comments. The first three days, each of them tried to encourage Loki to leave the room at least much less talk to them. Nothing worked. They couldn't even get him to look them in the eye. Another disturbing fact they realized about the fallen God.

"Stark, if you have a way to help my brother, then please, tell us," Thor pleas, ignoring the looks from the other men.

"No promises Point Break. Just a possibility. A slim chance. I have to make a call," Tony states, suddenly getting up and rushing away from the table.

"Did I offend him?" Thor asks.

"No. Whatever Tony has in mind, it must be something important to him as well is all," Bruce replies.

As the three wait to see what will happen, Tony takes the elevator down to his workshop. His fingers drum against the sides of the elevator from impatience. Not the first time he considers making these elevators move just a bit faster. It can't be all that hard really. When he hears the chime and the doors open in from of him, he quickly enters his workshop space, heading to a large desk tucked in the corner. A desk he rarely uses for it's sole purpose is to take care of the important matters of Stark Industries that simply can't wait until he is finished with whatever project he is doing. Needless to say, it is cluttered with junk that has a nice layer of dust on it.

It also has the holo screen for video phone chats meant for long, boring board meetings. Meetings he rarely attends in person and has yet to ever attend by said video chat. The idea was suggested by Pepper Potts. He accepted it, knowing he would never use it for that intended purpose. He suspects she knew it as well. They both knew how protective he is of his special projects. It was the thought that counts.

Now, for the first time he will be using it. But not for a board meeting. Though he will be chatting with the CEO of Stark Industries.

"Jarvis, dial Miss Potts please," Tony requests, happy to hear his voice is steady as ever despite the twisting of his stomach. It has been a long time since he talked to the red head. Not since having a few short words over the break up. He shakes his head. Not the time for that, he tells himself.

'Dialing now sir'

He swallows at seeing her image suddenly appear before him. A small smile forms when he notices that she hasn't changed her appearance much. What is up with the granny bun though?
"Tony?" An all too familiar voice says, a mixture of suspicion and concern laced within the voice.

"Hey Pepper. Been a while," Tony greets, wincing inwardly at the sound of his voice.

"Is everything okay Tony?"

Again he finds himself smiling. Good Ol Pepper. Always so concerned, even though they are no longer together.

"Yeah, yeah, everything's good. Why would you ask?"

"Maybe because you haven't called me since...well you know," Pepper replies.

Again the smile fades. He knows what she is referring to. "Ahh, yeah, that. Well, as you can see, I am fine. The other Avengers are fine. The world is relatively safe for the moment. So everything is fine," he tells her.

"I see. So...why are you calling me?" Pepper asks.

"Because...I need your help," Tony tells her.

He explains the situation concerning Loki, leaving nothing out. He hears the tiny gasps at the knowledge of the rapes. He keeps expecting her to interrupt, specially at the part where the God of Mischief is now a resident of Stark towers. Yet she only corrected him, reminding him it's now officially the Avengers headquarters. As if she is still trying to keep him modest. When he is finally done explaining the situation, there is a few moments of silence in which he was sure that he had somehow lost connection. Then she replies, "I can be there in two hours."

"Here? Pepper you don't have to fly here. Just need some advice really," Tony explains.

"Tony, I'm coming. With everything you have told me, it sounds like you need me there. Besides, I could use two weeks vacation. Paid vacation," Pepper adds this last line with a bit of humor in her voice.

"Consider it done. Pepper..." Tony says her name before his mind could put together what he wants to say.

"See you soon Tony," she interrupts quickly followed by the beep that tells him that the connection has been terminated.

He stares at the blank screen, listening to the beeps for a moment before finally turning it off. With a classic Tony Stark grin, he sends orders to have Pepper get her two paid weeks of vacation processed as soon as it is received. And to give her a bonus as well. Once he finishes that, he goes to notify the others of their soon to be arriving company.

A little over two hours later, Tony watches Hap open the car door to let Pepper out. Her sunny smile almost makes him forget why she is here. Almost. The moment was lost however when Steve steps forward and introduces himself.

"The legendary Captain America. What a pleasure to finally meet you," he hears Perrper reply.

"Wish it was under better circumstances," Steve mutters.

"Okay, well before we get into that, how about the Boy Scout takes your luggage to your floor while you and I meet with the others waiting for us on the twelfth floor?" Tony deliberately interrupts.
Steve nods and joins Hap at the trunk of the car.

"Thor is here too, isn't he?" Pepper asks.

"The mighty God of Thunder is here, yes. Want to talk to him first?" Tony asks.

"Yes, I do," pepper replies, making Tony raise his eyebrows.

"Okay. Like I said, twelfth floor. I'll give the captain a hand," Tony mutters as he goes towards the other two men. He see's Pepper nod and head inside.

"Umm, there isn't much here to help with," Steve comments.

"Then I can press buttons for you. Consider me your bell hop for the next few minutes," Tony replies. No one else may realize it but Pepper had just used the tone. Meaning she is angry. For once, he feels bad for the big guy.

Tweenty minutes later, it is just her and the Thunder God at the table. Dr. Banner had just left after giving Pepper the run down of Loki's medical condition since first seeing him in the cabin. After agreeing on a few ideas she has, he had left to pass the word along to the other two. Her focus now is on the older brother who refuses to look her in the eye.

"What happened to Loki is not your fault," she tells him quietly.

"I appreciate the words of comfort Ms Potts but sadly I have to reject them. For it is my fault," he states firmly.

"Did you ask those men at the cabin to harm your brother?" Pepper asks.

"Of course not."

"How about the agents? Did you ask them?"

"No."

"Then how is it your fault?"

Thor takes a deep breath before turning to face her. His blue eyes, filled with pain, meeting hers. "I didn't believe Loki when he told me the men attacked him. Instead I sided with his attackers. I left him alone, defenseless and restrained. I made it easy for them. When Stark told me that Shield had come, I said they could have them. I didn't care for his well being at that moment. I didn't care about my own brother at that moment," Thor admits.

"Thor, there's nothing I can say to that. You had your reasons for what you did. Maybe you made some bad decisions. But I don't believe you actually stopped caring for Loki. And what I said earlier is true. None of this is your fault," Pepper states.

"Then whose fault is it? Loki's? My father's?" Thor asks, his voice growing in volume.

"No. Your father. I can only assume, did what he could for Loki. And even though Loki has made some terrible decisions in the past, he isn't responsible for this either. Nor did he deserve it," Pepper replies.

"You speak as if you have some understanding in this matter," Thor comments thoughtfully.

"Because I do. I volunteer at a women's shelter. I talk to women who have been raped or hurt."
"Loki is not a woman."

"No he's not. But the experience and the result are no different then that for a woman. It's why I came here. I might be able to help your brother. And help you. But first, there is some information I need. Starting with what exactly was Loki's sentence?" Pepper asks.

"Why do you need this information?" Thor questions.

"So I know what Loki's situation was right before the incidents took place. More importantly, what was his state of mind was like."

Thor nods and tells her, including the parts Loki doesn't know. As he does this, he realizes how far he has strayed from the Alfather's plan for the fallen son. He will have to return to Asgard and explain the situation to Odin. A conversation he does not look forward to. He tells her after he's finished that he must go.

"Alright but one more question. When Loki was a child, what made him feel safe? Is it something you could bring back for him?"

"The few things that made Loki feel secure have already been stripped away from him. They can't be returned," Thor states before standing.

Pepper watches quietly as he leaves towards the elevator. After a moment it is just her. She sighs and looks down the hallway where she assumes Loki's room to be. "You owe me big time for this Tony," she says out loud before getting up.

She won't deny her nervousness. She knows that the others believe Loki to be practically powerless. But is that just compared to them? She isn't a God, a person with super serum running through her veins, or has a nifty suit in case things go south. Even the assassins have an edge over her. And she can't forget that Loki did try to take over the planet. He even tried killing Tony. Something that will be at the fore front of her mind while she talks to him.

She feels overwhelmed with the idea to turn around, tell Tony off for even suggesting this, and return to her normal everyday life. A life without super heroes or super villains. But she told Tony she would try. On top of that, she told Thor she would try. Maybe not in words but they are relying on her. And Pepper Potts is not one to run from her responsibilities or break promises. So she raises her hand and knock on the door.

As expected, there is no answer. She knocks again, knowing it won't be any different. But she knows that she needs to come off as non threatening. Barging into ones' personal space gives the opposite impression. This time she calls to the hidden God.

"Loki? My name is Pepper Potts. I am a friend of Ton...of the Avengers. I would like to talk to you. If you don't want to, go ahead and tell me now and I'll leave. If not, I'll assume it's okay and I'll come in," she tells him through the door. She waits patiently for more than a few minutes, so he does not feel rushed.

When she hears nothing, she takes in a deep breath as she grasps the door handle and slowly turns it. It takes her a moment to locate Thor's brother. Loki is sitting in the furthest corner from the door, his knees drawn up and his arms crossed across his chest. The way he is shifting just slightly tells her that he had just moved there from wherever he had been before. She glances around and finds the only place for her to sit down is the well made bed, but doesn't sit down right away.

"Hello Loki. As I said outside your door, I just want to talk to you. But if you don't want to, I can
leave. Do you want me to leave?" She asks.

As she waits for a some kind of response, she takes in Loki's appearance. His hair, that appears to have not been cut in awhile, is a mess. She doubts he has taken any care of it besides washing it lately. He isn't wearing a shirt which does surprise her. Usually those who have been through what he has would try to cover up every inch of themselves as possible. Then again, not everyone reacts the same. He seems to be shivering but trying to hide it. Even though he is not looking at her, his focus on a spot on the floor, she can see the bags under his eyes. He honestly doesn't look too healthy. He doesn't give her any response.

"Alright, if you don't mind, I'll sit down on the bed over here," she tells him, again waiting for a moment in case he objects. When he doesn't, she sits down. "Alright. Loki, I want you to know that you do have control in this conversation. You can choose to answer my questions or not. You can ask any questions you have. And you can end this conversation whenever you want. Do you understand?"

She watches Loki nod his head, the first sign that he had even been listening to her at all. She wears an encouraging smile. "Good. Before we start, are you in any pain or discomfort that might mean you need medical attention?"

Loki shakes his head. At least he's responding in some way, she thinks.

"Very well then. Do you want to talk about being sent here?"

Loki shakes his head again.

"How about the cabin?"

Another no.

"SHIELD?" She asks calmly, not at all discouraged by his negative responses. She would have been surprised if he had agreed to discuss any of those incidents right away. So when he shakes his head, she decides to approach a different topic. "You know that Thor is concerned about you."

This statement got a different reaction than she expected. He sighs as his arms uncross and wrap around his knees. The expression on his face seems to be of one of grief. She waits, wondering if he will say anything. But he remains silent.

"He's not the only one. Tony, Bruce and Steve are also concerned about you," she tells him, hoping that her words give him some comfort. That the fallen God will acknowledge that he is not alone. It's very important for him to know he is not alone.

Again, what she see's surprises her. Instead of appearing somewhat comforted, he looks out right terrified. He is shaking badly now and his eyes are widening by the minute. She wonders what is going on inside his mind.

"Loki? Are you alright?" She asks quietly.

A chill runs down her spine when she hears Loki start to laugh. It is a humorless laugh, void of any emotion she recognizes. The laughs make his body shake even harder. Her mind scrambles to understand what is going on. Is this a form of hysteria? Or has the trickster been playing some sort of sick game and isn't able to keep the jest up? Or has he completely lost his mind?

After a few minutes, the laughing dies down.

"Loki?"
"You mortals...are really strange creatures," Loki replies quietly, his breath slowly evening out.

"How so?" She asks, not sure she wants to hear the answer. Her suspicions of this being just a ruse of some sort are slowly mounting along with her anger. If this is just a game, it's a very sick game.

"Always showing such kindness as if to cover the depravity that hides within. It's a very good illusion. But a wasted one," Loki replies.

Pepper stares at the dark haired man, her lips pressed together tightly. Whatever is he talking about, she wonders.

Loki sighs and turns his face towards her, lifting his eyes but still not meeting hers. Instead they seemed to know be looking past her left shoulder. "There is no need to show me any kindness. I acknowledge my actions, my crimes. I know that I am guilty. I deserved what happened to me," he explains, his voice sounding emotionally drained.

"No Loki. No one deserves what happened to you. You don't deserve to have your body violated like that no matter what crimes you have committed," she states firmly.

"But I do. And I have decided to pay for my crimes willingly. So there is no need for you to go through the trouble of wasting your time with me. Just tell them I accept," he tells her.

"Accept what?" She asks, disturbed from what she is hearing. In all her time volunteering at the women's center, she has never heard anyone sound so far lost. Her doubts of this being a ruse quickly become doubts concerning if she can even help the God of mischief.

"Whatever punishment they see fit. It doesn't matter what they do now. Even if it will hurt, it doesn't matter."

"But it does matter! No one deserves to be physically or sexually abused Loki. Including you! It doesn't matter what you did or that you are not human. No one should be forced to feel pain."

"And yet that's what I want. Since being tossed down to this lowly planet, that is all I have wanted. In this hollow, empty form, pain would be at least something. Those men...they made sure I will never forget why I'm here. Debts need to be paid Ms. Potts. Yet all I have is my body. He made me realize that. He made me acknowledge what Odin left me, how I am to repair for my sins. He showed me what will happen," Loki tells her, a hand touching his chest as he speaks.

"He? He who?" Pepper asks.

"Someone else I owed a debt to. He made sure I was punished. He said he would if I failed him. He swore I would wish for something as sweet as pain. And so I do. I want to feel pain. For pain would feel so much better than the filth growing inside me."

"Loki, listen to me..."

"No Ms. Potts. No more kindness. No more lies. No more tricks. No more. No more. It's all very unnecessary now," he says quietly.

Pepper opens her mouth but for the life of her, she can not think of what to say. Loki again turns his head away, this time staring at his books longingly. She takes the hint and stands up.

"I am going to go now Loki. We'll talk again later okay?" She asks. Loki remains still. Disappointed, she walks over to the door.
"Ms. Potts?" Loki's tired voice calls out.

She stops and turns around, curious as to what Loki might say next. Maybe he wants to make a request? Maybe tell her to never come by again. Maybe he'll ask for his brother.

"Have you...ever been with Mr. Stark? Intimately?"

Her eyes narrow in anger and she is about to go off on the so called God. It had all been a game! He had been playing with everyone of them! Including her! She opens her mouth, her eyes burning with fury. Then her mouth snaps shut when Loki's green eyes meet hers.

"Is he gentle?" Loki asks, his voice revealing only one emotion. Desperation.

'Oh my god' is the only thought that goes through her mind when she realizes why Loki is asking her this. It's enough to make her feel sick.
Chapter 13

A Fallen God

Chapter 13

A Thor-Loki-Avengers Fanfic

Disclaimer: I don't own the characters, movies, comics or anything else. All that belongs to Marvel and the creators. I don't even know the actors, though I'd like to.

Warnings: Since this is a story in progress, Not sure what to warn ya about. I do tend to write pairings so I might do it here. Or not. There will be some cussing and angst. Some violence. There are references to past rape as well as rape and improper use of a fire poker. So be careful while reading.

Hope you enjoy and please leave comments! Thank you all for reading this and the support!

________________________________________________________________________________________

He wonders if enough time has passed yet. Maybe he should wait just a little longer to be sure. It won't be easy. He can feel the filth spreading. His inner being already rotted, now his outer flesh is at risk to follow. He needs to be under running water. He needs to wash, to clean it away before his skin breaks out in sores. Before his state becomes so obvious.

This is not the only reason he suffers. His stomach has been reminding him that he no longer has the God like abilities that enable him to go such long periods without substance. His body need him to eat. He tries to put it off. Deal with the discomfort for a while longer. It gets harder to do with each passing day. At first he had been able to manage it, sneaking out from his room when the world outside was well into darkness, going to the kitchen area and eating only small amounts of food that he is sure no one would notice. It helped at first. But lately he has been craving more. And it was getting hard to ignore the effects of eating so little.

He knows he can't put either need off for much longer. But he has to be sure he is alone again. He has to be sure that she is gone. He sighs. The visit from the woman he was not familiar with was a surprise. When she had knocked, he thought it was them. He had been reading when he heard the knock and had quickly put the book with the others and went to the corner to wait.

He had felt a moment of panic when he heard the female voice. He pictured the Widow. The only one he believed wouldn't use him for pleasure like her male team mates. No, he believes she would use him for other means. Such as sharpening her knives with his skin. Or using him as target practice for her precious guns. Barton had told him that she knew how to shoot a person that wouldn't kill them if they receive medical attention. He had no doubt that when the Avengers grew tired of him, it would be her to end his sentence as well as his life.

But the voice wasn't the widow’s, he realizes. No, this voice did not hide the emotion present in it. He could hear the nervousness in the kind voice. Curiosity came over him as he waited for the owner to enter his room. When the door opened, he focused his eyes on the floor and waited. Despite the kindness in her voice, he couldn't bring himself to look and see if her eyes had that blue glow. So he waited and listened.

He couldn't detect any deceit in her words when she told him that he had control in this conversation.
But he remained cautious. This could all be a test of some sorts. To see if he will act out in anyway. Show that he will not be complaint. So he did what he thought would prove otherwise. He kept silent, only nodding or shaking his head at first. Not inserting himself in any way.

When she said that Thor was concerned, it felt as if she had hit him. Of course Thor is concerned. He's concerned that Loki is up to something. Another scheme. Or worse. Maybe he believes he seduced the agents somehow. After all, he believed he had instigated the attack of those men at the cabin. Loki couldn't blame him. He wasn't called the silver tongue trickster for nothing. The reminder of the condition of their relationship pained him.

Then she brought up the other Avengers. The pain quickly turned to ice cold fear. So they are not trusting him either. Again he couldn't blame them. But what did that leave him? What would that mean for him when they finally make him pay? Then he realizes it doesn't matter. Had he been really so foolish to think that whatever they would do to him would be without pain? That they would go easy on him just because he had fallen? His own foolishness made him break out in laughter. When he thought how he must look to this Ms. Potts, he laughed harder.

When the moment passed, he decide to break his silence. His future was already looking bleak, what more could possibly happen if he spoke to her? Besides, he felt that he needed to let her know that she doesn't need to do this. Her forced kindness was unnecessary. He told her that he won't resist his punishment. Nor will he hide from his guilt. He can no longer blame Odin or Thor for his actions. The blame was his alone. Even if he was raised in their shadows, he should have known better than reaching out for the light.

He had to admire her skill. She kept up her act. She had argued that he didn't deserve the assaults on his body. He smiles at the sincerity he recalls her using. She sounded as if she believed her own words. Maybe she did. He didn't like having to tell her the truth. And he could tell she didn't like it either. But that is the thing about truth. While a lie can be made beautiful with the right skill, if the truth is unappealing, it will remain that way despite any skill used in telling it.

When he was sure she understood, he resigned himself to silence. He hadn't realized that he was gazing at his books until she stood up. It was a small slip on his part and he was sure she was displeased. Her voice sounded strained when she told him they would talk again. The gesture surprised him. He couldn't help but wonder just who this woman was.

Then he recalls her slip outside the door when she introduced herself. Right before she said she was a friend of the Avengers, she had started to say another name. A name that started with a T. Then he recalled the bit of information Barton had told him concerning the Avengers initiative. Tony Stark had been considered for the program. He was in a relationship with a woman by the name of Potts. He had kept that bit of information tucked away, same as with Bruce Banner's relationship with Betsy Ross.

Before he could think about his actions, he had called out to her. When she turned around, the question that came to his mind spilled from his lips. He knew he shouldn't have asked. He saw it in her stance, how her body became rigid, her hands closing into fists. But he couldn't stop. He needed to know. If she knew, maybe from her he can prepare himself. Maybe she will give him the answer that will ease the twisting in his stomach. Maybe give him an answer he could live with.

But she didn't answer him. Whatever knowledge she had concerning the man of iron, she kept to herself when she left. The wave of despair that came with the closing of the door was unbearable. In the end, the kindness was an act just as he had suspected. She had to know that her answer would be like a glass of ice cold water to a man who had nothing to drink for days. Instead of giving him some relief, she with held it.
So to his shame, he had wept. It had taken so much to ask that final question. He had been overcome by his need. And it resulted in nothing. Maybe she didn't know, a voice tries to suggest. But he ignores it. Of course she knows. They are lovers. How could she not know? Another voice suggests that maybe her silence had provided the answer. Maybe he is so horrible, so rough, that she couldn't bare to say so out loud.

That thought brought back the fear he had felt earlier. Now he is sure this is the truth. And with this, he felt the pain again. The pain from the fire poker. The pain that had been relived when the agents of Shield had him. It made him curl up on his side, arms wrapped across his stomach as if to try to comfort the pain somehow. It lasted for several minutes.

When it finally passed, he became aware of the filth. The two always seem to be intertwined. First pain, then the spreading of the filth. As if something inside of him, some dark seed, has ruptured and now oozes out of him. It was so hard not to run to the bathroom and start the hot water needed to wash it away.

What gave him the control he needed was what he saw in her eyes when he had dared to look into them. He almost over looked it when he saw her eyes were green like his own, though lighter than his. He had to suppress the relief over the fact they weren't blue. The expression in her eyes made that very easy to do. She had been disgusted. And he knew all the reasons why.

This was what had given him the self control he needed. For if he had went with his impulse, she might have seen him. Her pale green eyes would see the desperation. They would also see the filth. He was sure she didn't see it when she was in his room for his back was against the wall along with his left side of his body. The corner ended up being a blessing. It helped him hide the signs of the filth. But had he ran to the shower, she would have seen it. She would have been repulsed by it. And she would tell the others. He could only imagine how they would reacted.

His stomach painfully cramps again. He can't wait any longer. Using the wall, he pushes himself up and takes the few steps needed to reach the door. His hand touches the door knob but he doesn't turn it. Instead he tries to listen for any indication that the woman was still nearby. He also waited for his mind to clear for the few steps he took made him a bit dizzy. When he is sure both are not an issue, he opens the door and steps into the hall.

He is alone. He enjoys the moment of relief. No one will see. Despite the growl from his stomach, he goes to the bathroom. He needed to be clean. If he tried to eat before washing, he would get sick, unable to keep down whatever he eats. Something he learned the hard way.

By the time he reached the bathroom door, he feels light headed. But he couldn't wait for it to pass this time. He stumbles inside and goes straight for the built in shower and tub. By then his vision is spinning. He knows what is causing him to be this way. The filth. He had waited too long. He tries to grasp the hot water faucet but it seemed to keep sliding away from his hand. Finally he feels something solid in his hand and he turns it as far as it will go. Not bothering to strip, he practically falls into the tub. He never realized his foot kicked the cover of the drain, plugging it. He is dimly aware of the cold water hitting his skin before his vision goes black.

Meanwhile, on the floor below Loki's, Tony is pacing the conference room set up. His right hand seems to be stuck in a pattern, raking through his short dark hair then rubbing the tightly trimmed beard before going through his hair again.

"Tony..."

Pepper watches her ex boyfriend continue to pace as if he didn't hear her. She doubts that he did. After her chat with Loki, she had asked Jarvis to summon Tony. Because she was still spinning
mentally from the conversation, she had acted on instinct. Now she is wondering if she did the wrong thing.

"Tony!" She repeats, this time a bit more firmly.

He stops suddenly as if he had hit an invisible wall.

"I can't...I can't think of a single time where I might have even made such a suggestion. Yeah, I pushed the guy's buttons. I think I may have actually pushed him once. But nothing in that way. I just couldn't take his silent act any longer. You know me, I hate silence," he tells her.

"Tony, it was nothing you did. You might be a playboy but even you know where the boundaries are," she points out.

"Damn straight. I'm not into that," Tony mutters.

"I know. I think this is Loki's way of dealing with what happened to him. He thinks that if it's going to happen, for in his mind it is going to happen for it's his punishment, he might not hurt as much if he just accepts it. It's like when a rape victim becomes a prostitute. They think that's all there is to their life, their existence. Loki believes that his now human form is good for only one thing," Pepper explains.

"That's sick," Tony states firmly.

"It is. Tony, I don't know if I can help him. I think he needs some professional help," Pepper shares. Tony shakes his head. "Fury won't go for that. And like Bruce had pointed out, if he decides to go silent again, it won't help him out at all. You are the only person he has even spoke to this past week."

"Besides you, you mean," Pepper replies.

"Yeah, well, something tells me I should stay away. If he thinks I want...that...from him, I don't think it will be a good idea for me to be trying to connect with him, you know?"

"Then again, maybe he is already connected to you Tony. Maybe all you need to do is tell him that you are not expecting that from him. Make it clear to him," Pepper encourages. She won't tell him that she believes Loki needs to connect with one of the Avengers and start to accept that maybe there is someone who won't hurt him in that way. If so, then he could start to believe that for the others as well.

"I don't..."

'Sir, my apologies for interrupting but there is a situation in need of your involvement. It appears that Mr. Laufyson has lost consciousness in the bathroom. He is in danger of drowning," the AI informs him.

"Shit!" Tony shouts as he runs for the elevator with Pepper right behind him.
Loki is laying on his right side, the shower raining water down on his unconscious body. The water from the shower is quickly gathering beneath his body, the side he's lying on is already submerged. His chin is also submerged and his lips, breathing naturally from his nose which the water will cover in a few more minutes.

But before the water rises to that point, the bathroom door flies open. Tony, followed by Pepper, go straight to the tub.

"Uncover that drain!" Tony orders as he carefully climbs into the tub, not caring about the freezing cold water hitting him, instead focuses on hooking his arms under Loki's and starts to pull him up. He is caught off guard by how much lighter Loki is and has to readjust his hold so not to hurt the trickster.

Pepper turns the water off and uncovers the drain. She turns and starts grabbing towels as Tony lifts Loki out of the tub. She watches as Tony sets him down on the bathroom floor. She kneels down and tries to dry off what she can of Loki, starting with his arm. She is surprised when Tony starts shaking Loki.

"Wake up, come on, wake up God damnit!" Tony growls as he stops shaking the God and starts smacking him lightly on the face.

"Tony...he's waking up," Pepper tells him when she grabs his shoulder to stop him.

Both watch as the man groans and his eyes flutter open. He looks around, his face giving away with his confusion. He instinctively pulls away from Tony and Pepper. This brings a smile to Tony's face.

"Hey there Rudolph. Gotta tell you, the bed is a lot more comfortable than the tub. It's a nice tub but not that nice," Tony teases.

"What happened Loki?" Pepper asks, fight the eye roll from what Tony had just said.

"I...I needed to...," Loki tries to explain but he can't get the words out. If he tells them about the filth,
then he will have to reveal everything. Something he can't do. Not now.

"What I meant is why did you pass out? Did you hit you head?" She asks.

Tony gives himself a mental smack. He didn't even think to check. He narrows his eyes, examining what he can see of Loki's forehead, seeing if he has a forming bruise or a bleeding cut.

"No, I didn't hit my head. I...everything just went black," Loki replies.

"Jarvis?"

"Scans indicate that the combination of poor diet, sleep deprivation as well as elevated levels of stress, resulted in Mr. Laufyson's episode." The AI reports.

"Loki, when was the last time you ate?" Pepper asks with concern.

Loki is quiet for a moment, thinking about this question. Part of him wants to lie. Lie so they won't see him worse than they must see him now. But then he realizes that his lie would be easily proven false. All they needed to do is ask the voice which must have alerted them of his dilemma. It must be what always watches him. "Two days," Loki answers quietly.

The silence that follows his answer is deafening. Tony and Pepper find themselves staring at Loki in disbelief. Each was lost in their own thoughts for a few minutes. It seems that Tony snaps back to the now first, startling both Pepper and Loki when he suddenly stands up.

"Okay, come on Lokes. First things first, you need to get out of those wet pants. That water was freezing and you're shaking like a friggin leaf," Tony points out before walking to the door. "Pepper, can you order in some lunch?"

"Of course," Pepper replies, as she gets up. She watches Loki carefully get up and she hands him a towel. He takes it but doesn't make any effort to try to dry himself as he follows Tony from the bathroom. Pepper sighs and also takes her leave, thinking of what sounds good for lunch.

Loki finds Tony in his room, going through a dresser filled with the spare clothes they have given him. He tosses pants onto the bed, joining the socks and under clothing already there. He seems to be looking for something specific. Loki isn't sure if Tony is aware of his presence yet and wonders if he should say something.

"Go ahead and get changed. I'm still looking for something," Tony tells him.

Loki watches the man crouches down and start digging through the lower drawers. A thought comes to mind and Loki closes the door quietly behind him. Swallowing nervously, he undoes his pants as he approaches Tony. He stops for a moment to push down his wet clothing, stepping out of them quietly while moving closer to Tony.

His earlier question is repeating itself within his mind. Would Stark be gentle in bed or not? He needs to know. It is only a matter of time before one of them uses him, he thinks, so why not steal a little bit of power and be the one to start it. To be willing rather than be a victim.

"Ah, found it," Tony comments, pulling out a black hoodie with the logo of Guns n Roses on it. With a satisfied smile, he turns around to toss it to the bed but finds himself stopped as pale thin arms wrap around his body. "Eh?"

"Stark, you may take what you want," Loki tells the Avenger quietly. He leans his naked body against Stark's in a way that he hopes expresses what he is referring to. He's trembling despite his
efforts to still himself.

Tony goes still as a statue. He can feel Loki's naked body pressing against his back. He can feel the shaking, giving away Loki's fear. Tony Stark was no fool. He knew when someone was trying to stir him up. Even if it is a poor attempt. But what his mind can't seem to grasp is why is Loki doing this? The God of Mischief he knew would never lower himself to even entertain the idea. No more than Stark himself would. So what was the former God thinking?

Loki takes in a sharp breath when Tony spins around in his arms, facing him. He could feel the shorter man's breath against his skin. It terrifies him but it's too late to stop this. He ows it doesn't matter that he doesn't want this. The only comfort he can take in this is that once this man has taken him, there will not be any further desires for Loki's body, for Tony wasn't one to do long term relationships besides with Ms. Potts. And certainly not with someone who caused so much chaos and destruction.

"What the hell do you think you are doing?" Tony growls out, pulling Loki from his thoughts.

Loki takes a half step back, his eyes focused on Tony's shoulder.

"Look at me," Tony orders when he notices that Loki is not meeting his heated glare.

Loki shakes his head, withdrawing his arms to wrap them around himself.

"I said look at me," Tony repeats.

"N-no," Loki moans, shaking his head again.

Tony suddenly grabs Loki's face in a similar hold that Loki had on him just before he was thrown out the window. He hears the frighten cry that escapes from Loki, another sign of how different this man is from the one who brought an army to Tony's world. The Loki back then would laugh and throw clever insults, not make such pitiful sounds. It almost makes him release the trickster and leave the room. But that would not resolve anything. And Tony needs to nip this issue in the butt.

"Look me in the eye Loki," Tony orders, his fingers squeezing just slightly as he pulls the God's face down, forcing him to hunch slightly so they are face to face.

Loki is almost hyperventilating at this point. His arms wrap around himself more tightly, which Tony notices, wondering for a second why the God isn't trying to grab at his arm, to try to pry his hold on him. The green eyes are looking everywhere they can but at Tony's own brown ones.

"Look at me God damnit!" Tony shouts, his patience has ran out.

The emerald green eyes snap to Tony's instantly. Tony see's no other emotion within them other than fear. Again Tony feels the urge to release Loki and run straight out of the tower. He pushes it aside.

"Now listen to me. Listen closely," Tony orders, saying the last word slowly but firmly, "No one here wants that from you. Not Bruce, Steve, or even Clint. And specially not me. So remember that next time you decide to try to get some of us in bed. We don't want you. Now get dressed, take a minute to get yourself together, then go out there and eat with us. If you need help, let Jarvis know and I'll come back. But if you try this again, I knock you on your ass. Are we clear?"

Loki nods weakly despite the grip Tony has on his face. He takes a relieved breath when Tony releases him and walks past him. He remains where he is as he listens to Tony's steps to the door. He can sense Tony stop in the doorway, watching him for a moment before finally leaving and closing the door.
Once he hears the click of the door shutting, Loki falls down to his knees. A strangled noise escapes him as he rocks back and forth slightly.

"The poor Prince has been rejected yet again," a familiar voice comments.

Loki's breath freezes in his chest. He looks up slowly, seeing the familiar dark robes not even a foot from him. With a startled cry, he backs away until he hits the wall. The Other laughs with amusement.

"I would have never believed I would see you behave like a common whore. Maybe I overestimated you. I thought by using those agents, you would be broken. But instead it seems to have brought out your true nature," the other shares with a chuckle.

Loki remains silent, praying that the accursed being will leave when it's had it's fill of mocking him.

"I should take you to our Lord. He would have you chained at the foot of his throne, ready to be used as he pleases or be used by others according to his will. Would you like that little fallen Prince?" The Other asks.

Loki shakes his head.

"Or perhaps that isn't enough for you? Maybe you would prefer to be given to the armies as a plaything? They would not reject you. In fact, I can guarantee that they would be most pleased to have a taste of you," the Other tells him, his hand making a quick gesture.

Loki's green eyes take on a blue hue as he takes a sharp breath. Soon he is whimpering and crying when images invade his mind of how his body would be used by the remaining Chitauri. Images so vivid, he can actually feel their claw like hands touching all over his bare skin. It makes him sick. "Please stop, please," he starts to beg.

"Your pleas are truly a delight. I come to you with a warning little Prince. He too enjoys watching you suffer. As long as you suffer, he is pleased. But if you should ever experience a moment of reprieve, he will come for you. You can not hide from him. These foolish mortals can not protect you. He will make sure that you will never know a moment without suffering. So suffer little prince. Suffer till the end of your days," the Other tells him as he moves closer to Loki's huddled form.

Loki flinches back from the outstretched hand. But it continues to his neck, he can feel it stroke the collar Odin had left on. A collar he had already adjusted to and nearly forgotten. At the touch he feels the metal grow warm until it burns him.

"Never forget my words." Loki hears the creature whisper before knowing it's gone.

He lifts his head and looks about the empty room. Slowly he reaches his hand up to the collar and jerks his hand away from it the moment his fingers touch the metal. He stares at his finger tips, seeing the red irritated skin that has been burned. It's a new pain, the continuing burn around his neck. A new reminder of his situation. A reminder that there is no hope for him.

He remains where he is at, shaking as he recalls the mental images that the Other had placed in his mind. He's afraid of this fate. He swears he will do everything in his power to avoid it. But then he despairs. How is he to remain suffering? Stark has told him that the Avengers do not want him. And because of their morals, he knows they will not harm him unintentionally. Then it comes to him. There is one whose morals may not be so harden. One who would easily set them aside for the chance to make him pay. The hawk would love to see him bleed. He just needs to wait for the opportunity.
And hadn't Stark just showed that he too can easily be riled? Not to mention that a true beast resides within these walls. And who is Stark to think he can speak for the desires of his team mates? Maybe it is only him that is repulsed so much so that he cannot bare the idea of bedding the fallen God. It can be done, Loki thinks. He can ensure his own suffering. He doesn't want to. In fact he wants to remain where he is, enjoy the moment of safety.

A quiet voice tells him that the Other is lying. That he is no longer a concern much less a thought to Thanos. That the Other wasn't even really there. He laughs at such thoughts. Of course it was there. The collar burns, does it not? The voice in his mind, strangely feminine, asks him if it does. It challenges him to look at his fingers again.

Loki almost complies. But instead he pushes himself up and takes slow steps to the bed. He carefully picks up the clothing and dresses himself. Feeling his chest being covered with cloth gives him a moment of relief, feeling his once exposed skin become warm. But then the Other's warning comes to mind. He walks slowly to the door and without another look, he opens the door and flings himself out into the hallway.

When he gets to the living space, he hears the former lovers speaking.

"That might not be a bad idea. It could...be good for him," Pepper replies to something Tony had just told her.

He stumbles, drawing their attention. As soon as he realizes they are looking at him, he drops his gaze.

"Need some help there?" Tony asks.

Loki shakes his head and walks into the room. He stops a few feet from them and lowers himself to the floor. He could feel them exchange looks.

"Loki, it's okay to..." Tony starts to say when Jarvis interrupts.

"Sir, Shield is requesting that the Avengers Assemble," the AI informs him.

"Of course they are. Just what I needed to end a perfectly good day," Tony mutters, already getting up and walking towards the elevator when something comes to mind. "Pepper..."

"Go on Tony. We'll be fine," she replies. "Right Loki?"

Loki nods his head.

"Then I'm out!" He calls as he enters the elevator.

Pepper watches the elevator doors close then listens to the hum as it ascends to the roof. She silently prays that they will succeed against whatever threat they are going towards.

"Ms. Potts, the delivery personal has arrived at the lobby," Jarvis informs her.

"Go ahead and send him up," she replies before looking over to Loki, "Have you ever had Italian before?"
Chapter 15

A Fallen God

Chapter 15

A Thor-Loki-Avengers Fanfic

Disclaimer: I don't own the characters, movies, comics or anything else. All that belongs to Marvel and the creators. I don't even know the actors, though I'd like to.

Warnings: Since this is a story in progress, Not sure what to warn ya about. I do tend to write pairings so I might do it here. Or not. There will be some cussing and angst. Some violence. There are references to past rape as well as rape and improper use of a fire poker. So be careful while reading.

Hope you enjoy and please leave comments! Thank you all for reading this and the support!

________________________________________________________________________________________

Tony Stark could write a book on the pleasures of flight. And not the kind that has you sitting next to a large man who doesn't know what deodorant is. No, there is nothing like it. Though dodging blue energy blasts tend to dampen the mood. Honestly, who tries to create a being made of pure alien energy? A question he doubts he will hear the answer to anytime soon. Right now the focus is on damage control. Which is why he is flying towards the large body of water surrounding New York. Judging by the blasts, he isn't alone.

"Is it still tailing you Stark?" He hears Steve ask.

He is about to reply when his visor flashes red and he reacts by rolling to the side, dodging another blast. He glances back, finding the alien creature gaining on him.

"Still tailing. Tell me someone has an idea how to take this thing down," Tony replies.

"What, the great Tony Stark can't think of something on his own?" He hears Clint ask.

"Maybe if I wasn't playing decoy, which I will point out is more than what you are doing. Seriously, do you have any other weapon besides a bow?" Tony replies heatedly.

He didn't hear what Barton's reply was to that, for his visor had gone red again but this time he wasn't able to dodge. The blast hit him right between the shoulders, sending him into a spin. For the next few minutes his world was filled with alternating shades of blue. Strangely, the only thought in his head is wondering what Pepper had ordered for dinner just before he plunged into the water, followed by the alien creature.

Meanwhile, Pepper sits quietly in the floor just a foot away from Loki, watching the would be conqueror eating spaghetti. She struggled not to laugh. To her, Loki looked like a child who had just tasted it's first piece of chocolate. But despite the fact he seems to be enjoying the dish, he was also clearly getting frustrated with the natural messiness of the dish. She knows that if hears her laugh, he would most likely stop eating and storm off.

So she turns her gaze to the wall size windows of the living space. Her thoughts again fall on Tony
and how he still manages to shake her world up even though they are no longer together. She certainly never thought she would ever be sitting on the floor eating dinner with the younger brother of Thor.

She had a hard time explaining things to Hap. But he had at least pretended to understand and said nothing when she said she needed to go to Stark towers. He didn't even accuse her of trying to rekindle things with Stark. He simply got up and grabbed the car keys.

Now she is sitting on the navy blue carpet, a God sitting not too far from her who is trying to eat spaghetti delicately. The same God who had tried to take over her planet, bringing an alien army with him. She remembers watching the footage. There wasn't much that showed the God of mischief. Only his grand appearance at Germany. Caught on camera by a local TV crew who had gotten stuck with making a boring report of the social gathering.

Her eyes slowly drift to the man and finds herself making comparisons. There were the obvious differences, such as the armor he had been wearing compared to the spare clothes that he is wearing now and the missing horned helmet not to mention the strange staff. No the differences she is noticing, one would have to look closely as she is doing right now. He looked healthier in the footage. His eyes were glowing, his dark hair neatly brushed back, his smile giving away his dark intent could be seen in the recording. But the man before her lacked all of these. His green eyes appear thoughtful yet distant. His hair is still a mess. He had smiled when he had taken the first mouthful of the Italian dish but she noticed that as soon as he seemed to be aware of it, he quickly hid it with his hand until he got it under control. Now his lips were pressed together in a firm, thin line as he chews. They could almost be two separate people, she thinks.

She watches him glance down at the plate of food that is still mostly filled with a sad expression before he sets it down, clearly done eating.

"So how do you like spaghetti?" She asks with a kind smile.

Loki gives her a shrug. He hasn't said a word since Tony left. Some of his long black hair falls into his face which he pushes back behind his ear.

"Do you like having your hair long?"

Loki turns his face toward her those his eyes never leave the carpet. He seems to think this over before shaking his head.

"I could cut it for you," she offers. She frowns when she watches a tremble go through his body. She is about to take back the offer when he nods in agreement. "Okay then. Before I can cut it, I'll need you to wash it and brush it out. I'll go get you what you will need, okay?" She gets up and goes into the elevator.

Loki watches her in silence. After the elevator doors close, he stands up and walks over to the window. He knows that somewhere out there, Stark and the others were fighting to protect their precious planet. Yet he couldn't see any of the signs that would tell him that the world is in danger. He takes this in and wonders if there had been people unaware of the chaos he had brought. Was there anyone standing as he is now and had looked out at the city and thought nothing was wrong? How long was it before they realized they had deceived themselves? Did they feel overwhelmed by fear? Did they feel vulnerable like he does at this moment?

He shivers from an inner chill. He never thought he would find himself wondering what it was like for the mortals he wanted to rule. He honestly didn't care about them back then. Why would he? No, other things had been on his mind. Other things were in his mind. A whimpering sound leaves his
lips. He won't think about that. If he thinks about that, then he has to remember other things. The signs of the war he had brought, fighting his brother, throwing Stark of the window, and the green monster. He shakes his head as he tries to fend off the thoughts and memories.

When a hand touches his shoulder, he flinches back, pressing himself against the glass of the window. He finds himself looking at Pepper who is carrying a hair brush and bottle of conditioner.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to startle you. I tried calling your name but I guess you didn't hear me," Pepper apologizes.

Loki looks away in embarrassment from being so easily startled. But when he looks away, he finds himself looking out the glass and down at the street below. Is this what Stark had seen when he had thrown him out the window? Was the fear he was feeling at this moment anything like the fear Tony must have felt? He suddenly pushes himself away from the glass.

"Are you alright? Is something wrong?" Pepper asks, troubled by the tricksters' frighten look in his green eyes.

He shakes his head, giving no indication of which question he is answering. Instead he lowers his head and walks over to her. She passes him the hairbrush and gives him a quick explanation of the conditioner before stepping back to gather what remains of their dinner. Loki watches her for a moment before making his way to the bathroom.

Several minutes later, Pepper is washing the last dish when she feels someone is behind her. With a gasp, she spins around, the sponge falling forgotten to the floor. Apparently surprising Loki as well, for he quickly takes a step back. She releases a breath.

"You don't make much noise, do you? " she asks, breaking into a smile.

Loki doesn't reply, instead he looks away as if considering taking off.

"Ready to get your hair cut?" Pepper asks.

He nods and she walks over to the island and pulls out a stool, gesturing for him to take a seat. She grabs two hand towels and drapes these over his shoulders. Reaching into her purse that is on the counter, she pulls out a comb and pair of scissors that she kept in there just in case. He is stiff as a statue as she combs through his long raven colored hair. It is past his shoulders now that all the tangles were removed. She wonders if he is holding his breath and after the first cut, her guess is proven when he releases it.

She continues cutting the hair in silence, moving slowly. Now and then she glances at his face or to his hands which are gripping the sides of the stool. His hands was gripping the stool so tightly, his knuckles were white. His eyes he kept closed, his lips pressed into a firm line. She cuts the hair till it is just at the nape of his neck before she announces that she is all done.

"Thank you," he says quietly as she brushes the cut hair off of him then removing the hand towels.

He raises his gaze and watches her take a step back as if she is about to admire her handy work. But her foot steps on the soapy sponge and she starts to fall backwards. He watches in stunned silence, his body frozen to the stool. She seemed to be moving in slow motion before him as she fell backwards, the left side of her head hitting the counter before hitting the floor. This snaps him out of it, and he pushes himself off the stool.

"Mrs. Potts? Mrs. Potts! " he calls out as he carefully crouches down next to her and gently pushes the hair out of her face.
He is alarmed at seeing the small trickle of blood. His fingers continue to push the hair out of the way, looking for the source. He sighs with relief when he finds the source of the blood. It is just a small cut, not even serious enough to require stitches. But then he wonders why she isn't waking up. He reaches his hand carefully beneath her head and is about to lift it when...

"What the hell did you do?" Barton's voice growls out.

Loki snaps his head around, seeing the archer is standing right behind him. With another growl, Clint grabs the front of Loki's jacket and pulls him away from Pepper's body. With a twist of his body, he throws Loki out of the kitchen space and onto the carpet.

"Stay there! Don't move so much as an inch!" Barton orders.

Loki watches as the archer examines Pepper, checking her pulse. He hears the elevator door open but doesn't look away from Pepper and Barton.

"Loki?" Bruce calls out, Loki can detect the concern in his voice.

"What happened?" Steve asks.

Loki doesn't reply. His throat is too constricted.

"Bruce, I need you over here for a moment," Barton calls over.

Out of the corner of his eye, he see's the gamma specialist walk over to the other two. He glances back at Loki before looking over at Pepper. While watching, he doesn't see the blue gloved arm reach out to him. He makes a startled cry when he is suddenly lifted up from the ground.

"What happened Loki?" Steve asks again.

Loki opens his mouth to tell them what had happen when something comes to his mind. He remembers his earlier promise to earn the wraith of the members of this team so they will ensure that he will always suffer. Now here is a chance.

"She...she spoke too freely. Women really should know their place," Loki replies as he straightens himself up, forcing a smile to appear on his face.

He wasn't at all surprised when Captain America suddenly releases his arm as if it burned him. He didn't even need to turn around to know his words caught the attention of the other two. He could feel their hatred from here.

"What did you say?" Steve asks.

"You asked me what happened. I told you that I had to teach her her place. It's her own fault. Thinking that just because I am stuck in this form doesn't mean I am her equal. No more than I am an equal to any of you. I showed her that," Loki tells him, hoping the Captain can not hear the nervousness in his voice. The words he is saying is making his head spin. But he couldn't take his lies back.

Suddenly the archer is lunging at him, knocking him back to the carpeted floor. The air is forced from his lungs and he had barely a moment to see the fist coming at him. He raises his arms to defend himself from the blows but the archer paid them no mind. After a few blows, a voice rings out.

"Clint, enough! I need you to take Mrs. Potts down to the medical floor," Bruce shouts, getting the archer's attention.
Barton quickly moves off of Loki and walks over to Pepper, lifting her up as if she weighed nothing and hurries over to the elevator which just opens to reveal both Thor and Tony Stark who looks not only banged up, but something related to a drowned rat. Loki hears Tony ask what happened and Clint telling him it was Loki. Steve again pulls Loki up from the ground. But Loki is focused on the sight of the door. Bruce enters the elevator behind Clint and the doors start to close. But he still saw the look of disappointment on Tony's face before the shut.

Steve leads Loki to his room and pushes him inside before closing the door firmly. Loki can hear the muffled orders Steve must be giving Jarvis and soon he hears the door's lock click into place. He goes to his usual corner and lays down, this time with his back to the door. He no cares about how they see him. All they need to do is hate him which he is sure they do. He examines the bruises forming on his arms and even touches the damaged flesh. He wonders how long these will take to heal as well as how long the pain will last.

Twenty minutes later, there is a shouting match in the medical lab. What had most of the members stunned, including Tony, was that the shouting was between Clint and Pepper.

"Why are you even defending him?" Barton asks.

"I'm not! But as I have told you over and over now, he didn't touch me! I stepped on the sponge I had dropped before cutting his hair and I banged my head. He had nothing to do with it!" Pepper shouts at the assassin.

"He already admitted to it Mrs. Potts! He told us what he did! So again, why are you defending him?" Clint asks again.

"How can someone so thick minded become an Avenger?" She asks heatedly.

"I would tell you but it would just go over your pretty little head. Besides, don't you have to wipe Tony's ass or something?"

"Okay kids, that's enough!" Tony jumps in. He had been actually enjoying this little shouting match but he draws the line when his ass gets involved. "If you want, we can settle this easily."

"How?" Steve asks as he enters the medical room.

"Jarvis, show us what happened while we were away," Tony orders.

'Yes sir,' his AI replies.

A holo screen appears before them and plays the last few hours back for them. They see Loki examining the different dishes before selecting the spaghetti. How they ate in silence, often their gazes to the world outside. They watch as Pepper gets up, exchanging conversation for a few minutes before Loki is left alone for nearly an hour which he spends staring at the window.

"Where did you go?" One of the men asks.

"It took me a bit to find a new hairbrush. Ended up walking to the local convince store," Pepper answers.

"You left him alone?"

"I had asked Jarvis to keep a watch on him and had the tower on lockdown until I returned."

They see him walk away to the bathroom as Pepper puts away left overs and washes the dishes.
They see her jump when he joins her. She points to the sponge that she drops and lets the whole thing play out, again pointing when he foot steps on the forgotten sponge.

"See? He didn't do anything," she tells them.

"Then why did he claim otherwise?" Steve questions.

"I...I don't know. It doesn't make any sense," Pepper replies quietly.

"It doesn't change anything," Clint mutters stubbornly, crossing his arms and glaring at the others.

"You can't honestly still be blaming him after what you just saw," Bruce comments, exchanging a glance with Pepper who looks as if she was about to say the same thing.

"So he didn't touch you. I didn't see him try to stop you from falling either. In fact, he seems kinda pleased at the sight of your blood there," Barton nods toward the screen in which shows Loki examining the blood on Pepper's forehead.

"Seriously?"

"Regardless, I think we can all agree it was a accident. And we may have all over reacted because we did just save the world again. So how about we consider the matter over and call it a night. Then in the morning, one of us can go apologize to Loki," Steve suggests. Every one but Clint and Tony nod their heads.

"If you expect me to be the one apologizing, you can forget it," Clint tells them before storming off.

"Tony, you haven't said anything. Are you alright?" Bruce comments.

Tony blinks at hearing his name as if coming out of a deep thought. "Huh? Oh yeah, just peachy. I think I am going to go talk to him now. If I don't, I won't be able to sleep," Tony replies, surprising everyone.

"Tony?" Pepper narrows her eyes with concern.

"See you all in the morning. Oh and good work. Specially you Steve. Owe ya one," he rambles as he takes off, heading to the elevator to go to Loki's floor.

The rest watch him walk off before turning slowly to Pepper.

"What happened to him?" She asks.

"He nearly drowned," Steve answers quietly.

"Oh..."

As Tony rode the elevator, he went over what had happened during their fight despite not really wanting to. He feels a moment of dizziness when he recalls his downward spin. The sudden pressure as his suit hit the water. When he tried to straighten himself so he could simply launch himself out of the water, it felt as if he was maneuvering in jello. It didn't help that his comms had gone down. Just when he did manage to straighten out, he saw the thing come down at him, it's mouth or at least what he assumes to be a mouth, opening above him. He allowed himself to sink further. The creature hits the water and continues down wards toward him but the water had slowed it down significantly. And the water vibrated around him as it started to thrash about in the water. Apparently going into the water was a bad move on the creatures' part.
Seeing an opening, Tony unleashed his several missiles at it, aiming for it's opening mouth. He watched them streak through the water and into the creature. He had thought that maybe the water had affected their detonations when suddenly the creature exploded. He was again flaying around, trying to make sense of which was up and what was down. He didn't even think if he had actually beat the creature or not. No his focus was on the sudden opening that appeared in his suit and allowing the water to fill it.

He finally straightens out and he tries to use his thrusters to send himself up. He felt them come on for a moment before sputtering out. Panicking, he tried again and again to no avail. He looks up, seeing the light of the sun through the water. He takes a deep breath before the water reached his mouth. With no other options, he hit the hidden switch that made his suit begin to detach and fall away. As pieces of his suit fell off of him, he started kicking with his legs and paddling with his arms. His eyes focused only on the light of the sun.

He didn't see a stray bit of energy stretch itself out towards Tony and wrap around his leg. It didn't have a skin to skin sensation. No, it sent several painful electric like shocks through his body. It made him scream out, releasing the air from his lungs. As quickly as it touched him, it was gone. Tony realized he was sinking again. This time he didn't kick. He knew there was no way he can make it to the surface this time.

As his body descended in the water, soon to be joining with the pieces of his suit, he thought about his team mates, Pepper, and Loki. Soon that is the only person that was on his mind. Questions came flooding into his mind. Who will be looking after Loki? Will Pepper still hang around after he dies to help him? Who will be willing to try to put the fallen God back together again? Can he be put together again? Does he want to be? How badly does he want to be his old self? As Tony was watching the light fade from him, he realizes that he wants to know the answers, that he is even willing to be the answer.

But why? Is it because of how much they have in common? Is it because Tony actually feels bad for the guy after what he has recently been through? Or was it because of his own guilt? He had wanted the man to pay for his crimes. He had wanted him locked away, never see the light of day. When he heard that a powerless Loki was on Earth, he had felt down right giddy. He wanted to see the cast out God in his moment of humiliation. He didn't think there would be a limit. Yet he found out very quickly that there was. And it had been shattered.

These had been his thoughts when his vision went dark. The next thing he recalls, he was on the floor of the jet, puking water out of his lungs. Steve was by his side, soaking wet. When he could breath, he told Steve he needed to work on his kissing technique.

When the elevator doors open, he quickly walks out as if leaving the memories behind. Yet he knew they wouldn't be too far behind. Scotch could help but that had to wait. There is another issue developing and he isn't in any mood to let it develop beyond this point. Again he wonders why it is always him being the one handling these things. Maybe he didn't need to if he talked with his other mates. But the lone wolf in him said screw it. So he grabs the door handle to Loki's room and let's himself in.

Loki had heard the door unlock and knew he would have company. So he pushed himself up and turned towards the door. When Tony came in, he draws back. He hadn't expected Tony. He expected the Captain or the hawk. One would ask questions. Another would punish. But Tony...he could go either way or do both. He was like a wild card. All Loki knows at this moment is that due to this man's connection to Ms. Potts, he is in trouble. But he makes his face relax and wear a hopefully convincing smirk. He still can't bring himself to look the man in the eye.
Tony see's the smirk and knows it's fake. Those green eyes lack the insanity needed to look menacing much less any sign of confidence. Not only that, but the man is trembling. Tony offers a fake smile of his own and takes a seat in the bed, facing Loki.

"So, had a nice dinner?" Tony asks.

Loki doesn't reply.

"I'm more of a steak man but Italian is good. Specially mozzarella filled meatballs. Did you have those? Next time you should try them," Tony carries on. He knows he is throwing the God off with his idle chatter. "Maybe I'll order some tomorrow. Would do it now but I don't think I can stay up much longer. Just got done saving the world yet again. Would be nice if in doing that didn't mean I was facing an untimely death every time but a job's a job, I guess."

He watches Loki who appears to be fidgeting. Nerves would be his guess.

"Anyway, better get to the point. So I'll ask you straight out. Did you attack Ms. Potts?" Tony asks, staring at Loki.

"Yes," Loki answers.

"I don't buy it. I mean, if what you said is true, than look me in the eye and tell me you did," Tony challenges.

Loki swallows. He doesn't know if he can meet Tony's challenge. But he has to try. The mental images of the Chitauri helps.

Tony watches as Loki slowly raises his eyes, narrowing them slightly, as they met his own. "I put your woman in her place since you are unable to," Loki replies.

Tony leans back, placing his hands on the bed as he looks away. He had to give it to the trickster. It was a good act. Loki had put on a very nice mask at the end there. Nearly looked like his old self. He waits a few minutes, letting Loki believe he had fooled him. The. With a fake sigh he gets up and walks toward the door.

"I guess that's it then. Oh well. Tomorrow I'll hand you back over to SHIELD," Tony replies, looking over his shoulder at the God of Mischief. He managed to look back just in time to see the mask shatter.

"Wait...why Shield? Why not take your revenge out on me yourself?" Loki asks, shifting himself forward onto his knees. His eyes were wide and pleading.

"I don't like getting my hands dirty," Tony replies with a shrug, taking a small step toward the door.

"Then Barton! Let him do it!"

"Tempting but no. He can get pretty messy and I don't feel like bribing professional cleaners for when he is done. Steve and Bruce can't bring themselves to do anything to you. Natasha would be good but I would still have the same problem concerning the clean up. So SHIELD it is. Too bad you couldn't have controlled yourself. Had you not..." Tony trails off, giving Loki the lifesaver he needs. Now if only the fallen God will take it.

"I...I didn't do anything to Ms. Potts," Loki whispers.

"What was that? Sorry, got water in my ears," Tony asks.
"I lied. I didn't attack Ms. Potts. She fell," Loki repeats.

"We know. She told us. And we saw the footage," Tony tells him, smiling at the shocked expression on Loki's face.

"If you knew...then why?"

"Because I need something to sink into your thick skull. And that's that I will not be putting up with any of your games, your tricks, or your lies. Nor will I fall for any of it," Tony states firmly. "Now, tell me why you lied. Because that is something I can't wrap my head around. Why would you claim fault for an accident? You had to know how it might end up. Barton could have done a lot more damage. Or your favorite green buddy could have made an appearance. And I think both of us know that in your current state, well, I doubt you would be crawling away from that like you did before. So why?"

Loki looks like he is about to spill his guts when something flashed across his face. Tony notices the strange blue tint his emerald green eyes take for just a moment before it's gone. Loki closes his mouth and shakes his head.

"Really? Going to try giving me the silent treatment?" Tony ask, his eyebrow raising slightly in disbelief as Loki lowers his head.

A few minutes pass in silence before Tony sighs and runs a hand through his short hair. "Okay, you don't want to talk, fine. But until you do feel like giving me the answer, you will not be leaving this room. And no one will be visiting you either. When you are ready to talk, just say that you will answer my question. Until then, enjoy your moment of solitude," Tony informs him before storming out of the room and slams the door shut behind him.

"Jarvis."

"Yes sir?" The AI replies dutifully.

"Have his meals sent directly to his room. Allow no one into his room. Sound proof it in fact. And notify me as soon as he decides to talk," Tony orders.

"As you wish sir."

"What are you up to Tony?"

Tony turns around and see's Pepper approaching him. She has a small white bandage on her forehead but other than that, she looks alright.

"Why do you think I am up to something?" He asks with a playful grin.

"Tony..."

"I'm just giving him a timeout. Nothing serious. It will end when he decides to talk to me," he replies.

"Tony, you can't make him talk! You could be doing more damage to him! Change Jarvis's orders. Now," she orders.

"No."

"No? Tony you can't be this cruel," Pepper comments.

"It would be nice for you to trust me. Just a little bit. Besides, he needs this too," Tony replies.
"I did trust you once Tony. And I trust you to screw up. And you are! Think about it Tony, what if you are wrong here? What will you do if you end up breaking him?" Pepper asks.

"Then I'll fix him. I'm not changing my mind, Pepper."

"Fine. But I'm not staying here to watch you do this," Pepper warns.

"Enjoy your vacation. I'll call you in a few days to tell you how he is doing." Tony promises.

"As soon as you decide to stop this, you better be calling me," she threatens.

He nods and watches her take off back towards the elevator. He wonders when he will be calling her. Will it be tomorrow? A few days? Or a week? He looks back at the door.

"When it ends, it's up to you," Tony mutters before going to the living space to begin his wait.
Chapter 16

A Fallen God

Chapter 16

A Thor-Loki-Avengers Fanfic

Disclaimer: I don't own the characters, movies, comics or anything else. All that belongs to Marvel and the creators. I don't even know the actors, though I'd like to.

Warnings: Since this is a story in progress, Not sure what to warn ya about. I do tend to write pairings so I might do it here. Or not. There will be some cussing and angst. Some violence. There are references to past rape as well as rape and improper use of a fire poker. So be careful while reading.

Hope you enjoy and please leave comments! Thank you all for reading this and the support!

________________________________________________________________________________________

As it turns out, despite how broken Loki appears to be, he showed that he still has some strength inside of him. Something Tony finds himself almost admiring such a trait. Specially since patience isn't one of his strongest traits. Nor did it seem to be one of Pepper's. He rolls his eye at the vibration occurring in his pocket and he pulls the cell out, knowing without a doubt who it is. There on the screen is Pepper's beautiful face. Since locking Loki away in his room, he has been receiving these calls twice a day for the past eight days.

She wasn't the only one who didn't approve of his methods. The Captain gave him a very long lecture and questioned his mental stability which really offended him. After that the Captain had been avoiding him. Bruce had been giving him the silent treatment filled with looks of disappointment. Tony had decided to take the hint after the first two days and give the gamma specialist some space. In all, Tony spent those eight days in his own type of isolation. He wished they would trust him enough to accept that he knows what he is doing. Still, he hadn't expected this to go on for eight days.

Now that is a number, Tony thinks. Eight days. Eight days stuck in the same room. Starring at the same four walls. Reading the same pile of books. No interaction of any kind. There isn't even a TV in there. Tony knows he would be going crazy right about now. So how is the trickster handling it? He could always check the recording footage of Loki. Something he started as a precaution and he had no intention of stopping it. But instead of watching it, he chooses to wait. It wasn't easy fighting that particular temptation. It also wasn't easy to stand by his decision. More than once he considered Pepper's words and putting a stop this. He's considering this right now.

He looks down at the cell again and is about to answer, telling her he's done, that he will release Loki, when Jarvis's voice announces itself.

'Sir, Mr. Laufyson is requesting your presence. He said that he is willing to answer any question you may have." The AI reports.

"Thank you Jarvis," Tony replies automatically. Suddenly he finds himself regretting this course of action. He doesn't look forward to seeing the outcome.
But he knows he needs to see this through. And it's this tidbit of knowledge that finds him outside of Loki's bedroom door. It is his fear of what he'll find when he opens the door that keeps him frozen to the spot. He stares at the wooden door, wishing he could somehow see through it and see what lies beyond. Is the room trashed? The walls written on with detailed death threats? And what of the god? Will he giving off the aura of malice and insanity? Will the hatred in his eyes make them glow? Is he waiting to pounce and rip Tony's throat out? With a God of Mischief, what could he possibly prepare himself for? Deciding he needed to get to it, he grabs the door handle and pushes the door open.

Yeah, he couldn't have prepared himself for this, he thinks. What he is seeing is quite different from what he had almost expected. Instead of a trashed room, it is eerily immaculate. As if no one has been residing in here for weeks. The bed even looks like it's been unused. He is willing to bet that he would find it ice cold if he touched it, and that there will be no indent on the pillow. The walls were still their spotless shade of egg shell white. The only sign of someone living in here besides the actual being in the room, is the pile of books, the one on top having a book mark in it, for none of the guest bedrooms had books in them.

As for their reader, all the malice, insanity, hatred, and other emotions he had expected to see were strangely absent. Instead, when he looks at the dark haired God who is sitting with his back against the wall, his knees drawn up and wrapped around by his arms and green eyes looking no higher than the floor, all he sees is absolute resignation. Complete surrender. Total submission.

'Shit,' he thinks. This was not how the plan was suppose to work. He never told the others but when he had decided to put Loki in a form of solitary confinement, it was his way of pushing Loki's buttons yet again. Just like he did at the cabin. He was so sure that the fallen God would let his rage take over and Tony would be facing the same man he had threatened back during the attack. The cocky son of a gun that threw him out a window.

Turns out he is wrong. The others were right. Pepper was right. Tony screwed this up. He could tell just by looking at Loki. He swallows the hard truth and decides he better find out just how badly he screwed up. Besides, there is something nagging at the back of his mind. Some detail he should be seeing. But what?

He forces himself to walk over to the bed and sit down as he had done before. Even without looking, he knows Loki's emerald eyes are watching him.

"So ready to talk?" Tony asks.

"Yes," a tired voice replies.

"Do you remember what I asked last time?"

"Yes."

"Okay, so hit me with the answer. Floor's all yours," Tony tell him, leaning forward on his knees, finally giving Loki a closer look. His eyes widen when his mind gives up the detail that had been nagging him earlier. It's the clothes Loki is wearing. They are the same clothes he was wearing when he last spoke to Loki. Surely the God of Mischief has not been wearing the same...his thoughts are cut off when Loki begins to speak.

"I need to suffer. Suffer for what I've done. Suffer to keep from suffering from worse," Loki replies.

"That makes no sense what so ever. Care to explain?" Tony asks.

"I was told that if I experience a moment without suffering, I'll be taken from here. I'll...be forced to
suffer. My body will be..." Loki tries to explain but is unable to continue his explanation.

"Told by who? The Alfather?" Tony asks, his concern growing.

"No. The Other."

"The other? The other who? Some other Asgard guy threatened you?" Tony questions, his confusion growing.

"The Other is a servant of Thanos. He was the one who gave me the army to attack your world with. He had warned me what would happen if I failed. I foolishly disregard his warnings. I was a fool..."

Loki trails off.

"Yeah, yeah you were. But that was then. I want to know is why you are still believing some threats made back then," Tony tells him, his mind wondering who the heck this Other is.

"Not back then. He made these promises not so long ago."

"When? Where?"

"Here. When...when I tried to give you what you wanted," Loki replies.

"Give me what...oh, that. Wait, wait a second. That other guy you are talking about. You are saying he was here? As in here in this tower?" Tony asks, alarm bells going off in his head.

"Yes."

Tony suddenly stands up and races out of the room. His mind is repeating one fact over and over. Somehow, some way, there had been a security breach. He needed to see it. He didn't even bother closing the door behind him.

"Jarvis, has there been any security breeches detected recently?" He asks as he goes to the coffee table in the living space where he keeps one of his spare digital pads.

"None that I am aware of sir. I would have notified you had there been any," the AI replies. Tony could almost hear the thing being insulted.

"Alright Jarvis. Give me all the security feed from our guest's room starting from he first arrived," Tony orders.

"Of course sir."

Tony sits down on the nearby couch and casts a glance at the open doorway before turning his attention to the footage. It might do some good if the trickster realizes he is no longer locked away. He spends the next forty five minutes watching the security footage, the video speed playing at three times normal speed.

Meanwhile, one Avenger who the others note is missing but have grown use to it, stands in an all too familiar hall. His steel blue eyes meet with a stern single eye. He had left Earth to have this meeting the same day he learned of Stark's actions. He wasn't pleased with his brother being locked away but decided that with what may result from this meeting, it might be for the best. As before, he fears for his brother.

"Were my instructions not clear?" Odin questions.

"They were," Thor replies.
"Then why is Loki with the Avengers when he should be alone is some isolated location as was his sentence?"

"Something occurred. It was no longer safe for him to remain where he was at. Shield had come for him," Thor explains.

"That was expected. He owes them a debt for his actions. Had you not interfered, he may have learned from what they would have done," Odin replies.

"You do not know Shield, father, like I do. Loki would have learned nothing. Only his rage would grow."

"You should have returned him to that previous location once he was no longer with Shield," Odin points out.

"Father, your sentence will still be carried out," Thor replies.

"Oh?"

"I will speak to the Avengers. I'll have them agree that Loki is to earn his keep at Stark Towers. He will know labor. He will also be kept within the tower, away from any others besides those allowed within the tower," Thor offers.

"You have had this in mind for some time," Odin observes.

"Yes father," Thor replies, speaking the truth. Before he left, Pepper had spoken to him about an idea that Tony has concerning his brother. The idea isn't so much as a punishment as to give him something to spend his time on, to possibly keep his mind from reliving certain events.

"Loki...can be blind to things. Your loyalty being one of them. I am not pleased with my decision being so easily ignored. But I am willing to amend it this one time. For Loki is my son as well. Very well, he may remain with the Avengers. But heed my warning, never neglect your watch over him. Loki is still a trickster and still has a silver tongue. Though I do place my hope on you and your comrades in your goal to aid him. You have my support my son. May you be able to save your brother from the darkness that has long consumed him," Odin tells his son before turning away, signifying that the meeting is over.

Thor doesn't leave just yet. There is one question he has to ask. "About Loki's magik and powers..."

"He is to spend the rest of his life without them. He will never regain them."

Thor bows before he leaves the court hall. To say that he is stunned would be an understatement. He had expected to face the Alfather's wrath for his disregard to Loki's sentence. But it seems that his love for his adopted son has won this round. He hopes he and the other Avengers will be able to help Loki for he doubts Odin will allow his love to interfer again. It is time to return to Earth.

Meanwhile, Tony is walking into an all too familiar lab. Unlike his workshop, this place was beyond clean. Sterile would be a much better term. He eyes the numerous vials, his eyes scanning the labels. He is stalling. After watching the video feed three times, he decided he needs some help. Someone who knows crazy all too well. Or at least what it's like to have a dark side. After all, that was the purpose of this lab. To kill his inner Hyde.

As quietly as he can, he moves further into the lab, looking around for the gamma specialist. He finds him in the small office like space, reading some report on one of the many holo screens. Tony opens his mouth to call out when Bruce beats him to it.
"What can I do for you Tony?"

"Oh, nothing really. I thought I should come and check on you. Make sure you are still alive and all that," Tony replies with a shrug.

"Tony..."

"Not buying it, huh? Okay, how about telling you that I ended Loki's solitary confinement?" Tony asks.

"You shouldn't have done it in the first place. He did nothing wrong. And you shouldn't force someone to talk to you. Even if it is Loki," Bruce replies.

"I know. I'll admit it. I screwed up. Now I need your help," Tony answers honestly.

"Is he okay?"

"Wish I knew. Let me show you something," Tony replies, holding out the pad he had been using to watch the video feed.

Bruce gives Tony a questioning look before accepting it and hits the play button.

Meanwhile, Loki is still sitting in his room in the same position Tony left him in. He watches the open doorway, wondering when someone will come by and close it. Surely they will not run the risk of him trying to escape. Not that he has any intention of such a thing.

'How pathetic', a inner voice taunts. A voice he pays no attention to. He knows what a sorry state he is in. Had he not been given plenty of time to dwell on the subject? Besides, it's his own actions that resulted in him being here. His actions, his sins, his mistakes. 'Since when is trying to take one's rightful place a mistake?' The voice asks. He laughs at it. His rightful place was in the shadows. His rightful place was at Thor's side. It was his own delusion for grander that told him other wise. Had he not been such a fool...

And yet he had been. Now he is left with the ruins of his actions. No magik. No godlike powers. Nothing but this weak human form. 'Stop this sniveling! Fight!' Another laugh leaves his lips. Fight? Did he not fight when those three men attacked him in the cabin? What good had it done? No, all it showed him was how weak he really was now. How the pain doesn't go away like it once did. That the bruises do not fade within minutes, the skin remains bleeding even hours later. He did not have the power to stop it.

No more than he could stop it when he was at the Hellicarrier. The chains didn't matter. He could have still fought had he still had at least his god hood. But he couldn't. So he had been used. Used again and again...no, he has to stop this line of thought.

'Where is the true God of Mischief?' The voice demands. 'Where is the lie smith? The silver tongue? The trickster? The one who deserves the throne of Asgard? The one who will destroy Odin? Bring Thor to his knees? Where is he?"' Loki closes his eyes and see's himself. Not as he looks now but the would be ruler of Midgard. He see's the insanity and hatred burning in his own eyes. His horn helmet shinning brightly in the surrounding darkness. His Asgardian robes reveal the nobility he once had. A form that demands power and respect. This is the source of the voice. The part of him that is not willing to die.

'Join me. Become me again. We will bring the Avengers to their knees. Then we will rule as we should,' the other Loki offers, opening his arms wide as he grins madly. He is drawn to this version of himself. It was a perfect mask. Useful. The blue glowing eyes beckon him. He could put on the
mask again. He could once again taste the sweetness of power this form promises. He moves towards it. Yes, the power would feel wonderful. Certainly better than the hollowness that plagues him.

He feels the arms wrap around him, pulling him closer. He see's images form behind this version of himself. Visions of the Avengers demise. The cracked shield of Captain America. Broken arrows of Barton. Pieces of Ironman's suit amongst rubble. The torn remains of Thor's red cape, caught on Mjolnir's handle. Scenes that would once bring such joy to him.

He hears the other him begin to laugh. 'They are all fools. Nothing more than ants that deserve death. And we are the one who will give it to them,' it states with confidence.

"No," Loki hears himself reply. He feels the other him pull back and look at him in confusion then down at it's stomach. There it see's Loki's fist wrapped around a knife. A knife plunged into it's stomach. Loki slowly looks up to his former self and watches the skin grow grey, blue veins appearing on the sides of it's face. The eyes grow white.

'If I die, what will that leave you?' It asks, it's voice becoming raspy.

"I don't know. Perhaps nothing," Loki replies.

'You and I are one. Our fury is just! The world's deserve to suffer from our madness!' It shouts out.

"No more madness. No more. We both deserve to rest in peace," Loki tells it as it turns to dust that blows away.

Loki is tempted to open his eyes and leave the barren darkness of his mind. Instead he falls to his knees and lowers his head, not in defeat so much as exhaustion. He doesn't see the white light developing behind him.

'What must have been very hard to do,' a female voice whispers. 'I am so very proud of you.'

"Mo-mother?" Loki whispers as he quickly twists his body, facing the source of the voice. His eyes widen at seeing the former wife of Odin. His mother. The only one he had ever known.

She smiles at him and he feels a warmth grow within him. She kneels down, her eyes never leaving his. To Loki, there has never been a woman more radiant than Frigga. Nor as kind. He doesn't flinch when she reaches out and touches the side of his face as she used to do when he was just a boy.

'Loki, my son. Don't be afraid now. Take this opportunity. Embrace it,' she tells him.

"I am so sorry mother. I...I didn't mean to..."

'Hush now. That is in the past. You must let go of it all if you are to live. And you must live my son,' Frigga encourages him.

"Was that not what I have been doing?" He asks, taking pleasure in feeling her touch even if it is only a memory.

'Was it? Were you living or were you acting out the greatest lie you have ever created?' She asks.

Loki thinks this over. After a moment, he feels her start to fade away. "Must you leave me?"

'I must. But I leave you with these words. Live your life, do not concern yourself with grand purposes or of power. You may still find what you once sought,' she whispers before pressing her
lips against his forehead.

He still feels the kiss when he opens his eyes and watches Tony Stark and Bruce Banner enter his room.
"There must be...a mistake," Loki replies quietly. Both men had just finished asking him a series of questions concerning the Other. They now know he was at the Helicarrier. They know about his power and it's telltale sign of it being in play. The blue eyes. They understand why he refuses to look them in the eye. Stark made him again look in his chocolate brown eyes and confirm that there is no blue in them. Unlike last time though, he also made him meet Dr. Banner's gaze. This made him whimper and he tried to pull away from Stark's grasp but failed. He ended up giving in and looked the doctor in the eyes, again confirming that his eyes are brown, not blue.

It was at this point that they went over the Other's appearance here at the tower. After he had answered their questions, Dr. Banner had handed him the strange little device that played a security footage of himself. Loki realized it was from just after Stark had left after rejecting him. He felt the panic grow inside as he waited to see the Other. It felt like it was squeezing his heart as each minute passed by.

But something was wrong with the footage. The Other didn't appear. Instead, he saw himself on his knees. He watches as he suddenly throws himself back against the wall, tears spilling down his face. Then he starts to rub at the collar around his neck. What alarms him is his eyes turning into an unusual shade of blue. Then his hand jerks away from the collar. This is when he burnt his fingers. What he was watching wasn't making any sense.

"Loki, the footage shows what happened. I checked it myself. There are no mistakes," Tony tells him.

"He...he was there," Loki states.

"To you, he was," Bruce speaks up. "You have been under a great deal of stress, don't you agree?"
Loki nods his head after a moment of thought.

"And you haven't been sleeping well. Nor have you been eating much, am I right?" Bruce ask, glancing over at Tony. Jarvis revealed to them before they came in here that Loki has only taken a few bites of his meals while he was locked within his room. The report of Loki's sleeping habits wasn't much better.

Again Loki nods his head, this time a bit more slowly.

"These things combined have a negative affect not only to one's body but on one's mind as well. I think...you triggered something within you and had a sort of...hallucination."

"Hallucination? You think...I've gone mad?" Loki asks quietly. He raises a hand to his collar but lowers it before touching it. Could that have been a moment of insanity? If so, could the other time also be a delusion?

"No. I'm not that kind of doctor but if I was to make a guess, I would say that this Other...he represents something to you. Is that right?" Bruce asks.

"He promised that I would pay for my failure."

"So he is has become a mental punisher to you. Every time you fail at something or when you are at your lowest moment, your mind may create his appearance. In truth, he is the manifestation of the punishment you believe you deserve," Bruce explains.

"Does that mean...at Shield...he wasn't..." Loki struggles to ask, feeling just the tiniest flicker of hope.

"When was he at the Helcarrier?" Stark asks.

"Fury left. The agents came in. Did they really come in? Or was that...my mind?" Loki asks, glancing up at the two Avengers. He see's their eyes widen and both men look at each other, both thinking about the black out of the security footage.

Bruce sighs and breaks eye contact first. "I'm sorry Loki. Those agents were real. So was what they did to you. I wish I could tell you differently."

"Then he was there," Loki says quietly, feeling his stomach drop. Hope had been extinguished yet again.

"Looks that way," Bruce replies.

"But he wasn't here. Nor will he be able to get to you here," Stark points out, the last comment sounding more like vow than a mere fact.

"And how can you possibly stop him?" Loki asks as he lowers his head. Again he reaches up to touch the collar.

"You let me worry about that Rudolf. But what's up with the collar? That must be the ninth time you went to touch it," Tony asks, changing subjects.

Loki doesn't reply. How can he possibly explain that the Other, who wasn't actually there, had done something to it so when he had touched it, it burned? Specially when he saw the video. He was the only one to touch it. He wants to confirm that if he is to touch it again, it won't burn. But something holds him back.
He nearly jumps out of his skin when Tony slides himself off the bed and reaches out to touch the collar.

"Easy. Just want to get a look at it," Tony tells him.

Loki nods, doubting the man would stop even if he refused. He closes his eyes and focuses on remaining still as Tony examines the collar. He knows that there isn't much to it. There are runes inscribed in the metal, runes that keep it locked around his neck. He also suspects that it would send out some sort of signal if Loki tried to escape or at least remove it. A theory he has no intention of testing out.

"Interesting markings. Too bad my Norse is rusty. The metal itself is unique. It should feel warm from your body heat but it feels like ice," Tony comments.

Loki's eyes open suddenly. He hadn't realized that Tony is actually touching it. Instinctively he pulls away.

"Is the cold of it bothering you?" Tony asks, ignoring Loki's reaction.

"It's..." Loki starts to reply before finally reaching up and touching the collar himself. He finds Tony to be correct. Instead of burning his finger tips, it feels ice cold as before. The truth finally settles itself within his mind. The Other hadn't done anything to it. He hadn't been there after Stark refused him. But what does that mean?

"Anyway. Now that we have that squared away," Tony glances over at Bruce who nods in the acceptance of changing the topic yet again, "Time for some instructions. First, you are going to eat something, and more than a few bites. After that, a shower and change of clothes. Then you are going to hang out with yours truly in the living room. There's some things we need to discuss. But first, food. So follow us to the kitchen."

Tony gets up and strolls out of the room. Bruce gets up a bit more slowly and watches Loki for a moment before holding out his hand.

"Come on, better not make him wait. Tony hates waiting," Bruce tells the fallen God. He inwardly sighs when the trickster takes his hand and allows himself to be led from the room, his head lowered as if in defeat. Again he thinks that he lacks the temperament for these situations. But as Tony has pointed out, he is the best they got. "How about some hot chicken noodle soup? I believe Steve made some yesterday. Very tasty."

About an hour later, Loki leaves the bathroom and finds Tony laying spread out on the couch, reading a time magazine. Interestingly, the man on the cover looks similar to Tony. But before he could read the headline, Tony notices him and throws the magazine aside, cover down.

"Alright, feeling better?" Tony asks with a smile.

Loki shrugs his shoulders in reply.

"Well, come on, sit down. I don't bite," Tony tells him as he shifts his legs off the couch and pats the empty space.

Loki slowly walks over to the couch and sits on the edge. Tony can see the suspicion on his face and even if he didn't, the rigid position Loki is sitting in is broadcasting the man's wariness of the situation. Well, he shouldn't be surprised if Loki has some trust issues with him. He has been acting like a royal ass lately.
"Alright, now just stay right there," Tony tells Loki, smiling playfully. He pulls out his cell phone. "Dial Miss Potts."

He glances up at Loki, noticing the curiousness slowly developing in those deep emerald colored eyes. There are two rings before Pepper's voice is heard.

"How may I help you Mr. Stark?" Pepper asks.

Tony grimaces at the question. If he had any doubt that he is in the doghouse, it's gone upon hearing how she is addressing him. "Is the formality really necessary?"

"What do you want Tony?" Pepper asks.

"Oh come on Pepper. Here I am calling with some good news and you are going all ice queen on me," Tony replies.

"And what is this good news? You decided to attend an AA meeting?" Pepper asks with a sigh.

"Even better," Tony tells her before hitting a button that makes her appear above the cell phone.

"Loki?" Pepper asks, her eyes widening in surprise.

"Told ya it is good news."

"Loki, how are you?" Pepper asks, ignoring Tony at this point.

"I...am well," Loki replies, wondering how she is able to see him.

"Uh huh. Well, I'm sorry for what Tony did to you," she offers.

"He had the right to do what he did. This...is his building and I...I'm..." Loki stops and looks away. What is he exactly now? A prisoner? War criminal? Something else?

"Anyway, as you can see, he's no longer locked in his room. So I thought maybe you will come by tomorrow and get him started with what we had talked about," Tony interrupts.

He almost flinches at the heated glare he is receiving. Then she sighs. "I will be there at nine am. It was nice seeing you Loki. I look forward to seeing you tomorrow," she says before the image blinks out, signaling that she hung up.

"Well, that wasn't nearly as bad as I expected. If she was actually here, I would have been slapped," Tony comments before noticing that Loki is still looking away. Time to swallow the bitter pill, he thinks. "Loki?"

Loki doesn't turn to look at Tony, his mind filled with a million thoughts. What he had said about Tony is the truth. This building belongs to him. He is here only because Stark allows him to be. No, that isn't right. He is here because Thor asked Stark for help. Come help with his de-powered brother. The trouble maker. Would be ruler. The liar and traitor of Asgard. Truths he realized he can't hide from.

A hand on his shoulder pulls him from his thoughts. Surprised, he pulls away and ends up on his knees, staring wide eye at Stark.

"Whoa! You okay?" Tony asks as he holds his hands up. He makes a mental note to never touch the God when he appears lost in thought.
Loki blinks and looks around for a moment before lowering his head in embarrassment. He is thankful that no one else is in the room with them at this moment. He starts to get up then stops. He's here because of Stark's generosity, he thinks, so should he not start to show some appreciation? He remembers the anger he felt at first when he was sent to this world as punishment for his crimes. And how he slowly accepted the truth that this is because of his own selfish actions. How he couldn't stay in the shadows. Isn't he making the same mistakes even now? During his time of solitude, he had personally vowed to never again make those fateful choices. Now is the time to fulfill that vow, he decides.

So to Tony Stark's disbelief, Loki shifts into a kneeling position before him. Horrified, Tony opens his mouth to say something when a voice from behind him beats him to the punch.

"That's not a bad look for him," Clint comments, his arms crossed and looking very satisfied when Tony turns back to look at him.

"I...he just...I didn't tell him to do that!" Tony tries to explain, looking back and forth between the two men.

"I'm not judging," Clint replies.

"Loki, Loki come on. Get up," Tony mumbles as he also gets up and goes to the kneeling God to help him up.

But before he can reach a hand out to him, Loki stands up quickly, his eyes remaining downcast. Tony stops and waits to see what else the God of Mischief might do. After a few minutes of silence, Tony rakes a hand through his hair before sitting back down on the couch. This situation is getting weird really fast.

"Loki, are you alright?"

"I am well," Loki replies.

"You sure?" Tony questions. Maybe he is over thinking things here. Maybe he really just startled the guy and the kneeling wasn't really him kneeling like some lowly servant or anything. Maybe it was just how he was getting up from the floor. Hopefully that is it.

Loki nods his head.

"Alright. Well, as you heard, Miss Potts will be here tomorrow. She and I talked and decided that it might be best if you have some chores to do around here rather than go out of your mind with boredom. Nothing difficult. Simple tasks. She will show you what to do and how to do it. Doesn't sound too bad, does it?" Tony asks.

Loki shakes his head. A few more minutes pass in awkward silence, Loki remaining standing still as Tony stares at the coffee table. He takes a deep breath then looks directly at Loki.

"Listen...about the past week, having you locked up in your room, that was a bad call. I shouldn't have done that," Tony shares.

"You needed answers. I should not have with held them," Loki replies quietly. "It won't happen again. You may ask me anything and I will give you the answers you seek."

"That's no excuse. I shouldn't have pushed the way I did nor punished you for not answering me. I should have backed off. I'm no good at making apologies and I can recognize my mistakes. I can't promise it won't happen again but I'll try to use more self control. Kay?" Tony offers.
Loki nods his head and for some reason Tony gets the feeling that Loki is only agreeing to please him rather than believing him at his word. Slightly irritated over this fact, he gets up again and heads to the kitchen past Barton.

"You look tired. Maybe you should get some rest," Tony suggests. He pulls a glass out from the cabin and peeks out to see Loki is already gone.

"And I thought I was lousy at apologies," Clint comments.

Tony only scoffs at the remark as he grabs a bottle of brandy and pours himself a glass. He doesn't notice Barton heading to the elevator with a dark look in his eyes and a smile on his lips. Instead he downs the drink and is refilling his glass when something comes to mind.

"Jarvis..."

"Sir?"

"Relay this message to Loki," Tony instructs before giving Jarvis the intended message.

Meanwhile Loki is walking to his all too familiar spot on the floor. However, just as he is about to sit down, Jarvis's voice fills the room.

'Sir, Mr. Stark has requested that I inform you that the bed he has provided is much more comfortable than the floor and wishes to encourage you to use it. He implied that he will be greatly offended if you still choose the floor.'

Loki nods in response, not sure if the computer even acknowledges this. With a sigh, he looks over to the bed then the doorway which he left open. Slowly he walks over to the bed and sits down, leaning back against the headboard.

Tony was right. He is so very tired. He would love to do nothing more than to go to sleep. But he won't. Not yet anyway. For the past week he fought off sleep as much as he could. He had kept telling himself he has been made to go without sleep before. That he has endured worse under Thanos. The lack of sleep is nothing compared to that. Besides, there are some things he needs to think over.

One is his new station in life. When talking to Ms. Potts, he had pondered this. But Stark quickly provided him with the answer. It wasn't an answer he hadn't thought of. Just not the one he had expected. During the past few days before he called for Stark, he had gone over the possibilities of his fate here. Would he eventually be sent back to the cabin? Handed over to Shield again now that he is willing to answer any and all questions? Now that he has shown that he will give in when punished, what will that information serve to the other Avengers? Will they be merciless now? All of these are still very much possible, he admits to himself. If he proves to be unsatisfactory. Which in recognizing this, there is only one option for him. To do everything in his limited power to be satisfactory. Being a servant to the Avengers can't be that hard after all. It's certainly safer than the other possibilities. Something he now must keep at the top of his priorities. Before, such concerns would have been laughable. With his own powers and abilities, he needed no one to provide him with security. Even if he did, he would never lower himself to become depended on others. He would simply weave his lies and take what he needed. But that was then, this was now.

He can not allow himself to forget this. He needs the Avengers now. He needs Stark, Barton, even Thor. With them close, he knows they would not allow strangers to simply come in and have him. If he was back in the cabin those men may come back. Thor is unable to always be there to prevent
further incidents from occurring. He may be able to fight them off now that the illness he had has left his body but if they brought some friends along, the outcome would be no different. A small yet high pitch noise rises from his throat at the memory.

No, he doubted the Avengers, with their precious image as Earth's Mightiest heroes, would not allow strangers from the streets to come in and have him. Now for Agents of Shield or even themselves, that is a different matter. But he convinces himself that as long as he doesn't displease them, specially Stark who owns the very building, they are unlikely to hand him over to Shield again. It might even be enough to hold off their own private urges. If not, well, he will face that when it happens. Maybe seeing his compliance will make things easier.

How strange that a fall from grace can tear apart a person's very being and make them into a new creature. Now he understands why Thor was so different when he returned to Asgard. Though he doubted his brother had been altered as much as he has, he had been changed. The Allfather is certainly wise with his punishments.

Yet there is another difference between his banishment and Thor's. Thor had a home to go back to once he was again deemed worthy. And he received his Godhood back. Loki is no fool though. No matter what he does, he will never be deemed worthy to return to Asgard. And his powers... he will never have them returned. And his magik... his magik is forever lost to him. He is left with this hollow feeling in it's place. A feeling that he will have for the rest of his long life.

A future he doesn't want to think about again. He already knows how bleak it is. It is because of this that he had decided to give in to Stark at the end. After all, most of the Avengers, as powerful as they are, are still only human. And humans live such short lives. When they are gone, he will have to move on. And he knows what awaits him out there. The same thing that happened to him at the cabin and in that cell at Shield's. So shouldn't he humble himself now and enjoy the moment where he could sleep without wondering if the next time will hurt just as much as the last?

He nods to himself, his eyes almost closed. After a few moments he falls asleep, his last thoughts being of what will be expected of him from now until tomorrow.

Elsewhere in the tower, two floors beneath where Loki is sleeping, Clint enters his own bedroom. He sets down a duffle bag on a nearby desk and sits down while whistling a tune. He turns on the lamp desk then opens the duffel bag. The first thing he pulls out is a thick file. He opens this and flips through the pages. Seeming content with the file, he sets it aside.

Next he pulls out a small black box. This he opens and examines one of the several tiny spider like mechanical devices which is inside. He presses a button and a blue light comes on. He gathers a handful more of these and stands up. He tosses the one he had turned on towards the closest corner of the ceiling and watches as the device actually crawls the rest of the way before embedding itself in the corner. He does this with the rest in all corners of the bedroom then does the same with the hallway.

"Never liked that nosy AI anyway," he mutters with a smile when he returns to his room.

Without sitting, he pulls out the rest of the contents of the duffle bag. There is a wall hook, a pair of handcuffs, a couple of thick leather belts, a taser, and a brand new hunting style knife. He lines these items out in a row across the desk. Then he sits down on his bed and stares at them.

Can he really do this? Since working for Shield, he has had to do a lot of nasty things in his time. Some that gave him nightmares. Yet he always reasoned that he had been ordered to do those things. That he has no personal responsibility for those actions. But what he is planning to do has nothing to do with Shield or any orders he's received. This was something else altogether. More personal. So
the question is, can he do this without being ordered to?

Then his eyes fall to the thick file. There is the source of his determination. There is his answer. Yes, he can do this. He will do this. He has to. Just like Loki has to pay for his crimes. The others may choose to coddle the super villain simply because he is now powerless, but he will not be so kind. He can not ignore the injustice Loki is responsible for. It's time for Loki to pay for his deeds.

His hand reaches underneath his bed and he pulls out his bow. Without a thought he pulls out a rag and starts polishing it. His eyes never leave the file as he does this. 'Yes, it's time to even the score,' he thinks.
When Loki wakes, it's with a start. Confused, he looks around. He acknowledges that he fell asleep despite planning not to. But what had woke him? Then he hears it. Thunder. His brother. Despite the stiffness in his back from falling asleep in a strange position, he presses himself back against the headboard and brings his knees up to his chest. All he can do is wait now. So he does, his eyes watching the open doorway.

The other Avengers come to the same conclusion concerning the sudden storm and start to make their way to the roof to greet the God of Thunder. They had no doubt that Thor would have more information concerning Loki's situation, if there were any. Each was being driven by their own curiosity. Yet, Starks seems to be the exception for they had to wait several minutes before he met them.

"You know, I'm really glad that you learned that you can land on the roof instead of crashing through the windows," Tony comments with a smile, ignoring the looks he is receiving due to his late arrival. "Seriously, I was having windows replaced every other month."

"So now that we are all here, how did the meeting with your father go?" Steve asks. When they met Thor, they had exchanged greetings while silently agreeing to wait to ask the big question until they all were gathered.

"He wasn't pleased with the change of circumstances. But he has agreed to ad end his decision. As of now, Loki is to remain here. He not allowed outside near the common population. And...he is to earn the right to remain here," Thor tells him.

"Earn the right?" Steve asks, clearly confused.

"I think he means that Loki has to earn his keep. As in work," Bruce explains, though looking doubtful.

"Yes. Loki is to know labor, hard work," Thor replies, looking at his fellow heroes with concern.

"And he will," Tony pipes up, pulling out a pair of sun glasses from his pocket. "He starts tomorrow
"Stark..." Steve says with a bit of concern.

"Oh don't worry boy wonder, it won't be anything he can't handle. Pepper will teach him the ropes. So anything else?" Tony asks with a wave of dismissal.

"Director Fury wants to know what is the situation concerning his powers," Natasha states.

"Father said.. Loki is to live the rest of his life without them. He will not return them to Loki," Thor informs them with a grave tone.

"I can't say that that information doesn't make me feel better about this but it seems a bit...harsh," Steve replies to this information.

"I have to agree. He's being made defenseless and we all know that with our line of work, well, that's not a good thing," Bruce comments.

"Still, we can not forget that he is a world class terrorist. Him being without his powers makes it less likely for him to repeat the New York incident, then so be it. But he still has other...talents. We can't let our guard down," Natasha states firmly.

"I agree. If he steps out of line, we need to make sure he's put back in his place," Clint adds with a small smile. He ignores the questionable look from Natasha as he said this.

"Well, it's a lovely day and all but if we're done, I am going back inside. I left my welding torch on," Tony tells them with a bored tone as he turns to head back inside. "Oh, Point Break, you sticking around and visiting with your brother?"

"I will stay but I am not so sure my brother would like my company at this time," Thor answers.

"Your call," is the only reply he receives.

A few minutes later, Clint is standing in the corner of the living space on the same floor Loki is on. From his position, he could just see that the door to Loki's room is open. He wonders if the former demi-God will be lured out by the voices of his brother and the Captain. That is why they chose this floor compared to the numerous others to hang out with the blonde God. Bruce is in the kitchen area with Natasha, cooking something. Judging by the smell, it is nearly done.

He turns his gaze to the God of Thunder. He wonders how long he will be hanging around. And if he will be hovering over his dear brother or not. If so, that might delay his plans. But as they all know, Thor can't stick around for long. Not with his duties to Asgard. Not to mention his girlfriend here on earth. And if he is careful, even Thor's presence won't mean anything. Loki will pay.

"Clint?"

He blinks and looks to his right, seeing Natasha watching him with mild concern.

"Never get a moment's peace, do we?" He asks.

"Part of our job," she replies. "Are you going to be alright with Loki here?"

"Don't worry, him staying here won't compromise me," he dismisses.

"Clint, what he did..."
"He's paying for. And will pay for. Seriously Natasha, I'm fine," he states firmly. He turns his attention back to Thor and Steve who have moved to the couch, Bruce bringing plates out from the kitchen.

"Well, foods done. Let's go join them. Jarvis?" Natasha addresses the AI.

'I will notify Mr. Stark that dinner is ready,' the AI replies.

Clint can see her nod and walk towards the kitchen. With a final glance down the hall towards the other god's room, he sighs and follows her.

Several minutes later, Loki is still sitting on the bed, his body tense. He has been listening to the voices of the others. Specialy his brother's. He listened to him tell the Captain about the Warriors Three and Lady Sif, of the work being done on the Bifrost, and of the small matters that have been occurring on Asgard. A tiny sliver of pain develops in his chest as he realizes that had he not done what he had done, he wouldn't need to eavesdrop to hear such information. Information about his home. Information on his brother's friends. Such information would have been his naturally.

As time passes, the voices grew quiet. They were retiring for the night. He heard Steve and Bruce wish his brother a good night. Then Barton and judging by his brother's response, the widow as well. Now he was just listening to Stark and his brother talk about Jane Foster and Pepper Potts. It seems that his assumption that Stark was closer to Ms. Potts was accurate in part. They had been very close but when he would not give up being an Avenger, they parted. This makes Loki think about the strange ways of mortals. Here, Stark had chosen the path of a hero. Something that would catch the attention of countless women of Asgard. They would be proud to stand at the side of such a hero. They would not see it as a burden as Ms. Potts had. As for Jane, Thor is concerned that they are not as close as they once were. He wonders if this is also because of his actions.

Finally he hears his brother announce that he is going to retire for the night and Stark makes a similar comment. Following this, there is nothing but silence. Loki isn't sure how to feel about this. He was sure Thor would come through that door and at least greet him. Yet he stayed away. Then he remembers his brother's strange behavior at the cabin. He should have known better. He should have remembered that things have changed. That he was the one that made them change. In his rage, he wanted to destroy their bond. And he had succeeded.

Even so, he was so sure Thor would at least see how he was faring. Thor would stand outside his bedroom and look at Loki with those heated blue eyes. Blue eyes filled with betrayal, pain, and disappointment. Emotions he is solely responsible for. Maybe his brother will speak, remind him that this situation is because of his own madness. Or to ask his questions, pleading for understanding behind his wicked deeds. More than likely though, he would remain silent. For if he spoke, then Loki might reply and Thor had said right from the beginning that he never wants to hear his voice again.

With a sigh, he glances at the doorway, despite knowing it will be empty. So when he see's that there is someone standing there, he is caught off guard.

"Why so glum?" Tony asks as he leans against the doorway, holding up a plate of food. "Hungry perhaps?"

Loki lowers his eyes and remains quiet.

Tony puts the plate down on top of the nightstand. "Not very talkative again, are we? Is it because Thor is here? Or perhaps because he didn't go visit you?" Tony questions as he sits himself down on the bed, glancing over at Loki.
"There's no reason for him to see me," Loki replies quietly after a few minutes.

"Other than he is your over bearing big brother?" Tony quips. "Or that he's obviously worried about you?"

Loki faces at Tony, meeting his eyes for a moment before lowering them when he realizes what he is doing. "We were never brothers," Loki replies quickly.

"Oh give it a rest with the whole, he's not my brother thing already! And do I really need to make you look me in the eye again?" Tony ask, his voice heavy with annoyance.

"I'm sorry," Loki whispers, forcing himself to meet Tony's gaze. He watches Tony's mouth open then close as if he was about to say something but thought better of it. Instead, Tony looks away.

"Forget it. Make you eat that then get some sleep. Tomorrow is a big day for you. Jarvis will be waking you up before Pepper gets here. So...good night," Tony replies before quickly getting up and leaving Loki's room.

Loki watches his shadow fade away from the hallway walls. After a few minutes he moves to the plate and starts eating the small portions of meat and vegetables.

Tony finds that his heart is nearly racing by the time the elevator doors close. Who would think two little words could have weird-ed him out so much? Maybe it has something to do with the fact that they came out of the God of Mischief's mouth? Seriously, did Loki actually apologize to him? He shakes his head. It's been a long day. Any further thoughts on the matter can wait till morning. Right now he could use a few hours of undisturbed sleep. Still...an apology? Is that good thing or a bad thing?

The next morning, Loki finds himself standing in the living space, watching the elevator. Stark's AI had informed him that both Ms. Potts and Tony Stark were on their way to his floor. He quickly muffles a yawn. He tried to get some more sleep as Tony had instructed. But unlike before where he fell into a dreamless sleep, he had been plagued by nightmares. When he gave up and left the bed, Jarvis had told him he had yet four hours before Ms. Potts was due to arrive. After his shower he had spent the morning reading one of his books, deciding that this may be the only time he will have for a while to sit down and read quietly.

Now he is waiting for the elevator to open. A moment later it does and he watches the former couple walk over to him.

"Good morning Loki. It's good to see you again," Ms. Potts greets him.

"Good morning Ms. Potts. Tony," Loki replies quietly, lowering his eyes just slightly, missing the glare Pepper gives to Tony.

"Well, I'll leave you to it. Loki...just listen to Pepper and you should be fine," he offers as he slowly backs away from the pair.

"We'll be fine Tony," Pepper replies coolly.

Loki watches Tony retreat into the elevator before he turns to the red haired woman. He is startled by how closely she seems to be looking at him.

"Are you feeling alright?" She asks.

"Yes," he replies, stepping back from her.
"Okay. So have you had breakfast?"

Loki shakes his head, wondering what that has to do with learning the chores he will be expected to do.

"You really should eat breakfast. You don't want to be cleaning on an empty stomach or you will overeat come lunch. Come on, I'll make eggs. Then we will start in the kitchen," she tells him.

Loki nods even though she is already walking into the kitchen area. He follows her quietly.

To his surprise, none of the chores were at all difficult, as Tony had promised. The tasks were rather basic. Wash and dry dishes, wipe all surfaces, sweep and mop the tile floors, vacuum the carpeted ones, empty the trash, and clean the bathrooms. On weekends he will be expected to wash the windows and do the laundry. Something he will be taught how to do in a few days. Even the fact that he is supposed to be responsible for ten floors of the tower, he's only expected to get two of them done per day. He really expected the chores to be much worse and more embarrassing somehow.

Pepper had been very patient with him as he learned the basics. He use to pride himself for being a quick learner but he only hoped that this trait makes this experience more bearable for her. He didn't say much as he followed her around doing the various tasks once she showed him how. When she told him they were done for the day, it was just a few hours after noon. He had told her that he is okay to clean another floor but she insisted that he shouldn't try to over do it. Tomorrow he will do these all on his own but she told him that she will be in the tower so if he needed help, he could just ask Jarvis to get her.

So now he is in the elevator, riding with her. The elevator stops on her floor which is six floors down from his. He went with her with the vacuum so he can leave it there for the next day's work. But before he can pick up the vacuum, she grabs it.

"Don't worry, I've got it. You did really well today. I'm sure you won't have any problems tomorrow. But if you do, you can ask Jarvis to get me, okay?" Pepper repeats to himself.

Loki nods and watches her step off the elevator. She offers him a smile just as the door closes between them. As he was taught, he hits the button for his floor then presses himself in the corner, his arms crossed. He is wondering if he should finish the book he's been reading before starting all over again or maybe gather his nerve and ask Tony if he could borrow a few books.

Just as he decides not to push his luck, the elevator stops. He looks up and feels himself panic when he see's that he isn't at his floor yet. The doors open and he swallows nervously when Clint Barton steps into the elevator, grinning when he see's the trickster alone inside.

"Today was your first day as a maid, wasn't it?" Clint asks.

Loki doesn't reply, not sure what a maid is and not at all comfortable with being trapped within this small space with the one person who has the biggest grudge against him.

"Bet you never imagined that you would be cleaning the floors of the very tower you wrecked during your little war attempt, did you? No, you were so sure you would be fulfilling some glorious purpose. No offense, but I'd say that your purpose...well it's a far cry from being glorious," he continues.

Loki lowers his head, his arms tightening around his body. Any minute now the elevator will stop on his floor and he can get away from the Avenger. His breath catches when he see's Clint move closer to him out of the corner of his eye.
"What's wrong boss?" Clint asks, drawing the last word out, "Now that I am no longer under your control I'm not worth talking to? Huh?"

Loki jumps when Barton slams a fist into the elevator wall.

"Guess not. That's fine though. You don't need to say anything. All you have to do is whatever I tell you to do," Clint hisses into his ear. "Starting with following me to my room."

As Barton says this, the elevator door opens. Loki knows this isn't his floor as much as he knows he doesn't want to follow Barton anywhere alone. He glances towards the ceiling.

"Don't even think about it. Besides, Tony, Bruce, Steve and even your brother are gone for the afternoon. Judging by the fact you were in here by yourself, that means Ms. Potts retired for the day. And Natasha got called in. That leaves just the two of us. And I think we have some catching up to do, right boss?" Clint asks as he gets a firm grip on Loki's arm and drags him out of the elevator.

Loki's mind is ringing with alarm bells. He thinks of trying to pull away and run back into the elevator but sees how foolish such an attempt would be. The hawk would just go after him and it would end the same way it is now, though he would be no doubtedly earn a few more bruises. So he allows himself to be led towards the man's private bedroom.

Barton pushes him into the room and slams the door shut behind him, enjoying seeing the former God jump from the sound.

"Did you really think that you would get away with everything you did just by cleaning a few floors? Not even close pal. No where near close. But don't worry. I'll make you will pay for your crimes. Let's start with Germany. Now what was it you told those people? Oh yeah, you told them to kneel. Guess what that means?" Clint asks sadistically before shoving Loki to the ground near the wall.

Loki knows exactly what Barton means. Therefore he doesn't bother to save himself from the fall. Instead he quickly gets into the position he knows Barton is expecting. It's the position he put himself in for Stark. And he holds no doubts that before long, he will take the same position before all of the Avengers. Just as he knows that they all will share the same pleasure that Barton is feeling at this moment.

"That was almost too easy. Guess all we needed to take you down a few notches was to let a few agents have some quality time with you, huh? Wonder what you would be like if it was to happen again," Clint says, pretending to muse the idea over.

"Please..." Loki whispers, shaking his head.

"What, you want it to happen again? Wow that's sad."

"No! Not again. Please, do whatever you want to me but not that," Loki begs, lowering his head.

"All I want is to see justice done. What should have been done when Thor took you back to Asgard. Seriously, they thought it would be enough to reduce you to our level and that makes everything all better? Maybe in Asgard but not here! Look at this!" Clint shouts as he throws the file at Loki, hitting him in the face with it.

Loki flinches from the hit before he opens his eyes and looks down at the folder on the ground, its contents spilling out. He sees countless pieces of paper with faces of different people on them with their personal information.
"You know what that is?" Clint asks.

Loki shakes his head, his eyes reading the bits of information from the papers in an attempt to find some clue so he can answer Barton's question.

"Those are all the people you killed."

Loki feels his heart stop. He knew he was responsible for the death of many mortals but now he was actually seeing them. All of them were in that folder. It was larger than he could even imagine.

"You stole their lives. Now you are going to learn how us puny mortals get even. Take off your shirt," Barton orders.

Loki's hands are shaking as they move to the collar of his shirt, pulling it off. Clint takes a step forward and Loki draws back.

"Oh please, I'm not going to rape you. That's going a bit too far even for me," Clint tells him. "Now face the wall and raise your hands above your head. Stay on your knees."

Loki felt a moment of overwhelming relief when Barton told him he wasn't going to use him but the feeling quickly reverted back to fear as he followed Barton's instructions. Barton may not be planning to use him but whatever he does have in mind, Loki knew it would hurt. He closes his eyes when he feels the handcuffs snap close around his wrists.

Two hours later, Loki stumbles out of the elevator. He doesn't bother to look around as he makes his way to his bedroom. All he wants to do is go to his room.

'Sir, I detect some unusual readings regarding your heart rate and blood pressure. Are you in need of medical assistance?' The AI asks.

"No. I'm slightly exhausted is all. No need for concern," Loki replies as he enters his bedroom.

Once inside, he falls down on his bed, face down. He is trembling and tears fall. Slowly, with a few hisses of pain, he pulls off his shirt. His back is covered with red welts. One hundred and thirteen of them. His long fingers reach out over his shoulder and flinches when he touches one of them. He clutches at the sheets in pain.

Three names repeat themselves in his mind. Megan Boone, Thomas Decker, and Xander Hall. Three of his victims. Three who have been avenged. He wonders how he will be able to bare with those he still owes a debt to. Earlier he had thought that maybe his life here won't be so hard to bare. Now he knows just how wrong he was. If only he wasn't alone, he thinks. Yet that is his fate. To suffer alone. So that is how he spends the rest of the day.
Chapter 19

The following day, Tony is in his workshop. But he isn't building anything. Instead he is resting his forehead on his arms, occasionally groaning. The afternoon before was suppose to be a harmless day out eating at some Thai restaurant with his fellow Avengers. They had spent several hours there talking about pretty much everything. Then the group separated, Steve and Bruce going off to see some exhibit or something (Tony wasn't really listening as the see us laters were being said) while he and the big brother went to the a local club.

Now that had been a lot of fun. Well, what he can remember of it. They had actually made a bet to see who could get the most phone numbers (which ended in a surprising tie) and getting the big guy to try some of the craziest alcohol concoctions from the guide to seeing pink elephants (which was a riot to explain).

Then there was a somber moment. Strangely, Tony remembers this with perfect clarity. Rest of the night, not so much. In that moment, questions he had concerning their trickster tower mate came flooding out of him. What is the story between them? Why did Loki try to take over Earth? Was he always an evil prick?

He didn't give Thor a moment to answer until they were all out. And when they were, he was really surprised by Thor's reaction. He really expected to be told to watch his mouth or at least be told that the matter doesn't concern him which was Thor's polite way to say mind your own business. Instead the larger man sighed and looked at the mug in his hand with the saddest expression he had ever seen from the big guy.

Then he started talking. It wasn't in directly answering his questions. No, the big guy started from the beginning. His earliest memories of Loki as a child. How they were raised as true brothers. They sounded like any pair of kids. Adventurous, troublemakers now and then, yet basically good kids. Differences did develope as they grew older such as Loki actually enjoyed their daily lessons while
Thor preferred their training bouts. But they remained close. When Thor went to his first patrol, Loki was right there by his side.

The man honestly believed Loki would always be by his side. He would never have imagined the fate they now share. Even with what he had done at his own coronation, he forgave Loki and saw it as just some jest that may have gotten a bit out of control. He admits that Loki was right in his actions however. Thor hadn't been worthy of the crown at that time. Had the coronation gone as it should, he would have been nothing more than a ruthless tyrant, hungry for war. He praised Loki's foresight in the matter.

Tony heard the grief Thor experienced when he believed Loki had died when he fell from the Bifrost. And again when he believed Loki had been killed by Algrim. Tony wondered what had led Loki to fake his own death, it couldn't be just to obtain the throne? Specially when the big guy just admitted that he told Odin, who was actually Loki, that he didn't want it. Sounds like all Loki had to do was behave in a cell for a time and then make up with Daddy and the throne would be his anyway. Then again, Loki wasn't exactly in the right frame of mind nor did he come off as overly patient.

At the end of Thor's ramblings concerning his little brother, Tony felt just as lost as Thor. So the guy hadn't always been a prick. Maybe a bit of a nerd instead of a warrior like his big brother but still, that couldn't have been enough to make him go all world dominatingly crazy. And the guy wasn't completely heartless either. Thor pointed out the guilt his brother felt over the death of their mother and also during their little battle during the attack in New York. Thor expressed a hidden concern that his brother may have been somehow...possessed during that battle. Thor had muttered something that strangely sounded like 'my brother's eyes were blue'.

After that...well things get fuzzy. They left the club and somehow ended up at a beer tasting event...or at least he thinks that is what it was. Mugs of beer were involved. And wet t-shirts. Why, he has no idea. Just like how he managed to return to the tower is a mystery. He hopes that no one had to carry him in. He could always ask Jarvis but some things are better left unanswered.

So that leaves him to here and now. He had managed to crawl into the elevator and get to his workshop despite his head pounding like a jackhammer. Told everyone who saw him that he had to finish something. No one stopped him. But when he came in to his workshop, this was as far as he had gotten.

He hears a faint ping sound and groans. Just what he needed during this bad hangover. Company. Maybe it will be one of the guys.

"Had fun last night?" Pepper asks him.

He gives another groan.

"Don't worry, I won't waste my time lecturing you," Pepper tells him, slowly walking to his side and leaning against the workbench.

"Much appreciated," he mumbles.

"I felt I should report to you on how Loki's day went yesterday," she continues.

This gets his interest. He sits himself up and turns towards her, smiling his carefree smile. "And how did it go? Did he spontaneously combust when he had to touch a sponge?"

"He did not. And it went fine. Not a single incident," she replies.
The smile falls away. "So what is bothering you?"

"You really did it this time Tony. You went too far," she scolds.

"Pepper..."

"He is broken Tony. The guy followed me around with his head hanging down as if I was leading him around on a leash! Do you know how that feels? If I asked him to do something, he dropped whatever he was doing to do what I asked. And no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't get him to talk to me like he did before you locked him up in his room," Pepper rants.

"I noticed the same thing," Tony admits.

"Yeah, well what are you going to do about it?" Pepper demands to know.

"I don't know. I'm open to suggestions though."

"I told you that I'm not cleaning up after you anymore," Pepper states firmly, giving him the evil eye of hers.

Tony turns away and rubs his face before getting up. "Guess I should try to talk to him again," he mutters.

When he gets to the elevator, she calls out to him.

"Tony?"

"Hmm?"

"You might want to let him know that he's doing a good job," she suggests.

"I'll do that," he replies as he steps in. He goes to hit a button but stops. Before he can ask though...

"He's on the twenty second floor. I passed him when I came down to check on you," she informs him.

"Thanks," he says with a wave before hitting the correct button. He stands back and folds his arms as the elevator starts to rise. He wonders what exactly he will be saying when he see's the former God. Whatever it will be, it will be more than saying 'good job'.

Meanwhile, Loki steps out of the now clean bathroom with a trash bag in hand. He moves on into the living space here and adds it to another trash bag. He winces in pain when he straightens up. Since the little session with Barton yesterday, his back has been pure agony. Even wearing cloth against it hurt but he doesn't dare go without covering it. Barton made it very clear that things can and will get much worse if he things Loki is trying to trouble the others with his predicament. Besides, Barton told him that they all were aware of it. They just don't want to see it. Which is why he is wearing the hooded sweater even though it is actually warm within the tower. Thankfully there has been cool air being blown into the floor he is currently cleaning. Still, the heavy cloth seemed to always shift and scrape against his sore back, making him pause for a moment until the sensation fades.

Which he is doing when he hears the elevator running. Quickly he turns towards the hall, grabbing the broom waiting nearby and starts sweeping the tile floor of the small hallway as not to be caught being idle. With his sore back facing the elevator, he silently prays that the elevator doesn't stop on this floor. He is nearly done, only the sweeping he is doing now and the vacuuming left to be done
before he moves on to the next floor, for this floor had been fairly easy to clean.

He tenses when he hears the ping. Maybe it will only be Ms. Potts returning to her room for the day. Regardless, he doesn't dare stop to see who it is.

"Almost done Dasher?"

That question makes him finally stop and turn around. He see's Tony look about with mild interest before meeting his gaze.

"Almost," Loki replies, "with this floor. I haven't started on the floor above."

"Pepper told me that you did really well yesterday. Looks like you are doing a good job," Stark comments before casually walking towards the main living space which only has a single couch and instead of a entertainment stand with TV, there is only a small coffee table with a portable CD player and a few loose cd's.

Loki watches him for a moment as he sits down before he starts sweeping again. Stark doesn't say anything as he picks up the dustpan and sweeps the tiny amount of dirt onto it then dumps it into the trash. When he sets the broom and dustpan down, Stark makes a coughing noise to draw his attention.

"I think you can use a break there Lokes. How about you take a seat for a few minutes?" Stark offers.

Loki glances down at the space next to Tony Stark before he sits down, careful not to touch his back against anything.

"So besides the cleaning, what else do you have in mind today?" Stark asks as he leans back into the corner of the couch.

"Reading," Loki answers, hoping that this won't get him more chores.

"The books Thor brought?"

Loki looks up at Tony in surprise. All he knew was that somehow his books were retrieved from the cabin and were returned to him by Banner.

"You didn't know that Thor went back to that cabin to get them, did you? Figures the big guy wouldn't tell you," Tony mutters with an eye roll. Sometimes he would wonder what he missed out growing up without a sibling. But at times like this, he was thankful for the lack of experience. So Loki still likes books he muses over. Then something comes to mind. "You know, there is an unfinished library here at the tower. Well, not really a library. It has a bunch of books we sometimes use for reference for whatever. There might be some general everyday books in there. And if not, I could always order some. Like reading anything in particular? Or are you only familiar with Asgardian stuff?"

"Nothing...in particular," Loki answers.

"Okay well maybe I'll just order you some classics, a few different titles and then go from there. You know, if there is anything you need, you can ask for it. Or if there is something that might help make you more comfortable here. No glow sticks of destiny or horned helmets but I can be flexible about most things. You know..." Tony says as he sits up and looks Loki over, taking the black sweat pants and the hoodie, "maybe we should get you some of your own clothes since it looks like you will be staying here for awhile. No offense, but our hand-me-downs and the clothes your brother picked up
from who knows where, isn't doing you any favors. You either look like you've been shrunk or waiting for a flood. Think you can handle some clothes shopping this weekend?"

"Perhaps," Loki replies, thinking about what shape his back will be by then. But if Barton has him go to his room again, he will have to think of some excuse to decline the offer. Maybe he should decline it now to be on the safe side. He parts his lips to do this...

"I had an interesting chat with your brother," Tony shares before Loki can say anything, "Sounds like you had a decent enough childhood. Both of you were really close until around his coronation or whatever when things went south. Is that about right?"

Loki nods, his mind spinning a whirlwind of memories and emotions but refusing to express any of them in any form.

"So here's my big question. There's the Loki your brother grew up with, the jerk who tried to bring war to our planet in a foolish attempt to rule over all of humanity, and the Loki that I have been watching develop lately. The one that resembles a kicked puppy. Who is afraid to look people in the eye. Rarely speaks. And strangely...'submissive'. Which one is the real Loki?" Tony asks, watching him intently. He had thrown in the submissive comment in hopes to see the tiniest spark form in the trickster's eyes.

He fights a sigh when the trickster looks away and answers quietly, "I do not know."

A few minutes of silence passes by, with Loki looking off to the far wall while Tony continues to look at him with intensively. Loki hears Tony take in a deep breath and get up. He assumes that Stark if finished talking to him and is going to leave so when he feels his wrists being grabbed, he is startled.

"Come on Loki! Who do you thinking you're kidding? Remember, I'm the guy that threatened you during your little invasion. I'm the guy who offered you a drink. I got to know you during that little chat. You were a cocky little shit, so sure that you were going to win with your army. Remember what you did when I challenged you? You grabbed me and tossed me across the room. Then you tossed me out the window. You didn't think twice about killing me! So where is that crazy son of a bitch? Where is he?!" Tony shouts, his eyes burning into Loki's.

Loki is trembling at this point. Nothing is making sense. Stark had been laid back earlier during their chat. Now he is almost on top of him, holding his arms down in a painful grip and shouting at him. Bringing up a past that has not been a pleasant one. And worse yet, how can he explain to Stark that the Loki he knew was an act? A lie? Something he had put on in hopes to prove himself. That by ruling earth and getting these mortals in line, he could be a just ruler as expected of Thor. At least, that was his reasoning at the beginning. But he underestimated the alliance he made with Thanos. No, he underestimated Thanos. When the Other made his dark threat, that is when he realized how deep he was in. So he had to be sure he would win. He needed to win. His mind scrambles for some way to be able to give Stark what he hopes could be an acceptable answer.

"Am I interrupting something?"

At the sound of the new voice, Loki flinches back and bumps his back against the back of couch which makes a painful cry escape from him. He see's Tony blink at the sound then looks down at Loki's wrists which he quickly releases.

"No. No you're not Clint. Can I help ya with something?" Tony asks, turning to face his team mate with a charming smile.
"Not really. An envelope was delivered for Ms. Potts so I thought I would drop by and give it to her. I thought this was her floor..." Clint replies, holding up a large envelope.

"It is. She's off doing a conference call," Tony replies before looking down at Loki. "Well, it was nice chatting with you. See you at lunch."

Loki nods and watches Stark walk past Barton, patting him on the shoulder on the way before going into the elevator, not bothering to wait for Clint to join him as he presses the button. Barton sets the file down and watches the elevator door close before turning to Loki who is staring at the floor. The former God seems to be almost hyperventilating.

"He seemed really upset with you. What did you do?" Barton asks.

"Nothing," Loki replies before he could stop himself.

"You sure about that?"

Loki remains silent this time, biting his lip to remain so.

"Have it your way. You're suppose to be cleaning right now, right?" Barton questions, smiling as an idea comes to him.

Loki nods and quickly gets up. But before he could move towards the vacuum, Clint grabs his arm in a vice grip.

"After you are finished with your chores, come to my floor. I will be waiting for you," Barton promises before releasing Loki and goes to the elevator.

Loki doesn't turn around. Instead he falls to his knees and stares at the vacuum. His hands slowly cross in front of his stomach and reaches around to touch his back, his fingers just touching the bruises. Not for the first time, he wishes Odin had sentenced him to be thrown in the Asgardian prison cells and left there to rot. There he would know what to expect. There no one would dare to touch him as he has been since returning to this world. There he may still know who he is and who he will be.

Later that day Tony Stark finds himself in company of the one person he didn't think he would have gone to for any sort of advice. Yet there he is playing a game of chess with Steve Rogers, trying to stretch the game out. The good captain had seemed surprised when he suggested the game and accepted without a second thought. Yet Tony finds himself unable to ask the questions he wants to ask. Thankfully, the captain saves him the trouble.

"So how is Loki adjusting?"

"He seems to be fine. Well, as fine as one could be for someone stripped of their Godhood and dumped on the one place that has a serious grudge against you," Tony replies.

"Asgardian justice is certainly different from our own," Steve comments.

"Yeah, makes me grateful that our own legal system is what it is."

"I'm impressed with how you are handling it. Not too many people these days would treat a criminal the way you have," Steve shares.

"Ehh, I haven't actually been that good to him," Tony admits.
"How so?" Steve asks as he studies the chess board.

"I may have been...kicking the hornets nest a little. Trying to get him to go off."

"You...want him to go off?" Steve asks as he reaches out to touch a knight piece but then stops.

"You notice how he has been acting?" Tony asks.

"Not really. To be honest, I haven't been spending much time with him," Steve confesses. "I know what happened to him was horrific but he still makes me feel uneasy."

"He's not the same evil overlord he was before. Heck, your eyes alone would send him running in terror these days," he shares with the Captain.

"My...eyes?" Steve asks, finally looking up from the board.

"They're blue, right?"

"Um, yeah?"

"Then yeah. He has a thing about blue eyes. Remember the footage we all watched when Loki first arrived? When he took control of Clint?" Tony asks.

"Yes, I remember. After Loki touched his chest with that scepter of his, Barton's eyes turned blue. But why would that bother him?"

"Apparently the agents that raped him...their eyes had the same blue glow. Turns out it isn't just his little stick that does that. Some guy called the Other has the funky mind control power and had paid him a visit at the Helicarrier," Tony explains.

"Shield was breached?!" Steve cries out, standing up suddenly.

"Looks like it."

"I have to report this to Fury," Steve mutters and starts to walk away to do so.

"Won't do any good. Besides, the guy was there for Loki and Loki only. Doubt he will make a second appearance there while we have him. And whoever they are, their beef seems to be only aimed at Loki. They didn't like that he failed," Tony shares.

"I...see. If this 'Other' is responsible for the mind control, could Loki have been under the same control during the battle?" Steve asks.

Tony wouldn't admit it but the question catches him by surprise. Then Thor's words from the night before come back. 'His eyes were blue.' He knows from his little chats with the former God that Loki's eyes are in fact a deep green. Maybe he wasn't fully responsible for his actions during that incident. Certainly something to keep in mind. "Possible."

"That...I don't know what that is."

"A mistake on Loki's part. One with a really steep price," Tony mutters, taking this information over and mentally kicking himself. "Steve, you've seen a lot during active service, right?"

"More than I wanted to, yes," Steve answers, sitting himself back down but no longer interest in the game board.
"Have you ever seen someone who when they went in they were one way but when they got out, they were like someone completely different?"

Steve leans back in the chair, thinking this over. It's a strange question coming from the fellow Avenger. But he could see that Tony needs a serious answer. "Happened quite often during the war. Specially those who became shell shocked. Umm, you call it..."

"Post Traumatic Stress Disorder," Tony finishes for him, suddenly getting up. "Thanks for the game Captain. Got some things to look into."

"Later Tony."

Later, Loki is trembling as he steps off the elevator. He glances around and almost sighs with relief when not seeing the hawk around. He hears the sound of water running. Maybe the Hawk decided to for go his earlier intents. He is just about to turn around and go back in the elevator when he heard the bathroom door open.


Loki lowers his head and complies. He expects Barton to lead him into the bedroom again but instead he gestures to the bathroom. Inside, Loki see's the tub filling with water. He knows that whatever Barton has in mind, he isn't going to enjoy it. Before he can turn around, Clint grabs his arms and pull them behind his back. Within seconds, Loki feels the cuffs snap into place.

"Thought I would always be whipping you? Think again boss. I can get pretty creative when I want to. Like now. I wasn't going to start avenging my team mates until later but that little scene I walked into earlier tells me this can't wait," Barton tells him as he steps around Loki and checks the water level.

"That should be good enough." He turns the water off then smiles at Loki. "Get in the tub. And on your knees," he instructs the fallen God.

Loki looks at the tub of water and slowly walks closer to it. It's three quarters of the way full, the water strangely still. Carefully he lifts his leg and steps into the water. He shivers violently from the contact. The water is ice cold! Not wanting to anger Barton, he quickly gets in and settles on his knees, closing his eyes tightly from being in the cold water. The water is up just past his stomach.

"Good, looks like we are all set. Want to know a secrete boss?" Barton asks.

Loki shakes his head, sure that he doesn't want to know what Barton is going to tell him.

"Remember how you made me tell you all about the others? After asking me about Fury's Avengers Initiative? Specially the part about Tony Stark being tortured in Afghanistan. You remember that, right?" Barton asks.

Swallowing nervously, Loki nods his head.

"Well I never told you the details. Then again, you never asked. So maybe this doesn't count as a secrete. Well anyway, one of the ways they tortured him was by what we lowly mortals refer to as water boarding. I would explain it but that would be going off topic. The point here is that Stark went through some things before you came along and threw him out a window. Since you seem to enjoy giving him a hard time despite his generosity, well, I think you need to be taught your place," Barton tells him coolly before sudden grabbing Loki by the back of his neck and pushes him forward, submerging his face into the cold water.
His body jerks and he tries to turn his face. After a few seconds, Barton pulls him back out of the water. He releases Loki, watching him cough and sputter.

"You need to be more grateful Loki. If it was up to me, you would still be in that cell on the Helicarrier. I don't care if all of the Agents form a train and screw you senselessly. But it didn't sit well with the others so they convinced Fury to keep you here. So you should worshiping the ground they walk on. Specially Stark. Considering what you did to him, you owe him more than the others. So what did you do to upset him?"

"Nothing...nothing," Loki replies.

"Uh huh. So he was yelling at you for no reason? Come on Boss, you are the God of lies, surely you can do better than that," Barton comments.

"I don't..." Loki starts to reply before Barton again grabs him and forces him under the water. This time it's a bit longer before he is allowed up for air. When he comes up, his lungs are burning.

"We are going to stay at this until you tell me what I want to know. Then we'll continue this until I believe you are truly sorry for what you did to Tony," Barton promises.

The words chill Loki to the core.

Hours later, Tony sets down his tools. It's time to call it a night. Judging by the holoscreen before him, it's nine o'clock. Everyone else, or at least those who are currently residing within the tower, must have retired for the night by now. Something he is hoping for.

Since the chat with Steve, Tony is feeling, for lack of a better word, an ass. He did some research on PTSD, though it wasn't easy since he himself had the same diagnose at one point. He likes to think he's over it though. After his little research, he decides that this is the cause of Loki's drastic change in personality. Though the PTSD that Loki is suffering from is different than what the fellow soldiers of the Captain suffered from or his own, all the signs were there.

Which left him with a new question. How much mental damage did his little outburst cause? He felt the strong urge to go and find Loki and apologize. Instead, he went to his workshop and tried to immerse himself in repairing one of his old suits. He ended up spending several hours staring at the parts before him.

With a exhausted sigh, he gets up.

"Jarvis, get the lights. Lock the worship up for the night," Tony instructs.

"As you requested sir. Also, it seems that Mr. Laufyson is requesting your presence on his floor," the AI informs him.

Tony suddenly halts. Loki is asking for him? Is it about earlier? "Tell him I'm on my way," Tony replies before making himself continue on.

The elevator ride is almost pure torture as it takes him to Loki's floor. He swears he will find a way to make them faster somehow. Even hearing his rock music playing rather than elevator music, does nothing for his nerves. Yet when the door opens, he almost hits the button for his floor. But with a deep breath, he steps off.

He doesn't have to look for the trickster. The former God is standing in the middle of the living space, his back to Tony. He stops when he is a few feet from the former God.
"Loki? You asked Jarvis to call me?" he asks.

Tony finds his jaw dropping when Loki turns around fluidly and drops to the floor into a familiar kneeling position, his head low.

"I apologize for everything I have done to you Mr. Stark. I am so sorry," Loki says quietly, his voice choking up at the end.
Tony Stark finds himself grasping to make sense of what he is seeing. Loki is without a doubt kneeling before him and apologizing. He hears Loki repeating the words "I am sorry" again and again. Loki's head is bowed so Tony can't see his face. But what he can see is the body is shaking. Slowly he sinks down to his knees.

"Hey, hey. It's okay. Nothing to worry about," Tony tries to soothe, his hands moving slowly towards Loki.

Upon contact, Loki jerks back, meeting Tony's gaze for a moment. Tony knew at that moment that something is very wrong. Loki's head is bowed so Tony can't see his face. But what he can see is the body is shaking. Slowly he sinks down to his knees.

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"Loki? Did something happen? Why are you shaking?" Tony asks, hoping the trickster will say answer him instead of repeating his apologies.

"No. No, I'm fine," Loki answers quietly as he forces himself back into the former position.

"Stop it!" Tony shouts, making Loki go still. "No lies, remember?"

"No lies...I am sorry," Loki replies.

"No more apologies Loki. I need you to talk to me. What happened? Is this...because of earlier? When...I lost my temper?" Tony asks.

Loki shakes his head, giving Tony a moment of relief. So this isn't because of him. Still, something
happened. He shifts a little bit closer to Loki who stayed still, shivering. Tony then notices that the
clothes appear wet.

"Why are your clothes wet?"

Loki takes in a startled breath. His only thoughts since being allowed to return to his floor was to
apologize to Stark and hope to be forgiven. Barton made him realize just how important Stark is to
his now lowly life. Not only is he allowing him to stay here but he provides the food and the clothes.
When he told Barton about the conversation with Stark, including the offer to buy him books, Barton
used that to bring the point home. If he keeps upsetting Stark, he could lose more than mere books.
The man practically owns him, Barton had said. His punishment from Barton was to make him
realize this, to do him a favor. At the end, he believes Barton.

Barton also told him that one of Stark's pet peeves, something that always puts him in a sour mood, is
being told what he already knows. Stark knows about what Barton is doing, if not would he allow it
to happen? His AI watches the tower and therefore reports everything to the billionaire. That
includes what Barton has done with him. So if he answers Stark's question, he could be invoking his
wrath.

Loki's mind quickly lists the things Stark can take away from him. His books, clothes, meals, even
the small amount freedom from his room or the tiny rights he has been allowed to have such as his
daily showers. Worse, he could take away the shelter of the tower itself, sending him to either the
Helicarrier or back to the cabin. Places of his disgrace. Of his defilement.

To his embarrassment, a small yet high pitch noise escapes from him as he thought of those places.

"It's okay. You don't have to answer that," Tony tells him. He is confused by Loki's reaction to the
question and decides that the answer must be embarrassing or something. He remembers earlier
when he and Pepper found the fallen God in the bath tub, still fully clothed. What had he said back
then? He needed to get clean? Tony thinks this might be the reason behind the wet clothes this time
as well. "Listen, we'll talk but first you need to go change out of those. I'll wait out here. I'm not
leaving."

Tony watches as Loki quickly gets up and hurries to his room to change. His stomach tightens
uncomfortably at Loki's unquestionable obedience. He rubs his hands through his short hair in
frustration. He knows he's in over his head here. Part of him is screaming at him to run to his floor or
workshop, to call for Pepper or even Thor to deal with this. He doesn't do emotional breakdowns.
Heck, he tries to avoid anything with the hint of being 'emotional'.

Yet here he is, getting up from the floor but not to run. Instead he walks over to the kitchen area and
begins rummaging through the fridge. When Loki reemerges, Tony has a bowl of pudding waiting
for him on the coffee table.

"Better? Can't imagine wet clothes being very comfortable. That's for you by the way," Tony
gestures to the bowl before returning to the kitchen to get himself a drink.

Out of the corner of his eye, he watches the trickster look at the bowl. But he doesn't go for it or sit
down. Instead, he remains standing where he is, arms crossed across his chest. He is wearing a pair
of grey sweatpants and a black Blue Oysters Cult shirt with grey long sleeves that is slightly tight on
Norse deity. Tony remembers that was one of the shirts Dum-E kept putting in the dryer, shrinking it
to the point Tony himself didn't dare wear it. He hadn't realized it had been with the clothes he gave
Loki. Still, better than the striped t-shirts he found in the clothes Thor had brought. Shirts that
mysterious vanished into the incinerator. Good ol Dum-E.
He sighs as he fills a shot glass. Taking it with him, he returns back to the living room. Moving slowly, he sips his drink as he walks around Loki. The shirt really is a bit too tight, he thinks and considers suggesting Loki to go and change again. He wonders why Loki even chose it, for there are plenty of other shirts. Maybe because this and the hoody is the only long sleeve shirts he has? He notices that Loki is still shaking. Tony decides that must be it.

"Go ahead and eat," Tony tells the man before him, shrugging his shoulders as if it is no big deal.

Loki slowly reaches down, watching Tony as he does this, for the bowl. Tony continues to his spot on the couch, pretending to not be watching the man next to him as he picks the bowl up and examines the strange white mixture in the bowl. Glancing at Stark, looking for any sign that some underhanded trick is at play before carefully taking the spoon and scooping up some of the pudding.

With one final glance towards Stark, he puts the spoon in his mouth. His green eyes blink once, then twice before making a slight pleasing sound, forgetting Stark’s presence in the room.

Tony grins behind his drink at the sound. If he were to describe it, he would say it is something between a moan and a purr. Apparently the devious demigod likes pudding. He will have to remember to ask Bruce what kind that was. He watches Loki sit back down on the couch and continues to enjoy the dessert, the corners of his mouth turned upwards just the tiniest bit. When he finishes, Tony is impressed by what he see's. The bitter little brother of the God of Thunder actually looks happily content.

Until he seems to recall that he is in Tony's company. The happiness that was on Loki's face shatters, leaving behind a look of guilt and fear.

"So what is going on inside that little wicked mind of yours?" Tony asks, deciding that now is the best time to get to the issue.

"I...don't know what you mean," Loki answers quietly.

"Okay, let's start with you asking for me. Was it just to apologize?" Tony starts with the simplest question.

"Yes."

"And why did you feel the need to apologize? I mean, why now?" Tony questions, calmly watching Loki.

"I...I haven't been...very grateful for what you have done and allow me to do. I have been recently made aware of this mistake. I...I regret this oversight," Loki answers with some hesitancy. Tony doesn't miss the few flinches the paler man makes during his admittance.

"Is that all?"

"I realize that this situation must have you under some level of stress. Because of the things I...have done to you in the past. And to this world. I owe you more than mere words," Loki shares, looking towards the view of the city from the windows.

"I agree with you there. You do have a lot to atone for. I think that's the word. Atone..." Tony replies.

Loki stiffens at these words. So what Barton had said, about Stark knowing, is true then. And Stark agrees with Barton's methods involving making him pay. He feels his heart sink. He had no intentions of discussing what Barton has been doing with him but he had begun to hope that Stark
may show some leniency. He had been kinder than necessary. Agreeing to meet with him at this late hour shows as much. No, Stark isn't a cruel man, Loki thinks. He was just left with little choice when Thor involved him in this. As Loki himself knows, he needs to pay for his deeds.

"You alright there?" Tony's voice interrupts Loki's thoughts, making Loki nod quickly in response. "You seemed lost in thought there."

"I apologize for that. I...did not mean to be rude," Loki replies, closing his eyes tight for a moment. Why can he not do the smallest of things right? Does he really want to upset Stark again? Does he want to provide Barton with a reason to repeat earlier's session? When will he learn?

"It's not a problem. Really. But you can talk to me. If you are afraid of me going off on you like I did earlier, well, I doubt this will mean much but I promise not to so much as yell at you this time. Within reason of course," Tony tells him, looking uncomfortable with bringing up that unpleasant episode.

"It's...within your right to. I know I am here because of your generosity. I need to start acting accordingly," Loki says quietly, sounding to Tony like a child after being scolded for some misbehavior.

"No, I was out of line," Tony corrects, "Besides, you didn't do anything."

Loki blinks his eyes, the only physical sign of his disbelief. That is not what Barton had told him. Barton said that because he did not answer properly, he had displeased Stark and that is what caused Stark to snap. He learned that 'I don't know' will never be an acceptable answer amongst the Avengers.

"Listen Loki, about today's earlier outburst? I was just trying to push your buttons a bit. Remember back in the cabin, when I got you yelling at me?" Tony asks.

Loki nods, swallowing nervously. Why can't any small transgression be forgotten?

"That's what I was trying to do. I...I was trying to find a trace of the same son of a bitch that wanted humanity to bow down before him and treat him like the God he believed he was. I can't wrap my mind around the fact that that particular super villain with ridiculous delusions of grandeur is gone. He is gone, isn't he?" Tony asks.

"Yes," Loki whispers. That part of him was taken when Odin stripped him of his magik and powers. At the cabin he had foolishly believed he had not been changed. He knows now that he is wrong. He is not even a shadow of his former self.

"Alright. I'll accept that. Even if it kicks me in the ass later, I believe you," Tony replies, looking at the former God with a dead serious look. "To be clear though, if that little s.o.b does make an appearance, I will make it regret it. Am I clear?"

Loki nods his head.

"So with that said, I will be giving you a new clean slate. The incident with New York won't be forgotten of course but I won't hold it over your head. Nor will I be giving you any grief for that little window incident. Sound good?" Tony offers with a smile.

Loki is staring at the floor, completely dumbstruck. He...he doesn't understand what to do nor what to think. He expected nothing from this conversation. He had only hoped not to make things somehow worse for himself.

What does this mean? He knows it won't stop the sessions with Barton. Nothing will, until he's paid.
Maybe this means that there will be no more bathtub lessons? That there is no further debt he owes Stark? Could honestly apologizing change so much? Or could it possibly be a trick? Maybe this is Stark's way to punish him. To be kind to him, lure him into a false sense of safety then cruelly strip everything from him in one fell swoop. Then Loki realizes that it doesn't matter if it is a trick or not. He has no choice but to accept it. He also needs to show his gratitude for such generosity, whether it is false or not.

"Thank you Mr. Stark," Loki says quietly. Slowly he pulls his legs up onto the couch as he turns his body towards Stark. Stark raises an eyebrow as the black haired man gets into a crawling position on the couch. He looks over Stark's body with his deep green eyes as he slowly crawls forward. Soon he is straddling Tony's waist.

"What do you think you are doing there Reindeer games?" Tony asks.

"Thanking you for...everything," Loki replies before leaning forward, closing his eyes as he goes to kiss Stark. He feels encouragement by the lack of Stark's action when he moved himself on top of him.

But something is pressed against his lips and he knows it's not the other man's. Afraid, he pulls back before opening his eyes. What he see's makes him flinch back. Stark is watching him with a strange look, a hand is raised between them, looking ready to slap him. It doesn't strike him though, instead it lowers.

"Got that out of your system? Look, I know I can be described as irresistible, and I think it's fairly accurate, but you don't need to throw yourself at me. A simple 'thank you' will do just fine," Tony tells him before gently pushing Loki off of him.

Loki looks down to his knees. He is overcome with the desire to smash his head into the wall. How could he have forgotten so quickly? Stark had made it clear that he doesn't want him that way. He had made a mess of things. And he had just been handed a fresh start. Now he's terrified of what his actions have resulted in. And what he is powerless to defend himself from.

Tony doesn't like the mood developing around the former God of mischief. It reeks of depression and hopelessness. Loki again bows his head, this time so low it almost touches the couch cushion. Then he watches the slender shoulders shake, not from the cold he must have been feeling earlier. No, this is from the repressed sobs the man is fighting to keep inside.

He knows this all too well. He had seen Pepper do this at the end before they ended things. Back then, when she fought to keep her tears in check, he had failed to offer her any comfort. If he was honest with himself, he was being spiteful at that moment. He knew what she needed, what she was depending on him to do, but because of his own hurt feelings, he choose to let her suffer.

But this wasn't Pepper. This was Loki. A man who not so long ago had God like powers and felt nearly indestructible. But in what must seem like a blink of an eye he lost it all and ended up in the hands of his enemies. But just before that, he had been stripped of the only thing he had left when being tossed down to their world. His dignity. Now, he seems to be in desperate need for Tony's permission to release the pressure that must be nearly suffocating him by now.

He knows he is no good with other people and their emotions. But now is a good time as any to change that, he decides. Slowly, he places a hand on Loki's shaking shoulder and gives it a comforting squeeze.

"It's alright Loki. No need to hold back on my account," Tony tells the man quietly.
As if pressing an invisible button or hitting a hidden switch, Loki begins to cry against the couch. Tony never removes his hand nor does he say anything. He doesn't want the broken man to think he's pitying him. So he offers silent comfort, his hand switching between squeezing Loki's shoulder and gently rubbing small circles on the man's back. Even when the shuddering stopped and he could no longer hear the man's sobs, he didn't withdraw his hand.

He didn't pull his hand away until Loki sat himself back up on his knees, like he had been before he broke down. Not surprisingly, he wouldn't meet Tony's gaze.

"Mr. Stark..."

"Tony. Mr. Stark was my father," Tony corrects with a hint of playfulness.

"What am I to be? To you? Am I...your slave? Or your...your whore?" Loki asks in a near whisper, his voice sounding cold and distant.

Loki, you're...you're not my whore or slave or anything like that. Okay? You are...you are Loki. And only Loki," Tony answers firmly.

Loki doesn't reply to this. Instead he turns and leans back against the couch, bringing up his knees and hugging them. Tony watches him for a moment then glances over at a nearby clock. It is nearing midnight. He could announce that it is late and they should get some sleep. He would ride the elevator to his floor, leaving Loki alone. Instead, he gets up and walks over to the TV.

"Do you like popcorn? I think there is a Back to the Future marathon on tonight," he tells Loki, planning on spending the remainder of the night on the couch next to Loki. Something tells him that leaving Loki alone this night would not be a good idea. What he was thinking for the following next day may also not be a good idea but after watching Loki break down, he knows it needed to be done.

When he woke up the next morning, he knew it would be a long day. His body is stiff from sleeping sitting up on the couch. He stretches and rubs his face before he notices that he had been covered in a blanket that has fallen down to his waist. Slightly confused, he looks over and see's Loki curled tightly on the other side of the couch, his body shivering even as he slept.

"You goof," Tony mutters as he takes the blanket that covered him and tosses it over his couch mate. Satisfied, he gets up and staggers his way to the coffee pot while issuing a request to Jarvis. It isn't until after his second cup that he notices the form on the couch starts to stir. He grabs a second coffee cup and fills it. Thinking about the little he knows of the other man's tastes, he adds some chocolate coffee creamer and two spoonfuls of sugar. Loki is sitting up when he walks over to him, holding the steaming cup out.

"Morning there sunshine. Feeling alright?" Tony asks.

Loki nods and carefully reaches out to accept the cup of coffee. He takes a sip and scrunches up his face.

"Coffee. Guess I didn't do a good job mixing it. Too sweet?" Tony asks.

Loki shakes his head and takes another drink. The expression doesn't change with this drink either.

"Hey, if it's no good, don't make yourself drink it," Tony tells him before finishing his own cup.

Loki nods and starts to set his cup down on the coffee table when he is startled by the AI's voice.
"Sir, Mr. Odinson is on his way to your location," Jarvis reports.

The coffee cup misses the surface of the coffee table and hits the floor, spilling its contents and creating a crack along the side.

A few minutes later, Tony is speaking about his theory on where certain villains get their endless supplies of robotic equipment which neither Norse deity is listening. He looks over at them from his spot in the kitchen space. He couldn't see Loki but knows he must still be on the floor, wiping up the spilled coffee despite Tony telling him it's not necessary. Thor on the other hand is at the other end of the couch, watching his brother with a blank expression.

"The evils of Ebay. Anyway, I'll just leave you two alone..." Tony offers.

As if he turned into a spring loaded toy, Loki suddenly stands up, looking over at Tony with a desperate expression.

"It seems my bro...Loki prefers you to stay," Thor states, his blue eyes not leaving his brother.

"Well, I know some things are best said in private. And this is a family affair I'm guessing," Tony replies.

"It is. But if your presence is needed, I can not deny him that," Thor returns, finally looking away from Loki. "Please, stay."

"Uh, sure. Sure, I'll stay. But over here," Tony says as he points to the kitchen area.

This seems to be accepted as Loki turns towards his brother, his eyes lowered to the floor.

"Loki, how have you been fairing?" Thor asks. He was surprised when Tony had requested his AI to summon him. The message that accompanied the request has him perplexed. 'Thor, Loki is no longer anyone we know. Not the brother you grew up with or the man with his insane dreams of a throne. He needs you so get your butt up here now' was the message.

Looking at Loki, he sees that the message is correct. This isn't the brother he knows. But it is also not the man who came to hate him so. This man...this man seems to be lost. He has never known him to lower his eyes nor act in such a submissive matter. It stirs a mixture of emotions. Rage, grief, guilt, sadness, and even suspicion. Had someone done something more to his brother to make him this way? Or had the event at the cabin proven to be too much for him? Did Thor's betrayal in siding with the men that abused him, break him? Why did things have to turn out this way? Has it really come to this? Or is this another of his brother's grand schemes? Like his death was?

"I am well," Loki replies, crossing his arms and looking away.

"I'm glad to hear that. I am sorry I did not come to see you sooner. I...I was afraid you wished to never see me again," Thor explains.

Loki remains silent. Tony also remains silent, doing his best to become one with the counter as he watches the interaction between the brothers. He wonders what is going through Loki's mind right now.

"I would not blame you if that is your wish. After what I have done, I deserve much worse. Brother, you must understand, I...I would never have let those men leave the cabin alive had I known what they had done to you. I should have taken your word over theirs. So I beg of you brother, I beg of you for forgiveness. Please, will you forgive me?" Thor asks.
Tony sighs and thinks 'about time' as he drinks from his fourth cup of coffee. He nearly chokes on it when he hears Loki's reply.

"No."
Chapter 21

A Fallen God

Chapter 21

A Thor-Loki-Avengers Fanfic

Disclaimer: I don't own the characters, movies, comics or anything else. All that belongs to Marvel and the creators. I don't even know the actors, though I'd like to.

Warnings: Since this is a story in progress, Not sure what to warn ya about. I do tend to write pairings so I might do it here. Or not. There will be some cussing and angst. Some violence. There are references to past rape as well as rape and improper use of a fire poker. So be careful while reading.

Hope you enjoy and please leave comments! Thank you all for reading this and the support!
________________________________________________________________________________________

Tony gives a quick mental prayer that a family feud does not develop between the two Asgardian's because that would most likely end in some property damage. Setting down his cup, he moves quickly to a spot behind the couch, just in case. But as soon as he reaches his spot, he knows his involvement in unnecessary. He even regrets his actions free what he witnesses.

"Loki, is there no way..." Thor starts to say before he falls silent as Loki again shakes his head before lowering himself to his knees.

"No, this is all wrong," Loki mutters. "You should not be apologizing to me. Not to me. I...Thor, I need to be begging you for forgiveness. I've...I've done so many things. I destroyed so much. Including...including the bond we once shared. I don't blame you for siding with those men. How can I? You above all others have reason to never invoke trust in me. If you were to ever strike me, it would be within your right. Even taking my life would be within your right. I am aware that I may never be forgiven for my crimes but I humbly ask to at least be granted the chance to be forgiven for causing the rift between us. I...apologize for what my hunger for a throne that I was to never have has caused. For being...so ungrateful."

"Ungrateful?" Tony asks, suddenly becoming embarrassed for he didn't mean to ask that out loud. "Sorry, ignore me."

"There were many things I should have been grateful for Mr. Sta...Tony. Under my delusion I believed my birthright was to rule as is Thor's. But as I was corrected, my birthright was to die as an abandoned infant. If not for Odin, I would not be here. He gave me a home, a family, and a dream. A dream I turned into a nightmare," Loki answers Tony.

"What new trickery is this?" Thor asks with a low growl, getting both of their attentions.

"This...this isn't a trick," Loki replies quietly.

Tony takes a step forward, about to tell Thor that a similar scene had happened and he believes Loki
is being sincere, strange as that might be. Words that failed to leave his lips when Thor suddenly reaches down and pulls his younger brother up from the floor by his arms. Loki makes a small whining noise from the pain and tries to pull away but Thor only grips him tighter.

"Who do you think you are speaking with? Do you believe I will accept such lies? I demand that you stop this deception! This act! It does not suit you well. Come, show us your true face," Thor hisses, shaking Loki as he speaks. "Tell me now what you are trying to gain with this!"

"Nothing! I'm sorry!" Loki cries out.

Hearing this snaps Tony out of his stunned state and he quickly moves around the couch. He is just about to get in between them when Thor releases Loki to deliver a hard slap across Loki's face which knocks him to the ground. In a blink of an eye, he finds himself at the Trickstee's side, his hand gently rubbing Loki's shoulder. The fallen God gives no reaction to this, instead he curls up in a fetal position, a hand on his stinging cheek.

"Just what the hell was that?" Tony asks, glaring up at Thor.

"Get away from him man of iron. His lies have already gain a hold of your mind," Thor states gravely.

"Are you really that stupid?" Tony growls out.

"What did you just say?"

"Are...you...that...stupid," Tony repeats slowly, his heated gaze meeting Thor's. "Didn't we have this conversation back at the cabin? The way you are treating him isn't helping! Time to face facts big guy, this isn't the same Loki either of us know! The sooner you get that, the better."

"You are wrong," Thor replies though without much confidence as he looks down at his adopted sibling.

"Look at him Thor. Take a good look at him then tell me he's putting on act," Tony challenges.

Thor seems to accept the challenge as he looks over Loki, his eyes narrow as they search for any sign that gives away the trickster. He wants to believe Stark. Above all else, he wants to believe Loki. But the wounds he has caused are still too fresh. When he had apologized, he had done so with the faint hope that his action will lessen some of the rage he knows must be building within his brother. When Loki had said no, he was not surprised. But when he dropped to his knees and said the very things that Thor had been wishing to hear leave his brother's lips, he was at a loss. Had the moment finally come? Could they possibly become brothers again like they were as children? Or is it another trick? Who better would know what words to use to try to deceive Thor? Is Loki not known for his silver tongue after all? He feels as if he is standing before two paths. Which one will he choose?

"I need time," Thor finally says before looking away. "Excuse me."

Tony doesn't bother looking up as Thor leaves the room. Instead, he watches Loki.

"I'm sorry..." Tony offers quietly as he starts to rub Loki's arm instead of his shoulder.


Tony opens his mouth but closes it. He is very tempted to call for Pepper. Perhaps even Bruce. Anyone that could at least think of what to say because Tony himself is at a lost. Both tense up when
a familiar voice fills the room.

"Sir, there is another call for the Avengers to assemble," Jarvis announces.

"Perfect timing," Tony grumbles. He looks down before deciding to screw caution. "Whose up to no good now?"

"It is reported that Victor Von Doom has been spotted downtown. He is not alone. Apparently there are six others calling themselves the 'Masters of Evil'."

"I guess the Brady Bunch is copyrighted. Alright let the others know I'm suiting up," he tells the AI.

"Notifying them now sir," Jarvis replies.

Tony sighs and looks down to find Loki slowly sitting himself up. He is not at all surprised that he won't meet Tony's concerned gaze.

"Sorry but duty calls. Do you want me to ask if Pepper can visit with you for a bit?" Tony offers.

Loki shakes his head as he pulls his legs up and hugs his knees.

"Alright. If you need anything, just ask Jarvis okay?"

Loki nods his head. Tony shakes his head and giving Loki one more glance, he heads to the elevator. He doesn't need to look to know that Loki is still sitting on the floor. He wonders if Loki will still be there when he gets back.

Several minutes later, Loki does move from his spot on the floor. He stands up and walks over to the window, gazing out. He wonders if Tony is fighting right now. And who is he fighting? He recalls hearing about Doom and the group he was putting together. From his information, Doom had been searching for him after the New York incident. Probably to ask him to join. He wonders if he would have accepted the offer or not? Maybe if Doom had something he wanted, though he doubted it. He wonders why he is even thinking about it now. Not only would doom no longer have interest in him with his current condition but Loki wants nothing to do with such things. If Doom has forgotten him, then all the better.

A distant glow of an explosion catches his attention. Smoke is bellowing up. Was anyone hurt from that explosion he wonders. What of the Avengers? Soon he hears the distant sound of sirens. Then, before his eyes, a building starts to collapse. He steps away from the window, horrified at seeing such damage. Before, when they fought whatever they were summoned to fight, he could not see any signs of the fight. But this time he can. And it reminds him of the damage he had caused not too long ago.

"Loki?"

He turns around and see's Ms. Potts watching him with concern.

"You should come away from the window. In fact, I need you to come with me. The other's are concerned...Loki, watch out!" She shouts suddenly.

Loki turns around and see's a doom bot fly up to the window he had stood before. It's hands started to glow. He runs to join Pepper behind the couch, practically throwing himself to the ground behind it when the window explodes. Pepper covers her ears from the sound and is faintly away that something is covering her her. Looking up, she is surprised that Loki is shielding her body with his own. There are several energy blasts that go over the both of them and blasts into the kitchen area,
leaving crater like holes in whatever they touch.

Then it suddenly stops. Both move slowly, listening for any sign of more to come. Loki looks over the couch and see's the bot is gone. They hear faint sounds of similar explosions coming from above them, telling them the bot is blasting the floors above them in similar fashion.

"Why is it blasting the tower?" Pepper asks.

"What better way to leave a message," a voice from outside replies.

Pepper joins Loki in looking over the couch and see's what she almost mistakes as another bot. Until she looks into the eyes. Eyes of pure madness.

"Victor Von Doom at your service. And you must be Ms. Pepper Pots. As for the man standing next to you..." Doom comments as he steps forwards, entering the floor. Each step he takes is marked by the sound of glass shattering beneath his feet.

Loki moves himself in front of Pepper as he approaches them.

"If my eyes do not deceive me, I believe I am in the presence of the God of Mischeif himself. What a pleasant surprise," Doom says with a hint of amusement in his voice. "I would have never thought to look for you here."

"What do you want Doom?" Pepper asks.

"Oh, just the everyday pleasures in life. Cause a little mayhem. Bring a city to it's knees. Sounds like good fun, doesn't it? I was looking for you Loki," Doom shares.

Loki straightens himself up though keeping himself between Ms.Potts and Doom. A fake smile forms on his lips. "I'm flattered."

"As you should be. As you may have heard, I have assembled a team to fight the Avengers," Doom continues.

"I've heard."

"Yes, well, even though I have them already assembled I could always add one more. The rewards would be...phenomenal, I assure you," Doom offers, moving himself even closer. "What do you say Loki? Will you join me?"

"No," Loki answers firmly. His mind is racing with what can possibly happen. It is apparent that Doom doesn't know about the loss of his powers. Nor does he seem to be concerned about the fact he's residing in the tower. Probably thinking he is working on his own plans.

"That is a real shame. But no matter. The team I have will get their job done even without your aid. Now, do tell me why you are here," Doom requests. "Some inner workings I suppose?"

"Perhaps. But my plans are my own and you are getting in the way of them so if you would just kindly take your leave," Loki suggests, struggling to keep his voice even. If he can convince the super villain to leave, he and Ms. Potts can get to safety. Or at least bluff his way to give her an opening to do so.

"I see. Well, far be it of me to intrude on another's territory. May I ask one question though?" Doom requests.
Loki doesn't like the predator look in the metal covered man's eyes. Eyes that seem to see all and miss very little. But he can't back down before them.

"Very well, what is it you wish to know?" Loki asks.

"From my information, you are of an alien race known as the Asgardian's. It is in this information that I learned that you heal faster than that of a human. Bruises fade away in what, five minutes?" Doom questions.

"If at all, yes," Loki answers, feeling the hair stand up on the back of his neck.

"I see. It is little wonder why people say you are like a god. Or that you and your brother may in fact hold the secret to Godhood. Or...did hold," Doom states before suddenly reaching out, grabbing Loki by the throat and lifting him up.

Loki frantically claws at the metal covering Doom's hand, his feet kicking. Pepper steps back, her hands covering her mouth in shock.

"You should have remained silent Loki. Or perhaps shouldn't have been so honest. I notice bruises forming on your arms. Did someone lose his Godhood? I must say, it is certainly an interesting thought. Tell me, how did it happen?"

Loki doesn't answer, instead he glances back at Pepper.

"Run!" He tells her.

"Ah yes, the lady. Go on my lady, run to safety. I have no interest in you at the moment so run along," Doom tells her.

"I'm not leaving without him," Pepper states firmly though she does walk slowly around them towards the elevator.

"How sweet. Does Stark know?" Doom comments with a deep chuckle. Then he looks back at Loki who is starting to grasp for breath as he tightens his hold. "I believe I asked you a question Loki. What is the answer?"

"I...I...will never tell you," Loki swears.

"A pity. Well, we'll figure it out once we have your brother anyway. So, I guess it's time to dismiss you," Doom states.

Pepper is silently praying that Doom will just release Loki and take his leave. But she watches in horror, her pale green eyes meeting his deep emerald eyes for an instant before Doom throws Loki like a doll, sending his body out the shattered window. All she can think to do is scream for Jarvis.

Loki feels the rush of air as his body is sent soaring through the window. Again, he is reminded of his attempt to bring war to this world. This is the very thing he did to Tony Stark. As his body begins to plummet towards the earth he knows will shatter his body, he thinks about this. He now knows the fear that man must have felt. What the countless people have felt as he brought his alien army to lay waste to them. He feels the fear leave him as he decides this is a fitting end.

His life, both sins and good deeds pass before his eyes. To his shame there are more of the former than the latter. Memories of his childhood that he once viewed as a lie played out. All the times he was at Thor's side, standing proudly. Times when his brother trusted him with his very life. If he could do one last task, he thinks, it would be to somehow earn back that trust. But now it's too late.
All that will be left is the sting on his cheek from his brother's hand. He hopes his brother will know that he doesn't blame him for his distrust.

With a sigh, he closes his eyes and waits for the pain to come.
Chapter 22

A Fallen God

Chapter 22

A Thor-Loki-Avengers Fanfic

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He expected to feel nothing but pain the moment his weak body stops falling. To meet his death on cold and unrelenting cement. So when he comes into contact with something other than air, he tenses. His body is shifted, no longer falling head first but caught somehow flipped into an upright position so quickly it made his stomach turn. He had somehow been caught before meeting his fate. Caught by something warm, living. Confused, he opens his eyes.

At first all he could see is green. Then he looks up and see's an all too familiar face. The large features gave him only a glance and what looks to be a smirk before looking down. Loki's eyes widen in terror and opens his mouth to shout when it is closed by the sudden stop when the large green form lands. Loki hadn't realized they were still falling, that the green beast had caught him in midair, only a few floors from the window he had been thrown from.

Loki closes his eyes from the impact but quickly opens them when he feels himself being raised up. For a brief moment, he thought the beast would open it's large hand that is wrapped around his waist and drop him to the ground. Or worse yet, be slammed into it as was what happened last time he faced the beast. Fear is racing through his veins as he is lifted up. But the beast doesn't let him fall nor smashes him into the ground. Instead it is looking at him with an almost curious expression.

Loki knows he shouldn't struggle but the last encounter is too fresh in his mind. Add to that the ever present reminder of his now fragile state and the knowledge that if that particular event chooses to replay itself, Loki knows he will not be able to simply crawl away as he had done before. No, the pain would not fade away like it had last time. So he twists and tried to push away from the hand holding him despite knowing such attempts are fruitless.

A low groan like noise makes him stop his attempts. Green monstrous eyes are watching him closely, this time with interest. Loki feels his body break out in a cold sweat.

"HMMM..."

Loki closes his eyes, unable to take the look anymore. He's afraid of what that look will mean. So he is caught off guard when he feels himself being lowered to the ground very carefully. Surprised, when he is released, he can only stare at the Hulk.
"PUNY GOD...INSIDE..." The beast tells him in a voice that Loki believes could shake the ground.

Loki doesn't move. He can't.

"NOW!" The Hulk shouts.

This snaps Loki at his frozen state. He backs up, his eyes not leaving the monstrous being before him. His foot hits the stone steps of the tower and he falls backwards, hitting his back painfully against the stone steps.

"Loki!" A voice cries out behind him.

He doesn't turn around to see whose calling him. He's frozen again. He can't do anything. Not even when he feels someone pulling on his arm, trying to get him to his feet. He watches as the green beast looks away, something else catching it's attention. It smashes it's fists into the ground and Loki can feel the tremors.

"Loki, snap out of it!"

Loki blinks and finally looks over to who is pulling on his arm. He finds Ms. Potts looking at him with a frantic expression.

"We have to get inside! Now!" She shouts just as something explodes down the street.

Loki gets to his feet and is about to look at the source when Pepper grabs him by the wrist and pulls him towards the entrance of the building. His bare feet stumble to keep up with her, getting cut up in the wreckage that litters the ground. But he doesn't dare stop. He follows her to the main elevator. Both rush inside and turn towards the open doorway. They witness a car flipping down the street before the elevator doors close.

Loki finds himself sinking down to the floor. The sounds of battle are still ringing in his ears. And the sense of falling is washing over him again. He is barely aware of Pepper kneeling down beside him, quietly saying his name over and over. To him, she sounds so very far away. Too far away to reach. In his mind he see's the beast grabbing him just before he gets inside and starts to slam him into the ground. He can actually hear his bones smashing, his spine snapping as if a mere twig. The beast had saved him only to hurt him once again. It wouldn't be the first time. HE did the same after saving him from the void. HE who didn't hesitate in fulfilling his promise to punish his failure when the opportunity presented itself.

The memories are too much. Too raw. Too painful. Why must there always be pain? He admits that he is wrong. He said that he is sorry. So why won't they leave him alone? Why won't the pain go away? The endless darkness was better than this! And the fear! The uncertainty! He thought he knew them so well. What a fool he was. A fool left begging for the absence of pain and memories. He is so tired of this existence. So tired. But he can't rest. It hurts too much. Those hands won't leave his body alone. Hands that always finds him. Always bringing pain. Please. Please no more!

Pepper meanwhile is fighting to keep from losing it herself. One moment she saw the former God of Mischief tossed out of a window, presumably falling to his death. The next, Jarvis is telling her that the Hulk has caught him and advises her to bring him inside before he may suffer any further harm. Not to mention that all hell has seemed to break loose around them. And now she is riding in an elevator to the lower levels to Tony's storage room where he keeps his finished suits which also happens to be the safest place within the whole tower with Loki who seems to be having some sort of mental break down, judging by the trembling of his body, the way his hands are gripping his knees, and the glassy look in his eyes.
She needs him to snap out of it. She can't go through this on her own. She thought she was free of it when she ended the relationship with Tony. Yet here she is again, in the middle of the chaos. And she will not be alone.

"Loki!" She shouts before trying to shake him. When this doesn't seem to work, she takes a deep breath then delivers a slap across his face.

She watches as his eyes suddenly become clear as they peer into her own. He raises his arm to defend himself from more blows as he tries to push himself away from her. The reaction pulls at her heart.

"Loki, I'm sorry but I had to. I need you to stay focus. Stay with me, okay," Pepper tells him.

Loki nods, slightly too eager for Pepper's liking but knows she has to take it. The elevator door opens behind her.

"Come on, follow me," she instructs him.

She walks out of the elevator, glancing back only once to see the trickster stand up. She walks to the center of the dark room, all too familiar with the space.

"Jarvis, lights please," Pepper calls out.

With a faint clicking sound, lights start to turn themselves on around them. Each light shines down on a different suit that Tony had made, some similar to what he is fighting in now and some drastically different. There is even one that rivaled the size of the hulk. Pepper paid no mind to the suits but Loki couldn't help but look at them in wonder. There are so many, as if Tony is preparing for war.

"Display any footage of what is going on, please Jarvis," Pepper requests.

"At once Ms. Potts. May I direct your attention to the first aid station to your right?" Jarvis inquires.

"First aid?" Pepper repeats, caught off guard by the suggestion.

"I am detecting lacerations on Mr. Laufyson's right foot that is in need of medical attention," Jarvis explains.

Pepper suddenly turns to Loki who looks away. He is caught leaning his weight against a workbench to keep the weight off of his injured foot. When Pepper looks down, she can see the bloody foot prints leading away from the elevator.

"Oh, Loki. I'm sorry. I should have noticed sooner," Pepper apologizes. She steps over to him but stops when he draws back.

"I...I can manage," Loki tells her quietly before turning and slowly walking over to the first aid station.

Pepper sighs and follows him. As they approach, holoscreens flicker and begin playing various live feeds of the battle happening outside the tower. Loki sits down on the bench and looks at the different feeds, seeing the battle playing out. Pepper picks up a scanner and pulls over a stool chair.

"I am going to treat your foot, alright?" She asks despite taking the injured foot in her hand and proceeding to scan it without his answer.
"Amora?" She hears Loki whisper.

"Who?" Pepper asks, looking back at one of the holoscreens. It displays a long blonde hair woman in a green outfit, blowing a kiss in Tony's direction, making him stop in midair.

"That's Amora. She's also known as the Enchantress," Loki answers.

"A friend of yours?"

"No. But she is Asgardian. And she has been after Thor for a long time. She is a seductress and can control the minds of men. I...I think she is doing so to Stark," Loki shares.

"Not for long, Jarvis, relay this information to the team. I think that one has Natasha's name all over it. Loki, is there anyone else you recognize? Could they all be Asgardian's?" Pepper asks.

"I...I don't believe so. I don't recognize the man in black with the lance. Or the man that glows. But if Amora is here, then so is her companion. Surge the Executioner. And he too is Asgardian," he replies as he watches the screens. "There!" He points to a screen on their left, showing a large man with a flaming battle ax.

"Jarvis?"

"I have relayed the information to the team," Jarvis replies.

"I thought Thor and I were the only ones..." Loki says quietly.

"Appently not. Why are they doing this? What do they want?" Pepper questions, not expecting Loki to have any answers.

"I...I don't know. I have no connections to them. I swear!" Loki replies in panic, pulling his foot away from Pepper.

"Hey! Hey, it's okay. I don't expect you to have the answers. I was just thinking out loud. I didn't mean to accuse you of having that information," Pepper tells him.

"Maybe you don't. But they will. Barton will. He will want answers I don't have," Loki replies with a groan, knowing there will be another water session.

"Clint? Listen Loki, the others including Clint, won't expect you to have those answers either. We know you don't have them. Besides, you have been here since the cabin and from what I understand, you were always being watched at the cabin as well, so they will know you have had no contact with those guys. And even if they suspect otherwise, I'll tell them about the chat between you and Doom," Pepper promises. She had offered this last bit in hopes that it will calm him some so she can continue to tend to his bleeding foot.

Sadly it has the opposite affect. He looks down at her with wide eyes, as if she had slapped him again.

"But that...that was an act! I am planning nothing, I swear! I...I was only trying to...trying to..."Loki trails off. He had thought she knew, that she somehow understood what he had been doing when speaking with Doom. Had he overestimated her? Or is it because of who he is? Why are things still going so wrong?

"I know it was."
Loki snaps his attention to her.

"You were acting. Trying to bluff him, persuade him to leave. You were doing that to protect me, weren't you?" She asks.

Loki nods his head slowly, as if having trouble admitting this to himself much less her.

"That is what I will tell them. That and how you refused his offer. That that is why you were tossed out of the window. Trust me, that will speak volumes to them. Specially with Tony and Steve," she tells him calmly as she again takes his foot and starts to follow the scanners instructions in treating it. "There is something about that conversation that I didn't hear clearly. About your powers? How did Victor know you don't have your powers anymore?"

"He saw my arms," Loki answers with a sigh, looking them himself. This morning he had decided to try to put on a dark blue t-shirt that he was sure hid his damaged back from the eyes of the other tower mates. The shirt leaves his arms exposed and he could see the finger bruises developing on his upper arms. Bruises that would never have formed had he still had at least his Godhood.

"Your arms?" Pepper repeats before she reaches out and takes one of his hands, slowly turning it as she examines it. She see's the same bruises that he is sure are the ones Victor had seen. "I...see," she replies before releasing his arm and returns her focus on his foot.

Several minutes pass as Pepper works on his foot. Loki watches the battle, switching his gaze from screen to screen, seeing Tony, the Hulk, Captain America and the others fight against these new villians. Natasha has gained the upper hand with Amora while the Hulk takes on Skurge. Tony is dropping metal plates around the glowing man before starting to seal the edges. Captain America is facing off with the man in black, blocking the attacks of the lance with his shield. Hawkeyes is firing his special arrows at another man in a green outfit with a blue mask, the arrows exploding in his face, blinding the man effectively while Thor comes up from behind, sending the man flying. Doom appears no where on the screens but now and then they see one of his bots before its destroyed one way or another.

"It appears the battle is coming to an end," Loki comments.

"Maybe this one. But there will be more. There is always more," she replies as she begins to wrap the foot.

"You hate it, don't you?"

"Yes. I do," she answers without looking up.

"My broth...Thor and I were raised to accept such battles as a fact of life. As common as breathing. I once thought that to be a good ruler was to bring peace by removing all threats of war. Keep the people's attention on you and they will have nothing to go to war over," Loki shares.

"You are not the first to think that. But that will never work. There is always something to fight for. Even peace," Pepper replies. "Did you honestly want to rule over us?"

"Yes. I believed that if I brought your world to it's knees before me, I could give your people the peace they so desire. Things like this," he gestures to the screens, "would be a thing of the pass. I could have made this world prosper under my rule."

"And then what?"

"Then I would have been acknowledged. I would make all see that I too can rule. That I can do good
if I stood in the light rather than the shadows they tried to keep me in. That I can stand beside Thor, not as the monster, but as his equal. Both fair and just with the kingdoms we would rule. But...but I was not meant to rule. Nor be at his side. I am...to remain in the shadows," he answers.

"You believe there are only those two options for you? To live in the shadow of your brother or to try to become some King so you can be his equal?" Pepper questions.

"That is all there is."

"And if Thor never existed, or Asgard, or anything else, what would you be then?" Pepper asks.

"There is no answer for such a question," Loki replies as he watches the Avengers start to gather around Amora and Skurge before the pair suddenly vanishes in a white light.

"Maybe there is and you just need to find it. Anyway, your foot should be okay for now," Pepper tells him as she gets up from the stool and sits down next to Loki, watching the screens as people slowly came out to the streets, cheering for their champions.

"Thank you," Loki says quietly.

"You're welcome," Pepper replies, a small smile forming on her lips.

The two watch the last few minutes of footage which shows the team aiding the wounded or helping Shield gather the world\'s most recent threats. Loki wonders if such footage exists concerning his attempt to invade and how he will feel viewing them now. Should he add salt to this gaping wound or simply let it bleed out as his wraith did? Rage, pain, and the desire of vengeance once filled him, specially at that moment when he was fighting with Thor on the roof of this very building. It grew everytime he held that special scepter.

But there had been a moment. One single moment where he felt something else. It was when his brother challenged him to look around at the result of his actions. When he truly saw the destruction he was causing. Guilt. Even though he understands that there are always casualties in war, it never sat well with him. He honestly didn't like death, even when he brings it to others. The scepter had helped ease this emotion from him, helped him focus. But at that moment, he had been horrified by the resulting chaos. Thor gave him a choice then. To undo what he had done. Instead he had sunk his blade into his brother.

He feels her bump into his shoulder, pulling him from his depressing thoughts.

"I\'m betting it\'s safe to go up now. They should be heading back any minute. Let\'s try to find a floor that isn\'t too trashed," she suggests.

"Ms. Potts, the Avengers are landing. Mr. Stark wants to see both you and Mr. Laufyson as soon as possible," Jarvis announces.

"He\'s on his way down here, isn\'t he?" Pepper asks.

"Affirmative."

"Well, I guess we wait here then," she replies. "Jarvis, can you make up a report of all the floors that were damaged? From the most sever to least if you could."

"Already done Ms. Potts. I have also taken the liberty to call the needed professionals. They will start work tomorrow morning," Jarvis informs her.
"Perfect. Thank you Jarvis. One more thing, how bad is my floor?" Pepper asks, preparing herself for the worse.

"Your floor only has one broken window, resulting from some falling debris from the floors above," Jarvis answers.

"Nothing a little cardboard and duct tape can't patch for the night," Tony comments as he steps off the elevator, still wearing his hot rod red and gold suit though with many scrapes and some alarming dents.

"Tony," Pepper replies, giving him a warm smile.

"Heard you two had some action yourselves. Didn't I say no guests?" Tony kids as he makes his way to the pair, his suit dismantling with every step.

"Who can refuse Doctor Doom?" Pepper asks back, faking a dreamy look. "He is pretty big."

"Trust me, the suit he wears, which is no where near as impressive as my own, makes up a quarter of his height. He's a midget, I swear. And you princess, if you wanted to know what it felt like being tossed out of a window, you could have just asked. Seriously, I nearly had a heart attack when Jarvis told me that," Tony shares.

Loki lowers his head. He isn't sure if Stark had actually been concerned or if he is just gloating at the fact that he had gone through what he had done to Stark before. He decides it may be best to remain silent.

"Tony..." Pepper scolds.

"Sorry, just having a bit of fun. Meant no harm," Tony says, holding his hands up. "Seriously though, are you both okay?"

"We're fine all things considered. Loki cut up his foot though. You really should get him some shoes at least. Unless you plan to keep him locked in his room until the repair work is completed," Pepper comments.

Loki tenses up at the suggestion of being locked up again. Something that neither of the other two miss.

"Oh, Loki, I'm sorry. I didn't mean it," Pepper apologizes.

"No, I have no intention of locking you in your room again so you can relax. What I do have in mind is following Pepper's advice and getting you some clothes of your own including shoes. But that can wait til tomorrow. Right now, it's Italian for lunch. Or is it dinner time? Whatever, I'm starving. So let's go eat," Tony says as he turns towards the elevator.

Pepper gets off the table and follows Tony. She gets half way to the elevator before stopping and looking back at Loki who hasn't moved.

"Are you not hungry?" Pepper asks.

"I...don't think I would be a welcomed presence with the other Avengers. I'll be alright. Go on," Loki tries to encourage.

"Loki..."
"Come on Reindeer games. No one will bother you. You are allowed to eat too," Tony comments as he walks past Pepper towards Loki.

"No, it's alright. I'll be fine. Enjoy your moment of triumph," Loki insists.

"We will. With you there," Tony replies as he grabs Loki's arm and pulls him off the medical bench. He let's go as Loki stumbles but quickly puts an arm around Loki's shoulders. "Besides, you're a member of the 'get tossed out of a window' club now. And as a member, you have to try the mozzarella filled meatballs. Consider it your duty. Now enough arguing and come with us."

Tony withdraws his arm and joins Pepper in the elevator. After a brief moment with Pepper holding the door open, Loki joins them.

Hours later, Loki finds himself trying to move carefully among the broken glass and plaster on his floor. The others have all retired to their rooms for the night. The Avengers had suggested he sleep on a different floor because of the wreckage covering the floor and he already had one injured foot. He is suppose to be sleeping in the spare room on Steve Rogers floor. Yet he couldn't fall asleep so he came here. Why, he isn't sure.

At first he had thought about trying to sleep in his own bed. None of the blasts had gone through that part of the floor. Only the living space and kitchen area were damaged. His room should be intact. But when the elevator door opened, he had been drawn to the glass less window that he had been thrown out of it earlier that day. Taking one final, well placed step and he is now standing right on the edge.

A cool night breeze blows past him and he closes his eyes to enjoy it. It makes him shiver but he doesn't move away. Slowly he opens his eyes and looks out to the city. There is an eerie silence compared to earlier when they could hear sirens even from within the tower. Lights seem to flash everywhere. Some yellow, others orange. He marvels at how peaceful the city seems despite the danger it was in earlier.

He thinks about the meal he shared with the others. It had been strange to eat with all of them though not completely unpleasant. Tony did most of the talking, followed by Thor though he never addressed Loki directly, and Steve. Loki noticed how the widow watched his every move and the glares he was receiving from Barton. There was a few minutes of excited talk concerning Loki being allowed out of the tower to go clothes shopping. His stomach twisted when Thor restated the rules Odin had placed for him. Yet Tony had convinced them to let him leave for a few hours, though the Widow and Steve will also accompany him. Thor informed them that he needs to leave for Asgard to inform the, of Amora's and Skurge's appearance on Midgard so he will not be able to join them.

Bruce had excused himself rather early but before he retired for the night, he asked to have a word with Loki. Loki quietly followed him into Steve's room. He stayed close to the door, watching the man pace for a moment before smiling at him.

"It's alright Loki. He won't make an appearance. And even if he did, he won't hurt you. Unless you give him a reason. I want you to know though that you have nothing to fear from him or me. Alright?" Bruce asks.

Loki nods his head. With someone who has the Hulk inside, you don't dare disagree. But he doesn't fear Bruce as much as he does the green beast. So when he nods in acceptance, it isn't a complete lie. But Bruce seems to sense this. So for the next few minutes he talks about various things he has been reading about and his times helping people in Calcutta. The talk did help Loki relax. Bruce wished him a good time on his shopping trip the following day and allowed Loki to rejoin the others.
The rest of the evening Loki spent listening to the others talk about various foes they have come up against and some of the most ridiculous names these would be villains came up with. Then came the discussion of what Doom might be up to. Loki expected to be grilled about his brief talk with the mastermind but was surprised when he received a few questions then surprised again when they asked him for his opinion. He pointed out the strange comment concerning someone believing he and Thor being the ones to hold the key to Godhood. And he found it disturbing that there were two other Asgardian's here on Earth. Many of the Avengers nodded as they digested this bit of information. Only Clint was watching him with suspicion.

It was so strange to be asked for any sort of aid. They all still view him as the enemy, do they not? Maybe that is why they asked him. What better source to tap for information concerning schemes than a being known for trickery? He wonders if they will continue to seek for his knowledge on such things in the future. And how much do they trust the information he gives them. How long will it be before they believe in what he shares with them?

Why does that even matter to him, he wonders. Why does he question his place at all amongst Earth's Mightiest heroes? Would the answer give him any sense of peace? Why can he not simply accept that he is their prisoner and nothing more? Before...before he would do as he did back in the cabin. He would curse them, attack them at every given opportunity no matter what condition his body is in. Then he feels the burning shame. And it is this shame that holds all the answers.

He looks down from this windowless view. Because night is falling, it looks similar to the void he fell in. He feels a chill run up his spine and he is suddenly overcome with the urge to get away from here. He takes a step back and nearly cries out when he hits his back against something. An arm wraps around his chest, pinning his arms to his side. A hand holds a knife to his throat.

"Nice night, isn't it? I think it's the perfect night for you to answer some questions I have. After that, I think we need to empty that folder of a few more names, don't you agree?" Barton asks.

Loki nods his head, hoping he isn't cutting his neck on the blade.

"Good. Then after you," Barton replies and releases Loki.

Loki turns away from the glassless window and makes his way to the elevator. He knows why he doesn't fight or resist. Because the shame is worse than any pain he'll feel. He wonders though which is heavier, shame or guilt? Maybe he will know the answer after tonight's session.
Waking up at ungodly hours has never been one of Tony Stark's strengths. Staying up until such hours, that was something else entirely. But it certainly isn't being woken by the voice of his AI. With a groan, he wonders why he didn't program it with the voice of a hot supermodel.

"Sir, my apologies but something has come to my attention..." The AI repeats.

"Is the tower under attack?"

"No sir."

"Is the Avengers being assembled?"

"No sir."

"Is Pepper in danger?"

"No sir."

"Then whatever has come to your attention can wait until after the sun rises. Until then do not disturb me," Tony orders as he rolls over.

Thankfully his AI had nothing further to say. With a sigh, he closes his eyes. Eyes that open a moment later when there is a knock on his bedroom door.

"I might work with the guy, but I assure you, the handsome Captain doesn't float my boat. Try
Barton," Tony tells the puzzled man on the other side of the door. "Uh, what?" Steve asks.

"Never mind. So what has the good Captain knocking on my bedroom door at this hour?" Tony asks.

"It's Loki," Steve replies.

"What about Loki?" Tony asks, suddenly becoming more awake and focus, his eyes narrowing in suspicion.

"He's gone. I got up to get a drink and when I checked the couch, he wasn't there," Steve answers.

"Did you check his floor?"

"Yeah, thought I should before I alarmed anyone. He's not there either," Steve replies.

"Jarvis, can you locate him?" Tony asks.

"My apologies sir, but I can not detect Mr. Laufyson's where abouts," Jarvis replies.

"Shit," Tony growls, ignoring the dirty look he is getting from Steve. How could he have been so stupid? He let his guard down and Loki had given them all the slip. Everything had been an act and he missed it. No, worse, he fell for it.

But a small voice tells him it wasn't an act. Loki is a known trickster, master of lies, yes. But even he couldn't fake what Tony had seen slip past the mask. The fear. The depression eating away at the man. The dullness in those green eyes that were once burning with indignation and rage. Not to mention that until now, Loki hasn't actually tried anything. Not even when he was alone with Pepper. Or the countless hours he has actually been left alone. So why now? What's going on?

"Stark?"

Tony shakes himself out of his thoughts and turns to his team mate. "Yeah?"

"I think your...robot voice was asking for you," Steve replies sheepishly.

"The term you are looking for Mr. Rogers is AI. Artificial Intelligence," Jarvis offers.

"Jarvis? You have a location?" Tony asks hopefully.

"I do not sir but there is some security footage I believe that you will want to see," Jarvis answers.

Puzzled, Tony retreats to his room and picks up his Stark pad. Steve steps into the room but Tony doesn't pay him any attention. The screen lights up then starts to play some footage. His eyes widen at what he see's.

"Son of a!" Tony shouts before tossing the pad onto his bed and rushing past Steve. "Jarvis, wake Thor and have him meet us on Clint's floor! Wake Bruce and ask him to be ready to provide medical assistance," Tony orders.

"Medical assistance? What is going on Tony?" Steve asks as he hurries to follow Tony to the elevator.

"Clint has Loki. Jarvis, have you scanned Clint's floor for Loki?"
"Yes sir. Something is blocking my sensors however. I am unable to detect either Mr. Laufyson or Mr. Barton," Jarvis informs them as they step into the elevator.


"Tony, maybe Clint has a good reason behind all this. Maybe Loki did something?" Steve suggests.

"Knowing Clint, he does have a good reason. Even if he is the only one who see's it that way," Tony replies.

"I'm just saying, Clint is our team mate. Loki is the enemy. We shouldn't jump the gun on anything until we assess the situation," Steve tells him.

Tony doesn't say anything further. He hopes for Steve's sake that it is something minor. That the Hawk isn't personally dealing out his revenge on the former God. But he won't hold his breath.

Meanwhile, that is exactly what Loki is trying to do. It isn't easy as the seconds tick by. Suddenly he can't hold it anymore and he parts his lips. Air bubbles leave his mouth. The sight of them in the pink water makes him panic. He struggles, knowing he needs air. Finally Loki feels his arms being lowered and a hand lifting his head out of the water by his hair. The hands release him as he gulps for breath. As he does, he looks over at Barton who is smiling pleasantly.

Maybe he will let him go now. This session has gone on much longer than any of the ones before. Barton had done so much more. Nine names were removed from the folder, adding the three previous, he has paid for twelve victims so far. So he may not forget them, Barton had come up with a clever way of reminding him. On the back of his left shoulder, Barton had carved tally marks into his already bruised flesh. He had hoped that would be it for the night. But he was wrong.

Barton had expressed about his feelings concerning Loki's little trip the next day. That he believes Loki should not be allowed to be out amongst normal civilians under any circumstance. If that meant Loki would have to walk around the tower naked, so what. Loki should never forget what he has done. Or that he is here because of Stark's good graces. He should be grateful for that little bit.

But he was concerned that Stark may be spoiling the would be ruler. He knows of several terrorists that don't have it as good as Loki does. They have been locked away in a dirty cell, their bed nothing but filthy straw and dirt, the only clothing they have is the rags that remain of the clothing they wore when they first were locked away, many never seeing the light of day. Stale bread was a luxury to those men. And their beatings compared to what he has done to Loki, those men would trade their children to be punished as he was. No, Barton felt like Loki was getting off easy. He needed a reminder as he walked about the streets.

Loki's bottom lip is still bleeding from his efforts to keep quiet as Barton had grabbed him by the ankle and began running the same blade he used on his shoulder, over the bottom of Loki's bare feet. The cuts were deep and painful. Worse was his left foot which had been already cut up. Barton had removed the bandage then slowly inserted his blade into the cuts, making them deeper. It was because of these cuts that the ice cold bath water he was kneeling in has a pink color.

He looks down to the bathroom floor. He can see his bloody foot prints. He knows there is a small puddle of blood right outside the tub, where his feet were as he sat on the edge of the tub. Barton had made him run the cold water this time. Made him watch as the tub filled. Barton ignored his pleas to ask him his questions now. Ignored his promises to answer them honestly. No, Barton had stood against the doorway, looking like the predatory he is code named after.

When the tub was full enough, Loki had gotten in without being ordered to. He sat himself on his
knees and had put his hands behind his back. Maybe if he showed that he is willing to comply, he won't be in the cold water for long. Such hopes turned out to be in vain.

Now Loki looks over at his interrogator, hoping that it is about to come to an end.

"Let's try this again. You knew two of those guys we were fighting earlier, right?" Barton asks.


"Because they are from Asgard, right?"

"Yes."

"Yet, you didn't know they were here," Barton questions.

"No, I didn't know," Loki answers, flinching from the sharp look he receives.

"But you did say there were ways to get here. Ways that Thor would not have been aware of," Barton continues, pulling out the familiar knife and cleaning his nails with it.


"Ways you know so well, don't you?"

"Yes," Loki replies, his voice sounding so small.

"You told them about these forgotten pathways, didn't you?" Barton asks.

Loki shudders at this question. It's the same question that put him under the cold water. It will do so again.

"I swear, I did not tell them. I don't know how they..." Loki starts to reply. But he stops when he see's Barton set down the knife of the bathroom sink and turn to him.

"Sorry, not buying it," Barton replies before grabbing Loki by the back of the neck, pushing him face first back into the reddish pink water, his other hand lifting the cuffs binding Loki's wrists together up, denying Loki any leverage out of the water. He smiles at the former God's attempt to remain still, knowing that it won't last.

Loki could feel the man's firm grip on the back of his neck. He wonders if this will be the time when he is left under for too long. Already his lungs are burning, threatening to make him try to draw breath. As soon as he was submerged, he closed his eyes, not wanting to see the water which is slowly becoming darker from his blood. So all he knows at this moment is darkness. If not for the firm hand on the back of his neck, he would think he was somehow back in the accursed void.

He tries to focus on something, anything other than the need for air. He is almost surprised when he imagines Stark appearing before him. Then Barton's words come to him. Of course Stark is there. Stark will always be there. He fears the time when Stark will not be there. For if Stark isn't there, then neither will he. Barton swears the other Avengers would not allow him to stay. They would all vote to send him back to Shield. Back to the the cell. Where he would be left, forgotten. Where he will pray to be forgotten.

Stark almost appears God like to him in his vision. As if he is somehow a true Asgardian. Loki can feel the warmth radiating from this mortal. He enjoys it. Stark moves closer to him, dispelling the darkness around them with his mere presence. Loki wonders what this vision means. Is it a sign of
how far he is broken? How far he has fallen that he sees a man like Stark above him? A man he had once tried to kill. Had thrown him out of a window. Actions he truly regrets.

Stark says nothing in his vision. He only stops and slowly extends a hand. Loki knows what he is expecting. He couldn't explain how he knew. It was simply there, like the knowledge it takes to breathe. He knows what the man is offering. An end to his pain. His loneliness. His sins would be forgiven the moment he does as expected. He knows he will do it. It doesn't matter if it means being in another's shadow for the rest of his existence. Even if it means he will never stand in the light, he will gladly give everything to earn the fulfillment of such promises. So he gets on his knees before the man and accepts the hand, kissing the knuckles lightly as the man steps even closer.

His heart is pounding in his ears, being the only sound he can hear. Suddenly he can't breathe. Afraid he looks up. But Stark is gone. The warmth is fading. So is the light. The pain of his absence is too much. He screams.

Barton feels a moment of alarm. Something is wrong. The man looks to be screaming under the water. Is he trying to drown himself, he wonders. He starts to pull him up when the bathroom door suddenly bursts open. Caught by surprise, he releases Loki and looks to the doorway. There is Stark, his eyes burning.

"What the hell are you doing to him?!" Tony shouts as he lunges forward, grabbing Barton by the cuff of his shirt and throwing him towards Steve who is still outside the bathroom door.

Tony looks into the tub and feels his stomach flip. The fallen God is on his knees and his face is under the reddish water. He doesn't seem to be moving. Acting without too much thought, he reaches over the tub and plunges his hands down into the bloody water. He works his arm under Loki's chest and starts to lift him up, his other hand resting on the back of his head. When Loki comes out of the water coughing, Stark can't help but smile with relief. He helped the God into a more comfortable position as he started vomiting.

When a hand touches his shoulder, it takes him every bit of self control not to throw a punch at the source.

"Sorry Tony. Thor is here. Let me take Loki to the medical floor while you take care of things here. Trust me, I won't let anything happen to him," Steve swears.

Tony finds himself wanting to tell Steve to take it and shove it. He won't let anyone near the trickster again. Not if they are only going to do this to him. No one deserves this kind of treatment. It makes him sick knowing it was happening under the same roof as him. As if somehow Stark tower has become another cave...like that in Afghanistan.

Loki's shaking draws him out of his thoughts. Looking at him, seeing the black hair plastered to his head, his eyes struggling to stay focus on him. They seem to be begging him for something. He can't let him down.

"Go ahead Steve. Be gentle with him," Tony tells him. "When Bruce patches him up, take him to my floor. Give him whatever dry clothes that will fit. Drag a mattress into my room. There should be enough room."

"You sure about..." Steve starts to ask.

"I'm sure. Get him out of that water. It's freezing," Tony orders before getting up and pushing his way past Steve.
He storms out of the bathroom. He pauses long enough to look around. As soon as he spots Clint, he heads straight for him.

"You son of a bitch!" Tony growls out before his right fist plants itself into the surprised face of Clint Barton, knocking the archer onto his back.

"What the...!" Clint starts to reply before seeing Tony's foot going toward his face. He just barely dodges it by rolling back.

"Hold still you..." Tony growls out, about to throw himself down on the archer. But he is stopped by strong thick arms.

"What is taking place here?" Thor asks as he effortlessly lifts Stark and carries him back a few steps, allowing Clint to get up.

"Oh, decided to finally join the program? Good! May be you can help me teach him why we don't torture people! Specially not here!" Stark shouts, glaring at the archer.

"Torture? Who was tortured?" Thor questions.

"Your brother. Loki. You remember him, don't you?" Tony asks, trying to pull away from Thor's grip.

"Barton...was torturing Loki?" Thor asks, his eyes looking at Barton in confusion. "Are you sure of this?"

"I just saw it myself. Look!" Tony shouts, pointing at Steve who emerges from the bathroom, carrying Loki bridal style, his upper torso wrapped in a towel. Steve only glances at the other men before he makes his way to the elevator.

The next few minutes past in silence as they watch Steve enter the elevator, being shut out from view the moment the doors close.

"See?" Tony challenges.

"What is the meaning of this Barton?" Thor asks, his face darkening.

"I wasn't torturing him," Barton replies.

"What did you just say?!" Tony shouts, moving closer to Barton but stopped again by Thor.

"I am punishing him for his crimes against Earth. As he should be," Barton states firmly, meeting Tony's heated gaze with one of his own.

"Bull. You were taking out your pound of flesh for when he had you under his control," Tony argues.

"And what if I am? Can either of you tell me he doesn't deserve it? After all the death and destruction he has caused, tell me he doesn't deserve it. Had he shown up right after his little invasion, tell me you would not have done the same. Come on Tony, tell me you haven't dreamed of making him pay," Barton challenges.

"Screw you. I may have wanted him to pay, but not like this! Sure lock him away in a cell somewhere till he rots. But this? No way," Tony mutters in disgust. "We're suppose to be the good guys. We're suppose to be above this!"
"Says the merchant of death," Clint replies.

Tony stares at him. He did not just hear that come out of Clint. He looks over at Thor who is watching the two of them.

"What do you have to say big guy? Loki is your brother isn't he?" Tony asks.

Thor doesn't reply. He continues to watch them.

"He knows the truth Tony. Who better knows what Loki has done? Loki needs to face justice. No one else here will see to it. No, you all are alright with just babying him as if he was the victim!" Barton shouts at Tony.

"He regrets what he's done," Tony shares quietly.

"What?" Barton asks.

"He's apologized for his actions. He regrets it. He even apologized to me personally. And to you," Tony continues, turning towards Thor who nods in agreement.

"That's because I made him do so," Clint reveals, taking a step back when he feels both of his team mates look at him.

"You...made my brother apologize?" Thor repeats in disbelief.

"I didn't expect him to apologize to you. But to Stark, yes, I did. He needed to learn humility. He needed to be broken down to his true level. Lower than the mortals he tried to rule over. He should have learned that when the agents used him. But I think he enjoyed..." Clint is cut off by a hand suddenly wrapping itself around his neck, lifting him off the ground.

"You watch what you say! You do not know him! Nor are you in any position to judge him!" Thor shouts.

Barton starts to laugh. "So you'll defend him if when someone questions his dignity?"

"What did you say?" Thor asks, his voice as hard as his hammer.

"He does have a point," Tony injects, getting the attention of the Thunder God. "Since you brought him here, you have been avoiding him. When he did apologize, you struck him. You are in no position to judge Barton."

The words sink in slowly. Thor can not refute what Stark has just said. Slowly he releases Barton.

"You see? I am right," Barton states, rubbing his neck.

"I wouldn't go that far," Tony replies, approaching Barton again. "I wouldn't even say that if I was you. Only reason I'm not strangling you myself is because I ain't in the mood to deal with Fury. That's all that is saving you. But let me make myself clear. If you lay another finger on him, you will have to figure out a new way to fire your bow with one hand. Am I clear?"

"Whatever," Barton replies.

"I'll take that as we have an understanding. Oh, and whatever you are using to get block Jarvis's scans, undo it. Now," Tony orders as he starts to walk away. Then he stops and looks back at Thor.

"Big guy, you coming?" Tony asks.
Thor takes a step forward, as if he might follow Tony. Then he suddenly reaches down, grabbing Barton and delivers a punch that sends the man through the wall into his bedroom. Tony crosses his arms, raising his eyebrow.

"Feel better?" Tony asks.

"No," Thor answers.

"Well I do. Come on blonde, let's go check on your brother," Tony suggests.

"No. I...must go," Thor replies.

"You shouldn't hide from him. Heck, suck it up already and apologize to him," Tony tells him, walking over to give the larger man a pat on the shoulder. "Besides, after this I'm guessing he needs his brother."

"No, I'm not the one he needs," Thor states firmly. "What you said earlier is true. I allow these crimes to occur against him. But you stood up in his defense. That is why I am entrusting his well-being to you. Please, take care of him."

"Was already planning on it big fella. But listen, you shouldn't beat yourself up over it. Seriously, apologize and make up. You will see, things will work out," Tony tries to encourage even though he knows he has lost.

"Maybe next time. Good night Stark," Thor wishes, casting the unconscious Barton a final look before going to the elevator.

Tony smirks and gives Barton the finger before joining Thor.

Sometime later, Loki is sitting stiffly on the edge of Tony's bed. He had just been carried into this room after Banner had finished stitching the cuts on his feet and bandaging them. He also has a bandage on his shoulder covering the tally marks. Steve has gone to another room to look for a mattress to drag into this large bedroom. He had told Loki to stay right where he is. Loki has no intention of disobeying this small order.

His mind is a mixture of confusion. He had passed out after Stark pulled him out of the water. But why was Stark there? Why is Rogers here? What room is this and why did Rogers say he is bringing a mattress in here? Is there something wrong with this bed? Or is this another punishment of some sort? Did he make a mistake? Or did something he tell Barton lead him to this?

He watches in silence as Steve returns with a mattress and after some struggling, he fits it onto the floor next to the bed. Again he leaves, repeating to Loki to remain still. Loki nods and watches him leave. He could have asked his questions. Maybe Rogers would have answered them. Or maybe he wouldn't. He doubts that the Captain would have hurt him for speaking. But the strangeness of the situation keeps him quiet.

When he hears someone come to the doorway, he expected to see Rogers bringing back whatever it is he went after. But when he see's Stark, he quickly lowers his head.

"Are you alright?" Stark asks.

Loki nods his head.

"Hmm," he hears before Stark sits down next to him.
He almost throws himself to the ground when a firm hand touches his shoulder.

"Easy there reindeer games. Relax," Tony tries to calm him.

"What is going to happen?" Loki asks before realizing the words had left him.

"Nothing. Nothing more tonight," Tony replies as Steve returns with extra blankets and pillows.

Loki watches as Tony takes these things from Steve and dismisses him for the night with a quick 'thanks'. Steve glances at Loki and gives him a nod of acknowledgement before leaving the room, closing the door behind him. Loki feels the panic build up as he is left in darkness but the room starts to light up. He looks over to find Tony setting up the mattress. When Tony seems satisfied, he meets Loki’s gaze before Loki lowers his eyes.

"Alright, I think we are good here. Will you be alright if I lift you up and set you over here? I doubt you can walk and I certainly don't think you should, judging by those bandages," Tony asks, his hand gesturing to the bandage feet.

Loki feels his face burn with embarrassment but he nods in acceptance. Banner had said much of the same anyway. He can't walk until the stitches are removed unless he wants to risk tearing them.

Tony moves slowly and carefully as he slides one arm underneath Loki's knees and guides one of Loki's arms behind his neck. With a deep breath, he lifts Loki up. Again he is caught by surprise of how light the man is. Even with him eating regularly, he is still pretty light.

That's not the only thing surprising him however. Something is making his skin tingle where Loki is making contact. And there is the sudden urge to hold the man tightly, to give him something to ground him. To let Loki know that he isn't going anywhere. He pushes these strange thoughts aside, writing them up as due to lack of sleep.

He carefully sets Loki down on the mattress, feeling a moment of disappointment when the man quickly pulls away from him.

"I'll be right back," Tony tells him instead before getting up and leaving the bedroom.

Loki shivers and instinctively pulls the blankets closer to him, covering his legs. Then he realizes what he has done and pushes them away. He doesn't know what the situation is yet. Making assumptions can be his enemy here. Stark didn't tell him to lay down. Stark said he will be right back, indicating that he is to wait for him.

A few minutes pass and Stark does return, though not empty handed. He carries a glass of water and brings it over to Loki but he doesn't offer it to him. Instead, like his vision, Stark extends his hand. Loki's breath catches at the sudden familiarity. Could his vision somehow be a glimpse of the future? Is Stark offering the same as the Stark of his vision? It doesn't matter, he thinks. If his vision was a glimpse of the future, then he has to act. He can't risk this chance slipping between his fingers.

But before he can act, Stark crouches down. Confused by this, he doesn't react when Stark, after setting the glass aside, takes his hand and turns it so it's palm up. Loki watches as Stark drops something from the hand he had extended. When Stark withdraws his hand, Loki see's three small white pills.

"They are safe. Watch," Tony tells him as he plucks one of the pills from Loki's hand and pops it in his mouth.
With eyes on the trickster, he reaches down and picks up the glass of water. He takes a sip, swallowing the pill.

"See?" Tony says as he holds the glass of water out to Loki.

Loki looks at the pills again for a moment. His mind is replaying the vision, this time with Barton's voice in the background, telling him over and over how grateful he needs to be to Stark. Nodding to himself, he takes the glass of water and swallows the pills.

"Good. Now try to get some sleep," Tony tells him as he gets up.

Loki expects to watch the man leave the room but instead Stark pulls back the covers of the bed and lays down. It dawns on him that he must be in Stark's bedroom. As he lays himself down, he wonders why he is here. Again, did something he said to Barton resulted in this? He heard Steve mutter about Barton providing answers. What could he have possibly said that war rent this distrust? He wonders how much he has ruined yet again, this time without even meaning to. No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't think of what he said or possibly did to have things come to this.

Then it does come to him. He was suppose to be sleeping on the couch on Steve Roger's floor. Instead he had sneaked away to his own floor. Barton must have told them this. Loki sighs as he lays his head down. So he is being punished. This time he is being stripped of his right to privacy. Something tells him this isn't a one night event. The same thing that assures him that when Stark leaves this room, the door will be locked. His actions have landed him in another cell, this time shared by the man acting as his warden.

The idea should frighten him to some degree. But strangely, it doesn't. Instead the idea brings him a sort of comfort. He does feel regret that it has come to this. That Stark feels he must now be burdened. That he can never take his eyes off of the world's most dangerous threat. He also feels sadden that his actions have no dou toy ruined his chance to go out as was planned. Something he had been looking forward to since the Avengers surprised him by agreeing to this little shopping trip. Now he has seen to it that it will not happen.

Maybe he should apologize, he considers. They like it when he apologizes. They like seeing their once mighty foe brought down below their own level. They take pleasure in seeing him on his knees. At least they don't take actual pleasure from him. They seem disgusted by the fact he has been used. Something he should be grateful for. But strangely, when he thinks of Stark being disgusted of him, it depresses him. Yet he can't seem to understand why.

His mind is slowly becoming hazy. He is so tired. Maybe tonight he can sleep without the memories. Without the nightmares. Without waking up in the middle of the night, feeling those hands on his body, touching him, hurting him. A small whimper leaves his lips.

Embarrassed by the small sound, he rolls over so his back is towards Stark. His eyes are growing heavy now, as if it took a great amount of energy to move into this new position. He wants to fight against the lure of sleep. But he can't. Whether this night will bring him nightmares or a dreamless sleep, he has no choice but to give in. He closes his eyes and submits to his need for rest.

Tony on the other hand is wide awake. Without Loki knowing, he has been watching the man struggle against the effect of the pills. He was concerned when he heard the whimper. Does that mean Loki realized what Tony had given him? That he had in a way drugged him? He gave Loki the sleeping pills for the man's own good. Anyone could see he is in need of a few good hours of sleep. After what Barton had done to him, he doubted the man would have been able to sleep. He knows he wouldn't have been able to. He knows this from personal experience. So the pills were only meant to help. Maybe in the morning he will explain this to Loki.
It wouldn't be the only thing he will be explaining. No, far from it. In fact, the list seems to be growing as he lays there. Explain that he didn't know what Barton has been doing to him, though this admittance bothers him. Explain that no one, and he means no one, expects anything from him including further episodes of him kneeling and apologizing. That he shouldn't have been treated that way. He shouldn't have been broken down any further than he already had been by those men at the cabin or by the agents. And explain to him why he had Steve set him up in his room.

That had been done on the fly really. He was overwhelmed by the sight he saw (he doubted he will get that image of the bloody bathtub out of his head anytime soon) and the need to prevent anything further from happening to Loki while in the tower. So the idea to have Loki be put in Tony's own room seemed like the perfect idea. At that moment anyway. He still doesn't know where that idea came from though. Any other day, it wouldn't even come across his mind to have Loki as a room mate, whether it is for his own good or not. Yet there is Loki, sleeping on a spare mattress on the floor next to his bed.

He muffles a yawn. Yup, tomorrow should prove to be interesting, he thinks. He tries to decide if he should have a talk before or after their little outing. Maybe after will be better. The condition of Loki's feet bothers him but worse case scenario, they find a wheel chair for the guy. Might actually be better since he has come up with a story as to not only why Loki has no clothes of his own but why he doesn't know his own sizes. Head injuries are a great excuse. And with the recent battle, well, sadly some homes were destroyed. Everything seems to have squared itself away. Still, he knows there is bound to be a few issues.

He glances over where the former God is sleeping. Maybe they could do a bit more than clothes shopping. He did promise to get books for the guy. And after this, he certainly deserves a few treats. Screw Barton and his spoiling comment. It's his money and he'll do what he wants. Including buying some burgers. Yes, burgers are a must, Tony decides before smiling to himself and follows Loki's example.
When Loki woke up, he finds himself feeling more rested than he has since arriving at the tower. In fact, he is feeling pretty good. He even wears a small smile as he sits up.

"Morning sunshine."

Loki freezes. Suddenly everything snaps into focus as he recalls the night before. The smile disappears as he pushes the blanket off of himself, preparing for whatever Stark will say next.

Tony fights a sigh. He is already dressed and drinking from his third cup of coffee. He had quietly returned to the room to watch over Loki, a need to see that he is in fact still in the room. He watched Loki stir from his sleep, seeing the first smile he has seen on the man since coming here. Then he went and opened his big mouth, causing the smile to fade so quickly it would make others doubt it was ever there.

Since he has ruined the moment, he might as well continue.

"Slept well?" Tony asks.

Loki nods his head.

"Good. In any pain? Bad enough that you might need something I mean?"

Loki shakes his head.

This time Tony doesn't bother to resist the sigh. "Alright, well here's the plan..."

Loki stiffens at this and holds the blanket in a death grip.

"You get a shower and eat some breakfast. After that we'll call together the others that are tagging along. Then we will get out of here. Sounds good?" Tony asks.

He watches Loki blink in surprise before slowly looking up to meet his gaze, something that suddenly makes Tony do a fist pump in victory.
"We...we are still going out?" Loki asks quietly.

"I said we would. And I do try to keep my word. You have noticed this, haven't you?" Tony asks.

Loki nods. Even though he hasn't been around the man long, or have much experience with him, he has kept to whatever he says he would do so far.

"Then here's something else. What Clint has been doing to you, it's done. It will not happen again. I will not allow it to happen again. Okay?" Tony asks as he tries to hold Loki's gaze. He could see the shudder that went through the man at the mention of Clint's name, the shaking hand that went to his wounded shoulder, and the widening green eyes. He mentally curses Clint for what he has done.

Loki is torn. He wants to believe Stark. Everything in his broken being desires it to be true. But there is doubt and with doubt comes terror. Why is he saying that Barton will no longer punish him? Does it mean Stark will take over that particular task? Is that why he is in the same room with him? Barton had been very skilled in the task, needing only a few tools for the task. Tools he recognized the moment he would enter the room. Tools that told him what to expect. But as he glances around, he see's nothing that holds such an obvious intention. Fearfully he meets Stark's gaze again and nods.

Tony doesn't understand why there is fear in Loki's eyes. Shouldn't he be relieved? He just told the guy that he won't be tortured anymore. So why does Loki look at him like he's about to devour him or something? Maybe it was too soon. Who wants to talk the torture they went through first thing in the morning? He better act quickly before he works the guy up even more.

"Anyway, let me help you to the bathroom. Banner told me this morning that he prefers you to not walk around at all if it can be helped," Tony shares as he stands up, setting the empty mug on the dresser and opens the bedroom door.

Loki watches the brilliant engineer leave the room. His stomach is in knots. He doesn't want to go into the bathroom. He's not ready to handle another session, his mind screams. Closing his eyes, he tries to take a deep breath. This is Stark, he tells himself. Not Barton. This gives him a little bit of comfort until his mind points out that he doesn't know Stark's intentions anymore than he knew Barton's that first time.

He closes his eyes and lowers his head when Tony returns to the room.

Tony had just made sure the path to the bathroom was clear, for the last thing they needed was for him to trip on some discarded bit of clothing while he's carrying the guy. He was going to just repeat last night's action of carrying the guy to the bathroom, sitting him down on the waiting stool and then leave the man to do his person business. But seeing the man's position of resignation stops him cold.

"Is everything okay there pal?" Tony asks.

Loki nods his head slowly.

"You sure? Because something certainly appears to be off. You do know you can talk to me, right? If something is bothering you, spill it. I'm all ears," Tony rambles a bit as he sits down on his bed.

Loki opens his eyes and peers over at Stark with apprehension. Stark folds his hands under his chin and watches him patiently. The steady gaze unnerves him, forcing him to look away. Should he risk speaking his thoughts? Will it do anything for his situation? Will he even be believed?

"You said...you will not let Barton...that he will not punish me further. Does that mean...will you be the one to do it now?" Loki struggles to ask, shifting himself slightly away from the Avenger.
"Is that what you are afraid of? That I will be hurting you?" Tony asks, his disbelief evident in his tone.

Loki looks away and nods his head. When he senses Stark moving off the bed, he closes his eyes and moves himself even further away, pressing himself against the wall.

"Loki, come back over here."

Loki doesn't miss that this was not said as a request but as an order. He feels a brief moment of anger at this realization. He is not someone to be ordered around, a thought whispers. He pushes it aside.

Yes he is. Now, in this sorry state he is in, he is someone, perhaps something is more accurate, that needs to be ordered around. For he now has only two choices in this life. Comply or defy. One promises pain that he is helpless to stop much less defend himself against, the other a meek but painless existence. The choice at least is his. So at this moment, he chooses compliance and pushes away from the wall, moving back to his earlier position.

"I need you to look at me."

Another choice to be made. Loki doesn't hesitate. Though he is filled with fear, he raises his eyes to meet Stark's own.

"Now listen to me carefully. When I said that what Clint was doing is done, I meant it. That means no one, not even me, will be...’punishing’ you. Understand? That means you don't need to worry about getting hurt for whatever. Not by us. Not by me. As I said earlier, I will not allow it to happen again. Had I known, it would have never happened. I may be neutral about most things but not torture. I would never allow that to happen here," Tony states firmly. His eyes staring straight into Loki's emerald pair, as if imprinting the words there.

Maybe they were, for Loki finds himself repeating them inside his mind. No one will be punishing him. He doesn't need to worry about being harmed further. Stark will not allow it. If he had known...suddenly a realization hits him.

"Barton said you knew. That you all knew," Loki reveals.

"He's a lying prick. If Steve or I had known about it, we would have stopped it a lot sooner. And if Bruce had found out, well, I doubt Clint would ever walk again. We're the good guys, at least that's the story. Not sure what that means up in Norse world but here it means we don't allow bad things to happen to people if we can help it," Tony replies, his voice dropping a few degrees when mentioning Clint's name.

"But I'm the enemy. I tried to bring war to your world so I could rule it," Loki argues.

"Yes, you did try to do that. Not arguing with that. But you were punished for that. The loss of powers and all that. Not to be mentioned being tossed down here after that. That was your punishment, right?" Tony asks.

"That...was my punishment for my crimes in Asgard. I..." Loki's tries to explain but stops. If he tells Stark of his crimes and misdeeds, what will be the result? Will he take back his promise of no one punishing him?

"The Frost Giants? Faking your death? Even taking the throne a few times?" Tony supplies. He watches those deep green eyes widen so much that the green becomes a thin ring. "Thor told me."

"So...you know. I am paying for my misdeeds to Asgard. But I still owe this world a debt. Both to the living...and to those I stole their lives from," Loki shares quietly, his hand again on his shoulder,
his thin fingers grazing the bandage.

"Maybe you do still owe them a debt. But you know, there are other ways to pay that debt off. Having your body abused isn't the only way," Tony tells him.

"Do...you know another way?" Loki asks, his voice rising slightly with hope.

"Well, I would have to think about it, but I'm sure I can come up with something."

A disappointing look comes over Loki, his eyes dropping to the floor.

"Hey, if you are serious about this, we'll figure something out. If that's what you want," Tony adds.

"It's not about what I want. It's...never about what I want," Loki replies.

Tony is about to argue this when he hears a growling noise. He can't help but smile as Loki's face turns deep red.

"I think that's enough talking for now. We can always continue this later. For now, let's see if Steve has a hidden stash of waffles anywhere," Tony says with a grin.

He starts to move towards Loki but stops when the man turns towards him.

"You...you don't intend to carry me around like some doll, do you?" Loki asks with a tiny playful smile on his lips, a contrast to the bit of fear in his eyes.

Tony chuckles at the thought. "No princess, I will not be carrying you around. Wheeling you around, yes, but not carrying you."

The fear shifts into puzzlement but the smile remains. Tony marks that as both an improvement and a victory. It makes him excited about their little shopping spree. Specially if that tiny smile remains throughout the day.

"Jarvis, have Bruce send the chair up," he requests.

Hours later, Loki is starting to feel exhausted. But he doesn't mind it as all. Everywhere he looks, there are people. Talking, laughing, using their small mobile devices. Many with shopping bags. Some gathered in groups, others by themselves. And none of them seem to pay him any mind.

That was the best part for him. After getting dressed and waiting for the widow and the Captain to get ready, he started having second thoughts. Maybe he should not be out amongst people like Barton had said. What is someone recognizes him? One of his victims? What if something were to happen during their outing? Would he be to blame regardless if he had done anything? There seemed to be too many concerns and was about to request that they for go the trip but before he could say anything, Tony was pushing his wheel chair into the elevator to meet the other two in the lobby of the tower.

On the way down, Tony assured him that nothing will happen. So he asked the question that had been burning within since he was told the outing is still going to happen. What will he owe Stark for this? Tony had smiled and told him that he will settle for seeing him look a little less miserable.

Such a simple answer. A request he found not hard at all to fulfill. Yes, at first it had been strange, specially being pushed about by Tony not to mention the first clothing shop where he had his measurements taken. Both felt uncomfortable. But one was over quickly and he got use to Tony maneuvering him about. Soon he found himself relaxing.
Tony and Steve made various suggestions but it seemed that Ms. Romanoff somehow knew his tastes, simple clothing in dark colors that do not draw too much attention to him but doesn't disappear into the crowd. This led to the purchasing of several solid color shirts, a few silk like long sleeve shirts and slacks though he did agree to a few pair of black jeans. At first he had been hesitant to show any interest in something in fear of being seen to eager to spend Tony's money. A concern that was quickly dismissed as Tony would insist on getting various extras, such as a jean jacket for Steve and an elegant necklace for Natasha in exchange for being a dinner date for some up coming charity. The man seemed to enjoy spending his money.

Now they are at the food court, enjoying their lunch. Tony had gotten burgers for both of them while Steve closed a cony dog and Romanoff ate a fresh chicken salad. He managed to eat half of his burger and now is munching on his French fries as he looks about, watching various people.

He see's a pair of brothers chase each other around a table while their mother laughs and tries her best to get them to take a seat so they can eat. In his mind's eye, he see's himself and Thor, the mother of course being Frigga. When she was trying to teach them table eliquitte so they can sit with their father during feasts, she often had such difficulty. Back then he and Thor believed they had all the time in the world. That they will always have their mother and father near by. There would always be another time to learn such lessons. The day was theirs.

"You gonna finish that?" Tony asks, pulling his from his reverie.

"No. I'm done," Loki answers, his face flushing when he realizes the others have finished eating.

"I'll take of these then," Steve offers as he gathers up the food trays.

"What is next on the agenda?" Romanoff asks. "I believe we have already visit every clothes shop and shoe shop here," she adds, smiling down at her own black shopping bags.

"There's one more shop to check out then we'll head back," Tony announces.

Loki looks over at the man with a questionable look. But Tony only smiled back and stands up. Soon they are making their way through crowds of other shoppers. Music can barely be heard over the noise of the crowds. Loki looks about, trying to guess Tony's next move. His eyes widen when they enter a book shop.

The next few hours were pure bliss to Loki. He looked at countless books, some even reading the first chapter before deciding to ask for it or set it back. He loved the smell of new books and the feel of the crisp pages between his fingers. Again, Tony spared no expense. If the book Loki showed interest in was part of a set, he bought him the whole set. He felt at peace surrounded by written literature. It didn't matter that these books were not like the books on Asgard, these books had their own magik about them. Almost as if each tale had it's own heart beat. He could even imagine Thor enjoying these.

When they left, Loki felt a giddiness he hadn't felt since he was a young child. He couldn't believe he now owns so many books. That he will not have to reread his small pile that he knows by heart. He can't wait to return to the tower and enjoy the rest of the day immersed in a book. The hardest part would be which to read first. Maybe the JRR Tolken series?

When they made their way out to the parking lot, Romanoff suddenly stops, gaining the others attention.

"Natasha?"
"Something up?" Tony asks.

"We have company," Romanoff answers quietly.

As soon as the words left her lips, men in suits surround them, guns mostly aimed at Loki.

"What is going on here?" Tony asks. "If this is for parking over the line, I think this is a bit over the top."

"Anthony Stark, you and the criminal, Loki Laufyson is to come with us," one of the men announces, stepping forward.

"Is this in regards to a Shield mission?" Romanoff asks.

"Negative. We have received Intel that Mr. Stark may have been compromised. He and Mr. Laufyson is to be placed under Shield's custody. You and Mr. Rogers may continue on since our orders are to only take those two into custody," the man answers, nodding to some other fellow officers who move towards Stark and Loki.

"Now hold on a minute! Are you saying that you are arresting because someone called in a tip? Seriously?" Stark questions, taking off his sun glasses to glare at the man.

"Those are our orders Mr. Stark. You will be taken to our medical center and evaluated while Mr. Laufyson will be placed in a secure cell. If it is determined that the information is incorrect, then we will return you both to the tower. Now please, do not resist us," the man requests.

One agent pulls out a pair of handcuffs before Tony.

"This is bull. I want to speak with Fury," Tony demands as he holds his hands out to be cuffed.

"We can arrange that," the agent replies as he leads Tony away from Loki.

Tony, Steve and Romanoff watch as two agents move towards Loki who tries to watch both of them. It's clear that he is nervous.

"Stand up!" One of the agents orders as he reaches down and grabs Loki's arms and pulls him out of the wheelchair. Loki stumbles on his bandaged feet and falls down on the pavement.

"Hey!" Stark shouts angrily.

"Hold on, there's no reason for that," Steve tells the agents as he steps forward to help Loki but is blocked by four agents.

"Get up!" The same agent orders, again grabbing Loki and pulling him to his feet.

Loki hisses out in pain, feeling the stitches stretch on the bottoms of his feet. The agent pulls his arm behind his back and cuffs it then gets hold of the other and does the same.

"Cooperate and this can be a lot less painful for you," the agent tells him.

"Loki, do as he says. Trust me, everything will be okay. Steve and Natasha will go back and get the others. We won't be there long, okay?" Tony tells him.

Loki nods and allows himself to be led away to a waiting black van. Tony is escorted to a separate van a few feet away. He see's Tony say something to Romanoff before the van door is closed. His stomach tightens in dread, afraid that was the last time he will see the billionaire.
Sometime later, he is off loaded from a plane into the familiar Hellicarrier. Waiting for him is Director Fury.

"You just couldn't behave yourself, could you? Well you can forget whatever little scheme you had going. Whatever you have managed to do to Stark, we'll undo. As for you, well you are going right back where you belong," Fury tells him before addressing his men. "You know where to put him."

Loki knows what he is referring to. The cell. Where the agents had him. Where the Other watched him shatter. He can't go back in there. Not there.

"Wait! Please! I did nothing to Stark! I swear! Interrogate me if you must, but please, don't put me back in that cell! I beg you, don't put me back in there!" Loki shouts as the man walks away.

"Sorry pal. I don't negotiate with known terrorists. Should have thought of that before playing your little game," Fury replies.

Loki continues to call out to the man, begging not to be placed back into that cell even as the men drag him away. He tries to struggle against them but it doesn't deter them. He is shaking by the time he see's the cell. He tries to fight one more time as the door opens. But one of the agents presses a taser to the center of his back, giving him a powerful jolt of electricity that brings him to his knees. The agents then drag him to the center of the cell but do not restrain him as before. He watches as they leave and the door seals itself shut behind them.

He looks down at the restraints near him and he crawls as far away as he can away from them. His heart is hammering away in his chest, his eyes burning with unshed tears. How did everything go so wrong? How did he end up here again? One moment he was enjoying himself, looking forward to the books, now he is trapped here. And somewhere else on this Helcarrier is Stark, also a prisoner. Was that his fault? Was this because Stark was showing him kindness? Instead of punishing him?

He hears a cough from outside his cell. With fear racing through his veins, he turns to the source. There, grinning at him, is Barton. He notices the deep bruises on the man's face. His one eye still seems to be swollen. But there is no pain in his smile or in his eyes.

"I told you I could get creative. I also told you that you will pay for what you have done. You still have so much to pay for," Barton tells him.

Loki watches the man move closer. He draws back when he see's Barton's eyes. Blue. Not any shade of blue either. Tesseract blue.

"Barton...you are still under his power?" Loki asks in disbelief.

"You know better than anyone. No one can escape him. Not you nor me. He went silent for a time but now he's back boss. All he wants of me is to make you suffer. And you know what? I don't mind," Barton replies.

"No, no. This isn't done by your own free will. It's his," Loki argues.

"Free will leads to chaos and pain. It is better to serve a greater power," Barton replies.

"Barton, you have to fight him! Tell the others!"

"Are you pretending to care? Or are you saying this to help your own predicament? Come on boss, after what I have done to you, what I am going to do to you, you don't care for me. After all, I am nothing more than a lowly mortal whose rightful place is below your feet. Isn't that right boss?" Barton questions.
"I...I don't know. But I do know you hated being under his control. Under my control. So fight him, Barton. Fight him before he consumes your sole too," Loki replies. He doesn't understand why he is trying to encourage Barton to become free of Thanos's influence. Is it guilt for being the one to force under it in the first place? Or in a desperate attempt to save both of them? Or to make things right?

"He has a message for you boss. He says to tell you that he enjoys your screams of anguish. He wants to hear more," Barton tells him before pressing a button.

Loki watches in horror as the metal walls form around his cell like last time. He screams out as the last one closes in place. Barton listens to this for a moment before grabbing his head as if suffering from a painful headache. He stumbles away from the cell to the doorway. He glances back in confusion, hearing Loki's screams for a moment before running out of the room.
Chapter 25

A Fallen God

Chapter 25

A Thor-Loki-Avengers Fanfic

Disclaimer: I don't own the characters, movies, comics or anything else. All that belongs to Marvel and the creators. I don't even know the actors, though I'd like to.

Warnings: Since this is a story in progress, Not sure what to warn ya about. I do tend to write pairings so I might do it here. Or not. There will be some cussing (Tony does have a mouth) and angst. Some violence. There are references to past rape as well as rape and improper use of a fire poker. So be careful while reading.

Hope you enjoy and please leave comments! Thank you all for reading this and the support!

________________________________________________________________________________________

Three days. It's been three fricken days and Fury still hasn't paid him a visit. Tony is beyond livid at this point. The first day had him strapped down to a table while stuff had been stuck to his head, recording various brainwave patterns and such. They ignored all the shouting and cursing and demands he had made. All it did was make the readings spike. After a bit it became a game to see how many spikes he can get to go off the paper with just saying a certain four letter word numerous times in a single sentence.

The second day had him feeling like a lab rat. He had been put in a cell with a type of pleaxy glass separating him and the so called specialists. They spent part of the day simply observing him while trying to irate him by doing things like making the room go freezing cold then hotter than hell. Or messing with the TV that is in the corner of the room. Sometimes it turned on to some obnoxious religious channel, other times to nothing but a static. The volume would rise and fall then rise again. He had been ready to climb the wall to get to it and smash it to pieces when they finally turned it off. The second part of the day was even worse. Again he had been strapped to a table and received shocks over and over, each time they watched for some kind of reaction, specially from his eyes.

Today he is sitting before a simple desk with a actual shrink, holding up ink blobs. If he wasn't in such a orated state, he would probably be laughing his head off at the sheer ridiculousness of it all. Couldn't these idiots tell that he was under no ones' control, much less Loki's. Even if he was, what good would these stupid tests be? Seriously, what is Shield thinking.

"How about this one Mr. Stark?" The man asked for about the tenth time.

"Looks like Fury...after chatting with the Hulk," Tony replies with an eye roll.

"And this one?" The man asks, lifting another card.

"Fury with a toupe."

"This one?"

"The Captain with breast implants."
"Alright. And this one?"

"Fury with implants," Tony mutters. He stopped looking at the cards after the first one. Now he was trying to get the guy to lose it and call it a day.

"Very interesting," the man mutters.

"What, picturing Fury with breasts? Someone has issues," Tony replies.

"There's no doubt you have issues Mr. Stark," a familiar voice comments behind him.

Tony turns around to face the head of Shield. 'About time' he thinks.

"Besides that, the reports I am receiving are saying that for you, you are consider normal. Under no obvious mind control," Fury continues.

"Well, had you met me earlier, I could have saved us a lot of time by telling you I am not like Barton was. Loki has not done anything to me nor has he tried. How can he, you have his stick," Tony points out, struggling not fly out of the chair and go off on the director.

"He could have. I'm sure a mind like his could find a way. Maybe it would not have been by supernatural means but maybe with that sly tongue of his. From what Thor has told us, he was well known for manipulating others with just his words. Is that what happened Stark? Did Loki sweet talk you?" Fury asks.

"What is this really about?" Tony asks.

"About you personally taking him out of the tower for starters. I thought it was made clear that he is to remain at the tower, no exceptions."

"He needed some things," Tony replies.

"And what, you couldn't have them ordered in like everything else?"

"Even a convict is allowed outside for some fresh air. Besides, I don't see how taking him shopping is such a big deal," Tony tells him with a glare. This can't be about the shopping trip. It must be something else. But what?

"Uh, Huh. And the wheelchair?"

"His feet got injured when Doom attacked the tower. You might not have a problem with someone walking around leaving bloody foot prints but I do."

"I didn't take you for the type to get queasy at the sight of blood Stark. Or the type to be suckered in by the enemy," Fury comments, meeting Stark's heated gaze with his one eye.

"Sucker in? Really?" Tony questions. He is losing his patience with this banter really fast and hopes Fury gets to the point sooner than later.

"Oh yes. So suckered in that you attacked a fellow team mate. Not only that but you brought in another team mate to help. Ringing any bells?"

'So that's it. This is about Barton.' He thinks. Never thought Barton would be the one to run to Fury crying about getting his just desserts. Doubt he even told Fury the whole story.

"Yeah, I decked Barton. And Thor got involved. But what do you expect when you find the creep
torturing a person who can't even defend himself?" Tony asks, his voice going cold as he remembers the bloody bathtub.

"Excuse me?"

"Oh you heard me. Barton didn't tell you that, did he? That sorry excuse of a Shield agent has been torturing Loki. He had him bleeding in a bathtub, head held under water. His back covered in bruises. Even carved into. Same with his feet. Loki lost consciousness when Steve took him to the medical floor. You can call him and ask him yourself. Call Banner too, he'll tell you about Loki's condition. So yeah, I decked him. And if he was here right now, I'd probably do it again," Tony tells him.

Fury doesn't respond to this, instead he continues to look Tony directly in the eye. Tony does the same. Neither notice the man who had been testing Tony excuse himself and make a hasty exit. It seemed like hours passed before Fury sighs.

"Fine. Let's say I believe all this. Why would Barton go after Loki? Could he have been provoked?"

"I don't think Barton needs an excuse. He's had a bone to pick with Loki from day one," Tony admits.

"I see. Well then, I guess I have no choice but to give you the all clear and allow you to return to the tower. For now," Fury states, turning away.

"And Loki?" Tony asks.

"Depends. I have someone questioning him at the moment. Once I get their report, I'll make a decision," Fury answers.

"He isn't at fault for anything," Tony argues.

"Perhaps he isn't. But I have to make sure. I'm sure you can understand."

"Understand that you are an up tight asshole, yes, I understand that. But now you understand something, things have changed. He's changed. Maybe not willingly but all the same, he's no where near the threat he once was. I'm not leaving here without him," Tony states firmly.

"Fine. I'll have one of my agents direct you to an open bunk."

"That's not good enough. We both go. Now," Tony demands.

"Who do you think you're speaking to? And I'm starting to think that maybe Barton is right. Maybe you are under his control," Fury suggests.

"You son of a..."

"Wait for my decision or leave now. Those are your only choices," Fury interrupts before leaving the room.

Stark glares at the door, imaging holes burning through it and into Fury's back. Then his anger flickers out. He sits down in the chair, feeling physically exhausted. Yes, the last few days have not been at all pleasant for him. But what worries him is what has Loki been through these last few days?
As Tony is thinking of Loki, Loki is curled up in his dark cell. His eyes stare into the darkness, his body tense. He is trying to quiet his breathing, to hear past it. Is he finally alone? Or is there someone waiting in the darkness? Is there more than one? Are they moving closer to him?

For the past few days, since Barton had left him in this darkness, agents have entered his cell as they did before. But unlike last time, they do not strike him. No, worse, they grab at him. Touch him. He would believe he's alone then feel a hand caress his cheek. Or slide up his leg. There were times where he was dragged to the center of the cell by his ankle. He would be pinned down despite his struggling. He would hear the chain that is attached to the collar they would place over the one he already wears. A voice would order him to get into position. An uninvited hand would slide under his clothing briefly before he would suddenly be released. He would hear their laughing as he would try to put as much distance as he can between himself and them. He would be left alone for sometime, sometimes hours, other times only moments before it would start all over.

He is waiting for it to happen again. Will they go further this time? Or will it be the time after that? Will it ever stop? His eyes start to close. He is so tired. But he's too afraid to sleep. If he sleeps, will they take advantage of that? Will he wake to find himself being used? He brings a knuckle to his lips then bites down hard. The pain forces the exhaustion to retreat. He will be able to remain awake for a bit longer.

His mind shifts from it's constant state of fear to concern and guilt. Is Stark still here somewhere? Did they put him in a similar cell? Would they do the same thing to him? He would like to think they wouldn't. No, he would like to think that Stark is back at the tower already. Safe. Without the burden of being under the same roof as the man who caused so much. He hopes Stark is now relieved if not out right pleased. He's no longer Stark's problem.

Does Stark regret their outing? He must. As he must blame him for all the unpleasantness he has experienced since Loki stepped foot into his home. No, even before that. The moment he saw him again at the cabin. His stomach twists painfully and his chest tightens. Stark would be within his right to be enraged with him. He had showed him a few hours of simple pleasure and kindness which resulted in him being taken into custody by Shield, as if he was a criminal. Yet, Loki finds himself wishing that this isn't true, despite how it is unlikely to be any other way. He wishes the man would forgive him for this. Possibly allow him to return to the tower. With Stark.

If he is ever released again, he wonders what he can possibly do to earn Stark's favor back. Maybe offer to clean not only the few floors he had been assigned, but all of them. After giving up every bit of information the man could want from him concerning Thanos, Amora, and any one else he knows of. He is surprised to realize that somehow this information hasn't been pried from his lips already. He would give the man his complete and utter loyalty. He would do anything to be back at the tower at this moment.

A humming sound pulls him from his thoughts. Suddenly the lights flicker on within his cell. He quickly shields his eyes from the bright onslaught. He hears more humming. Mechanical humming all around him. He backs himself up against the thick glass wall. Are they going to drop him, he thinks as panic races through him. He is tempted to look down, to see if the floor is gone but his fear forces his eyes closed.

"This is twice that I have been able to sneak up on you."

Loki's eyes burst open. He turns slowly, lowering his arms. The metal walls were gone. Standing outside of his cell is none other than agent Romanoff. He slowly crawls away from the wall, unaware that he is putting himself towards the center of the cell.

"I think you remember last time how this goes. Though I would prefer not to rely on any of my
special talents to get the answers I want. But that is up to you," Natasha tells him.

Even though her voice is not wavering with emotion, nor can any be seen on her face, she still feels them. This was not what she was expecting when Fury requested that she again talk to Loki. She had expected him to be like he was before. Standing there, looking every part the God he believes he is. As a viper ready to attack. Not this. Not this man that was cowering from mere lights being turned on. So driven by fear that he actually crawls away from her as if she was here to execute him. The fear so evident in those eyes, she knows this is no act.

She takes in his condition and what she see's within the cell. The floor is covered with bloody footprints. It's why Loki is not standing or walking. It is probably difficult if not excruciating. But he obviously hasn't remained stationary either. There are bloody hand-prints on the glass and she could see the dry blood on his hands. But no injuries on the hands themselves. Why would he insist on moving around?

She takes a few steps closer, watching him as he drags himself further back. His hand touches the chain connected to a large collar. She watches in interest as he cliches away from this, as if it burned him. Was this reaction due to a result of some dislike to being imprisoned or an unpleasant memory?

It's time for some answers.

"What did you do to Stark? Is it the same thing you did to Barton?" Natasha questions.

"No," Loki answers quietly, looking away. "I did nothing to Stark."

"That's not what it looks like to us."

"I swear. I did nothing to him. Everything he did, he did of his own free will," Loki insists.

"You know he has been examined," Natasha shares as she paces a little.

"They found nothing, correct? So they had to release him. He is released?" Loki asks.

Though nothing gives her away, Natasha is surprised to hear the sound of hope in Loki's voice. She needs to find out what is behind this.

"He was," she lies.

She watches as Loki nods his head, a look of relief flashes over his features. This is certainly not what she expected.

"Why the concern? Before you showed no concern for anyone. The only thing you cared about was tearing us apart so Earth could be yours. That included Stark," Natasha points out.

"That...was then. Everything is different now. Except that no one trusts me. Not even Stark," Loki replies.

Another thing of interest. The former God keeps mentioning Stark, she thinks. And what he has just now stated, it sounded like it pained him. This is no doubt the trickster that had controlled Barton. But it is also not him. She doesn't believe he was controlling or trying to control Stark. But there is a connection there. Before she can end this conversation and give Fury her report, she needs to know how strong this connection is.

"That's a shame. But you must admit it, did you expect that to change?" She asks.
Loki shakes his head.

"I could almost pity you. Almost. But I still think this is all an act," she tells him, watching the man fold in on himself. "But I do pity Stark. I can imagine how it felt to die knowing you were in his head."

"To die? What are you talking about?" Loki questions, suddenly becoming alarmed.

"Didn't anyone tell you?" Natasha asks, crossing her arms.

"Tell me?" Loki repeats.

"Yesterday the Avengers were assembled again. Because of Doom. Stark...something made him hesitate. He should have known better, I believe he did. But he couldn't act. He...was killed," Natasha tells him, her eyes watching him intently.

Loki doesn't notice this. Instead her last three words play over and over in his mind. 'He was killed. He was killed.' He gasps for breath as his body shakes. Tears begin to burn in his eyes. His hands grip the cloth of his pants, as if he is about to tear them any second.

Natasha doesn't miss any of these. Nor does she flinch when he let's out a painful scream. She watches as he breaks down in sobs. How did this happen under her watch without her realizing it? Is this true or is this the result of his badly damaged mind? Is it at all possible that Loki, once the earth's greatest threat, cares for none other than Tony Stark? It must be true though. Nothing else can explain what she is seeing.

She quickly turns and takes her leave. She needs to give Fury her report. He needs to release Loki. For there is no reason to keep him here any longer. She also knows that Loki needs to leave here before he himself dies. Maybe not physically, but from what she witnessed she is sure some form of death lingers near the fallen God. If her instincts are right, there is only one person who can save him. Still, this all still surprises her.

An hour later, an agent fetches Tony, telling him he is to be taken to where Loki is being held captive. He doesn't waste anytime with witty remarks. All he wants is to get him and the trickster back to the tower where they belong.

Fury is waiting for him outside the room where Tony presumes Loki is being kept.

"About time," Tony greets, though his usual snarky attitude is gone. "Open the door already. I'd like to get home in time for dinner if you don't mind."

"You two will leave soon enough. But there are a few conditions you need to be aware of first," Fury replies.

"Conditions?"

"Just a few. Like no more little outings unless I give the okay. Which I might say if you ask me nicely."

"That it?" Tony asks as he glares at the director.

Fury reaches into his black coat and pulls a all too familiar object out.

"You have to be kidding me," Tony hisses out as he looks at the muzzle in disbelief.
"No I am not. He is to wear this at all times, except for meals. Consider it a precaution," Fury replies with a smile.

"It's cruel. And I'm not doing it," Tony stars firmly.

"Then he doesn't leave. I am in no mood to negotiate Stark. Take it or leave it."

Tony has lost count of how many times over the past few days that he has wanted to deck Fury. But none of those times does he want it so badly then he does right now. Then finish it off by shoving that muzzle down his throat. He almost clocks the person who taps him on his shoulder. It doesn’t fade when he turns around and finds Agent Romanoff.

"Accept his terms Tony," she tells him.

"Of course you would tell me that. Seriously, is losing your heart part of your training?" He asks her.

"Tony, Loki needs you. Do this and get him out of here," she tells him.

"You both can just go to hell," Tony replies as he turns back to Fury. "I take it that I have to be the one to put it on him?"

Fury doesn't reply as he holds out the muzzle. With a muffled growl, Tony grabs the muzzle. Fury steps aside, hitting a key pad to open the door.

Tony storms into the large room only to stop suddenly. He thought this was a cell of sorts. Not a storage space for the cell. Yet there it is, a round cell of metal and some sort of pleaxy glass. He could see Loki curled up in a fetal position on the floor of the cell.

"Loki?" Tony calls out.

Loki doesn't respond to his name. For some reason, this freaks Stark out. Fury stands next to him.

"Open his cell!" Tony shouts at him.

"I'll let that little demand slip this time Stark. But not next time," Fury replies as he strolls up to the console and presses a few keys. There is a small hiss sound and a door opens.

Tony doesn't hesitate. He runs through the open space, stopping again to look in horror of the floor. He see's the same bloody footprints Natasha had noticed earlier. He follows a bloody path to Loki's blood soaked bandages wrapped around his feet. He has no doubt that the stitches have been torn wide open.

He pushes himself to move towards Loki. He could see the man's face now. The red swollen eyes, the tear streaked face. A tiny voice in his mind asks if it happened yet again. He replies to this thought with a vow of vengeance if it has. Soon he crouches down. He is right in front of Loki now but Loki's green eyes seem to be staring right past him. The realization makes him sick.

"Loki? Come on Reindeer games, it's me. Stark? Tony? Come on, snap out of whatever funk you are in," he tells the fellow man. He reaches down to touch his shoulder.

Tony quickly withdraws it when Loki let's out a cry. His bloody hands scramble at the floor as he tries to pull away from Tony. Then he stops when he takes in who is before him.

"Stark?"

"Yeah buddy, it's me," Tony replies, forcing a smile.
"But it can't be. She said...she said you were killed," Loki tells him.

"She?" Tony asks before realizing who he is referring to. So that's why Romanoff was here. And how she knew Loki needed him. When he has a moment with her, he has some choice words to share. But right now, his only focus is on the broken man before him. The man who again is refusing to look into his eyes.

He opens his mouth to scold Loki for falling back to this yet again but closes it before he utters a sound. Instead he reaches out slowly, placing his hand under Loki's chin and gently lifting it up until their eyes meet.

"It was a lie Loki. I'm still alive. And I'm right here," he tells the shaking man.

When Loki throws himself against Tony's chest, clinging on to his shirt for dear life, Tony is surprised but he doesn't try to pull Loki off of him. Instead he spares a moment to cast a glare to the two Shield agents watching them before looking down at Loki. It seems he is doomed to be a witness to the man's ever downfall, he thinks. What further damage will his next move cause on the man?

"Loki, they are letting us go. Both of us," Tony tells him.

"To the tower?"

"Where else?" Tony replies.

"Can we leave now? Right now?" Loki asks, his voice cracking.

"Yes. But there's a condition," Tony tells him. He hates himself for pulling back from Loki.

Loki releases him without a fight and shifts himself into a kneeling position. Tony hates this too. With a sigh, he holds out the muzzle before Loki.

"They said that in order for you to leave with me, you have to wear this. I'm sorry..." Tony starts to apologize when Loki takes the muzzle from his hand.

Tony's stomach flips as he watches Loki put the accursed muzzle on himself. There was no hesitation in his actions. Only the purest act of submission Tony has ever seen. He looks over to Natasha.

"Can I get a wheel chair?" He asks.

"There is no wheel chair on this Hellcarrier," Fury answers.

"Of course there isn't. Alright, ready to get out of here Lokes?" Tony asks even though he already knows the answer.

Loki nods eagerly. Tony takes a deep breath and arranges himself into a better position. After a few minutes, he leaves the cell with Loki in his arms.

Later, when the jet lands on the tower's roof, Tony isn't surprised to find both Steve and Bruce waiting for him. A wheel chair waits before them. But Tony doesn't pay it any mind as he walks off the jet with Loki. He continues inside the tower and to the elevator with Bruce and Steve behind him.

Questions were asked and Tony gave short answers. As soon as Bruce was sure Tony needed no medical assistance, he started asking about Loki. If he was bothered by Loki's lack of responding, he
never showed it. He seemed satisfied to be getting his answers from Tony. Steve told him that all of
Loki's things have been moved to Tony's floor. Pepper's idea. He was told not to be surprised to find
a dresser in his room nor that his closet has been split in half. Several book cases have also been
added to the living space of their floor. Tony listened to all of this with little interest.

Soon the elevator door opened and Bruce and Tony stepped off. Steve told them that he will get
some clean clothes for the both of them. Soon Loki was on the medical bed. Tony had a wet cloth
and was wiping the blood off of his arms and hands. It was his attempt to distract him from Bruce
who was removing the bloody bandages. Loki's hands clenched now and then when Bruce had to
peel off some gaze that had dried against his wounds. His eyes shut when Bruce began to clean the
wounds. Judging by the muttering Bruce was doing, Tony could tell it was bad. He started looking at
the fellow science nerd for traces of green.

"The stitches have all torn. I'll have to redo them," Bruce informs them.

Loki opens his eyes to only a sliver and nods his acceptance.

"Loki, I am going to give you an local anesthetic on both of your feet. You won't be able to feel
them but that's normal. Do you remember me telling this to you last time?" Bruce asks.

Loki shakes his head.

"Okay. Well, you'll feel a poke then nothing at all. It's perfectly normal. Then I'll redo the stitches
and rebandaged your feet. It may take you longer to heal, but you should be fine. Try to remain still
and relax," Bruce instructs him.

"Do you remember any of this last time?" Tony asks.

Loki shakes his head.

"He passed out when Steve brought him down. He appeared conscious for a few minutes but
apparently not long enough to really remember anything," Bruce explains.

Tony nods. Bruce gets up and goes to one of the medical cabinets and pulls out the needed tools.
Loki and Tony both watch him as he does this. None of them notice Natasha entering the room.

"How is he?" She asks.

"He'll live. That's the opposite of dead by the way," Tony replies.

"Tony, I had to..."

"Kick him while he's down? Tell me, is that an assassin thing? Or do you and Barton just get off on
that sort of thing?" Tony questions.

"Um, guys, whatever issues you have, you might want to settle it elsewhere. The patient is already
under a great deal of stress. He doesn't need anymore," Bruce tells them.

"I wonder whose fault that is," Tony mutters.

"I'll...check in later," Natsha told them. She starts to turn away to leave but pauses. "By the way, you
can take that off of him. I won't tell Fury."

"That is so generous of you," Tony replies with an eye roll. He reaches for the muzzle but Loki
grabs his wrist, stopping him. "Hey, hey, it's okay. We are just going to get rid of this."
Loki tightens his hold and shakes his head.

"I'm just making a guess here, but I don't think he wants you to take that off," Bruce comments.

"But why not?"

"Sorry, not my field of expertise. But maybe he has his own reasons," Bruce replies. "Okay, I'm going to start."

A little less than an hour later, Tony is stepping off the elevator with Steve behind him carrying Loki. Without a word, Tony gestures to the couch which is where Steve sets Loki down.

"Okay, I'll bring dinner up when it's done. Think you guys need anything else?" Steve offers.

"No, we should be fine. Mother hen not needed. Thanks though," Tony replies.

Steve sighs at the mother hen part and nods before walking back toward the elevator.

"One second!" Tony calls out.

Steve stops and looks back.

"Do you have a problem with Loki being here?"

"As long as he doesn't cause any problems, no," Steve answers honestly. "Why do you ask?"

"Just curious. And if you were to say that you did, I would have told you to stick it. But since you didn't, totally not necessary," Tony answers.

"Ohh-Kay. I'll see you later then," Steve replies, taking a few steps back.

"Laters."

Tony grabs a bottle of water from the fridge and drinks it as he watches Steve leave by elevator. He grabs another one and takes it over to the couch where Loki is sitting. Despite being back on familiar ground, the man is still obviously tense. Tony sets the bottle down on the coffee table before the fallen God and walks over to the newly built bookcases. He looks over the familiar titles he had purchased for Loki. With a smile he looks back.

"Want me to bring you over one of your new books? You must have been dying to read them," Tony offers.

He is disappointed when Loki shakes his head. A few days ago, the man looked like a kid in a toy store when they were shopping in the bookstore. He saw how much Loki wanted to start reading them. Did the incident with Shield ruin his pleasure for books? He turns back to the bookcase which is filled to the brim of various books. An idea comes to him and with a small mischievous smile, he selects one and takes it over to the couch.

"Well, if you don't want to read any, you won't mind if I read?" Tony asks as he opens the book.

As predicted, Loki shakes his head. Grinning now, Tony clears his throat.

"In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort," Tony reads out loud.
This is how he would spend the next few hours until dinner was brought up then an hour more before both fell asleep on the couch.
Chapter 26

Loki finds himself sitting on the floor before the large ceiling to floor window. A book sits on his lap, forgotten. He knows Stark is out there. He and the other Avengers. Somewhere, fighting the good fight. How long ago did they leave he wonders. Will they return soon?

He hears a cough behind him and turns around. There he finds Thor standing there, looking down at him. Why is he here? Didn't he go with the others? Or is this a sign that they have returned? The way his brother is looking at him disturbs him.

"Thor?" He addresses, surprised to hear his voice echoing in the room.

"Stark is dead," Thor states, his voice sounding as if he is a great distance away.

"What?"

"Stark is dead. We must leave," Thor tells him, lifting Mjolnir, pointing the mighty hammer at him.

"I...I don't understand," Loki tells Thor as he starts to get up.

But suddenly his limbs become heavy. He looks down and see's himself wearing all too familiar chains and shackles. He looks up, about to say something, ask for some sort of explanation, but his mouth is muzzled. Thor looks at him without a single hint of emotion. Instead he raises Mjolnir. A bolt of lightening strikes the hammer and everything goes white.

When he can finally see again, he finds himself standing in a bare, rocky plane. Jagged rocks pierce themselves out of the ground in the distance, being the only horizon he can see. He turns to where Thor was standing, hoping for some clarification. But he finds his brother gone. He is alone, muzzled and chained in this strange place.

The ground rumbles and a crack forms by his feet. He hears a hiss and is suddenly blasted with hot air. He falls back but instead of hitting the ground, it gives way beneath him. As he falls, the air grows warmer, burning his skin and heating the his shackles. The weight of the chains make him fall faster than he did when he fell through the abyss. The muzzle prevents him from screaming. At this
rate he fears he will burn to death very soon.

Then he suddenly stops. Something has caught the shackles around his wrists. Gratefully he looks to the source. His eyes widen in terror when he see's the mad Titan smiling at him.

"Foolish Prince. Did you truly believe I would allow you to die and escape my wrath?" The being asks, his voice booming louder than thunder.

Loki goes still as the Titan brings him closer, seeming to examine him for his answer. The gaze he feels burns worse than that off the fall he had just been saved from. Suddenly the Titan begins to laugh and with a swipe of his free hand, tears the burned clothing from Loki's body. Then he examines the dangling form again, his laughter still echoing in the air around them.

"I won't allow you to die my little prince. Oh no. You will suffer. You will want pain and death. You will beg for it. And I will be there to deny you. Now, suffer!" Thanos orders as he drops Loki.

Loki falls but instead of the endless burning cataclysm from before, there is a mass of darkness below him. As he descends, he realizes to his horror that the mass is thousands of black eyeless forms with large mouths and long beckoning hands, stretched out to catch him. He knows that those hands touching his exposed skin, for whatever part of him they touch will be forever stained. He also knows that those mouths plan to bite and suck on his flesh until it bleeds. He knows all of this and fears it but is helpless to stop it.

Then he hears a voice in the distance. He can't tell if it is Thanos or the creatures that speak or something else. But he listens to it just the same, hoping it will offer some relief.

"You are an unwanted thing Loki Laufyson. Unwanted from the moment you were conceived. Only reason you continue to exist is to be used. Accept this truth. Submit to it. For there is nothing else for you," the voice tells him.

Tears spring to his eyes. Again, there is no comfort for him. No hope. The voice speaks the truth, he thinks. The fear fades from him as the first hand touches his body. He watches his skin go black from the contact. But he doesn't pull away from it. More hands grab at him, pulling him down. More of his skin turns black. Still, he doesn't fight it. Not even when he can see nothing else but those black hands and wide open mouths.

Then they were suddenly gone. He lays on the ground, his skin completely stained by those creatures. Puzzled, he sits up and looks around. He finds the beings still surround him but are retreating from his body. Then he sees a glowing light approach him.

The creatures move away from this light, hissing as if in pain. As it moves closer, Loki could just make out that there is a figure in the light. But his eyes can't focus enough to see the persons features, for the light burns them greatly, forcing him to look away and raise his arm to shield his eyes.

"What are you laying there for Rudolph?" A familiar voice asks.

He lowers his arm and looks at Stark.

"Time to wake up," Stark tells him, stretching a hand out to him.

Loki feels relief and starts to stretch his own hands but finds the chains will not allow him. He looks at these and sees another link leading away. He follows this new link and finds it in the hand of Barton who is smiling at him as he is sitting cross legged.

"You going to obey him or what trickster? I would if I were you. After all, you are unwanted. So if
someone like Tony there comes along, well, I'd do whatever he wanted me to do. Show him my complete devotion. But that's just me," Barton tells him with a shrug.

Loki looks back at Tony, seeing the kind smile he is offering. He thinks that he doesn't need Barton to tell him these things. He already knows that the hawk is right. He again tries to accept Stark's hand but before he can touch it, the hand falls away.

Confused, he looks up. Tony's smile is gone. Instead there is blood spilling from his mouth. The brown eyes are wide and unfocused. Then he fades away, revealing the widow with a dagger, standing in the position she was in when she stabbed him. Without a look in his direction she sheaths the dagger and walks away. He hears Barton laughing.

"Whoops! Looks like you were too slow! Well, there went the only person that may have wanted you, if only for a slave. Such a pity. No one will save you now. Not Thor, the Avengers, Odin...no one. Looks like your actions are catching up to you Loki. Time to reap what you sow," Barton tells him as he raises a hand and snaps his fingers, causing the black beings to again swarm him. He screams out when they start to bite and tear at his flesh.

He is still screaming into the muzzle as he bolts upright, awakening finally from his nightmare. A hand touches his shoulder and he flinches back from it, his panic filled eyes looking at the source.

"Hey! It's okay! It's just me. Tony. You had a bad dream. But you are okay now," Tony tells him quietly, holding his hands up so Loki can see them.

Loki looks around and finds himself on the floor next to the couch. The blanket he had been covered in is twisted around his arms from his tossing and turning. Tony is crouched down next to him.

"Loki, are you alright? Do you feel any pain?" Tony asks him.

Loki shakes his head slowly. He untangles his arms from the blanket before he feels the hand again on his shoulder. He again looks over to Tony, keeping his eyes lowered.

"Listen, we need to talk. That means that has to come off," Tony tells him, pointing to the muzzle.

Loki's eyes widen and he shakes his head as he starts to pull away. Then he remembers Barton's words from his nightmare. So he lowers his head and scouts himself closer to Stark, nodding his head.

"I'm going to assume you changed your mind so I'm going to try to take that off, okay?" Tony asks.

Loki again nods and focuses on staying still as Tony reaches out, his hands going behind his head and working on the clasps. He feels the muzzle become slack a few seconds later. Tony slowly pulls it away from his face.

"There. That's a lot better," Stark comments as he sets the muzzle down on the coffee table. "So, how are you really feeling?"

Loki licks his lips. He opens and closes his mouth a few times, checking for any soreness. The only thing he notices is that his mouth is very dry.

"I...am well enough," Loki answers, swallowing uncomfortably.

"Here. You never touched this last night," Tony comments as he holds out a bottle of water.

Loki accepts this and after unscrewing the cap, he takes a few drinks.
"Better?"

Loki nods his head.

"Really preferred that you to talk to me," Tony tries to encourage.

"What do you want me to tell you? Is there information you seek?" Loki asks.

"Information I seek? I'm not after information Loki. I just want to know how you're holding up. The last few days...sucked for me. I can only imagine how they were for you," Tony replies as he rubs a hand through his hair.

"I...I will do anything not to go through that again," Loki tells him.

"I hate to ask this, but were you...did any agents..." Tony struggles to get the words out.

"No. They would start to. Again and again they would start to. Then they would stop. But then they would grab me again, touch me as if they were going to. I couldn't sleep. I didn't want to wake up..." Loki drops off.


"Safe..."

"That's right. I won't allow anyone to touch you here," Tony promises.

Loki thinks about this. Tony won't allow anyone to touch him. But when Tony is gone, who will save him then? The idea frightens him. The pain he felt when Romanoff told him that Tony had died returns, nearly suffocating him when added to his fear. He needs to do something. He needs to say something to Stark. It must be now.

"Loki?"

"I am indebted to you," Loki says quietly.

"No, no you're not," Tony says with a sigh.

"But I am. Even though I am an enemy, you have treated my wounds, given me a place to stay. You have brought me here when you could have left me in Shield's hands. And you offer to protect me from those that wish to either punish me for my crimes or harm me simply because they wish to see me suffer. You yourself have not tried to hurt me like they have. It is like...you do not wish to see me broken," Loki tells him as he shifts into the all too familiar kneeling position.

"That's because I don't. I do believe that if you commit a crime, you should be punished for it. But breaking someone...that's going too far. And you don't need to kneel..." Tony starts to scold.

"Maybe for most crimes, it is. But for the extent of my own crimes...maybe this time that punishment is fitting. Either way, I can't deny it. I...am broken Tony Stark. Nothing more than a mere shadow of who I was. A shadow," Loki says quietly as he raises his eyes to meet Tony's deep brown ones for a moment before bowing down, stretching his arms out across the carpeted floor till his forehead is tickled by the carpet threads, "that binds itself to you to do as you wish. In return for your generosity, I will do anything you wish me to do. My loyalty and my life is yours Tony Stark. Please, allow me to serve you as your slave."

A few minutes of silence ticks by before he finally hears Tony's response.
"Come again?"

"So what did you say to him?"

Tony swallows his mixed drink, trying hard not to look at his fellow team mates. Standing in the room with him is Steve and Bruce. He had left Loki with Pepper on his floor. Now he is in what he calls the party floor, standing behind his personal bar while the other two Avengers are sitting on the bar stools, waiting for his answer.

"Nothing. I helped him off the floor, called Pepper then came here. That's when I called you two here," Tony tells them.

"Wait, so you just left? After the God of Mischief practically offers to be your slave?" Bruce asks.

"I did say that I helped him off the floor, right?"

"But you didn't say anything about what he just did?" Bruce presses.

"And what am I suppose to say?" Tony asks.

"How about telling him that your generosity didn't come at a price? And that this is America and slavery was abolished years ago?" Steve suggests.

"I don't think he would have listened. Look, I panicked. Not everyday does a former God bow to me as if I'm the messiah. I can't even wrap my mind around why he did it," Tony mutters.

"You need to set things straight. Unless you want him as a slave," Bruce comments.

"No I don't! And if I did, that's what Dum-E is for. Besides, I didn't ask you two here to tell me how badly I messed up. I need some help here. I am way out of my depth here," Tony tells them as he pours another drink.

"Well, for starters..." Steve begins as he reaches out and takes the glass of liquor from Tony, "I'd cut back on this. It won't help."

"Whatever you say mother," Tony mutters with an eye roll.

"You need to talk to him. Not run away and get into a drunken stupor," Steve fires back.

"It's not just his vow to be your personal slave that bothers you, is it?" Bruce asks thoughtfully.

"No. No it isn't. It's how he's falling apart. How fast he's falling apart. He even seem to care that he's falling apart. There's no..."

"No fight in him," Steve finishes for him.

"Yeah. I mean, I find myself asking if this is the same Loki we fought. I know it is but it's not matching up anymore. When I had my little chat with him during the battle with the Chitauri, there was a fire in him. Not only that but he was so confident. Arrogant. We were suppose to kneel before him, not him kneel before us," Tony rambles.

"And that fire is gone. But is it really a bad thing?" Steve asks.

"His actions and even his motivations behind his actions were wrong but what Tony is talking about
is Loki's spirit. As Loki said himself, he's broken. That fire was his will," Bruce explains.

"Exactly," Tony agrees.

"I see," Steve mutters as he thinks this over. After a few minutes, he looks at the other two. "I hate to say it but I'm coming up empty. How do you restore someone's will?

"You don't" a feminine voice replies behind them. They all look at the source and find Romanoff standing to side, watching them.

"Sorry agent, boys only meeting," Tony tells her, looking away with annoyance.

"Too bad I don't abide by the rules," Natasha replies.

"Look, I'm trying to be civil in front of the Captain, but point is I want you gone. Now," Tony tells her, glaring.

"Do you plan to ask why I did it?" She asks.

"Did what? What did she do?" Bruce asks.

"Ms. Romanoff told Loki that I died. Almost put him over the edge," Tony answers.

"Not almost. It did," Natasha corrects.

"Why would you do something like that?" Steve asks.

"Because he was showing signs of having formed a connection to Stark. I needed to know how strong that connection was in order to give my report," she explains.

"Connection?"

"How much he cares for Stark," Natasha states firmly.

"Why would that matter?" Bruce asks.

"If Loki cares for Stark, then it's very unlikely that he would try to manipulate him. He may be a trickster but everyone has their drawbacks. Loki feels strongly for Stark and from what I witnessed personally, he would do anything to remain in Stark's good graces. He wouldn't risk destroying the little he has. That's what I put in the report," Natasha informs them, receiving confused looks from Steve and Tony but a look of shock from Bruce as he understands what Natasha has revealed.

"There were other ways to find that out. Without damaging him further!" Tony shouts at her.

"It was the most effective way to learn what I needed to know. I'm sorry Tony, but I had to," she replies.

"Just stay away from him. I don't need him getting any worse," Tony tells her before looking away.

"Getting back on topic, anyone have any ideas on how to help Stark convince Loki that he doesn't need to enslave himself?" Steve asks.

"Let things play out," Romanoff suggests.

"What?"
"If Loki wishes to bind himself to Tony, then maybe he should be allowed to," Natasha answers.

"Wait, you are saying that Tony should accept Loki's offer?" Steve asks in disbelief.

"I think we should hear her out," Bruce comments, surprising everyone.

Romanoff and Banner exchange a nod while Tony rubs his temples and Steve stares at them all as if they suddenly grew horns.

"For whatever reason, it's clear that Loki has attached himself to Tony. If it wasn't for him, I think Loki's condition would be much worse than what it is now. Loki has made Tony his anchor. From that moment on, Tony's opinion on anything means a great deal to Loki. I won't be too surprised if he starts seeking out Tony's approval," Natasha explains.

"So what does that have to do with this enslavement issue?"

"If Tony turns down the offer, it will be seen as a rejection. Disapproval. You want to restore Loki's spirit, but by rejecting him, you make it impossible. You will only do more damage to his self esteem. If you want to have any hope in helping him, then accept his offer," Natasha finishes.

"No way. I'm not doing it," Tony mutters.

"It makes sense. With him enslaved to you, your praise would mean more than it ever would. You maybe able to build him back up that way," Bruce points out. "Besides, we all know that you can be a real dick at times but you would not abuse him."

"Slavery isn't right. No matter the reason. But..." Steve pauses in thought, "it's your call. I won't pass judgement on you. That's not my job."

Tony looks to each of them for a moment before grabbing a bottle of vodka and throwing it at the far wall.

"I'm not doing it! I won't be someone else that breaks him apart!" Tony shouts.

A few hours later, Tony is bringing up a pizza and two salads. He gets off the elevator and finds Loki sitting in the wheelchair, staring out the window. He groans at seeing the muzzle back in place.

"Lunch has arrived!" He announces, getting Loki's attention.

Though he couldn't see it, he could tell that Loki is smiling. He watches the man wheel himself over to the coffee table. Tony sets the food down and goes to the kitchen area to get plates and forks.

"You know, that can come off while you're eating. In fact, there's no reason for you to still be wearing it," Tony comments.

When he turns around, he finds Loki removing it and setting it down on the coffee table. Tony brings out the plates and forks but his eyes don't leave the muzzle. He sets everything down and picks up the muzzle, examining it.

"Stark?"

"You think, with all the money I give Shield, they could come with something a bit more tasteful, Tony comments. "Why do you insist on wearing this?"

"When Ms. Romanoff mentioned it, she said she wouldn't report my not wearing it to Shield. That means I am meant to always wear it, correct? It is part of the condition for me to stay here?" Loki
"That's...true. It is," Tony admits.

"It's not a terrible condition. No need to be concerned," Loki replies.

"And what if I ordered you to never wear that again?" Tony asks.

Tony can see Loki's eyes widen.

"I would obey, if...I were yours," Loki answers hesitantly.

"I see," Tony replies. He opens the top box and pulls out a piece of pepperoni pizza. He raises it up as if to take a bite but stops. "About your offer earlier...I accept. And about that," he gestures to the muzzle, "is an order. No more wearing it."

"Yes...sir," Loki replies.

"Good. Now that that is done, let's dig in," Tony states before taking a large bite out of the pizza slice.

He hopes this will work as the others believed. The idea of Loki believing himself to be Tony's slave still makes him feel sick. He is very worried about Loki sliding further away from who he was. But maybe they were right. Maybe if he turns this situation around, gently pushing here and there to encourage Loki to head towards recovery, it will be a necessary evil. Besides, the others were right. He would not hurt Loki. He would rather self destruct his suit with him in it first.

But if this is to work, he needs to come up with a plan. The question remains, how do you restore someone as broken as Loki?
He had agreed to Loki's offer four days ago. And he feels no better about it then he does now. Maybe because he hasn't actually dealt with the issue. Or with Loki since. No, last time he saw the trickster, he had helped him into their now shared room, since there really wasn't any room for the wheelchair, later that evening after the agreement was made. He had laid down on his own bed and waited until he was sure Loki was asleep then had sneak out of the room.

That was the last time. Since then he has locked himself away in his workshop day and night. His stiff back reminded him that the cot had not meant to be used so often. Only for those rare late night working frenzies he sometimes put himself into. Yet these past few nights, instead of using his very comfortable bed, he was using the emergency cot.

Maybe this act of avoidance was cowardly but who could blame him? He didn't want a slave! He didn't want to accept Loki's offer. Yet he did after the others convinced him that it might somehow benefit the fallen God. He thought he would come up with a plan to do just that. But for the past few days, his mind drew a blank. So in frustration he would lose himself in his work.

When he got up this morning, he planned to do just that when Jarvis drew his attention.

"Sir, I am detecting some concerning readings from Mr. Laufyson. He is currently experiencing a body tempt of a hundred and two point three and his heart rate has been steady climbing," Jarvis reports to his creator.

"Shit! Any indication what's causing this?" Tony asks as he gets up and leaves his workshop.

"Infection is being detected," Jarvis answers.

"Alright, let Bruce know," Tony replies.

"I'm sorry sir but Dr. Banner is not currently in the tower. He had been called away with Mr. Rogers. However Mr. Barton is still present as well as Ms. Romanoff. Should I request their assistance?"
"No. What is Loki's location?"

"He's on the twenty eighth floor sir," Jarvis answers.

Tony pauses at the elevator, his hand hovering above the call elevator button. His mind racing to whose floor that was. It wasn't Barton's that he was sure of. But it wasn't Pepper's or Steve's either. That left either Bruce's or Natasha's. No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't remember which was which. He ends up hitting the button and silently wishes that Loki is on Bruce's floor instead of Natasha's, ignoring the question of why he's there in the first place.

Tony never thought he would be so relieved to hear the instrumental music playing in what he now knows to be Bruce's floor. Though it certainly lacks in taste in his opinion, it was a welcome sound at that moment. Even the occasional harp sounds.

He steps out of the elevator, scanning the living room space for the former demigod. He grew worried when he didn't spot him right away and was about to ask Jarvis for an exact location when a door opens in the small hallway. Staggering out is Loki, his cheeks flush from his fever. In his hand is a trash bag. Tony stared at this as he gets the man's attention.

"What do you think you're doing?" Tony asks, his eyes glued to the trash bag, even when it drops from Loki's hand.

"S-sir?"

Tony hears the exhaustion and strain in his voice, making the question of why that much more pressing.

"Loki...were you...cleaning?" Tony asks as his mind finally grasps what the bag that Loki had dropped was.

"Yes sir. Those were the duties you gave me," Loki answers.

Tony walks closer to Loki who is trying his best not to lean against the wall for support. He looks down at Loki's feet, which to Tony's dismay, are covered in dirty bandages. He entertains the thought that they are at least not bleeding but tosses it aside when he recalls Jarvis report of an infection. He didn't need to guess where the infection is.

"Where's the wheel chair? Why are you walking around?" Tony asks.

"I...it made cleaning difficult. I left it," Loki answers, his voice lowering. He knows he did something wrong. He can tell that Tony is displeased. He bites his lip to keep from whimpering in fear.

Loki's answer stops Tony in his tracks. He looks over the tall man in disbelief. Anyone can tell that he is not feeling very well, about to fall over any moment. So why is Loki insisting on continuing his duties? Why is he not at least on their shared floor, resting? He watches Loki straighten himself, something that looks to have taken great effort.

Loki briefly bends down to pick up the bag of trash then closes the remaining distance between himself and Tony. He doesn't look up once to meet Stark's gaze before he kneels down at Stark's feet, letting out a deep breath as he does this.

"Have I...have I displeased you? If so, I apologize," Loki says quietly.

Tony stands there, his eyes wide and his mind whirling in confusion. This isn't making any sense.
Why is Loki kneeling? Why is he apologizing? Why does Loki seem so concerned about displeasing him? Then it dawns on him. This is part of what he agreed to. Part of Loki being his slave. It's why he has been cleaning this floor. He knows that for the past few days that this must be what Loki has been doing in his absence. Fulfilling the duties Tony had given him, for that's what slaves do.

It doesn't matter if they are sick or hurt. It doesn't matter if they need rest. Nothing matters besides their...besides the wishes of those they serve. They are helpless to do anything more then everything they can to fulfill those wishes. And when they don't...they are left to fear those they serve. It's the role he agreed to take on. The reason as to he agreed doesn't matter at this moment. The fact remains that Loki is now his. And if this doesn't make Tony want to run back to his workshop, nothing else will.

Instead, he takes a step back. He can tell that this small action makes Loki tense in apprehension. He swallows to calm his own nerves. This is one time he can't allow himself to run. He needs to take care of this situation, plan or no plan.

"It's okay Loki. But it's time to call it a day. Follow me," he tells the kneeling form, surprised at how steady his voice is.

Taking another step back, he watches Loki stand himself up. A bead of sweat runs down the right side of Loki's face as he steps forward slowly, his eyes focused on the ground. But then the bag falls to the floor again, this time spilling it's contents. Loki staggers, forward another step before falling forward.

Tony gives himself a mental kick before moving quickly forward and catching the taller man before he falls forward.

"Okay, that was my bad. Apparently there is no way you can make it to the elevator," Tony states as he looks back to the elevator then to the hallway, grimacing from the heat radiating from Loki's body.

"I...I am sorry," Loki whispers as he tries to pull away from Tony.

"Nothing to apologize for. It's going to be okay. Let's try to make it to the bathroom. I'm sure Bruce won't mind. Which door is it?" Tony asks, grabbing one of Loki's arms and placing it over his shoulders.

Loki points to the door he had come out of with his free hand.

"Okay. Try to walk with as little weight on your feet as you can. Lean on me," Tony instructs him before slowly moving both of them towards the bathroom.

Once inside, Tony eases Loki down on the toilet before going to the large bat tub. He turns the knobs on full blast then hits the switch for the water to come out of the shower head. He hears some noise behind him, causing him to look back. He finds Loki leaning against the bathroom doorway before pushing himself forward out into the hallway. Tony is dumbfounded at this until he glances back at the tub, seeing red for a brief moment before realizing it is just a wash cloth.

With a sigh, and smacking his forehead with the palm of his hand, he quickly goes after Loki. He doesn't need to go far, for Loki is slumped against the wall just a few steps from the bathroom. He is hugging his knees, his face hidden against them. Tony can see the man's body shaking.

"Loki?"

There is a noticeable jerk but that is the only response Tony receives. He crouches down next to the
"I'm sorry Loki. I wasn't thinking. Been doing that a lot lately," Tony admits. "Listen, I need you to have patience with me today, okay? You are very sick. You have an infection. The bathtub isn't a punishment. It's to help with your fever. We need to bring it down. So I need you to trust me. I'm not going to use the bathtub to punish you. Not like Barton did. Okay?"

He watches Loki closely, waiting for a response. He hears Loki give out a shaky sigh then slowly, timidly in fact, nod his head.


He holds out a hand as he stands up. He smiles encouragingly as Loki loosens the grip on his legs and accepts the hand, getting to his feet. They go back into the bathroom where Tony checks the water temperatures as Loki slowly removes his shirt. He starts to undo his jeans but stops, his hands shaking too much.

"Okay, I think we're all set," he tells Loki, turning around to find the fallen God still half dressed.

He opens his mouth to suggest taking off the rest of his clothes to be more comfortable but snaps his mouth shut before the words could even be formed. He has screwed up enough for one day, he decides, understanding why Loki hasn't completely stripped. With everything that has happened, he doubt he would feel at all comfortable being naked before another man. Instead he gestures to the tub, signaling for Loki to get in.

Tony doesn't miss the fear in Loki's emerald eyes when he raises them to look at the tub. When Loki moves himself closer, he is sure the man is going to pass out with how pale he is becoming. But thankfully he doesn't, instead he steps into the tub and lowers himself under the running water. There is a violent shiver and Loki grabs the sides of the tub in panic. Tony places his hand over Loki's, rubbing it comfortingly.

"It's okay. Everything is okay. You have a really high fever so the water feels ice cold. But give it a few minutes and as your tempt goes down, you'll find the water's not too cold. Just give it a few minutes," Tony tells him calmly.

Loki looks away, his body still shaking violently. Tony starts to wonder if maybe this isn't such a good idea after all when Loki sighs and releases the sides of the tub.

"Good, see? Not so bad is it? Try to relax, lean back a little. I'm not going to push you under if you do. So it's okay to relax," Tony coaxes, reaching a hand to the back of Loki's head to help him. He ignores Loki flinching away from his hand, instead he starts to gently card his fingers through Loki's hair in an effort to soothe him.

He's not sure if it is working since Loki's breathing is a bit erratic as if suffering from a panic attack but he does lean back slowly until he is laid out in the large tub, his head leaning against the side as the water rains down on him. Tony removes his hand and hits the switch that keeps the water from draining out of the tub. He looks back at Loki, meeting his gaze for the first time though he writes this up as due to Loki feeling so out of it.

"The tub is going to fill up now but you are okay. Nothing will happen. But I need to examine your feet. I will be removing the bandages and cleaning them, so it might sting a little. But you're safe, alright?"

Loki nods his head weakly before closing his eyes.
"Javis, body temperature?"

"It's currently at a hundred and one point five. It is dropping sir," Jarvis answers.

"See? Already improving. Now I'm going to work on your feet, okay?" Tony tells him, not bothering to wait for a response as he carefully takes hold of Loki's right ankle and lifts it.

He realizes he can't get into a good angle from his position. With a sigh, he releases Loki's foot and quickly strips off of his own shirt. Standing up, he kicks off his shoes and socks. Then carefully, he steps into the bath and sits himself down on the edge of the tub.

He hears a small cry from Loki and looks over to see Loki look away, closing his eyes tightly. Glancing down to his hands which are submerged in the rising water, he see's Loki is pressing his nails into the palms of his hand.

"You're okay Loki. This is the only way I can treat your feet. But that's all I'm going to do. Nothing more," he tells him as he reaches down again, shivering slightly when the shower water hits his exposed shoulder, and lifts the foot before gently placing it on his knee.

He glances one more time over at Loki before he starts to unwrap the foot. The bandage feels dirty and somewhat oily between his fingers. But he ignores this and continues to unwrap it until he is at the gauze part. This he grimaces at as he peels it away from the bottom of Loki's foot. Surprisingly, there is just some dried blood on the stitches that quickly watches away wipe a few wipes of the wash cloth. He can tell that the skin is mending itself back together with the help of the stitches. He gently lowers it, not into the water but besides him.

"You might want to shift yourself over so you're more comfortable," Tony suggests when he notices the odd angle of Loki's leg.

Loki complies, slowly scooting himself until he is laying diagonally across the tub. Not once does he open his eyes as he does this, instead he sighs as he lays his head back down.

Tony smiles inwardly at this. He is happy to know that Loki is finding it possible to relax even the slightest bit even though the situation is less than desirable. He reaches for the left foot and like before, he sets it on his knee. He can already tell that this foot is the source of the problem by the swelling of Loki's toes.

Bracing himself, he starts to unwrap the foot. When he drops the dirty bandage into the wastebasket placed between the tub and toilet, he takes in a deep breath. Already there is a smell of infection and he fears the worse once he removes the gauze. He again looks over at Loki, finding him no longer resting his head with his eyes closed. Instead he is watching Tony's hands with a pained expression.

"Here we go," Tony mutters as he peels back the gauze.

As soon as it peels away from the skin, the space between fills with yellow pus. Tony quickly throws the gauze away and grabs the wash cloth, working to wash the seeping ooze away. There is a hiss of pain from Loki from the contact of the cloth and his swollen toes curl.

Gritting his own teeth, Tony dips the wash cloth into the gathering water then again wipes the infected foot, this time adding pressure to get more of the infection to leak out. Loki's leg jerks as if to try to pull away but Tony keeps a good grip on his ankle.

"I'm really sorry but this has to be done. Try to bare with it."

This stills Loki's leg and Tony continues his administrations. After what seemed like several hours
but was only a few minutes, there is no more leakage of pus, only a small bit of blood leaks from the
stitches. Relieved that the worse is over, he sets the foot aside.

"All done. Jarvis?" Tony calls out.

"Body temperature is steady at ninety eight point nine sir. May I direct your attention to the water
level of the bath?" Jarvis questions.

Tony blinks in confusion before he see's how high the water is. It is nearly to Loki's shoulders at this
point.

"Opps," Tony mutters as he quickly reaches over and hits the drain and water switch at the same
time. He listens to the water begin to drain for a moment before turning to Loki. "Okay, I am going
to go and get the wheel chair. And find some antibiotics. Then we're going back to my floor and you
are going to spend the rest of the day on the couch."

"Sir?"

"Tony. It's Tony," Tony corrects as he steps out of the tub and reaches for a towel.

"You...are still displeased with me?" Loki asks.

"I was never upset with you. Why did you think I was?" Tony asks as he dries off his arms then feet
before pulling his shirt back on and grabbing a few more towels for Loki.

"You...have been avoiding me," Loki replies quietly.

'Walked right into that one Stark,' Tony thinks to himself. Did he really expect Loki not to have
noticed that? Specially after Thor said that was one of Loki's many qualities, observing everything
around him, even that which most would overlook. This would be the perfect time to explain things.

"Here, dry off. Stay here until I come back," he finds himself saying instead, handing the thick
towels over to Loki before quickly turning and leaving the bathroom.

He waits impatiently for the elevator door before realizing he has no idea what antibiotics could help
Loki out nor where the wheel chair is currently at. He is just about to ask Jarvis when the elevator
opens. Tony let's out a groan when he see's whose inside.

"Tony," Natasha greets with mild surprise, removing her ear buds.

"Natasha. I think I'll wait for the next one," Tony mutters.

He is about to step back when Natasha sighs and grabs Tony by the collar of his shirt and yanks him
into the elevator. He stumbles into the corner once Natasha releases him. Natasha hits the button to
close the elevator doors.

"I would not have expected such childish behavior from you Tony. Maybe I over estimate you,"
Natasha comments.

"So I hold a grudge. Sue me," he replies, glaring at her.

"I thought we were past this. I explained my actions," she points out.

"And what, that makes things all okay? Breaking a person down may all be in a day's work for
assassins like you but even for someone like me, that's crossing the line."
"What do you want me to do about it Stark? Apologize to Loki?" Natasha asks.

"No. By now seeing you or Barton will probably scare the life out of him. I'm already making a mess of things, I don't them to get any worse," Tony answers with annoyance.

"You keep saying assassins. Not assassin. And you brought up Barton just now. Why?"

"Don't pretend you don't know. The two of you are thick as thieves. You probably gave him some suggestions."

"Suggestions on what? What are you talking about Tony?" Natasha asks, taking a step closer, her eyes narrowing.

"About the torture sessions he was having with Loki. Claiming he was making Loki pay for his crimes. Did he come up with that idea or did you?" Tony asks.

Natasha goes very still, her eyes widening just slightly. She knew something had been bothering her fellow teammate since Loki arrived here. But she didn't expect this. "I didn't know," she admits quietly.

"Really? I find it hard that someone can pull something over you. You're like Shield after all, you know everyone's secrets," Tony retorts.

"No. Not everyone's. And I had no knowledge about Clint's actions. I understand why he might want to have done such a thing but I would not believe he would carry something out like that."

"Well you know now, don't you? And since both of you have the habit of breaking people, you can just stay away," Tony mutters. "And hit the elevator button while you're at it."

"What if I offer to help heal him from the damage we caused?" Natasha asks, meeting Tony's gaze directly.

"Stop being so stubborn Stark. Anyone can tell that something is going on and it's stressing you out. And I would be willing to bet it has to deal with Loki. So let me give you a hand. We are team mates after all," she points out. Saying this last line sounds strange even to her own ears. The closest thing to be part of a team is when she works alongside Clint on missions. Yet she finds herself amongst others on a nearly daily basis, facing down whatever threatens the security of the world along side her fellow Avengers. This is why she is offering to help Tony, for she needs to be able to rely on him when the time comes, whether he returns that favor or not.

"Playing the team mate card, really?" Tony questions, though there is a grateful smile developing at the edges of his mouth.

"If it gets the job done," she replies.

"Fine. But if you screw either of us over..." He lets the unfinished threat hang in the air.

"Understood. So what is the situation? And what floor do you need?"

As they ride down to the medical section of the tower, Tony explains what has happened, more of what hasn't, since he last talked to her along with Steve and Bruce. He admits to avoiding the former God after agreeing to allowing Loki to serve him and how he had planned to continue to do so until he finally came up with a plan. Then how he was notified of Loki's condition and how bad Loki
actually was when he went to him.

Natasha for her part said very little, nodding here and there and asking a question now and then. To Tony's relief, she knew a bit about medications and had an idea about what antibiotic would be helpful to Loki. She even double checked with Jarvis concerning the dosage. They found the medication without any problems and when they got back to the elevator they found Dum-E inside with the wheelchair. She didn't comment once as she assisted Tony in getting the silly machine untangled from the wheel of the wheelchair.

They returned in silence to Bruce's floor. Tony headed straight for the bathroom before smacking his forehead.

"Something wrong?" She asks.

"Clothes. He needs dry clothes. I'll be right back. You..." Tony starts to say before Natasha waves him off.

"Go on. I'll wait until you come back," she tells him as she makes her way to Bruce's kitchen.

"I'll be right back!" He calls out before dashing back into the elevator.

She listens to the hum of the elevator before opening the cupboard and taking out a tall glass. She wonders how Tony or any of the other Avengers would react if they saw how familiar she is with Bruce's private quarters. She would certainly get a few surprised looks. She opens the freezer and pulls out the ice cube tray and begins to fill the glass. Then she turns on the cold water.

She can hear the faintest sounds of movement from the bathroom. She knows that Loki is trying to listen for her own movements as well, for she doubt he missed what Tony had said. She starts humming softly as she turns the water off after filling the glass. She opens the pill bottle she had brought along and procured a single white pill from many.

Continuing her humming, she makes her way to the bathroom, stopping just outside of it.

"Loki? It's agent Romanoff. Tony sent me with some medicine for you. May I come in?" She asks.

She hears the sharp intake of breath. But this is all she hears. Deciding to take her chances, she steps into the doorway and looks in. Loki is sitting on the edge of the tub, a towel wrapped around his shoulders. His chest is exposed but his lower half isn't.

"Hey," she says quietly as she moves into the bathroom. She can tell he is watching her even though his head is lowered. She stops, leaving a foot of space between them, and holds out her hand with the pill on it. "This will help with the infection."

"Will it? Or is this another lie? Like when you told me that Tony...that Stark had died?" Loki asks quietly.

"You'll have to see for yourself. Either you take it now or wait until Tony comes back and he tells you to take it. Either way, you will be taking it," she points out.

She watches Loki's shoulders sag with defeat before he reaches out and takes the pill. He pops it into his mouth and accepts the glass of ice water she holds out to him. When he has swallowed it, she leans against the doorway.

"So, I heard you offered to be Tony's slave. I didn't know Asgardian's had such practices," she comments.
"It's not uncommon," Loki replies.

"Slavery?"

"Offering to become one when someone has too great a debt to fulfill. Sometimes, though rarely, it can be ordered as a punishment. Specially if the victim has been gravely wronged by the other party in such a way that mere riches or other forms of retribution can not resolve the issue," Loki informs her.

"And you believe you have such a debt with Tony?" Natasha asks.

"I do," he answers firmly.

Natasha nods at this. She had wondered what had motivated the fallen God to make such an offer, and to Tony of all people. A part of her had been on edge, thinking this is simply another form of trickery. The man before her may have been stripped of his God like abilities but he still has the ability to weave his lies. Yet it seems he has not relied on this particular talent of his. Why, she wonders. A question to be answered at a later time she decides. Right now she needs to work towards fulfilling her agreement to aid Tony in his current situation regarding Loki. In order to do that, there is one question she needs to ask.

"Loki, what is it you need from Tony concerning this new arrangement you have with him? What do you want from him?" She asks.
Outside the tower, everything looks still, almost as if it's only a painting. Yet Tony knows there is life going on out there. Cars are continuously filling the streets, herds of people equally filling the sidewalks. And there are people in the buildings he is looking at, attending meetings, climbing stairs, answering phones, running to fax machines. A buzz of activity that is never ending. Only something drastic can make it stop.

Like the Chitauri invasion. That was sure to have brought things to an abrupt stop. At least until the survival instincts kicked in. Then there was most certainly activity, though a whole different kind. He still remembers some of the things he saw in battle. The people running. Abandoning the work office, their cars, even each other just to get somewhere that is safe. And the Avengers had fought hard that day to make sure the people would be safe.

Yes, many lives were lost despite their efforts. It took months for the city to recover from the damage from the destruction. There are people still healing from wounds made that day. And many walked away with scars that will never heal.

Tony turns away from the view and looks down at the sleeping form on the couch. The cause of all that destruction, all those wounds, all those lost forever was sleeping right before him. If people knew, he doubted they would just stand there and watch the man. No, they would act just as Barton had, if not worse. He doubted they would pause and wonder what scars the man had gained himself that day.

A distress moan leaves the man's lips. Hands clutch the blanket he is covered with. A expression of terror develops across his face. A leg kicks followed by a jerk of the whole body. Sweat begins to develop on the furrowed brow. It's the whimper that calls Tony over to the man. Knowing that out there, there are many people suffering from this man's actions. But even with that bit of knowledge, he can not bring himself to ignore the man's distress. It's too much like looking into a mirror.

He gently reaches out to touch Loki's shoulder.

"Loki. Come on Loki, time to wake up now," he coaxes.
Another whimper leaves the man, this time with a name.

"Thanos..."

Tony's hand freezes, hovering just above the material of the pale blue shirt Loki is wearing. He is familiar with that name. When Loki was being held by Shield briefly after the invasion, he gave them that name with a warning. That Thanos has his eye on Earth. And now that his army has been defeated, he will come. And when he does, they will all tremble before him. That was Loki's warning. It was also the only time he mentioned this Thanos. After giving his warning he became tight lipped, ignoring all further questions. Tony believes this is why Fury muzzled him before sending him back to Asgard with Thor. That and to give the man a nice heaping of humiliation.

So that leaves the question. Who exactly is Thanos? And why does he plague the tricksters dreams? All Tony knows for sure is that this Thanos gave Loki an army. But what was the cost? And he doesn't forget about the Other either. The servant of Thanos. The sick freak that watched the agents he controlled rape Loki. Looked him right in the eye Loki had revealed. How many nightmares is that particular being responsible for? And were his actions ordered from the big man himself? If he had given such an order to have that done to Loki, then what else had the fallen Prince suffer from in order to be given that army? What had he given up?

"No...more," Loki pitifully pleas in his sleep, snapping Tony from his thoughts. The man is now obviously trembling beneath the blanket.

Tony takes a deep breath and takes a gently but firm grip of Loki's shoulder.

"Loki, wake up!" He orders.

Loki's eyes burst open at the order. Nearly panting, he looks around until his eyes focus on Tony. Still feeling the adrenalin racing through him from his nightmare, he quickly sits up and pulls away from Tony's hold on him.

"You were having a nightmare. Looked pretty bad," Tony comments as he withdraws his hand.

"It...it was. I apologize for being...a bother," Loki replies as he catches his breath, looking away.

He tries to recall what had happened before he fell asleep. He remembers Tony treating him in the bath tub and his talk with the widow. Romanoff. He then was given some dry clothes to change into and had been left alone to do so while he assumed the two Avengers talked. He didn't need to guess as what the subject of conversation was. When Tony came back, he was alone. He helped him into that uncomfortable chair then took him to Stark's private floor.

Tony had not said a word to him during this. It bothered Loki, for something he has come to realize, Tony doesn't like silence so often he will fill it with his own voice. It made him nervous. He knows that Tony was upset with him. But why? Could it be that he regrets accepting Loki's offer? After making it, Loki remembers when he asked Tony what he was to the Avenger. He had suggested both that of a whore and that of a slave. Yet the man denied both of these. Instead he said that he was to be just Loki.

But that made no sense to him. It still doesn't. No one wants Loki. A painful truth that he has been forced to accept. They may want his skills, use him as a pawn or tool for some purpose. But no one wants him for him. Nor for him to be himself. Very few if any know the true Loki. His brother and mother were the only ones who saw him for who he is. Then he destroyed his relationship with his brother and now Thor see's him as everyone else does. The Trickster, the traitor, the liesmith. A heart that that if filled with hatred and darkness, a mind filled with only madness. Due to his own actions,
he is doomed to be unwanted by all. Including the Avengers. Including Tony Stark.

As he had told the widow, he needed to make the offer, despite knowing it may very well be rejected. He owes Stark more than he can ever possibly repay. He is not blind to the stress he has added to the man. And the constant displeasure he causes. He is desperate to correct this. He knows he needs to. He owes Stark so much. And he is not so foolish as to not know how much power the man has over him, even before their agreement. If he doesn't want it all to be stripped away, he needs to change things. But how?

"Loki? You alright there?"

He groans inwardly. He may want to change things between him and Stark but so far it is clear he is unsuccessful. He knows what is expected of him.

"My apologies. I let my thoughts wander. It won't happen again," Loki promises quietly.

"That's not what I asked Loki. I asked if you are alright?"

"Yes, I am well," Loki answers.

"Not buying that. So tell me, what's going on in that mind of yours," Tony encourages. He fights to keep his eyes focused on Loki and not look back to a clipboard that sits on the coffee table. He's read it a dozen times already. Notes from Natasha on how to handle his new situation with Loki. The top note reads 'Get him comfortable to talk to you'. That should be easy enough.

"You...distrust me," Loki states.

Maybe it isn't all that easy.

"That's not what I mean. To be honest, you look terrible. And you just had a nightmare," Tony points out. "You can tell me anything. I'm not going to lash out at you or anything."

Tony is really hoping that that was the right thing to say. If Loki was a woman, the words would be easy though maybe not sincere. He always relied on his 'take me or leave me' attitude. If they accept him, it's all good, if not then he didn't need them anyway. Yet he can't rely on it this time.

Loki looks at him with a clear expression of doubt. Tony decides to insert another of Natasha's notes.

"I really would like it if you could open up to me," he tells the man. 'Tell Loki that you would like him to open up to you. He wants to please you.' Her second note read.

Okay so the idea that Loki wants to please him is still so freaking weird. Yup, it weirdos him right out. But this is what he agreed to. Now if only Natasha's notes work...

"I...am concerned about some things," Loki shares quietly.

"Such as?"

"What are your expectations concerning me?" Loki asks. He feels his face burn with shame at the words, same as when he told Romanoff this when she asked what he needed from Stark. He knows she still remembers him from before, just like the others. She remembers him as the proud God that dared to call her a mewling quim. Yet there he was, revealing just how dependent he is on Stark. And now, he has just revealed the same to Stark himself.

Tony looks away, this time giving into looking at the clipboard. How the heck does Natasha know
these things? 'Make a list of expectations you have of him. You need to tell him this list.' Is she psychic? If so, that could explain a few things.

"What I expect of you? That's really simple. So pay attention. What I expect from you is the same thing I expect from everyone here at Stark tower," Tony tells him. He could see that Loki is about to say something so he raises his hand, successfully silencing the man. "I expect you to behave yourself, specially when interacting with the others. I expect you to not go out of your way and cause trouble. Or cause damage to my property. Only one who is excluded from that is Bruce. He can't really help it when the other guy makes an appearance," Tony jokes.

Tony doesn't miss how horribly his joke failed to lighten the mood. These expectations really were what he had for everyone. Now he has to tell the trickster what he honestly wants to hear. Maybe when he does, his nausea will pass. Doubt his guilt will.

"Those are the expectations I have for everyone in my tower. With you, there are a few more. One, no lies. If I find out that you've lied to me about anything, I'll make your life a living hell. The same goes for betraying any of us. I think I told you this already but since we are going over this, it doesn't hurt to repeat it. You with me so far?" Tony questions.

Loki nods.

"I want nothing but the truth from you. Two, if I tell you to do something, I expect no arguments. Even if it's uncomfortable, I expect you to do it. And if I tell you not to do something, you better not do it. Still with me?"

Loki nods again. He's no longer meeting Tony's gaze. Tony takes a deep breath. He needs to finish this before he loses his nerve.

"Three, if any of the others order you to do something and it's going to harm you, don't do it. Return to the bedroom instantly. Stay there and ask Jarvis to call me. It doesn't matter how late it is. It doesn't matter if you know I'm in the workshop, or in a board meeting, or in a battle. Ask him to call me and stay there. No one is to hurt you. No one else is to punish you besides me. I don't want to find out that Barton is having any further sessions with you. If he does, I will personally throw him out a window. See how well the little hawk can fly," Tony mutters, his face darkening in anger.

"It's not his fault," Loki says quietly, his voice almost in a whisper.

"It's not yours either," Tony replies with a sigh.

"No, you don't understand. His actions weren't solely his own," Loki tells him.

"What do you mean?"

"Barton is still...under his influence. Not completely. Not like before."

"Whose influence? Explain it to me Loki," he orders gently. This is not what he imagined when he decided to go over this. No, he expected Loki to withdraw, curl in on himself and not speak to him for the rest of the night. Or if he did, the last person he would speak about would have been Barton.

"It's not complete. The control over his mind. That has been severed somehow. But the Other's influence is still there. It feeds his anger towards me. I believe that what remains of the control the Other still has whispers to his mind. It's what it did to me," Loki explains.

"What it did to you?" Tony asks.
"Hearing their whispers. Sometimes I still do. Though they are not at the volume they once were. Not like they were during the invasion. Back then they could not be at all ignored or silenced," Loki tells him, lifting a hand to his temple as if experiencing a head ache.

For Tony, certain things are clicking. Thor's comment about Loki's eyes being blue. The times he noticed this himself. The time when Loki believed this Other has been at the tower. And Clint's behavior.

"What does the whispers tell you now? If they feed Clint's rage at you, then what are they feeding in you?" Tony asks, gripping his knees to brace himself for the answer.

"They tell me the truth. And they won't allow me to forget it either." Loki replies.

"What is this truth Loki? I want you to tell me right now," Tony pushes.

"That...I am...an unwanted thing. Unless I can be used, I am unwanted. I have no true purpose."

"Unless you can be used. Loki, is that why you offered to be my...slave?" Tony hears the question leave him. His eyes are glued onto the man in front of him.

"Yes. As long as I am of use, I will be wanted. By you," Loki answers quietly.

Tony feels as if the ground has been pulled out from under him. Now he has the whole picture. All the pieces fit. But what is he to do with the picture? And how can he change the unpleasant image it creates?

"All right. All right. New rule. When you hear these whispers, I want you to tell me right away. Tell me everything. And if I'm not available, tell Jarvis. I know that seems strange but he will make a recording of what you tell him and then play it for me. No one else will have access to these recordings so don't worry about anyone else hearing them. This will be between only me and you. And Jarvis but he doesn't really count," Tony tells him.

Loki nods, not revealing whether he likes the new rule or not. Tony accepts this for now. He lets out a long sigh.

"Well, I think we are all done with the rules for now. I need to go talk to the others concerning Barton though," Tony tells him as he gets up.

"What do you wish for me to do?" Loki asks.

Tony stops and looks over at Loki, finding the man lowering his head. "Relax for now. You will be recovering for the next few days until the infection has cleared up. How about some reading?" Tony suggests.

Loki nods his head. Tony feels himself smile, knowing that Loki is pleased with this 'order'. Tony goes over to the book shelf and pick a few books at random then takes them over to Loki.

"Later we'll do some reading together," Tony adds. Before he had locked himself away, he and Loki had fallen into a habit of reading together. Or more accurately, Tony reads a chapter or two of the Hobbit to Loki. Something he was surprised to find he enjoyed doing and he believes Loki enjoys it too.

He is practically beaming when he sees the small smile form on Loki's lips.

"Alright, if you need anything else, ring Jarvis. I'll be back for dinner," Tony tells the trickster as he
heads for the elevator.

Once inside he asks Jarvis for Natasha's location and to notify her that he is on his way to her. He plans to tell her what Loki has revealed concerning Clint and ask her to inform the others. That and maybe since she was the one to sever the connection, she might have an idea how to complete the separation. After he gives her a big squeeze for those notes of course.

The following morning, Loki wakes feeling lighter. Not the unease or fear he has woken with over the past few days. Even with Tony's bed empty, he knows the man had been there. He's no longer avoiding him. Stark is not upset with him anymore. And he finally knows what Stark expects of him. He even knows what Stark wants from him this day.

Stark had told him that after his morning routine he is expected to be on the couch or if he prefers, in the bedroom, spending the day reading. If he gets tired of that, he can request Jarvis to put on a movie for him. He can walk around but Stark made it very clear to do as very little of this as possible. The foot with the infection is wrapped but the other isn't. The stitches feel uncomfortable when he stands on his feet but it's a minor discomfort.

Stark has also promised to be around for lunch. Loki finds himself already looking forward to this. The last few days were far from pleasant. He recalls how he would wake up and find himself alone. The first day he spent a great deal of it inside the bedroom, sitting on the mattress and waiting. It had been agonizing, for he was sure that any minute Stark would storm into the room and yell at him for being so lazy. But when he consider leaving the room, he saw similar scenarios play out, this time being punished for leaving the room without permission. So he spent the day inside the shared room, waiting for Stark.

The next day he ventured out of the room but not to wait for Stark. No, he decided that he should at least try to make an effort to please Stark in some small way. So he started cleaning. When he was finished and he saw that there was still day light, he moved on to the next floor. He didn't start feeling sick until the third day. Still, he kept going about his cleaning duties, not wanting to anger Stark any further than necessary.

By the fourth day he knew something was wrong. His foot was a mess of pure agony. And he kept getting light headed. But he would not stop. He wouldn't dare. Not unless he wanted to face Stark's wrath. Yet as soon as he stepped out of the bathroom he had just finished cleaning and heard Stark's voice, he knew it had all been in vain.

So when Stark treated him, with the help of the widow, he had been thrown off balanced. The rage he had been fearing never showed itself. Instead there had been kindness. Not only that, but he later received the very information he has been desiring after Stark accepted him as his slave. Yes, now he feels...stable in his current situation. As if he has finally found the earth his feet has longed for. And this happened because of Stark.

Stark. His days now will start and end with that man. Or at least with his wishes. A small thought that warms him. Though he doesn't understand why. Nor does he really care to figure it out. He is happy to have it there. It doesn't replace the warmth his magik once provided but he still relishes at it's presence. It's better than the bitter coldness he knows all too well.

Deciding not to dally any longer, he gets up from his mattress and gathers his clothes. He pauses to take the medicine waiting for him on the dresser before he leaves to take his shower. When he steps into the small hallway, a voice stops him cold.

"Hey boss. Get plenty of beauty sleep?" Barton asks, smirking at him from the end of the hall.
Chapter 29

A Fallen God

Chapter 29

A Thor-Loki-Avengers Fanfic Frostiron

Disclaimer: I don't own the characters, movies, comics or anything else. All that belongs to Marvel and the creators. I don't even know the actors, though I'd like to.

Warnings: Since this is a story in progress, Not sure what to warn ya about. I do tend to write pairings so I might do it here. Or not. There will be some cussing and angst. Some violence. There are references to past rape as well as rape and improper use of a fire poker. So be careful while reading.

I would like to thank my beta reader, TheDeLowl (DA) for their help! Also to those who have been leaving comments, thank you so much!!!!

Hope you enjoy and please leave comments! Thank you all for reading this and the support!

________________________________________________________________________________________

Loki is trembling before he even turns to face Barton. His arms go limp, dropping his clothing to the floor.

"About to get in the shower? Need to clean up after last night's activities?" Barton comments.

Loki slowly takes a step back, his hand reaching behind him for the door.

"Don't even think about it. Unless you want your hand pinned to that door," Clint warns, pulling out a knife Loki knows all too well. Barton smiles when Loki drops his hand to his side. "Besides, I'm not going to do anything to you. This time. Just here to chat."

Loki doesn't believe the archer, his body tensing up. His mind whispers that Stark had given him an order concerning this. But what was it?

"So has Stark played with you yet? I know he's been looking forward to doing so," Barton lies, enjoying how wide those green eyes become with every step he takes. 'It serves him right', a voice whispers. 'Let him know fear.'

Loki presses more of his body against the door. He wishes Stark was here. He needs Tony here.

"After all, you just made it so easy for him. The whole slave thing? Nice touch on your part," Barton comments, stopping a few feet from Loki and starts to clean his nails with the knife. "Maybe you should take it one step further and become the Avengers personal slave, instead of just Tony's. After all, you owe them all something."

Loki shakes his head at this suggestion, not realizing he is doing so. He knows he has a debt to all of them. But his debt to Stark is greater than any of theirs. And...he made the offer for other intentions besides clearing a debt. Intentions he dares not think about at this moment.

"No? You really prefer Tony over the rest of us?" Barton asks.

"I would prefer myself over you any day," a voice comments behind them.
Both Barton and Loki turn to see Tony glaring in their direction.

"Loki, bedroom," he orders.

Loki doesn't hesitate. He opens the bedroom and quickly disappears inside, leaving Barton with Stark. He nearly stumbles as he makes it to his mattress. But he manages not to, and crawls himself into the corner. His trembling is worse.

But it's not because of Barton. His traitorous mind finally recalls Stark's order concerning Barton. 'Three, if any of the others order you to do something and it's going to harm you, don't do it. Return to the bedroom instantly. Stay there and ask Jarvis to call me.' That had been the order. It was so simple. Yet he failed to do it. Barton ordered him not to go into the bedroom and he followed it, knowing Barton could mean nothing good. The man's only intentions have only been to hurt him, one way or another. Stark's anger hadn't been aimed at Barton. It had been aimed at him. Now he must wait until Stark finishes with Barton to find out what the penalty will be.

Meanwhile Barton quickly tucks his knife away as Tony causally approaches him.

"So, what was that about?" Tony asks.

"That? Oh, you mean with Loki. It was nothing. I just said hi and the guy started having a panic attack. I think he needs some help," Barton comments.

"After what you've done, I'm not surprised," Tony replies, his jaw clenching.

"Like it really bothers you..." Clint starts to reply when he sees Tony stretch out his hand. In the blink of an eye, the bare hand is covered in an all too familiar red gauntlet which Tony flexes the fingers of before turning the palm towards Clint.

"Want to know one of my pet peeves, Barton? People touching my things," Tony tells him before Clint is thrown backwards from a repulsor blast into the fall wall. "Loki's mine now. So don't...touch...him," Tony punctuates each word with a few steps forward.

Barton, trying to catch his breath and making an effort to stand, shakes his head to clear it. When he looks up, Tony decks him with the gauntlets hand.

"Get the message?" He asks the now unconscious archer before flexing his fingers and grimacing in pain. "Damn you have a hard head," he mutters. "Jarvis, summon Natasha. Tell her I found her missing partner."

"At once sir."

With his foot, he nudges Barton, hearing a slight groan in response. Satisfied the man is out, he removes his gauntlet and turns to the bedroom. He braces himself for what state the former deity will be in.

When he opens the door and steps inside, there is a small cry in the far corner of the room where Loki's mattress is. Looking over at the source, Tony's heart sinks. Loki is visibly shaking, pressing his body into the corner. His wide green eyes are staring at Tony. He curses Barton.

"It's okay Loki. He'll be gone soon enough," Tony tells him reassuringly.

But when Tony moves closer, he realizes his words seem to have fallen on deaf ears. For another whimper leaves Loki and he turns his face to the wall.
"What the hell did Barton do?" He asks before taking another step. Then it dawns on him. This reaction isn't because of Barton. Loki is responding to his movements. He takes a few steps back, watching Loki's reaction. Though he is still shaking and pressing himself into the corner, slowly he looks over towards Tony as if to really see if he has moved back.

His brilliant mind that can rattle off facts, smart ass remarks and scientific equations that make Steve's head spin, is struck dumb by this information. Loki is no doubt afraid of him. But why? He didn't do anything to him! Just told him to go to the bedroom so he would be out of his way while he took care of Clint. Nothing more. So why is Loki reacting like Tony is some kind of...monster?

"Loki? Loki what is going on? I need you to talk to me buddy," Tony coaxes, willing himself to remain still.

Loki shakes his head, and Tony notices the small drop of blood dripping down from the corner of his mouth, the result from biting his lip.

"Loki," Tony says quietly, taking a deep breath before continuing, "That was an order. Talk to me."

This seems to shatter any resistance Loki had tried to put up. He raises his eyes and meets Stark's gaze, eyes filled with unshed tears.

"I...I am so sorry! I knew your orders yet I disregarded them. I didn't...I didn't mean to! I didn't mean to disrespect you! Please...forgive me sir!" Loki pleads before closing his eyes, the tears spilling. He forces himself away from the wall, quickly shifting into the kneeling position he knows he needs to be in.

But before he can lower his head to the floor, firm hands grip his shoulders, effectively stopping him. A whimper leaves him as he tries to look away.

"Loki. Loki, look at me," Tony instructs him quietly.

"Please...." Loki whispers as he slowly complies, "show mercy."

"It's okay Loki. Calm down. I'm not going to hurt you," Tony tells him when Loki finally meets his gaze.

At hearing these words, Tony feels Loki become limp within his grip. The man lowers his head into his hands when Tony releases him.

"Thank you, thank you," Loki says over and over even though his voice is muffled by his hands.

"It's okay, really. Nothing to thank me for. But I really would like to see you try to take a few deep breaths, okay? Come on, we'll do it together," Tony tells him.

Watching Loki, he takes in a deep breath, smiling when he see's Loki does the same. Together, they release it before taking another. He can see the tension leave the trickster with each breath, the tears stopping. After a moment, so does the shaking.

"There. Everything's back to normal, right?" Tony asks.

Loki nods, a small unsure smile on his lips.

"As for disregarding orders...forget about it, okay? Slips happen. And you were caught by surprise, right?"
Loki nods slowly, the smile gone the moment Tony spoke.

"So no harm, no foul. However, since Barton still has a bee in his bonnet, I don't think you should be left alone. In fact, leaving you alone this morning was my fault. I knew Barton was back. Stupid move on my part. But I corrected that," Tony tells the dark haired man with a smile, flexing the hand that had punched the archer's lights out. "Now, I'll go see if Natasha collected her fellow assassin. If so, you can continue to the bathroom like you were, then we'll have some breakfast. I do have a board meeting I somewhat have to attend, but I got time before then. How do you feel about spending the day with Bruce?"

An hour later, Loki finds himself standing nearby the entrance to Dr. Banner's lab space. His arms are crossed over his chest, a book hidden from view is pressed tightly to his chest. Fearfully, he keeps his eyes to the floor as Stark talks to Dr. Banner. When Stark had asked him how he felt about spending the day with the scientist with a large green beast hidden within, he never imagined that Stark was serious. Yet here he is.

Tony casts a glance back to the former God as Bruce continues to list all the reasons why this is a bad idea.

"I'm sorry Tony, I'm just not a very good candidate for being a babysitter," Bruce finishes, catching Tony's attention.

"Look, I can't argue that you don't exactly meet the qualifications but this is kinda an emergency situation. Either he stays with you or I come home and find another bath tub filled blood. Something I would do anything not to see ever again if I can manage it. So come on, take one for the home team," Tony asks. "Besides, look at him. I doubt he will do anything to bring your better half out."

Bruce glances over at Loki. Tony is right, the man still doesn't look like much. There are still bags under his eyes. He is still too thin to be healthy. And he knows that the man is recovering from a serious infection. This brings out his inner doctor instincts. Instincts he could never resist.

"Just how long is this board meeting expected to last? And when is the last time he ate?" Bruce asks, aware that he is giving in.

"It's a board meeting. Hours of blah, blah, blah and a few voiced concerns over some policy...a few hours top," Tony answers. "As for him eating, well, with earlier's episode he took maybe two bites of his toast. That's it. I know I already owe you and all but I would really owe you if you can get him to eat somehow."

"Owing a lot of favors Tony. Better be careful before someone thinks you actually give a damn," Bruce warns.

Tony opens his mouth to make some smart ass comment when Jarvis interrupts him.

"Sir, the board meeting begins in twenty minutes. Ms. Potts requests me to inform you that if you are not on your way in the next five minutes, she will personally drag you to the meeting by your ear," Jarvis informs him.

Bruce starts to chuckle at this as Tony makes an exaggerated eye roll of dismay.

"See what I have to work with?" He asks before turning towards the door and Loki.

"Have fun," Bruce wishes with a playful smile.

Loki raises his eyes when he senses Tony approaching him.
"Don't worry, he's all good. He's not someone to be afraid of really. Not even when he's green. Okay maybe you should be a little afraid then. But seriously, everything will be fine. Relax, read a little, and don't break anything. Do that and you should be good to go. I'll see you later," Tony tells him, patting him on the shoulder as he leaves.

When Tony moves out of sight, Loki again drops his gaze to the floor. He cringes when he hears the door shut behind him. The next several minutes pass in silence. When Dr. Banner clears his throat, Loki nearly jumps out of his skin.

"Sorry! Didn't mean to startle you," Bruce apologizes when he sees Loki tensing at the sound. "I was only going to suggest that you could sit over here and read if you would like. I'm going over some information and will be reading myself so it'll be quiet. Unless you don't mind music. Do you mind music?"

Loki shakes his head, lifting it enough to see where Dr. Banner is indicating for him to sit.

"Okay. My stuff is more instrumental and nothing like Tony's rock music," Bruce informs him as he turns to turn on his iPod.

"I know," Loki says quietly as he makes his way to the stool Dr. Banner had pointed at earlier.

"You do?" Bruce asks, pausing before hitting play to look back at Loki.

"Yes. You left it playing on your floor. I heard it while I was cleaning it," Loki reveals.

"Oh," Bruce replies, unable to think of anything further to add.

"I...like it," Loki offers, feeling unease about his admittance. Maybe the shorter man would have preferred not to know that he had been there to clean it. Maybe he will ask for him to never step foot in his private quarters again.

"That's a relief really," Bruce shares.

Loki glances up at the scientist, meeting a kind expression rather than that of irritation or worse yet, anger.

"About you liking the music. And that you were the one cleaning. No offense to Stark but sometimes his robots...well they are only machines. Sometimes there would be an error in their system...one actually mopped my floor with it's own motor oil. That was fun," Bruce shares.

Loki nods, not sure how else to respond. Thankfully Bruce turns away and hits play, filling the lab with music.

A good hour goes by before it is turned off. Loki stiffens at the sudden loss and places a bookmark where he is at before closing the book. Then he turns towards the direction he knows Banner is sitting.

"Time for a break. Eyes aren't what they used to be," Bruce explains.

Bruce looks over at the fallen God as he takes off his glasses and wipes them with his shirt. Loki seems to be waiting for something, his body tense in apprehension. Maybe a little conversation would help the man relax, Bruce considers.

"Back in college, I attended a class about world literature. Took it because I thought it would be an easy grade really. Should have known better. Anyway, one of our assignments would be to study
different types of mythologies. That included Norse mythology," Bruce shares.

Loki nods. He is aware of the stories that had been told. After all, they were created when he and the other Asgardians came to earth eons ago. He wonders what stories Dr. Banner has knowledge of.

"There were a lot of interesting stories really. But the ones concerning you...they were really strange. May I ask you about them?" Bruce asks politely.

Loki nods his head, his curiosity stirring.

"Okay. Well one story involves a mason. Some battle took place and a wall was destroyed. The story goes on that the mason offered his services in exchange for having one of the Goddesses as his bride when he finishes," Bruce explains.

"Freyja," Loki supplies.

"She exists?" Bruce asks.

"She does," Loki confirms.

"Well, the story has it that the mason was really a giant. But no one was permitted to interrupt his work. They blamed you."

"They often did," Loki replies quietly. He remembers the event all too well. And he had been blamed despite that it was Odin and Odin alone that had made the decision to accept the offer. Loki had tried to persuade the great King otherwise, that he sensed something about the mason. But he had been dismissed. Apparently the others thought he had used his silver tongue to persuade Odin to accept, ignoring the very fact that Loki's skill of being the lie smith was never so honed as to fool the King of Asgard.

"In some versions, various beings pressured you to fix the wrong they believed you committed. So, it goes on that you used your magic and turned into a mare and...well...distracted his horse. And later gave birth to Odin's prized steed. There...isn't any truth to that, is there?" Bruce asks cautiously as he kicks himself for picking the possibly worse story to ask about.

Loki feels his face burn, not in shame but in horror. He shakes his head.

"There certainly is not. That version...that was Fandral's version," Loki replies.

"Fandral?"

"He is one of the warrior's three. A good friend of Thor's. He and I...did not get along well. He changed the story," Loki shares.

"So what really happened?" Bruce asks, leaning forward in interest.

"The story is mostly accurate. The mason did come and I sensed something. A foreign magic. As you said, Odin had agreed to his terms and permitted none of us to be allowed to interfere with his work. And...I was pressured to correct the situation. I did use my magic, but that is the end of the truth in your take. I did not take a form of a mare. Instead I cast a spell on the horse. Made wild bees be drawn to it. This made the horse wild and mad. Eventually it ran to a river and threw itself in, drowning to death. The giant wasn't able to finish the wall and the deal became undone. Freyja was saved from marriage. There was a great celebration," Loki finishes quietly.

"You didn't get any credit, did you?" Bruce asks quietly.
"No. Why would I? I was held responsible for it in the first place," Loki replies.

"I see. So why did this Fandral change the story? And make up the part about the horse?" Bruce questions, unable to help himself.

"Sleipnir does exist. But I had nothing to do with it's creation. As for Fandral, he never was fond of me. When I was betrothed to Sigyn, a girl he had his eye upon, his dislike for me grew. He was the one who often reminded others of my...lack compared to Thor," Loki answers.

"I didn't know you were betrothed. So you are married?"

Loki shakes his head. "No. The promise of our marriage was dissolved when I was imprisoned. I imagine that was a great relief to her. She was not fond of me."

"Loki, I hate to ask this, but it sounds like no one was fond of you. But you must've had a friend. Didn't you?" Bruce asks.

"No."

Bruce feels the loneliness of that answer. He knows it all too well. How much did this play in the man's own madness, he wonders. How deep are the scars? Shaking his head, he turns back to the files before him. He is snapped out of his thoughts when he hears something shatter behind him.

He turns to find a broken beaker on the floor along with the stool Loki had been sitting in. As he gets up, the book Loki has been holding also falls to the floor, causing Bruce to look up at the Asgardian. He is quickly concerned as he watches Loki back away from the mess, staring at it with wide frightened eyes, until his back hits the wall. Then Loki sinks to the floor.

"Loki? Are you hurt?" Bruce asks.

Loki doesn't reply. Instead he continues to stare at the shattered glass as if in disbelief.

Bruce carefully steps around the mess, working his way to Loki who seems to be growing paler by the second. He crouches down next to him, glancing over at the shattered glass before focusing his attention back on Loki.

"Hey. Loki? It's just glass. I think it was just an empty beaker. Nothing to worry about," Bruce offers. "I tend to break a few of those every week."

"He..."

"Loki?"

"He said...he said not to break anything. Not to break anything," Loki says quietly, his voice faint.
When Bruce answers a call from Tony a few hours later, he wastes no time in asking if he's on his way back to the tower.

"Wish I was. This meeting is a nightmare," Tony replies through the phone.

"Any way you could perhaps speed it along?" Bruce asks.

"What's going on Bruce? Is Loki okay?"

"Nothing is going on. That's the problem," Bruce answers, glancing over at Loki who is still in the same spot on the floor.

Loki is staring at where the beaker had shattered. Bruce had already swept up the glass shards, set the stool back upright and picked up Loki's book which sits beside him, but even with all the evidence cleaned up, Loki's eyes remain glued to the spot. His legs had slowly stretched out and his hands sit in his lap.

"How's that a problem?" Tony asks.

"There was an accident. Nothing big. A beaker broke. And for whatever reason, it upset him. He wasn't hurt or anything. However, since it happened, he hasn't moved and he stopped talking. I've tried getting him to talk to me but it's almost like he doesn't even know I'm here. I'm concerned, Tony. Really concerned." Bruce explains.

Bruce misses the sharp intake of breath when he told Tony about the beaker. If he were to look over at Loki now, he would see that Loki is starting to curl himself up, bringing his knees to his chest.

"So am I. Let me try to talk to him. Can you pass him the phone?" Tony asks.

"Sure," Bruce replies as he walks over to Loki, taking in the change of position. He crouches down
and holds the cell out to the other man. "Loki, Tony wants to talk to you."

Loki slowly extends his hand and accepts the cell phone. His hand shaking slightly. He brings the phone to his ear as Bruce is indicating for him to do.

"Loki?" He hears Tony call out, unsure if the man is on the phone yet. "If you're there, I need you to say something."

"Y-y-yes, sir," Loki struggles to say, only just managing, in a volume that is barely above a whisper.

"Hey Loki. You have Bruce really worried. Are you okay?" Tony asks him.

"Yes," Loki answers.

"Okay. Well, I'm going to be stuck here for a bit longer. In the meantime, I want you to listen to Bruce. If he tells you to do something, do it, okay? He won't hurt you nor have you do anything that will hurt you. So listen to him. View his orders as mine. When I get back, we'll talk more, alright?" Tony asks.

"Yes, sir," Loki replies.

"Good. Okay, pass the phone back to Bruce," Tony instructs.

Loki pulls the phone away from his ear and holds it out to Bruce.

"Thank you," Bruce tells Loki, offering a brief smile when their eyes meet for a moment. When Loki looks away, he gets up and walks away a little bit. "That was the most I've heard him say in the last couple of hours," he says into the phone. "What did you say to him?"

"Not much, but hopefully it helps. I have to go, Pepper just came to get me," Tony tells him.

"Alright, Tony. Enjoy your board meeting," Bruce replies, smiling when he hears the groan on the other end.

"Hey, something I forgot to tell you," Tony says suddenly before Bruce pulls the phone away from his ear.

"Oh?"

"Loki likes pudding. Seriously, the guy looked like he was having an orgasm eating it," Tony tells him.

"Okay Tony. Could have really gone without the visual though," Bruce replies.

"Your welcome! See ya later" Tony ends and Bruce hears the click.

He sighs while shaking his head, putting the cell away. Then he looks over back to Loki. He is still curious about what Tony had said to the man. And more importantly, if it really would result in anything different.

"I think I'm done with everything here. How about we go to my floor and get something to watch?" Bruce suggests.

To Bruce's surprise, Loki nods and stands up, ready to follow Bruce.

"Okay, follow me. Don't forget your book," Bruce reminds him as he heads for the door.
Meanwhile, Tony has just put his cell into his jacket pocket. But instead of going into the board room, he looks at some promotional picture hung on a wall. Pepper is standing a few feet from him, watching him. She had heard a strange part of the phone conversation.

"Is everything alright Tony?" She asks finally after a few minutes.

"Huh? Oh, yeah. Everything's fine," Tony replies, giving her a charming smile.

But the smile doesn't convince her. "So what the 'view his orders as mine' all about?"

"You know, it's not polite to listen in on other people's private conversations," Tony deflects.

"Tony Stark..."

"Yes Ms. Pepper Potts?"

"Who were you talking to concerning orders? It couldn't have been Bruce," Pepper pushes.

"What can I say? Bruce is a submissive. He likes it when I order him around. No worries though, we have safe words. Though 'green' doesn't mean it's all good," Tony jokes.

Pepper crosses her arms and gives him her famous stink eye.

In response, he raises his hands. "Okay, I give in. But you are not going to like this. Remember that," he warns her.

"I'm listening," she replies.

"Okay, here it goes. A few days ago, Loki offered himself up as my personal slave," he reveals.

"And you did the right thing and refused, right?"

"No. I accepted the offer," he replies.

The look of pure shock and horror on her face made him cringe. He is in serious trouble right now.

"How could you?! Wasn't what he went through enough? I know that what happened between you two was bad but seriously Tony, enslaving him?! You are a real piece of work Tony! A real bastard!" She nearly screams at him.

"He offered! And I talked to both Steve and Bruce about this. They, and Natasha I might add, thought it would be bad if I didn't accept," he tells her.

"You listened to Natasha? Her of all people? And did you explain exactly what Loki was offering when you talked to Steve and Bruce? Because I can't believe either of them would be okay with that. Natasha doesn't surprise me. But did Steve really agree with those?" She fires her questions in disbelief.

"Yes, he did. He said he didn't like it. He talked about how wrong it was and how it's been done away with a long time ago. But at the end, he agreed that refusing Loki's offer would be worse than accepting it," Tony explains.

"How would it be worse?"

Before Tony can answer, a man pokes out from the office door they are standing by.
"Excuse me, we are ready to continue," the man tells them.

"We need a minute," Pepper tells the man, not looking away from Tony to acknowledge the man.

The door closes, leaving them alone again.

"Tell me how refusing his offer would have been worse," she demands.

"If I had refused, Loki would have taken the rejection personally. He's already pretty bad, Pepper. You know that. In the end, I gave in because I didn't want to see him get any worse. I've already seen enough. Not only that but I didn't want to be the reason he got any worse. So if accepting his offer makes me a bastard, so be it," he states firmly.

Pepper stares at him for a moment, taking in what he had told her. Tony meets her glare, refusing to look away. If she hates him for this, it will bother him. But not nearly as much as what he had imagined would have happened had he refused Loki's offer. It will never sit well with him but he accepted that. Now she needs to do the same.

She sighs and rubs her temples. "Do you have any idea what you did?"

"What I did?" Tony asks, not sure what she is asking.

"Yes Tony, what you did when you accepted that offer. Do you know what it means? What it really means?" She asks.

"Not sure where you're going with this Pep..."

"It means you are responsible for him," she fills in.

"Pepper, I have been responsible for him since the minute I agreed for him to be brought to the tower," He replies.

"Not like this. Not like this. We better get back in there. I'll try to rush things along," Pepper mutters before putting on a fake charming smile and opens the door.

"You have no idea," Tony mutters before he follows Pepper's example and enters the conference room with his own fake charming smile.

Back at the tower, Bruce is sitting in his recliner, pretending to be reading a book of poetry while actually watching Loki eat the bowl of pudding he gave him. Since the phone call, Loki has remained silent but compliant. When Bruce told him to sit down on the love seat, Loki did. When he handed him the bowl, Loki accepted it. When he told him to go ahead and eat, well, he is still doing that.

Bruce will admit that he doesn't know what to think concerning this small change. It certainly is better than the near coma like behavior he had been exhibiting earlier. The blind compliance however bothers him. He knows Tony accepted Loki's offer for Loki to be his slave. But that was only for Tony, right?

Suddenly he understands. Tony must have told Loki to obey Bruce as well, at least for now. This bit of realization doesn't help ease him though. But seeing that Tony was right about the pudding does. Loki definitely looks like he is in absolute bliss, eating the butterscotch pudding Bruce made only a few minutes ago.

But when the bowl is empty and set down carefully on the coffee table, the moment of pleasure
vanishes. Bruce observes how tense Loki becomes as he remains on the edge of his seat. He knows the trickster is waiting for the next order.

"Would you mind if I examine you? To make sure your injuries are healing correctly?" Bruce asks.

Loki flinches at the words and at first, Bruce is thrown off by the response. Then he realizes what Loki must be afraid of.

"I would only check your back and feet. All you need to remove is your shirt and socks. Everything else you can keep on. We can do it right here and it will be very quick," Bruce tells him.

Finally, Loki nods his head. Bruce stands up and Loki slowly pulls his shirt off over his head, then shifting on the seat so his back is facing Bruce. Bruce swallows at the sight of the still yellowish bruises covering the man's back. Even though he witnessed these same bruises when they were much worse, it still makes him a bit angry. But with experience, he quickly soothes the flare of emotion before there is even a remote threat of losing control to the other guy. He doesn't touch Loki's back but moves closer to examine the tally marks. They have scanned over but sadly, it looks like they will scar regardless. With a sigh, he steps back.

"Okay, you look good there. You can put your shirt back on," he tells Loki who quickly does so.

When Loki has his shirt back on then removes his socks, Bruce kneels and takes the non-bandage foot in to his hands, gently raising it to examine the stitches. He checks for any tears or redness. He is happy to see that everything looks to be in order. Another week he figures and he might be able to remove the stitches on this foot. Maybe sooner, though he wants to make sure the skin heals back together completely first. The improvement does explain the man walking around, though slowly and carefully.

He lowers the foot and lifts the other one that has an infection. To his relief, this injury seems to be recovering nicely. When Tony left the message for him concerning Loki's infection, he had feared the worst. But Tony must have treated it in the nick of time. This brings something to mind.

"Loki, Tony told me that when he found the infection in your foot, you were walking around on it. It must have hurt, didn't it?" Bruce asks.

"Yes," Loki answers quietly.

"But you still walked on it?"

"I...I had responsibilities I needed to fulfill. My health didn't matter," Loki replies.

"Of course it does. Especially to Tony. And Steve. And myself. None of us want you sick," Bruce corrects.

Loki remains quiet, not having a response to that.

"Did Tony tell you to clean while you're feet were like that?" Bruce asks.

Loki shakes his head.

"So you pushed yourself to do it then?"

"They were my responsibilities. I had assumed he was displeased. I didn't want to upset him further. I wanted him to know that despite my...condition...I am still capable of completing my tasks," Loki explains.
"When you talked about your condition, you're not talking about your injuries, are you?"

Bruce glances up, seeing Loki swallow as he stares off to the right. "I...am not."

"I can only imagine what it was like when you lost your magic and other abilities. But I don't think you are completely helpless Loki," Bruce comments.

"But I am," Loki replies with a defeated sigh.

"No. You still have other talents, don't you? Other abilities that weren't stripped away?" Bruce questions.

"Other abilities? No. Nothing."

"Sure there is! Think about it. When you would go into battle with Thor, did you use only your magic?"

"No," Loki admits.

"So you could fight without it. Did you use any weapons?"

"Throwing knives. A dagger. I...can also use a staff," Loki admits.

"That's more than I can do," Bruce points out encouragingly.

"But it's not enough," Loki tells him.

"Enough?"

"I fought those men at the cabin. Yet my body failed me. I couldn't stop them. I couldn't defend myself. Same happened when I was in that cell in S.H.I.E.L.D. That was worse. I had no control over my own body. It betrayed me again, and again, this weak body. It's because of this weak, pathetic body, that I need Stark," Loki admits, eyes widening a little at his confession.

"Are you saying you need his protection?"

"Yes...no. It's more than that."

Bruce raised an eyebrow at this answer but didn't push the issue. Instead, he says, "We all lose battles now and then Loki. Even the small fights. They do show us our weaknesses but they also show us our strengths. The important part is not to focus only on your weaknesses. If you do that, you are only setting yourself up to lose."

Loki glances at him in disbelief. For that moment, Bruce could have sworn he was looking at the old, haughty Loki. But it was gone quickly.

"My strengths were taken from me. There is nothing else for me to focus on then my weakness. And as you have clearly stated, I am doomed to lose...to fail. Unless I remain under Stark's...control. Even then I have proven I can fail," Loki replies with a sad sigh as he sinks back into the chair.

Bruce also sighs. He gave it his best shot. But as he has said numerous times to Tony, he simply doesn't have the temperament to be that kind of doctor. He can't heal Loki's mind and therefore must admit defeat. For now anyway. On the upside, there are a few things he plans to share with Tony when he finally gets back.

"So, would you like to listen to some more music?"
Hours later, Tony is finally in the elevator, heading up to Bruce's floor. That board meeting was a disaster! The new policies were a bore, he learned that someone has been trying to contact illegal buyers for some of their old weaponry plans, they fired a man that has been caught embezzling and discussed whether charges should be filed or not, and other topics he doesn't bother trying to remember right now. The point now is that it's over. And his only concern at the moment is seeing Loki.

He wonders if things have gotten any better after the phone call. Did Bruce manage to get Loki to eat? Talk more? There had been no damage reports so that means no Hulk episodes so that means things were good, didn't it? But if he was honest with himself, he had not at all been concern with a hulk episode. No, he had been concerned about Loki withdrawing more into himself after that morning’s episode with Barton.

He paces a little in the elevator. If Loki is somehow in worse shape, what is he going to do? Pepper had been right earlier. He is responsible for Loki. That includes his mental health. And he has been trying to help that along, right? It's not his specialty but he certainly isn't doing that bad of a job. Right? All these doubts are making him crave a good, strong drink. Two of them in fact. But first...

The elevator door opens and he walks out. There he finds Loki and Bruce waiting for him. Loki quickly gets up and walks over to Tony.

"Hey, how'd things go while I was trapped in hell?" Tony greets.

"There were no problems. We came here after the phone call. Ate pudding and listened to music. That's about it," Bruce admits.

"Next time, you're attending the board meeting," Tony groans.

"Especially with your anger issues! It would give the meetings something interesting to talk about for once!"

"I don't at all envy you Tony. Not at all."

"Gee, thanks buddy. I think I'm going to take my Loki and go home now," Tony replies with a fake pouting expression.

"Your Loki, huh?" Bruce comments with an amused expression.

"You heard me," Tony replies before putting an arm around Loki's back and gently pulls him towards the elevator.

"Alright, see you later Tony. Oh, I'll be sending you a message later. I think you'll find it interesting," Bruce tells him with a wave before settling back down with his own book.

Tony waves back and enters the elevator with Loki still at his side. He doesn't notice how tense Loki actually is until the elevator door closes. The man beside him is standing ramrod straight as if he had been struck by lightning. Wondering if it is because of his physical form of contact, Tony withdraws his arm from Loki and watches for any sign of the man relaxing. None happens.

He's tempted to ask about it but decides to wait, leaving them in silence till they step out of their now shared floor. Again he wants to bring it up and manages to rely on the small amount of self-control he has until they are sitting on the couch. He doesn't miss that Loki is simply following his example. Nor that he's doing the whole 'eyes on the floor' thing yet again. Seriously, when will he stop doing...
"Okay Lokes, what's going on? Something is bothering you," Tony asks.

"I..." Loki starts to reply but can't seem to go beyond the first word.

"I'm all ears Loki. Go ahead," Tony encourages.

"I...failed to obey you again," Loki tells him so quietly that Tony had to lean forward to hear him.

"What are you talking about?" Tony asks.

Loki quickly slides off the couch and kneels before Tony. "You told me not to break anything. Yet I still did so," he tells Tony once he is in position.

"I know. Bruce told me. But it was only an accident," Tony replies, sighing as he does so and reaches his hands out to grab Loki's shoulders and pull him up from the floor.

"Everything I touch, I destroy. I have wrought chaos, destruction, and death," Loki says quietly, making Tony stop in his action. "I am known only for my trickery and deceit. My treachery. Nothing good. Nothing decent." Loki slowly looks up, meeting Tony's eyes. "This is why you must not show me leniency. You need to correct me. You need to punish me."

"Whoa. Hold up. You want me to punish you? You want me to hurt you?" Tony asks, withdrawing his hands suddenly as if Loki had suddenly been engulfed in flames.

"I don't want pain. But I can't deny that I...am in need of it. So that I can learn. I have failed to obey you twice today. I need to learn. I...want you to teach me," Loki pleads.

Tony looks around the room, hoping that some answer will suddenly appear. He needs one to appear. Yet all there is are the two of them and furniture. He realizes then that Pepper is right. He had no idea what he took on. It's more than providing for Loki's common needs. It's more than setting up some house rules. It's about revealing all of himself to Loki, so Loki will not have to be afraid of the unknown lurking in Tony's heart and mind. If he is to be Loki's Master, he can't always be gentle.


Loki obeys without hesitation. He balls his hands into fists and prepares for the first blow. With his eyes closed, he doesn't see Tony reach his hands out towards his face. He stiffens when he feels the callous skin touching his cheeks, but remains still. When the hands lift his face, he allows himself to be manipulated.

Tony feels his own heart pounding from his own fear. Loki is allowing Tony to lift his face without any resistance. He knows he could do anything and Loki would not resist. It's a power Loki gave him and him alone. What does that say about him? Who in their right mind would give Tony such power? Apparently, Loki was not in his right mind. And neither was he for he accepted it. The power of having complete control over another person had frightened him. He tried hiding from it. He tried getting away with taking on the role only for a moment to lay down some house rules. But he can't run from it. And it's not a role he can put on and off whenever it suits him. No, this is a full time job and he needs to step up.

So he will.
"Don't...move," he repeats.

Loki remains still, eyes remaining close. Before he can lose his nerve, Tony brings his own face closer. In an instant, his lips are pressing against Loki's. It was not a gentle kiss. Nor a quick one. Tony kisses Loki's top lip, then his bottom lip. He pulls back just slightly, allowing his breath to touch Loki's lips before his own does so again. Then it's over and Tony pulls back.

"There. No more disobedience. Are we clear?" Tony asks.

Loki slowly opens his eyes and nods his head before bowing it.

"Good. Now we are going to watch a movie. You are going to stay on the floor. Your head on my knee. Understand?" Tony asks.

Loki nods again and shifts himself into the desired position.

"JARVIS, find us a descent thriller movie," Tony orders.

The lights grow dim and the TV starts itself up. Tony wants to look down at Loki, to see if the trickster is okay with this arrangement. Is he doing things right now? Instead, he gently places a hand on Loki's head and runs his fingers through the short black hair. He smiles when he hears a contented sigh.

As the movie begins, he starts to consider that maybe he can do this. At least until Loki's broken mind starts to heal. Until then, he can be what Loki needs.

The two watch the movie, unaware that there are eyes watching them. Hovering in the air nearby is a man in a grey metal suit, a green cloak fluttering behind him from the evening breeze. He roars with laughter from what he sees. After a few minutes, he takes off. He needs to prepare himself for the morning battle. But he also needs to adjust his plans. A very interesting idea has come to him and he looks forward to seeing their results.

This being isn't the only one watching Loki and Tony Stark. For an ancient being is watching them in a small pool of water with one eye narrowed in suspicion. Besides him is his son, the one who will be King and he can finally rest in peace.

"Do you see this son?" Odin asks.

"I do Father. They are only watching a movie," Thor replies.

"Look closer. Look at Loki's position. Does it not strike you odd?" Odin questions.

Thor steps closer. Yes, it is strange to see his brother sitting on the floor, his head resting on Stark's leg like some sort of pet. He admits this to his father.

"I have received word that Loki offered himself up to be the man of iron's slave. That man accepted," Odin reveals.

The news doesn't sit well with Thor. He feels a twist of betrayal and rage. When he told Stark to take care of his brother, he did not mean this! Stark is clearly abusing his power over Loki. Power he gave Tony himself. Was he a fool for trusting him with his younger brother?

But as he looks closer, he notices how relaxed his brother seems to be. Almost as if he is at peace
with his dire situation. After a few minutes, as Stark actually begins to pet Loki's hair, a small smile forms on Loki's face. What does that mean, Thor wonders.

"Loki is up to his old tricks my son. You must warn your comrade that he can not be trusted," Odin tells him.

"I have Father," Thor replies.

"Your words fell on deaf ears then. It seems I will have to settle things myself. Your friends need to know what kind of monster they are dealing with," Odin states.

"What do you mean Father?" Thor asks in alarm. His father can't possibly mean that he plans to go down to Earth. If so, for what purpose?

"Your comrades need to see your brother's true face. I will personally reveal it to them by midday tomorrow. Let us hope that it will not be too late by then," Odin decrees.
"So Steve, I have something I want to run by you," Tony states casually.

"I don't think this is the right time Tony," Steve's voice replies over the feed link Jarvis is providing through his visor.

"Why not? It's only more of Doom's goons we're fighting. The man seriously needs a hobby. Whoops!" Tony cries out as he drops a doom-bot on top of the Black Knight. "Sorry, didn't see you there!"

"Anyway, has there been any sighting of the Asgardians?" Steve asks.

"Nope, no hot blonde and her axe wielding boy toy. Though I think Hawkeye was shooting at a new face," Tony comments as he swings around in his suit.

So far this was how their morning has been going. He and Loki were both woken up to the sound of Jarvis's oh-so-jolly voice announcing that the Avengers were being summoned and again it was Doom who was up to no good. So he ordered Loki to the elevator and instructed Jarvis to have him go into his workshop and lock it down. Going to battle has never been an issue for him. It didn't matter who they were facing nor how dire the situation may seem. He was always ready for a fight. It did wonders when things got stressful with the company or issues with Pepper. Yet he had hesitated this morning. He didn't summon his suit until he received Jarvis's report that Loki is secured. As soon as he heard that, he called his suit.

"So Steve, how would you feel about having some training sessions with Loki?" Tony asks as he turns back towards where he last saw Barton.

"Not the...come again?" Steve asks in clear surprise.
"Training sessions. You look a little bit out of shape there Captain. Don't want your image to get ruined," Tony kids.

"Ha-ha Stark," Steve mutters.

"Boys, can we focus here? Because there is another wave of Doom-bots on their way. And something else leading the way. Looks to be a meta human?" Romanoff interrupts.

"A meta human? Well now things are starting to get interesting. Let me go introduce myself," Tony replies as he flies off.

Meanwhile, Loki is sitting in the workshop, watching a holoscreen which is displaying bits and pieces of the battle. He smiles when he see's Tony collide with a man in green armor who seemed to be creating a tornado around his lower half to fly. The force of Tony's impact sends the man crashing into the ground. "Watching your beloved hero?" A feminine voice asks. Loki suddenly turns around and finds the Enchantress leaning against the doorway, smiling. Loki quickly looks away. "Why are you here Amora?" Loki asks before whispering for Jarvis.

"Forget about Stark's little mechanical voice. It doesn't sense us nor hear us," she says sweetly. "As for why I am here, well I thought I should pay you a visit. We were such good friends at one time."

"We were never friends. You only tried to use me to get to Thor," Loki replies.

"Oh Loki, it's true your brother had a special place in my heart but so do you," she coos. "Don't you remember the tricks we would play on him together?"

"Save your words Amora. Tell me why you are here," Loki demands as he attempts to straighten himself up to his full height.

"You were never one for pleasantries Loki. Too bad. I came here to deliver a message personally from Doom. He knows that you...have become Stark’s pet. Is this true Loki? Have you become some mortal's mere pet?" She asks, interrupting the message she is supposed to give with her own curiosity.

"Whether I am or not is no concern of yours!" Loki shouts at her. He is growing nervous in her presence. He keeps glancing about, looking for any sign of her faithful follower.

"So it is true," she comments before laughing wildly. "Loki, the great Liesmith, the Trickster, the second son of Odin...is nothing more than a mere slave!"

"Better than being a mere harlot," he counters.

"Watch your tongue!" A voice roars out from behind him when an axe handle suddenly appears before his face. Loki grabs at it as it is placed against his throat. He tries to back away but his back hits against a large broad chest. The axe handle continues to press against his throat, restricting his breathing.

"Now, now Skurge, you can't be so rough with him anymore. He is no longer possessing the powers he once had. He was never an Asgardian but now he is really no longer a frost giant. Or anything else. I don't think he can even be classified as a mere mortal," the Enchantress comments with a giggle. The handle loosens just slightly from Loki's throat, allowing him a little bit more air.

"We should deliver the message then take our leave Amora," Skurge suggests.

"Oh, alright. Dooms message is this. He knows of your situation. But he believes you still have a
use. That brilliant mind of yours could serve him well. And the secrets you have locked away in that cunning mind of yours could be a great asset. He wants you to consider serving him instead of Stark. Be his...slave," Amora tells him.

"No," Loki replies as he tries to struggle against the axe handle.

"Oh Loki, don't be stubborn now. Doom is not so bad once you get past the iron. He even knows a little magic. It's not anywhere near ours, or what yours use to be, but still, for a mere human, he is quite powerful," she tries to persuade. "He won't treat you too badly. He says he will even try to find a way to restore your magic. That fool Stark can't make such promises."

"No...no he can't," Loki agrees. "But I...I will not betray him."

"Betray him? Since when do you know of loyalty Loki? And why give such a rare gift to a mere human?" She asks.

"He might...be nothing...but a mere human...but he will...always be more than Doom...can even hope to be," Loki replies between gasping for breath.

"What a pity. Then we have no choice. His instructions were that if you refused his offer, we must leave Stark a message. Using you," she replies.

The axe handle pulls away from his neck but before he can move, the handle is jabbed painfully into his back. He falls to the ground at Skurge's feet. "I never liked you Loki. This is going to bring me much pleasure," Skurge tells him before kicking him in the chest.

Amora watches with an air of boredom as Skurge beats Loki. She grimaces when he stomps on the former God's left hand, successfully breaking it in several places. Loki's cries of pain fill the room and after a few minutes, she has had enough. "Skurge, enough. If we kill him, Doom may not carry out his end of the bargain. It's as Doom wanted. Stark will no longer believe he is untouchable here in his fortress. Doom's plan to keep Stark distracted will certainly succeed now," she expresses her line of thought out loud.

"Amora...should you be saying such things?" Skurge questions, looking down at Loki who is moaning in pain.

"What do I have to fear? No one here, not even Stark, trusts the famous lie-smith. Not only that but he is now only a slave. We could tell him every detail of Doom's plan and he will be unable to repeat any of it and it being taken seriously. Such a fate for those who chose the path of lies and deceit," she replies.

"And...what of your fate?" Loki asks between painful breathes.

"Mine? Oh my dear Loki, don't you know? You may have dreamed of obtaining the throne of Asgard and that is all it will ever be. The dream of a delusional former Prince. But as for me, I will stand beside that throne you crave, the one that your brother will sit upon. And through him, I will truly rule Asgard. I will think of you now and then dear trickster. Until then," she answers with a wave.

Loki looks up and his eyes burn from the bright light that engulfs the pair. He lays his forehead against the cool surface of the floor and grits his teeth from the pain as he cradles his wounded hand to his chest. He thinks about Amora's comment about no one trusting him. Not even Stark. To distract himself from the pain, he wonders if this is true and if he should dare say anything at all even though the Enchantress had said so very little that could be of use.
Then he recalls the comfort he felt when he had rested his head against Stark's leg. It had been an order but Loki didn't mind that. Nor did he mind the punishment Stark had placed upon him. He closes his eyes and tries his best to ignore the pain and instead recall the feeling of Stark's lips on his own. Warm, slightly moist. Moving with purpose against his own. And the brief moment when it was only Stark's breath touching his lips. As if his breath was also kissing his lips. No, he didn't mind such a punishment. Maybe another time he would have been outraged. He surely would have tried to kill the man for having such gall. But he only accepts it in silent submission. What surprises him is the yearning. Such thoughts are not enough to vanish the pain but make it bearable.

Elsewhere, Stark is bouncing off the side of a building, cursing as new dents are made in his suit and bruises against his skin. He is looking at another three days of repairs at least. This is getting old, fast. He quickly recovers himself and scans the area. "Jarvis, I need to ground this guy and fast. Need some options here," he mutters as he dodges another incoming doom-bot.

"He needs to focus to continuously use his abilities sir. Something I would imagine would be difficult if there was a strong current of electricity going through his body," Jarvis suggests.

"Perfect. We just need Thor who happens to still be in his magical kingdom," Tony mutters.

"Not quite sir. The man Mr. Barton has just taken down happens to be wearing gauntlets that would suit your needs."

"Why didn't you just say so?" Tony replies with an eye roll as he turns to the left and looks for the man mentioned. He spots Barton standing over someone in an orange body suit. He flies past, grabbing the man and knocking Barton on his ass at the same time. "Sorry, need to borrow this!" He quickly scans the gauntlets the man is wearing and activates them as his visor flashes red, reporting that he has someone coming up from behind him. He twists himself and the suit in a single fluid motion, throwing the unconscious man at the incoming meta human.

"Catch!" He shouts as soon as he releases. He smiles as the man in the green armor actually pauses and attempts to catch his teammate. There is a bright spark before both men tumble towards the ground. With a sigh, Tony flies after them, catching both of them, one by the leg the other by the arm, before they smashed into the ground. "Got two down, where do you want them?" Tony asks.

"Hey! One of those was mine!" Barton cries out.

"Key word there is 'was','" Tony replies.

"There's a SHIELD van waiting on a hundred and eighth. Toss them in there with the others. Hulk is finishing off the last of the doom-bots now," Steve reports.

Just as this is being said, Tony dodges three falling bots, smashed together. "I see that. We should get him a set for Christmas," Tony suggests playfully as he finds the van and throws the pair in with the others his team has already taken out. He closes the van doors and watches as it takes off. "Is it just me or did this seem even sloppier than last time?"

"There seems to have been no real objective for them," Romanoff comments. "They just caused a lot of damage."

"What happened to the good Ol days where the bad guys robbed banks or carried out their devious schemes?" Tony asks, looking around.

"Hate to admit it, but that's a very good question. Was there any sighting of Doom?" Steve asks. "No," both Romanoff and Barton reply. "Stark?" "Sorry, didn't see the tin man. Something isn't..."
"Sir," Jarvis interrupts, "I'm afraid there has been an incident involving Mr. Laufeyson."

"Incident? Isn't he secured in the workshop? He's suppose to be secured in the workshop Jarvis," Tony states as his concern grows.

"Stark, what is it?"

"Trying to figure that out Captain. Give me a minute. Jarvis, full report!" Tony shouts as he takes off, heading for the tower.

"Somehow Mr. Laufeyson was shielded from my scans for several minutes. I detected a sort of strange interference. I began to activate the emergency protocols but before they became fully functional, my scans picked him up again. He is in need of medical assistance," Jarvis reports.

"Shit!" Tony growls out as he lands on the tower's landing pad. He runs into the tower as pieces of his suit fall off, leaving a trail. He ignores the pain and aches of his body as he passes the elevator and goes straight for the emergency stairs. There is no doubt in his mind that Doom is behind this. For whatever reason, he went after Loki. Was that why the battle seemed so off? Had it only been a distraction? But what does he want with Loki? Pepper told him that Doom had deduced Loki's loss of power. So what can he possibly want with him? He jumps over the railing, the repulsors firing off on his hands and feet where the suit had not come off yet. He quickly descends to the right floor, and rushes through the door, the last of his suit falling off as he enters.

"Loki! Loki, talk to me!" He shouts as he looks around.

"Sir..." He hears the faint reply from his right.

Tony turns and finds Loki struggling to pull himself up with the help of a workbench. His left hand is pressed against his chest. "Loki..." Tony quickly goes to the trickster's side, quickly helping him the rest of the way up. "What happened to you Loki?" Tony asks, looking at the hand Loki is keeping close to his chest. He doesn't like the way it's bleeding or how the fingers look unable to bend.

Loki opens his mouth to tell him but stops himself. Will answering do any good if his words won't be believed? Or worse, misinterpret? What if he is accused of letting them inside? Of giving them information?

"Loki, tell me what happened?" He hears Stark order as the man gently leads him towards the elevator.

This silences his thoughts, his concerns. He will do as Stark wants. That is the agreement he made. "Amora and Skurge were here," Loki answers. "She used her magick to shield us from your scanners."

"I see. And what did they want?" Stark asks.

"They were sent to deliver a message from Doom. He wanted me to...serve him instead of you. He thinks I may be of use, my knowledge I mean. But I refused," Loki tells him, though he doubts Stark will believe him.

"I know," Stark replies.

"You know?" Loki asks, surprised.

"If you had agreed, you wouldn't be in such bad shape. Heck, you wouldn't be here if you had
agreed," Tony points out. Loki nods his head as he thinks this over. Stark has made a good point. He wouldn't be here much less in this condition if he had agreed. Still, doesn't Stark have any doubts? He watches the man of iron, looking for such doubts to cross his features. Instead he receives an amused look before quickly lowering his gaze. "You really could stop doing that. Haven't I proven that it's alright to look me in the eye?" Tony asks. Loki doesn't reply as he tries to straighten himself up but bumps his hand, letting out a hiss of pain. He nearly jumps when Stark pats him on the back gently.

"Don't worry. We'll get you all fixed up," Tony promises.

Several minutes later, Loki is watching Stark wrap his hand. It had been very painful when Stark straighten his fingers. The man apologized over and over but it gave Loki no comfort. He tried once to pull his hand away but Stark ordered him to remain still. The pain is still there but not as strong as before.

"There. Once Bruce wakes up from his nap, we'll have him treat this properly. For now, try not to move it," Tony tells him as he stands up, stretching. "How about we go back to our floor and order some pizza? We could watch a movie or read if you prefer." Loki starts to nod.

"Sir, Mr. Odinson has arrived. He has brought a guest," Jarvis announces.

"So he finally shows up. Thor isn't going to be happy when he learns that he missed another battle. The guy loves swinging his hammer around. So whose his guest? A lady friend?" Tony questions as he walks over to a nearby desk, turning on a holoscreen.

"Mr. Odinson has identify him as his father, Odin himself, sir. They request your presence. And that of Mr. Laufeyson's," Jarvis answers.

"Odin?" Tony repeats. Just then he hears something fall to the ground. He turns and finds Loki fleeing the room. "Damn!" He cries out as he quickly goes after the fallen God.

"Loki! Stop!" Loki hears the shouts. He recognizes the orders being given. But he doesn't comply. He knows he will be punished. But he can't stop. He needs to get away. If Thor brought Odin here, it can be only for one reason. To make him suffer more.

Tony catches up to Loki and grabs his arm. He is surprised when Loki let's out a loud cry. "Loki, Loki! Stop! Just stop!" Tony shouts as he struggles to get a hold of the taller man. Loki is fighting him, trying to pull away. Tony finally slaps Loki hard. This makes Loki stop. He goes still in Tony's grip, and lowers his head.

"I'm sorry Loki. I didn't want to do that. But I had to. And right now I need you to listen to me. Okay?" He asks. Loki nods his head. "We are going to meet Thor and his father," Tony tells him, being careful with his words. "We'll see what they want and then hopefully once they have said their piece, they will take their leave. But I promise you, I will not let them hurt you or take you from here. Alright?"

Again Loki nods though without much enthusiasm. Tony sighs. "I guess I'll have to take that. Let's go see what brings our guests down from Asgard." He heads for the elevator and glances back over his shoulder, seeing Loki follow silently.

A few minutes later, the elevator door opens. Tony strolls out of the elevator, as if meeting the God of gods was an everyday event. He nods to Thor then takes in the mighty Allfather. Both he and Thor are dressed in casual attire. Thor in jeans and a white shirt with a jacket over it while Odin is dressed in a soft brown business attire. In his hand is a golden walking stick. Matches nicely with the
gold eye patch, Tony thinks. Something moves beside him and he glances over, finding Loki kneeling beside him. He wants to say something about this but decides to focus on Thor.

"Back so soon Thor? You know you just missed another fight with the bad guys," Tony greets.

"Son of Stark, I would to introduce you to my father, Odin King of Asgard," Thor addresses.

"Hi," Tony replies with his trademark smile. "So what brings the King of Asgard to my lowly abode?"

"It has come to my attention that Loki Laufeyson has offered himself as your slave to repay a debt. Is this accurate?" Odin questions.

"That sums it up pretty much. Not sure why it concerns you though. I mean, you did banish him," Tony points out.

"If you knew him as I do, then you would understand the concern this causes. I believe you are unaware of what his true nature is. A fact he will use to advantage," Odin states.

Tony pinches the bridge of his nose. Can anyone trust his judgement? He glances over at Thor who has gone silent, his gaze on Loki. "His true nature? Maybe you are the one that 'unaware'. When he tried to take over our planet, I had a nice little chat with him I got to know him real well then. So yeah, I get the whole concern part. But what you don't seem to realize that after what you did to him, and some other events I will not discuss, Loki is no longer that person. If you knew him now, you would see that your concern is unnecessary at this point," Tony replies.

"You are a fool Son of Stark. A brave fool but a fool none the less. Loki has mastered the skills of deceit. Deception is his nature," Odin informs the Avenger.

"Was his nature. Like I said, if you knew him now, you would see he is not the same Loki," Tony repeats, glaring at the single emotionless eye watching him.

"And what do you plan to do with him as your slave? Make him labor? Respond to your every wish? Bed him perhaps? Or is this agreement of slavery simply a verbal agreement in which he has every freedom to do as he pleases? Freedom in which to scheme your destruction," Odin questions. "And if not, how has he preformed? Does he resist your every command? Or does he seem to fulfill them without struggle? For that is what you must be watchful for."

"I don't see what I plan to do with him is any of your business. He offered, I accepted. That's it," Tony replies, his tone sharp. He is quickly reaching his limit with this great Allfather. He is already looking forward to the man taking his leave.

"You accepted without knowing his true face. Are you aware of this?" Odin asks.

"What are you talking about?" Tony asks, glancing down at Loki who is rigid.

"Let me show you," Odin replies. "But first, he needs to remove his shirt."

"Fine. Loki, do as he said," Tony orders. Loki glances up at Tony with a look of distress before he lowers it again and carefully removes his shirt.

Odin takes a few steps closer and taps his walking stick against the floor and a small tiny ray of light leaves from it and goes directly to Loki. Tony steps to the side to get a better view. A small gasp leaves Loki's lips as he watches the skin on his hands turn a deep blue, the markings revealing themselves. He wraps his arms around his chest and he closes his eyes shut before the spell is
"Look at your Master Loki. Let him see your true self. Let him see how you have deceived him," Odin orders.

Loki slowly opens his now blood red eyes. He is more terrified at this moment then he has ever been in his life. He heard the gasp that left his brother's lips. But not a sound has come from Stark. Is he horrified? Disgusted even more? How much will be stripped from him when Thor and Odin take their leave? Will he end up wishing they had taken him as well? He wants to get up and run from this meeting. He wants to lock himself away from the sight of others. Of Stark's. But he won't. Instead, he raises his head and meets Stark's gaze.

To his surprise, Tony doesn't seem to even acknowledge this physical change. He is peering down at Loki with the same look as before. No horror nor disgust. Not even a look of interest.

"So this is what Frost Giants look like. Neat," Tony comments before turning to face Odin, sensing Loki has once again lowered his head.

"You know of his parentage?" Odin asks, his voice carrying the smallest hint of surprise.

"Uh, yeah? When I decide to take something in, I tend to do a little research first. Was turning him blue supposed to get me to change my mind or something's?" Tony asks.

"No. Only to make sure you are well informed. I wish for this realm not to fall to chaos because one did not possess the necessary knowledge. Nor do I wish such harm to befall you because you accepted the offer of enslavement from such a creature," Odin explains.

"How can you possibly talk about someone you raised as a son like that's?" Tony challenges, his stomach twisting from the man's words.

"I may have raised him like a son, but he choose to sever that link. Not I. I am powerless to do any more than accept it," Odin replies.

"So that's it? You give up on him? Do you even care about what he went through? Do you have any concerns about how I may treat him? I could do anything to him. Beat him, cut him, burn him...and like you suggested earlier, I could bed him. In fact, I just might once you take your leave to hurry back to your precious throne," Tony tells him, his eyes meeting Odin's dead on.

"Stark..." Thor growls out, a storm suddenly developing outside.

"Thor, stand down!" Odin orders. The storm dissipates as quickly as it developed. "As for you Son of Stark, my concern only lies with you. Loki...is nothing to me," Odin replies.

"Really?" Tony questions before he crouches down beside Loki. He quickly grabs Loki by the chin and raises it. "Part your lips," he orders quietly. Loki obeys.

Suddenly Stark's lips are pressed against his, forcing him to close his eyes. He tenses when he feels Stark's tongue enter his mouth, stroking itself against his own.

What Loki doesn't see is that as Stark assaults his mouth, his eyes remain open and focused on the King of Asgard. He knows he shouldn't be doing this, challenging the mighty Allfather. But his attitude towards Loki has pissed him off. When Loki gags when his tongue goes a bit too far, Tony breaks the kiss and stands up. A bit of saliva trickles down from the corner of Loki's mouth but the trickster seems unaware of it. In fact, he seems to hardly be aware of anything as he stares at the ground. Tony and Odin stand there, looking each other dead in the eye. Thor takes a few steps.
forward, either to comfort his brother or cause Tony some pain, he isn't sure. But he is stopped when his father places a hand on his shoulder.

"It appears that this meeting has come to an end. I will take my leave now," Odin announces.

"About time. Oh and any further concerns about Loki, just send a message next time," Tony fires off.

Odin nods and turns to leave but stops. Without a word, he taps the stick again, this time a larger beam of light leaves it. Tony watches as Loki slowly changes back into his pale skin form. But that is not all he notices. The bruises that were starting to develop begin to fade. Cuts heal themselves closed. And Loki's left hand radiates with the light for a moment before it too fades. Tony is willing to bet that they will no longer need Bruce's assistance later.

"I have healed his wounds. So he may be of better use. Accept this as my apology for the unexpected visit," Odin tells him before leaving the room.

Tony could feel the heated gaze he was receiving from Thor. Slowly he looks over at his fellow Avenger. "I know we need to discuss a few things. But first, let me take care of Loki," Tony tells him.

"Take care of him? Like you just did?" Thor questions, his rage not at all hidden.

"No Thor. Not like that. Please, let take him out of here. Take him to his room," Tony asks, again being careful to choose his words. Thor says nothing to this and turns away.

Tony takes this as the consent he was asking for and crouches back down next to Loki. "Loki? It's over now. Let's go back to the bedroom, okay?" Tony asks quietly.

Loki nods his head, his eyes still having that far off look, the saliva drying at the corner of his mouth. When Stark stands up, Loki follows. When they leave the room, he doesn't look back at the man he once called brother. He enters the elevator after Stark and ride it up to their shared room in silence.

"You look a bit out of it there reindeer games. Maybe you should get some rest?" Tony suggests as he heads to the bedroom. Loki remains silent as he follows.

When Tony sits down on his bed, Loki makes his way to his own. A few minutes pass in silence before Tony clears his throat. "Listen, about kissing you like that in front of your adopted father...I maybe shouldn't have done that. I was just trying to piss the old coot off. I didn't like how he was talking about you. Father's...shouldn't talk about their sons like that," Tony tries to explain.

Loki doesn't respond to this. He remains perfectly still. He hears Tony let out a sigh.

"Well, I'm going to go talk to Thor. Hopefully without that hammer of his being involved. You had a crappy morning and afternoon. So get some rest. I'll be back later and we can talk more then, okay?" Tony offers. He doesn't like the way Loki is acting. Guilt is eating away at him. Maybe that kiss was taking things much too far. He gets up and goes to the door. Giving Loki one more glance, he leaves to give the man some peace and quiet.

Loki doesn't move when he hears the door click. It's several minutes before he does move. And when he does, he stands up and looks over at Tony's bed. Tony's voice repeats itself over and over in his thoughts. 'I could bed him. In fact, I just might once you take your leave.' His throat tightens as he looks over the bed. He feels himself being torn apart inside. He feels both fear and...hopefulness. He's afraid of Stark using him like those agents but he is also curious about what Stark's touches will be like. Would he come to hate it or will he find pleasure? Again he feels the desire to run. But there
is also another desire forming within. Taking a deep shaky breath, he undoes his pants. Slowly he steps out of them then does the same with his underwear. He stands there, his exposed body trembling as he stares at the bed. Finally, he crawls on top of it and stretches himself out. When Stark returns, he will be ready. Maybe his earlier behavior will be forgiven. Maybe Stark will listen to him concerning Amora and Doom. Maybe...

But before he could consider the next maybe, he falls asleep.
A couple of hours later finds Tony Stark in the elevator, heading to his now shared floor. The palm of his right hand is rubbing his forehead, a false attempt of relieving the headache that is forming. He wants only two things at this moment. One is a very strong drink. The other is a nap that he feels is well earned.

The conversation with Thor did not actually happen. He went to where the big guy was waiting. He managed to convince him to set the hammer down, telling the God of Thunder that he will get the suit and they will waste time fighting rather than talking if he doesn't. But no sooner did Thor put his mighty hammer down did Jarvis inform him that he was being summoned back to Shield's Hellicarrier for a meeting with Director Fury and the rest of the Avengers. Tony had asked Jarvis to tell him he's busy but Director Fury wasn't having it. So both of them left the tower, though not until after Tony gave Jarvis instructions concerning Loki.

That meeting did not go well. Apparently the Captain couldn't keep his mouth shut and had told Fury about an incident had taken place with Loki. The Director was all for sending his men to apprehend Loki and put him back where he belongs. Tony had to talk fast. So he did. He explained the condition he found the trickster in and what Loki had said had happened. Fury questioned the part where Loki turned down Doom's offer and asked how he could have said anything if he was wearing the muzzle like he should. Tony told him that he had taken it off because he needed to know what took place, while giving the director a 'duh' expression.

The fun part came when he got to Thor's surprise visit accompanied by his dad. Here he let the big guy take over in explaining what happened, enjoying the fact that Fury's wraith was no longer focused on him. He did get nervous when the story reached the part of him kissing Loki in a clear challenge to the King of Asgard, but Thor skipped over this part completely. Fury demanded to see footage of Loki being in his true form and so Tony complied and had Jarvis show him the bit where the change could be seen. This brought up a lot of questions. Thor did his best to answer them and Tony listened carefully. He learned about the Asgardian's view of Frost Giants and what Thor had done personally to them. They were seen as monsters. To be feared and killed. No wonder why Loki looked so upset when he looked at Tony.
There was a lot of chatter after that. Fury wanted Loki to be brought in. To answer a few questions of course. He also demanded that a complete examination be done on Loki. Steve questioned the security of the tower which greatly offended Tony. Natasha agreed that Loki needs to be questioned more thoroughly. Clint not surprisingly seconded that. Thankfully Bruce was the one that suggested that there was no need to go to the trouble of dragging Loki all the way to the Helcarrier for these things. He pointed out that Loki can be questioned at the tower, a feed could be sent straight to the Helcarrier. As for the examination, he could do that too at the tower and would of course send the results to the director. And Tony could work on the necessary upgrades on the tower's security. If needed, a tracking device could be placed on Loki. This suggestion had surprised Tony but he didn't argue against the idea. If it helps keep Loki at the tower, so be it.

Before Fury consented, he had some more questions for the billionaire philanthropist. Someone had let it slip that Loki offered himself to Stark as a slave. Seeing the smug look on Barton, he didn't need to make a second guess as to who. He expected Fury to go off on the idea of slavery, or at least that Loki chose him out of all the others to enslave himself to. Instead he expressed approval over the idea. He really liked the idea of Loki having to humble himself to a mere mortal. Ignoring the glare from Thor, Fury told him to make sure the fallen Prince of Asgard gets a daily dose of humility. Tony only nodded his head to this, biting his lip to keep from telling Fury to piss off.

Finally they were dismissed. Thor expressed that he still want to have that talk concerning his brother then a private chat with Loki. And Natasha, Clint, and Steve requested that he bring Loki to the lounge floor for their questioning. Bruce said that whenever he gets the chance, bring Loki to the medical floor for the examination. There was no rush there unlike the other requests. But they will all have to wait. Because he wants to talk with Loki about a few things first. Like the stupid stunt of kissing him in front of the Allfather. He really needs someone to hit him for that, he thinks bitterly. He remembers the strange look that had been on the God's face when he left him in their room. This time it wasn't a look of submission. It was more of a look of someone who was...not even there. It had bothered him during the long meeting. It was bothering him now. Why did Loki look like that? Was it his fault? Can he fix it? Or has too much damage been done to the tricksters? He swears to himself that from now on he will not push himself on the fallen God like that again. Doesn't matter if the King of Asgard returns and expresses his shitty views of the man he adopted. No, next time he will give the mighty Allfather a certain american hand gesture instead.

He is actually picturing this and smiling when he steps into his room. Then he comes to an abrupt halt. He blinks his eyes once, then a second time, more slowly. But what he is seeing isn't disappearing. There, on his bed, is a very naked Loki. A sleeping Loki, judging by the slow steady breathing, but very much naked.

Okay, that drink is a must now. As soon as he deals with the person sleeping on his bed. Not just a person but a former God. A naked former God who still has a body befitting a god. Specially...nope, going to stop there, he tells himself. Don't need any of those kinds of thoughts right now. He should be thankful that no one tagged along. Yeah, that could have made things very awkward. If not get him killed. Especially if Thor had been there, seeing his younger brother spread out on Tony's bed, in all his natural glory.

This gets him to move. He considers calling out to the trickster, especially asking just what the heck is going on, but decides against it. Loki has already been acting strange enough. No need to scare him. Instead, Tony approaches the bed and grabs one of the blankets covering it. He starts to pull it over Loki's lean body when the whole body jerks and twists. He hears the gasp and looks over to see Loki now looking at him.

He didn't need to guess at how Loki is feeling. There is no way he could miss the look of sheer
terror. He sighs and releases the blanket, raising his hands up.

"Just covering you up, nothing more. You looked...cold," Tony tells him, feeling embarrassed by the lame comment.

"Why?"

Tony raises an eyebrow. "Why...what?"

"Why are you covering me?" Loki asks as he sits up.

Tony watches Thor's younger brother shift himself till he is sitting on his knees, his head lowered. This movement has made the blanket fall away from Loki's body. Tony glances at the waist, hoping that the corner of the blanket still covered that part of him. Sadly, it didn't. He turns away before answering.

"Like I said. You looked cold. No need to risk you getting sick again," Tony answers.

"I...my apologies. I hadn't considered this," Loki replies quietly.

"Why are you on my bed?" Tony asks suddenly.

"I...was waiting for you."

"Okay. But why are you naked?" Tony questions, not sure if he really wants to hear the answer. If this had been any other day in the life of Tony Stark, he wouldn't bother asking why there is a naked man in his bed. He wouldn't even bat an eye that the said man was a god. But when the same man is that of a mentally broken trickster who also recently became his slave, well, that changes things up a bit.

"To...to make things...easier for you," Loki answers with a bit of hesitation.

"Easier for me? Not making any sense there Lokes," Tony points out.

Tony watches as the man before him swallows nervously, his hands gripping the blanket that had fallen off, his knuckles going white.

"You said...you said that as soon as they leave, you...you will...you will bed me," Loki tells him, his voice dropping to a whisper at the end.

Tony is about to ask him just what the heck he is talking about when it hits him. His little comment he made to the Allfather. 'I could do anything to him. Beat him, cut him, burn him...and like you suggested earlier, I could bed him. In fact, I just might once you take your leave to hurry back to your precious throne.' Yeah, that's what he had said. Right in front of Loki. Then he went and gave him that kiss. And not just any kiss either. A nice, heated kiss involving tongue no less. For a genius, he can be really dumb at times.

"Loki..." He starts to explain but stops. What is there to say at moments like this? What could he possibly say? Not without causing more damage anyway. But he needs to tell the man something. "About that...I have no intention of sleeping with you."

Okay, that came out way harsher than he intended. He looks back at Loki, to see how the man is reacting to this statement. There is that look of terror again.

"Did I...did I do something wrong?"
Tony sighs, rubbing his face. "No. No you didn't," he replies.

"Then...you are disgusted by me. Is it...is it because you saw how I really look?" Loki asks.

Tony opens his mouth to argue this but stops when he sees the tears that start to spill down the other man's face.

"Or is it because you remember how I was used by those agents? Or what those men at the cabin did? Am I truly ruined in your eyes? I...I will do anything. You can...you can hurt me if that will help. You don't need to worry..." Loki tries to encourage.


As he expected, Loki stops, closing his mouth, most likely biting his lip in an effort to keep silent. Tony didn't like where Loki's mind had been taking him. He needed Loki to understand something. Make something clear to the former God.

"Lay back down," Tony orders.

He watches Loki comply, laying back down, this time on his back. Tony approaches him, taking off his shirt in the process. Loki see's this and closes his eyes.

"Don't close your eyes," Tony tells him.

Tony watches those brilliant green eyes snap open at the order. They briefly look at him then try to search for somewhere else to look.

"Eyes on me," he orders as he sits down on the edge of the bed.

As he knew they would, Loki's green eyes slowly focused on him. By now, Loki is biting his lip without a doubt. Tony only hopes that he doesn't make it bleed. He already feels guilty about everything that has transpired. And he has a feeling that he will be having nightmares about those fear filled emerald eyes for the next few nights. Calling on his reserve, he crawls onto the bed and straddles himself across Loki's legs. He could feel the man's body trembling between his legs.

"Do you want me to do this?" Tony asks, his voice void of anything but seriousness.

"Ye-yes," Loki whispers. His mind is screaming no but he knows what Stark wants to hear. If Stark wants to believe that Loki is not only doing this willingly, but desires this, he can do that. "Please...please use me."

Tony says nothing to this. Instead he slowly brings his hand to Loki's face, as if to cradle it. Instinctively, Loki flinches away from the touch, closing his eyes despite Tony's earlier order not to.

"What did I say about lying to me?" Tony asks.

Loki opens his eyes when he feels Tony move off of him. Confused, he watches Stark get off the bed and retrieve his shirt. Once it is covering him again, Stark gathers Loki's clothes and goes through the closet for a new shirt. Loki watches the billionaire move about, waiting. For what he doesn't know. He can't even grasp why things have suddenly changed.

When Stark steps out of the closet, he looks down at Loki with an expression Loki can't determine. Stark holds the clothes out.

"Get dressed," comes the court order.
Loki accepts the clothing. He watches the Avenger turn, his back facing him. He looks at the clothing in his hands. He did something wrong. He must have. Maybe it was his response to Stark’s question. The man somehow knew the former God was lying. But could that have really been it? Had he told the truth...then an idea comes to him. Maybe that was exactly what he should have done. Spoke the truth. Stark must not want a willing partner.

He dresses himself with this thought repeating itself in his mind. He has failed yet again. And he knows he will be punished. But how could he have known what Stark truly wanted? The man often confuses him. The last punishment...hadn't really been a punishment. But it would seem that the man did want him this way. Yet when offered, he's refusing. Why? And what will the next punishment be like? Will it confuse him as well?

Once dressed, Loki crawls out of the bed and moves to the floor. Whatever Stark intends to do to punish him, he will face it. He crawls over to the man and kneels at his feet, awaiting for what will happen next.

"Loki, you don't need to do that," Tony tells the kneeling man with a sigh. When Loki doesn't move, he shakes his head and goes to the bed, sitting on the edge. He's not surprised when Loki follows, though still crawling along the floor, until he is at his side.

"You lied to me. You didn't, you don't want me to have sex with you, right? Tell me the truth this time," Tony tells him.

"No...I..."

"Loki, the truth," Tony repeats, this time a bit more stern than before.

"I...don't want that," Loki confesses, closing his eyes and preparing himself for the worse.

"That's okay. There's nothing wrong with that. But I need you to understand something," Tony tells him. He wishes the man would look up at him and he knows he could just order him to but there's been enough orders for now. "I may have a reputation for having a crazy sex life. But never has any of my partners been unwilling nor did they not want it. If I even think that it was that way, well, I would call it a night and sent them on their way. I may be many things but I am not that kind of guy."

Tony slides himself down off the bed and gently places his hand beneath Loki's chin and raises it until their eyes met.

"I also need you to understand that my choice not to force myself on you has nothing, and I mean nothing, to do with the fact you are really blue or what happened when you were at the Helcarrier or at the cabin. They don't come into play with this. Alright? That just isn't the way I roll. Understand?" He asks.

He smiles when Loki nods his head.

"Good. Now that that is settled, I want to apologize for saying otherwise earlier. And for kissing you that way. It was stupid on my part. Your supposed father just rubbed me the wrong way. It doesn't really excuse it but that's the truth. Personally, I get why you went bat shit crazy. Especially if you were raised by that guy." Tony rambles a bit. He swears he hears a tiny chuckle from the former God. "Regardless, I didn't mean to treat you that way."

Loki doesn't reply or respond in any way that Tony can see. In the end he can only hope that Loki accepts his apology.
"Now, I guess you did some things that you feel you should be punished for, right?" Tony asks, noticing Loki's body becoming stiff. "You did misbehave quite a bit today. So there will be more than one punishment. Sound fair?"

Loki gives a slow nod in acceptance.

"Good. Then let's start with the first one. Get back on the bed and lay down. Face that wall," Tony instructs, pointing to the opposite wall.

Loki glances up to see where Stark is pointing and follows the instruction. He wills himself still when he feels the blanket being pulled up, covering his body. Then he feels Stark lay down, pressing his body against his back, an arm wrapping around his chest. Again his body starts to tremble.

"Easy there Rudolph. We're just going to sleep. Nothing more. Your punishment is to act as my personal body pillow." Tony explains with an amused chuckle. How many other people can brag that they have used a Norse god as a body pillow?

He feels Loki slowly relax. He marvels at the level of trust Loki has been bestowing him. Sure, Loki is his personal slave but that doesn't mean he has to be so willing. If Loki had been forced to be his slave right after the whole Manhattan thing, well, Loki would make his life a living hell. No doubt about it.

True there were things they still need to work out. Or at least Tony does. But that can wait for two hours. In fact, he can't think of anything that can't wait until he gets up from his nap.

"Jarvis, make sure we're not disturbed for the next two hours. And set an alarm would ya?" He requests before gently squeezing Loki before closing his eyes.

"Of course sir," the AI replies.

Tony doesn't add anything further. He simply closes his eyes and gives in to his exhaustion.

Loki on the other hand does not fall asleep. He focuses on laying there as still as possible, taking in every small detail of this moment. Like the warmth coming from Stark's body that is soaking into his back despite the blanket separating them, the man's breath faintly touching the skin on the back of his neck, and the weight of Stark's arm across his body. He had expected to feel these sensations but not like this. No, he had envision a completely different means of these experiences.

He glances down as Stark drapes a leg over his own, the arm around him tightening for a moment. Then Stark becomes still. A few minutes past and the distinct sound of snoring reaches his ears. A sound he has gotten use to since sharing this room but not from hearing it this close. In a strange way, it's comforting. In fact, this position doesn't bother him in the slightest.

It should. He should not be enjoying this. It's a punishment. Punishments are not enjoyable. They are not suppose to be at least. So why is he enjoying this? He should find it uncomfortable. Degrading in some form. Humiliating. But he doesn't. Only comfort. And a sense of security. He wonders if he were to fall asleep, would he have nightmares? He doesn't believe he would. Stark...is becoming his...what? What is this man becoming to him?

Why isn't he fearing the man or hating his existence? Why is he not afraid of these future punishments? Yes, there is a fear of Stark hurting him. And he knows it will happen. It has to. But right now, he likes this. It may be a punishment. Yet it's also a gift. One he gets to enjoy for the next two hours.

He closes his eyes and takes in the small details of this moment he is coming to take pleasure in. Like
the warmth of Stark's body...
If not for Stark having his limbs wrapped around his body, Loki would have fallen out of bed when Jarvis's alarm went off two hours later. Apparently Stark's alarm is not one gentle quiet noise, but brash music loud enough to make one deaf. His body is instantly tense and he is doing everything in his power not to hyperventilate. He barely realized he had also fallen asleep yet again.

Stark, on the other hand, barely moved when the music started. He made a groan and muttered 'Jarvis' that had stopped the loud music. Instead of getting up, he presses himself a bit closer to Loki.

"Sleep well princess?" Tony asks, his voice slightly muffled.

"Yes sir," Loki answers, calming down though embarrassed about having fallen asleep when he was suppose to simply lay there for Stark's benefit, not his own.

"Hmm," Tony groans.

Loki feels Tony withdraw his leg and arm. Taking this opportunity, he rolls onto his back and glances over at Stark who stretches himself out.

"That isn't going to work for me," Tony suddenly announces.

Loki tenses as Stark himself up and looks down at Loki.

"Sir' makes me sound really old. Going to have to try something else," Stark tells him.

"I...I am sorry," Loki apologizes as he looks away in shame. He knows what Stark is expecting. It is fitting of their relationship now. But by not using that title, he had been showing just the small bit of pride he still has. The tiny bit that wouldn't die just yet. But it needs to and he knows this. So he closes his eyes and with an inner sigh of defeat, he adds, "Master."

There is a moment of silence that is disrupted by Stark's chuckling. Loki feels his face turn red in shame as he waits for the ensuing insults to start.

"Loki...that's not what I meant," Tony replies when he settles down. He looks at Loki and see's the red blush. He thinks briefly that it's nice to see a bit of color on those pale cheeks. Then he notices
the discomfort. "I appreciate how hard uttering that word must have been, Loki. But there is no need
for it to be repeated. Tony. I would like to hear you address me as Tony. Go ahead, say it."

Loki opens his eyes and looks disbelieving at Stark. Uttering that word was indeed humiliating. But
it would be in Stark's every right to make that word leave his lips as often as possible. After all, that
is what Stark is now. Even Odin addressed Stark as Loki's Master earlier when he ordered him to
look at the man while his true self had been exposed. Yet here that man is, not demanding to be
called Master, as in his right, but by his name as any other person. As if they haven't agreed to terms
different of his current station. Again he is left in utter confusion.

"Loki?"

"I...I can't," Loki replies quietly.

"Okay, I'll bite. Why not?" Tony questions, his eyebrow raised.

"Did you not agree to having me as...your slave? That is a...lower status than a common person. A
common person who could address you by your name plainly. That is not what I am now," Loki
explains.

Tony rubs the side of his face for a moment before looking back at Loki.

"That's a good argument. Not bad at all. Now here's mine. Yes, I agreed to your offer of you being
my slave. And that means you have to do as I say. So if I tell you not to call me Master or Sir, you
have to obey that order, right? And if I say you have to call me Tony, again, it's my understanding
that you have to follow that order as well. Right?" Tony questions.

Loki closes his eyes and nods his head.

"I call all the shots, right?" Tony asks.

Loki nods his head again.

"So despite the whole status thing, you're Loki and I'm Tony. No need for any other titles or
anything else. Just follow my orders and everything will be fine. It doesn't need to get any more
complicated than that," Tony finishes with another stretch. "Speaking of which, there is one you still
need to, you know, do," Tony adds, looking at Loki with a look that is clearly evident that he is
expecting something.

And Loki knows very well what it is that the billionaire is expecting. "Very well,...Tony," Loki
replies quietly.

"See? Ain't that better than the boring titles? Now that's squared away, I guess it's time to quit stalling
and get a few things taken care of today," Tony comments as he gets up out of bed.

Loki follows his example and leaves the bed. He quietly follows Tony out of the bedroom to the rest
of their shared floor.

"Okay, here's the deal. Steve, Natasha, and Clint have been waiting to question you. Don't worry,
you won't be alone with Clint. If he so much as touches you, call for Jarvis to get me. But I doubt
Steve will let that happen. He isn't too happy with Clint himself. Nor is Natasha. If it wasn't for her,
he'd been tossed out of here that night. Anyway, they want to question you about your little chat with
that Enchantress chick. Probably the chat with Doom as well. Just tell them the truth and you should
be fine. While you are doing that, I get to spend some one on one time with Thor. Who I also agreed
to let him have a private chat you. Again, if he hurts you, call Jarvis. With that one, you will have the
control. Meaning that if you don't like where the conversation is going, stop it. Leave. Simple as
that,” Tony tells him.

Loki nods. He doesn't like the idea of being questioned by either of the assassins. He's not sure of
Steve Rogers but so far the man has not given him any reason to be concern. Then there's his
brother. He remembers all too well how their last conversation went. As much as he wants to believe
that he will be in control of that conversation, he knows he will be powerless to do anything but face
whatever his brother has in mind. Whether it be more cruel comments, accusations, or a more hands
on interaction. He wishes that Tony would at least be there. But he doesn't express such desires.

"After that, you will be given a once over by Bruce. That should be the better part of a long
afternoon. I'm sure he'll want to check your former injuries, make sure they healed correctly. I would.
No offense but I don't trust the mighty Alfather as far as I can toss him," Tony tells him. "Sound
good?"

Loki nods his head. Being examined by Banner certainly does sound like the better part of this list of
activities. He knows the man will work quickly and will try not to cause him too much discomfort.
Most likely he will have that music playing which Loki does enjoy. But there is something that Stark
hasn't mentioned.

"And...my punishments?" Loki questions.

"Don't worry about that right now. Got enough to think about, don't you?" Tony asks as he pours
himself a shot of whiskey and downs it quickly.

"Yes, that is true," Loki agrees quietly.

"Okay, so let's go and meet with Steve and the gang."

Ten minutes later, Loki is sitting on the corner of a long black couch, sitting on the edge with his
hands gripping his knees and his gaze on the floor. To his left sits the Black Widow, across from him
is the legendary Captain, wearing a pair of dark tinted sunglasses, and standing behind him is Barton.
He listens to the quiet footsteps of Barton as he paces behind Steve, to Loki, it sounds like the pacing
of a restless tiger that sorely wants to ounce upon it's pray.

He has already shared the events of what happened when Amora had showed up at the tower. Now
the others were boring this information and forming their questions. Loki hopes that someone will
soon start this part, for he feels his nerves growing thin with every step Barton takes.

"What information do you have that could be useful to Victor?" Natasha asks.

"I...I am not sure what information he wants in particularly," Loki answers.

"Give us some examples then," Barton tells him, smirking at the given order that seems to have gone
 unnoticed by his teammates.

"I have knowledge of various old forms of magik. Spells that could very well wreck havoc on this
realm. I also have knowledge of various ways one could enter Asgard without detection. Where
powerful relics dwell. Of those who he may wish to ally himself with. And...certain weaknesses of
those who would try to challenge him. I can also help in making any plans of his be more likely to
succeed," Loki lists, feeling himself becoming more vulnerable with every sentence. He is basically
listing the reasons he should be locked away despite not having his powers.

"That makes sense why Victor wants you. But if that's all he wants, why does he keep making you
offers? I mean, why doesn't he kidnap you? He's done it in the past. He certainly doesn't hesitate in
"I don't know. Perhaps...he believes that if I was to be forced, I would betray him," Loki offers.

"Who would ever suspect you of that?" Barton questions with a fake tone of surprise.

"Amora said that you were to serve as a message. What is that message?" Natasha asks.

"She mentioned that Stark will no longer feel untouchable in his fortress. He will be distracted now."

"He already is," Barton comments.

"Why would she say something like this in front of you?" Natasha continues.

"She...she said it didn't matter what she said. None of you would believe me," Loki tells them quietly.

The three members exchange glances at this, then look at the former God before them.

"Loki, is there anything you can tell us so we know we can believe what you have told us so far?" Steve asks.

Meanwhile, Tony is watching Loki's brother pace before him. The hammer sits on the coffee table, at the moment being ignored. But from experience, he knows Thor can summon it to his hand and swing it within seconds. He had just explained in detail about the afternoon in which Loki offered himself up as Tony's slave. He thought of continuing on but a distant rumble made him shut up.

After a few minutes, Thor stops.

"He offered? You in no way coerced him into this?" Thor asks as he turns to look out the window.

"Like I said big guy, he offered. And for the record, I didn't accept right off the bat. I actually called Pepper and...kinda went for a drink. I needed a drink after that, do you understands?" Tony asks.

"What are you trying to tell me?"

"That the idea of Loki being my slave freaked me out. I honestly thought he was toying with me at first. But when I realizes he was serious, I didn't know what to do. So I went for a drink. And talked to Steve and Bruce about it," Tony explains.

"You spoke to them about this matter?" Thor asks, turning back to look at Tony with an unsure expression.

"Yeah I did. Natasha also showed up and also gave her input. It was because of them that I decided to accept Loki's offer."

"I...can not believe they would encourage such a thing. I believed they were honorable," Thor comments sadly.

"They are. Specially Steve and Bruce. Listen Thor, the reason I accepted Loki's offer is because I decided to help him. I want to help him," Tony admits.

"How does enslaving my brother help him?" Thor growls out.

"Because he's afraid of himself," Tony answers.
"Afraid?" Thor repeats, the anger quickly fading.

"He told me that everything he touches, he destroys. That all he has done is wrought chaos, destruction, and death. He told me this before begging me to punish him. Punish him! He said he needed me not to show him any leniency. That he needs to be corrected. Do you understand? He believes that if left to his own devices, he is doomed to be the bad guy. So he wants someone to stop him from doing so. By ruling over him. Telling him what to do," Tony explains.

"But that's not true! He may have strayed but there's still hope for him!" Thor argues.

"Really? Because lately you sounded that there isn't any. In fact, to me it sounds like you gave up on him. Like your father has," Tony tosses back, crossing his arms.

"You do not understand Stark. He has done many things that have broken my father's heart. My heart. And until recently, it seemed as if he cared little to change his ways. What could we have done?" Thor asks.

"Forgive him. That's just off the top of my head. Talking to him is another idea," Tony replies.

"I have. More than you will ever know."

The room is silent for a few more minutes as Thor stares out to the city and Tony runs a hand through his short hair, his eyes watching the hammer.

"How do you intend to treat him? How do you intend...to use him?" Thor questions.

"I'm not hurting him if that is what you are talking about. Haven't laid a hand on him. Well, actually I did once. But he was freaking out and he could of hurt himself. This was when he heard of your arrival with dear old dad," Tony adds quickly.

"Will you...do you plan to abuse him further?"

"Not unless I have to," Tony states firmly.

"And what of these punishments he...he begged for?"

"I have been thinking of things that he may not be comfortable with but would really help him out in the long run. It's my plan with this whole enslavement thing. As I said I want to help your brother. Build him up into someone he doesn't have to be afraid of. Show him that there can be some good in him. That he doesn't need to feel like he can only live in someone's shadow. That he can be someone he can be proud of, rather than be afraid of," Tony answers as he looks up to meet Thor's gaze. "And if you have a problem with that, well, you can just..."

Back on the lounge floor, Steve is staring in disbelief at their former enemy through the borrowed sunglasses. He had heard of Loki doing this with Tony and Thor. But he had his doubts about the details. Well, really he doubted only one detail. After what he witnessed at Stuttgart, it just didn't make sense. Even with him now seeing it, it still doesn't make sense.

Nor did it make sense that Barton of all people was the one who suggested this. When he had asked if he could tell them something that would make it easier to believe him, he had expected only a verbal response. Most likely a 'no'. Or even more fitting to Loki's personality, an insult. But that wasn't what he got. Instead he told them that Tony had ordered him to tell the truth.

This is when Barton jumped in, challenging Loki's willingness to comply. At first, he had agreed with Clint. Yes, Tony may have ordered Loki to tell the truth, but how do they know he is actually
obeying that order? They have nothing more to go on than his word since something blocked Jarvis's scanners. And Loki is known as the God of Mischief. Of lies. He had tried to play them once before, get them so focused on one another that they could not possibly overcome their differences and fight him. It failed but still, he tried. So how were they to know for sure he wasn't trying something this time? And in doing so, aiding Victor Von Doom?

But when Barton demanded that Loki show his willingness to comply, Steve had to turn to the archer assassin, to see if he had really said that. He hadn't been the only one in disbelief. Natasha had quickly gotten up and said something in Russian to Barton. 'Not the time' he believe it was.

And that's when Loki did it. He had slid himself off the couch and onto the floor. He put himself into the perfect kneeling position, his head low, and asked what they would order him to do. It's the same position he is in now. Steve has no doubts that he is waiting for their commands. Nor does he have any doubts he will carry them out. After everything he has seen since he helped Banner and Tony get Loki away from Shield the first time, he comes to terms with Loki's current condition. The man before him is no longer a threat. And he benefits nothing from lying to them now.


The room falls silent after Clint makes his demands. He can hear Natasha begin to whisper to Clint when Loki speaks up.

"I am sorry for those things. For all the things I have done. The lives I have ruined. The lives I have ended. The destruction and chaos. For nearly destroying this realm in my moment of madness. And..." Loki pauses and turns his head towards the direction of Natasha without lifting it, "I do apologize for the insult Agent Romanoff."

It doesn't happen often. In fact, Steve can't think of a single time where a super villain has verbally apologized for his crimes. And if any of them would, he doubt they would sound so sincere. He doesn't know how to even react to this. Where does he even begin?

"Maybe you should crawl over to her and lick her boots, to show how sincere you are," Clint sneers.

"Okay that's..." Steve cuts in as he stands up. He stops when he see's Loki move. It takes him a moment to acknowledge that the man who once was Earth's greatest threat, is actually crawling along the floor towards Romanoff. Before he can act, Natasha crouches down and grabs Loki firmly by the shoulders before he could possibly carry out Clint's latest order. He finds himself being very grateful for Natasha's quick reflexes and fast thinking at this moment. He doesn't want to even think about what he would have witnessed had she not acted.

"Stop Loki. That's enough," she tells the crawling man as firmly as she is holding his shoulders.

Loki nods and sits on his knees, his hands resting in his lap. Again he is waiting.

"I believe him," Steve states.

Five floors above them, Tony is standing besides Thor, both looking out at the view of the city. Tony has just shared his plan concerning helping Loki and is now waiting for Thor's approval or disapproval.

"You...believe this is the path that will help him?" Thor finally asks.

"There's no guarantee that it'll work, but yeah, I think so," Tony replies.
"It is clever," Thor concedes. "Loki would often recognize such ploys but with his current state of mind..."

"If he does realize what I'm up to, then that's just a sign that he is improving. That's the goal isn't it?" Tony questions.

Thor sighs. "Alright. I will not stand in your way concerning my brother. But I warn you, any more incidents like the one witnessed earlier..." Thor warns.

"Not going to be any more incidents like that, I swear. I'll be a perfect gentleman to your dear little brother," Tony promises, even raising his hand and making a gesture. "Not sure if this is the boys out gesture or the Vulcan one but either way, it counts."

Thor doesn't respond to this puzzling statement. Instead he remains silent and in thought.

Tony isn't surprised. It seems that despite his earlier attitude, Thor still cares for Loki. He had only tried to put on the same bitter mask of anger and rage that Loki himself wears when concerning Thor. If he had any doubts about Thor's feelings, they were dismissed as soon as Thor speaks up again.

"Loki may appear to be a monster due to his true heritage. But that couldn't be further from the truth. I...have treated him wrongly since Father has decreed his banishment. I have done so not out of ill will to him but because I trusted in our father's judgement. I...wish only for my brother to find his way again," Thor shares quietly.

"That's something you really need to tell him. You don't need to explain anything to me. But you owe him an explanation. And concerning your dad," Tony continues, ignoring the threatening look he is receiving from Thor, "he might be the mighty Alfather but that doesn't mean he isn't capable of making mistakes. And when it comes to Loki, I think he's made plenty."

"Our father still loves him," Thor replies, though not with much certainty.

"Whatever you want to believe Point Break. Just know that Loki is in good hands," Tony replies.

"Yes, I believe he is. Do you suppose the others are done questioning him?" Thor asks.

"Jarvis?"

"It appears that Mr. Rogers and company have finished with their interrogation with Mr. Laufyson and are now waiting for him to be summoned by Mr. Odinson," Jarvis reports.

"Send him up. Meanwhile, I need to see if I can figure out how to prevent further magical interferences from happening within my tower. And Thor," Tony stops as he is about to leave for his workshop, "don't hurt him. I don't like people damaging my property."

Before Thor can say anything in response to his comment, Tony leaves by taking the stairs just as the elevator begins to make it's way to their floor. Thor tries not to watch the elevator doors, instead he keeps his back to them. But he watches the reflection on the glass. His mind races with what he is going to say to Loki. Yet he has no idea where to start.

He watches the doors open and he holds his breath as Loki leaves the elevator. His brother moves silently across the floor towards him, stopping what Loki must believe to be a safe distance from him. Thor looks out to the city again. He knows he is stalling but he still hasn't decided on where to start. But he has to say something.
"It is amazing how these people can recover so quickly from chaos," Thor comments. "Hours ago fear was in the very air. Yet somehow they have already moved on. The event already nothing more than a mere memory to them."

He turns to face his younger brother. Loki is not meeting his gaze but seems to be looking at the view himself.

"At moments like these, I think these people are stronger than the bravest warriors of Asgard. I admire their ability to continue to move forward, despite whatever unpleasantness they experience in their short lives. It's a quality I wish to someday possess myself," Thor continues as he slowly begins to approach his brother.

He is aware of the half step back Loki takes before going still. His eyes still look past him to the window but he knows they also watch his every movement. He stops when there is only a foot of space between them.

"They also have another impressive quality. Do you know of what I speak of?" Thor asks.

"No. What...might that be?" Loki asks quietly, slowly turning his gaze to Thor.

"Their ability to forgive even the greatest insult, greatest harm they are forced to suffer. Even if one breaks their very heart, they can still forgive that very person," Thor tells him.

"That is an impressive ability. If only...we could be more like them," Loki replies.

"I see no reason why we can not be more like them in this regard. We could...perhaps try. Loki, would you forgive for how I have made you suffer since you arrived here? And for the wrong I have done unto you in the past? Is such a thing even possible?" Thor asks.

Loki finally raises his eyes to Thor's face. He feels a moment of panic when his eyes meet his brother's steel blue ones. But he quickly quells it, reminding himself that this is the Thor he has always known. That those blue eyes are not the eyes of someone under the Other's influence but one who is connected to the very sky above them. That he has seen those eyes be like a clear summer day or as stormy as the foulest storm. Eyes that are unable to conceal themselves from whatever emotion Thor is feeling at any moment. Eyes that right now show a desperation to make things right between them.

"Yes," he hears himself answering, "yes, it has already been given...brother. It is you forgiving me that is not poss..."

Before he could finish his statement, his arm is seizes and he is pulled forward till he crashes into Thor's armored breastplate. He tries to step back but thick arms wrap around his body, ensnaring him to the spot.

"Of course it is brother. Of course it is," Thor tells him quietly as he squeezes him quickly before stepping back to give Loki a bit of breathing room though his hands place themselves firmly on Loki's shoulders.

Loki sees the grin form on his brother's face. It reminds him of how his brother would smile after they had just fought over something silly. It didn't matter if they were covered in bruises, blood dripping from their noses. It didn't matter who was wrong. Thor in the end would simply grin and go about his way as if the fight never happened. He knows that Thor would want nothing more for that to happen at this moment. And Loki isn't at all surprised to find himself wanting the same thing.

"So how is your Miss Jane?" Loki asks, enjoying how Thor's expression lightens up even more.
He isn't the only one enjoying this interaction. Tony turns off the holoscreen, content with what he saw. He wasn't spying. He was just making sure Loki was okay. Thor oils be the one person to forget that Loki is without his Godhood and accidentally hurt him by giving him a bear hug. Or a pat on the back. He totally is not spying.

"Would you like me to continue giving you minute by minute reports concerning Mr. Laufyson?" Jarvis asks.

Tony groans at this. Okay, maybe he was spying. But really, it was for Loki's best interest.

"No Jarvis, that will not be necessary. Just let me know when he meets with Bruce," he replies.

"Very well Sir," Jarvis replies.

Tony sighs and looks back at the Stark pad that has the readings of the Enchantresses visit. Or it would if there were any readings. But there isn't. And Tony is stumped. How can he do any figuration if he doesn't have any figures to play with? To distract himself from this, he had been watching Loki. But even Loki needs some privacy. So he can't use Loki as a distraction.

Or can he? He does still need to come up with Loki's punishments. And to organize some new responsibilities. Things that he is sure will help Loki. He swipes the screen on his data pad and and open his email.

He hits play on a recording and listens to Bruce's comments concerning his opinion on Loki's state of mind and the few suggestions he makes. Everyone seems to have some advice concerning the falling God. And for once Tony plans to actually listen to it. Starting with this evening. Tony breaks into a smile. He might not be able to figure out the magical interference problem but he certainly help fix a broken deity.

"Jarvis, here are some new orders..."
Chapter 34

Chapter Notes

This is more of a filler chapter, showing what kind of punishments Tony will have in store (don't worry, I'm sure there will be more 'sweet' punishments) for Loki and finally getting rid of the 'Other's' influence. Next chapter will have a grand idea from Tony concerning our little God of Mischief. Care to make any guesses?

A few hours later, Loki is out of breath. He clutches the railing of the stairs as he struggles to catch his breath.

"Come on Reindeer Games! You can do it!" Tony's voice rang out.

Loki looks up. He tries to guess which floor Tony is on. After he came out of the medical floor after Dr. Banner did his examination, Tony's robotic servant had told him that there was a video message from Tony for him. Tony told him that it's time for one of his punishments. He directed him to the emergency stairway. Somewhere, on one of the floors, Stark is sitting and waiting for him. He was expected to run up the stairs until he finds him. But first he had to go down to the first floor.

He thought it wouldn't be too bad at first. But now he is covered in sweat. He has no idea how many floors he has climbed already. So far though, he hasn't found him.

He takes in a deep breath, rubbing his aching sides before he starts running again. He's a bit afraid though he won't admit it. This is only the first of his punishments. What are the other ones going to be like? Apparently the gentle, almost kind, punishments are over.

"Run Loki, run," Tony shouts.

Loki shakes his head and pushes himself onward. As he moves up the stairs, he thinks about how this punishment would be nothing if he at least still had his Godhood. He wouldn't have to stop every few floors to catch his breath. He wouldn't even have broken into a sweat. This is what makes this punishment embarrassing for him. It is taking his weakness and rubbing it in his face. But he won't say anything against it. He can't. He deserves it.

Before he can muse about this further, he feels his foot slip on the next step up. Startled, he cries out and grabs the railing in an effort to stop him from falling.

"Loki!" He hears Tony shout his name, this time sounding much closer than ever before.

He looks up and see's Tony running down to the landing before him. He is wearing a panic filled expression on his face. "Good god! Don't scare me like that! I thought you fell over the railing or something! We are forty floors up so believe me, it would hurt. A lot!" Tony scolds.

"I...I am sorry. My foot slipped. Forty...forty floors?" Loki repeats in disbelief.

"Huh? Oh, yeah. Almost forty five. Where I was sitting and waiting for you. You look like you could use a shower," Tony comments with a smile.

Loki feels his face burn with embarrassment. Embarrassed because he failed in his punishment and
not only that but he is obviously a mess if Tony's comment is any indication. He nods weakly.

"Come on, we'll take the elevator the rest of the way," Tony tells him as he walks over to the door on the landing and holds it open.

Looking away, he walks up the last few steps and through the door Tony is holding open. He stops a few steps inside and waits for Tony. Tony stretches his arms as he walks past, leading Loki to the elevator. He won't tell Loki that he originally started waiting on the twentieth floor. When Loki made it to the tenth, he moved up ten more. He did the same when Loki made it to the twentieth floor. He didn't do this to be cruel. He wanted to show Loki that he isn't as weak as he believes he is. One of the many notes Bruce had sent him.

But before he reached the fiftieth floor himself, he heard Loki cry out. And the fact that it scared the dickens out of him is no exaggeration. He glances over at Loki once they are in the elevator. The trickster looks very much...defeated. Tony thinks about the day they had. The day Loki had. It had been a long day. And he did run forty plus some floors. The man could use a break. But first there is something he needs to do. And he needs Loki.

"Cheer up Rudolph. You look like someone ran over your dog. You did really well with the running. It's certainly something I can't do. Not without having a heart attack," he offers in an attempt to get the former God to brighten up a little.

But Loki continues to look away, his shoulders hunched. Before he could make another attempt, the elevator door opens. Tony steps out with Loki following behind him. He moves about his lab, glancing back to see the uncertainty in Loki's eyes.

"Thought we were going to our floor, didn't you?" Tony asks. "We will. But first there is something I have to check. And I needed you. Please, come over here." He waves Loki over to the workbench he is standing at.

Loki feels his skin break out in goosebumps. Something doesn't feel right about Tony's attitude. But he will not refuse. So he walks over slowly.

"Hold out your hand, palm up," Tony instructs.

Loki holds his hand out, turning it as Tony had instructed. He flinches when Tony grabs his lower arm firmly, pressing a device to his wrist. When it goes off, he lets out a hiss of pain and jerks his arm away.

"Sorry. I know it stings. So you know, I injected a type of nano bytes into you. Think of them as tiny robots like Dum-E, the size of dust particles. They perform a few different functions. One, they are connecting to Jarvis as we speak. So in a way, Jarvis will always be able to detect your location," Tony explains.

"You will be tracking me then," Loki replies, feeling a little depressed. He knows that no one trusts him, so he had expected this to happen. But he had been foolishly entertaining the idea that maybe, Tony will at least tell him before committing the action. Not to give him a choice but to treat him as something other than...but Loki fails to find the word. Too many fit his current position. This thought doesn't help his depression.

"Yes. It's nothing against you, as far as I'm concerned, it's really unnecessary. But I told Fury it will be done. Jarvis is connected to their system so they are also tracking you. Should get them off our backs for awhile. Another function of those nano bytes is that they will give me direct readings on your body. Like this," Tony continues before picking up a electronic pad and enters some
commands.

Before them a light flickers before displaying a hologram image of a body. On the side there is a
display of statistics, the name being Loki Laufyson.

"These are your readings there. Your body temperature, heart rate, basic stuff mostly. There's
something though I expect to find not so normal," he shares as he inputs some commands.

"You are referring to...my...origins?" Loki asks, his face burning in shame. He should have known
that Tony still had some interest in the fact that he is a Frost Giant, not an Asgardian like Thor. He
wonders if now he will not only be Tony's slave but also serve as a test subject of sorts. To him, it's
the only explanation that makes sense of his situation.

"Actually no. I'm looking for signs of radiation poisoning," Tony answers.

"Poisoning?"

"Yup. From your contact with the tesseract. And/or the glow stick of destiny. Remember when you
were first brought onto the Hellicarrier, after the whole kneeling thing in Germany?"

"I remember..." Loki replies though cautiously.

"Yeah well, then you remember seeing Dr. Banner there. And how you were going to unleash the
Hulk and all that?"

"Y-yes."

"But do you know why Bruce was there?" Tony asks, looking up to meet Loki's gaze.

"No. I...I did not care. I only knew he would be," Loki answers, looking away from Tony's gaze.

"He was there because we learned that the tesseract emits a type of radiation. One that could be
tracked down if we find a high enough radiation spike. The radiation was not all that different from
that of Gamma radiation. Something that Bruce is an expert with. With me so far?" Tony asks.

"Yes. Your Shield was using him to find where I had taken the tesseract."

"Exactly. Well, with any kind of radioactive material, it can and often will, be absorbed into a
person's system. That's never a good thing. I think that's what happened to you. And if so, then it's
possible that it happened to Barton."

"I don't understand," Loki admits.

"I think the radiation poisoning is the 'Other's' doorway to influence your mind. It's like this. Here on
in this realm, there are diseases that make a person weaker and more susceptible to other illnesses.
Like they create an open door policy for all other nasty little infections to wreck havoc in your
system."

"So you believe...this radiation...is what connects him to me?" Loki asks.

"That's the idea. If so, well, most radiation poisoning can be treated as long as the exposure hasn't
been too long. Or before any serious side effects develop. So far, it seems only having that creep in
your head would be the only side effect you've experienced, right?" Tony asks.

Loki can only nod his head. He wants to know what Tony means by 'too long'. He had been near
both the tesseract and the staff for several days if not weeks. He tries to figure out how long exactly
but no matter how hard he tries, his memories only seem to blur the moment the staff had been placed in his hands.

"You alright Lokes? I know it's a bit much to take in," Tony asks, not liking the distant look in Loki's emerald eyes.

"Yes, I am well. Sorry, I...was lost in thought," Loki answers, turning his focus on the holo image of his body. Suddenly he spots a blue glow at the base of his skull, the same time he gets a painful headache, bringing him to his knees.

"Loki! Hang on!" Tony shouts, as he tosses the pad aside and goes to Loki's side. "It's okay. The nano bytes found the main source of the poisoning. The last thing they are programmed to do is diagnose it and hopefully treat it. Because of it's location, it's going to hurt. But it'll be over in a few minutes, okay? So hang on. Take my hand, it'll be okay. Once it's cured, he'll never use you again. He won't be able to," Tony tells him as he grabs Loki's hand and rubs Loki's back.

It's hard for Loki to focus on Tony's words. The base of his skull feels as if it's on fire and sending out waves of pain throughout the rest of him. Tears leave his eyes as he closes them tightly, trying desperately to wait this out. He feels something squeeze his hand and he tries to squeeze it back. He feels the pain mount and he is sure he is on the verge of passing out when it slowly decreases. A few minutes pass and the pain slowly becomes nothing more than a dull ache.

Tony feels Loki relax and he turns to the holo display. The blue light that displayed the radiation is slowly fading away. At first it was large, the size of Thor's fist but now it is only a few spots no bigger than quarters. A few minutes later they will be gone completely.

"Congratulations Loki. You no longer have radiation poisoning. And better yet, that 'other' bastard can't play in your head anymore," Tony tells him. He feels Loki lean into him and he sighs. "I'm really sorry Loki. I should have prepared you a bit."

"No...don't be sorry. It's worth it. It's...worth it," Loki replies before slowly straightening up, wiping his face.

"Well, that's enough excitement for one day. Ready to call it a day?" He asks.

Loki nods which makes him light headed. He tries to ignore it and stand up but almost falls when Tony steadies him.

"Yeah, I think I may have pushed you a little too much today. My bad. Come on, lean against me and we'll go to our room. Where you will spend the rest of the day doing as little as possible. That's an order by the way," Tony tells him as he helps him walk to the elevator. He had planned to load up his injection gun and give Barton a little surprise. But he can do that later. Right now he has a thoroughly worn out former God to take care of.

A few hours later finds Loki laying out on the couch, his head resting on Tony's lap. He had tried to sit at his feet like before but Tony wasn't having it, instead he was ordered up on the couch. A movie plays in the background but neither are really watching it. Instead, Tony is reading some paperwork while he runs his free hand through Loki's hair. Loki is enjoying the feeling though trying to keep himself awake.

"So, before the episode at the workshop, how was your day? How about you start with the talk you had with our favorite assassins and boy wonder?" Tony asks, wanting to hear Loki speak for he had been quiet since they left the workshop.
"It...was as expected. They asked what I could offer Doom. About Amora's message. And...I apologized to them. For the past," Loki tells him quietly.

Tony's hand pauses for a moment before going back to it's previous motion. "Did they accept it?"

"I...believe so. At least Agent Romanoff and Mr. Steve Rogers," Loki answers.


The room falls silent, neither really wanting to say anything more. Tony already knows how things went with Thor and is currently reading over Bruce's notes from the medical examination of Loki. For a frost giant, his anatomy is not all that different from theirs, no more than Thor's is. There's one heart, one brain, one pair of lungs, a stomach and so forth. Only difference so far is that it seems his body tempt runs a little cooler than their's but that is it.

He hears something and looks down from the papers. He smiles at seeing Loki has fallen asleep. He quietly orders Jarvis to turn down the volume on the movie and dim the lights as he turned on the often unused reading lamp. The trickster has had a one long day and as far as he is concerned, he has earned a few hours of sleep. Looking at the dull paperwork in hand, he considers if he too should take a small cat nap.
Tony's eyes shoot open. At first he wants to get up and run into the workshop. He has just had a brilliant idea. And he doesn't want to waste a second. But then he feels the weight on his lap. He looks down and smiles at seeing Loki still fast asleep. He runs a hand through his black hair, not receiving even the smallest sign of stirring.

He sighs at his dilemma. He could stay like this for a bit longer. Let his mind work out the kinks of his idea while he enjoys this. Or he gets up and puts this idea into action, making it a reality rather than a idea from a dream.

"No rest for the wary. Unless you happen to be a god, former or otherwise," he whispers quietly.

He slides himself slowly out from under Loki, placing a couch pillow under his head. Satisfied, he heads to the elevator.

A few hours later, Loki stirs. Judging by the view outside the windows, it is early morning. Sitting up, he muffles a yawn then stretches his arms. Then he freezes. He looks around again and realizes he is not in his room. Nor is he on his bed.

He slowly gets up and again looks around. No sign of Tony being up and about. He moves to the hallway, finding the bathroom door open, eliminating another possible location. So he opens the bedroom door, trying to open it as quietly as he can. He looks in and finds that Tony is not there either.

He looks around for some clue of Tony, finding none, he sits down on the edge of the bed. He takes a deep breath then looks towards the ceiling.

"Jarvis?" He says quietly, not sure if it will even respond to him.

"Can I be of service Mr. Laufyson?" The AI asks.

"Umm...where is Stark?" He asks, expecting to be told that this information is unavailable to him.

"He has buried himself in a new project in his workshop. Do you wish to have me summon him for you?"
"No! I mean, no, that's not necessary. Did he leave you any particular instructions for me?" Loki asks. He wonders if the punishments are behind him yet or there will be more to come later today when Tony remembers him.

"None sir," the AI replies dutifully.

"I see. Thank you," he replies.

So Tony has left him without any instructions for the moment. But that doesn't mean the man doesn't have expectations of him. He knows that yesterday he never got to cleaning the floors. In fact, he's fallen behind them altogether. Deciding to correct this error, he changes his clothes and decides to get to work.

An hour later he is washing the dishes left on the third floor of the ten he is responsible for. He could tell that no one had actually stayed here for the bedrooms were immaculate. He guesses that this room had been used for a long game of cards for he had picked up several up from the floor and neatly stacked them on the card table. He had finished gathering beer bottles and soda cans just a few minutes before.

Despite this being work he would never have done before, because it was not fitting for a god to lower himself to such tedious tasks, he rather enjoys it. They are simple acts that build up for one simple goal. There is no need for tricks or deceit to accomplish the desired goal. Praise can be awarded easily.

If he works hard, he has no doubt that his efforts will be noticed. He won't be brushed to the side. To the shadows. Even if the other Avengers pay him no mind, at least Tony will.

Suddenly he recalls the first punishment he received. A hand raises to his lips. That kiss was suppose to humiliate him. He should feel disgusted by the act. Dreading the idea of it happening again. Yet he doesn't. Any time he has tried to kiss Tony, he was stopped. But what if he tried again? Or waited until he was asleep? Surely any punishment would be worth it...

The sound of shattering glass snaps him out of his thoughts. He looks down in surprise by his feet. There are the remains of a glass bowl that had slipped from his hands. He steps back when suddenly, someone is right behind him. Someone with a knife held tight against his throat.

"Well, look at this. Breaking the dishes instead of washing them?" Barton asks in his ear.

"No. It slipped," Loki replies, torn between trying to look at the knife or the man holding it.

"Sure it did. You just have a tendency to break everything you touch, don't you Loki?" Barton replies.

"Why are you here? This isn't your floor. And I haven't done anything wrong."

"Look again Loki. Besides, we never finished our earlier sessions, did we? I've been thinking about how to take care of all those names in one fell swoop. Want to know what I came up with?"

Loki starts to shake his head but stops when he feels the knife cut the skin on his neck.

"Oh yes you do. Because you survive this, I'll grant ya a clean slate. At least for the Manhattan event. You see, no matter what I did to you, you took it without even really breaking down. Yes, there would be a few tears and some pleading but...it wasn't enough. Never was. Then I remember how you looked when you came out of that cell after those agents had some fun with you. Anyone can see how deeply that affected you. Shattered that whole 'I'm a God' image you had. We liked
seeing you like that. How about we bring you back down to that level, shall we?" Barton suggests.

"N-n-no! You said...you said you would not..." Loki tries to get the words out.

"And I won't. I have no intention of sticking any part of me in you. Who knows what diseases you have. No, what I have in mind is using this," Barton tells him, bringing an item around from his other side, holding it in front of his face.

Loki looks at what appears to be a simple arrow. But as he looks at the tip, his eyes widen. He remembers this particular arrow. During the attack, Barton had fired at him with one of these. He had caught it and thought the archer was so foolish in his attempt. Then it had exploded. Yes, he knows this arrow well.

"You...you can't..."

"I can't be serious? Oh trust me, I am. So, let's get to it. Undo your pants. Pull them down to your knees. Go on unless you want me to set this off. I highly doubt you will get up so quickly from this as you did last time," Barton orders, bringing the arrow closer.

Hating himself for being in this position, he complies, closing his eyes as he does so.

"Good. No wonder why Tony has you as a slave. You obey orders really well. Now how about you suck on it. Unless you want it to enter you dry."

Loki tries to move his head away as Barton presses the explosive arrow to his lips. He is grabbing the kitchen counter for support, his legs already feeling weak. Seeing that there is no other choice, he starts to part his lips.

"Suck on this Barton," a voice says firmly from behind them.

Barton spins around, withdrawing the knife and arrow from Loki. As he does this, Tony presses a familiar injection gun to Barton's exposed throat and pulls the trigger. He jerks away, backing into Loki with a hiss of pain. He drops the knife and places that hand to his neck.

"What did you just do to me?!" He shouts, pushing Loki to the side where he lands on the floor.

"Found out you were behind on your vaccinations. No need to thank me. Though I have to warn you, you may experience an extremely painful migraine at any minute. And the usual side affects of course. Hope it sucks," Tony tells him as he tosses the gun aside "Besides, how many times do I have to tell you not to touch my stuff?"

He walks over to Loki who is pulling his pants up, his face a deep red."Come on, something tells me his days of terrorizing you are over," he tells the fallen God as he helps him to his feet. He leads him to the elevator just as Barton cries out and falls to his knees, his hands grabbing at the side of his head.

Once inside the elevator, Loki moves away from Tony, embarrassed by what he had seen. What had almost happened to him. What he had almost allowed to happen.

"Are you okay Loki? I'm sorry I didn't get there sooner. I took the stairs. I didn't want Barton to hear me coming. I knew this was going to happen but..." Tony tries to explain.

"You knew it was going to happen?" Loki replies, looking over at his Master is surprise.

"Yeah. You can kinda say it was bound to happen. Like fate. So I planned that when he did, I would
"You planned for it to happen. But did nothing to prevent it? You were...you were using me as bait," Loki accuses. The realization makes his chest tighten. He feels colder. He had been used yet again without even knowing it.

"No! Not really. Look, I just hadn't had a chance to give him an injection. After I gave you one, we went upstairs to our floor..."


"Right. So I didn't get a chance to do it sooner. When Jarvis told me that he had you cornered, I thought now would be the perfect time," Tony explains.

"Yes, because he went for the bait. Me. Your plan...worked perfectly," Loki replies quietly.

"Loki, I didn't plan things out to happen this way. Where he almost..."

"Raped me? With one of his special arrows? I'm sure you didn't plan that part. I am...grateful you did arrive when you did. Before it got that far," Loki says as he sinks down in the corner of the elevator.

He feels sick to his stomach and wants nothing more than to lock himself away. Away from Barton. Away from Stark. Away from everyone. Maybe take the hottest shower he can handle, to wash away the taint that Barton's idea had left on him. And the old taint his words had brought to the surface. The memories were starting to replay in his mind. He could feel the hands touch him.

He jumps when a hand squeezes his shoulder. He looks over and see's that Tony has crouched down next to him.

"Hey. Tell me the truth. How are you holding up?" Tony asks.

"I...I feel so...pathetic. And filthy," Loki answers quietly.

"Why?"

"Because of what happened."

"Yes I know that. But what exactly about what happened is making you feel this way?" Tony asks, grateful for the advice he has been getting from Pepper and Bruce.

"I...he didn't even need to hurt me. I was giving in. Because I was powerless to stop him. He could have killed me. I should have...I should have challenged him. Face death instead of...instead of being so willing to shame myself. Yet I obeyed him as easily as a lamb being led to slaughter. I was going to let him do that to me without putting up a fight. Tell me that is not disgustingly vile. You saw the state I was in. You saw how I put up no resistance. Like a common whore, I was prepared to suffer through that without any protest. I am a far cry from the man I once was Stark. The people of your realm...can rest easy. The monster that once threatened their lives is now nothing more than a whore," Loki says sadly, sharing his thoughts openly.

"You're not a whore Loki. If anyone gets that title, it's me. Seriously, you don't want to know how many people I've had in my bed. and I didn't care. About them, or me, or what we were doing. So yeah, out of the two of us, I'd say I earned that title. Now yes, I didn't see you resist Barton back there. But I did see that he had a knife at your throat. And if I'm right..." he pauses, placing a hand under Loki's chin and turning him to the side, exposing a shallow cut.
"Yup, the knife was real. So you knew the threat he was making was a serious one. Life or death. And you chose life. There's no shame in that," he tells the man, turning his chin so they are facing each other. "Giving in to someone's demands so you can live another day, specially when you are powerless to do anything else, does not make you pathetic or a whore. Stronger men have done worse to live."

Loki narrows his eyes. He doesn't believe these words. He knows better. He knows the truth. He's fallen. A slave. A whore. A living disgrace. Something to be left in the shadows and forgotten. Something that should have died after it was abandoned.

"Loki. Earth to Loki," he hears Tony say to him.

He blinks a few times before focusing on the man besides him.

"There you are. Welcome back," Tony says smiling.

"I didn't go anywhere," Loki replies, looking at Tony as if he may have hit his head or something.

"Did so. Inside your broken little mind. Betting it's not a pretty place right now. It will be in time though. For now, it's lunch time. You could use a break," he tells Loki before getting up and hitting a button.

Loki doesn't look up nor moves to stand up. He doesn't want to eat. He wants nothing. But he reminds himself that his wants mean nothing. He is a slave, a piece of property and nothing more. He gave the man his freedom and his will.

He thinks about the situation with Barton. How he had followed his orders so willingly. A man who he doesn't trust though it didn't matter at that moment. A man who he knows only desires to cause him pain. Pain he knows he deserves. But he had been willing to endure it in favor of living.

Yet now and then, he finds himself hesitating with Tony's few orders. A man he gave his trust to along with everything else within his being. He doesn't know what Tony desires from him. The man seems unsure of this himself. Which leads to his confusion. And...hoping for more than he deserves, as he again recalls the kiss.

He didn't offer himself in hopes of such foolish thoughts, he scolds himself. It is to make even a debt he has no hopes of ever clearing. That is what he had told Stark. But he also told Stark is was to keep him in a form of control. Barton's words were true. He does tend to shatter everything he touches. And when he does, he is with left carrying the remains and feeling the pain. A burden that is too heavy to carry anymore. So he gave it to Stark.

But even though the burden is no longer on him, he can still feel the results of his actions. The pain and shame are still there. That alone feels like it's squeezing the life out of him.

Before the incident with Barton, he had felt a sense of contentment. He felt like he was fulfilling a role that could not become anything more than what it is. A role that keeps him from being the monster everyone believe him to be. Who in their right mind would fear a slave?

But it isn't his place to feel contentment. In fact, he shouldn't be feeling much of anything. He should obey the orders given then stand aside and wait. It's what he did agree to. Tony doesn't care about the emotional state of his slave. Just how well it performs. It's what anyone would expect from someone with his status.

He should have answered the question in fewer words. Tony didn't want to hear his actual thoughts. He probably thinks the same thoughts of him but he is being polite in not speaking them. He did
walk in and saw him in that state. Maybe he is even angry that he had been so willing to follow Barton's orders.

Does Stark realize that he would obey any order he gives him? If he ordered him to strip and walk in shame in the streets, he would? Or if he is ordered into silence, he would comply, remaining silent even for years until Stark tells him he can speak again. And if he is ordered to please him, he would. He just needs to give him these orders so he can prove himself.

The elevator doors open. With a sigh, he stands up and follows Tony out of the elevator. He stops cold after a few steps when he dares to look up. They are in Tony's workshop again. Last time he has here he was put in great pain by Tony.

Tony notices that Loki is no longer following him. He looks over and see's the look of concern and how the fallen God is rubbing his wrists. With a sigh, he rubs his face and approaches the man. Not surprisingly, Loki steps back. This is not going to work.

"Loki, come here," he orders.

Loki lowers his head, stepping closer to the engineer.

"Listen. I know last time wasn't so fun for you. But nothing is going to happen this time. Absolutely nothing. Look, Barton is going to be in a foul mood for awhile. So maybe you shouldn't be left alone for awhile. Which is why I kinda brought you here," Tony explains rather poorly.

"I see," Loki replies quietly. "What do you wish for me to do?"

Tony grimaces at the words. He doesn't really like hearing Loki sound like some...some slave. A person without a will of it's own. That's not how he wants this. "Just...relax. I have a bunk set up in the corner if you want to sit there. Or you can sit next to me if you prefer. I'm sure I can find another chair somewhere," he replies, looking around for the mentioned chair.

"That will not be necessary," Loki states.

"Really? You sure?" Tony asks, receiving a nod. "Alright, if you insist."

Tony shakes his head and sits down at his workbench. He brings up various holoscreens and starts looking at some schematics. He begins to adjust some of the numbers when he feels something press against his leg.

Surprised, he looks down, finding Loki sitting on his knees, his hands in his lap and he is resting his head against Tony's leg.

"Loki, what are you doing?" Tony asks.

"Sitting beside you. You have ordered me into this position once before. Do you...prefer another?" Loki asks without looking up.

Tony feels goosebumps break on his skin. Loki's voice sounded...so empty just then. Was this all because of what Barton did? Or the accusations Loki had been making earlier? He needs to talk to someone. Quick before he really screws this up.

"Stay here. I need to make a business call. I'll be right back," Tony tells the dark haired man. Loki doesn't move or say a word.

He quickly goes into the elevator but hits the emergency stop button once the doors close. He knows
he can't stay in here long before the enclosed space gets to him but he can handle it long enough for this. He pulls out his cell and flips it open.

"Dial Ms Potts," he orders the device.

The rings fill the small space of the elevator before they are replaced with Pepper's voice.

"Tony, is everything alright? Is there something wrong with Loki?" She asks with concern.

"You can say that again. Something is very wrong with him. At least, I think there is, I need you to come here Pepper. Come here and tell me I'm only over reacting. That I need more sleep or something. That I didn't make him worse," he rambles, no longer talking to Pepper.

"Tony...what did you do?"
"You shouldn't always be running to clean his messes," Hap comments quietly. He was surprised to get a call saying there was a change in the schedule and she needed him to take her to Stark towers. He had really believed she was done with whatever mess that had resulted in her taking a surprise vacation. Most of which she spent at the tower rather than at home with him.

"Hap, it's complicated. But I won't be staying there long. Just handling some...negotiations. A few hours at most. Are we still on for dinner tonight?" She asks, hoping that by changing subjects he will be a little more relaxed.

"As long as he doesn't keep you, yeah. Sure," he replies.

She sighs as she gazes out the passenger window. She knows he doesn't believe her. Problems with Tony take usually more than a few hours to clean up. This particular problem...who knows how long it will take to make things right. Months? Years? Or maybe, it'll never happen.

Considering this is Loki they are speaking about, it isn't hard to believe that there is no solution. His mind was already damaged before all this. That invasion thing is enough to convince anyone of that. But to be broken down further...there is a point when broken items are beyond repair. Loki may very well be like a mirror that has shattered beyond repair.

"Here we are. Should I wait for your call?" Hap asks, shifting to his professional personality.
"I wish I could say," she replies as she gets out. But before she walks away from the car, she bends over, looking in through the open window. "Hap...Thank you for staying with me through this."

"Only for you Pepper. Now go see how bad things really are," he says with a smile that doesn't reach his eyes.

Pepper stands back and watches the car drive away. Taking a deep breath, she enters the lobby of Stark towers.

"Good afternoon Ms. Potts. Mr. Stark is waiting for your arrival on his floor. Should I let him know of your arrival?" Jarvis asks.

"Good afternoon Jarvis. Yes, please do. Tell him that I will need to speak with Loki alone," she replies.

She steps into the elevator, again wondering what had gotten Tony so riled up. A small part of her wishes that Loki has proven this all to be a grand hoax and he's ran off to do whatever scheme he has planned. That would be easier to deal with than this situation. But she knows that is not the case. The time for this to be revealed to be just a game has long passed. Loki’s current state of mind is no game.

The elevator door opens and she finds Tony standing by the glass looking out. She stops cold at the genuine look of concern on his face. A look that ages him by twenty years. This is serious.

"Tell me again what happened," Pepper says quietly, not bothering to greet him in any form.

"What, you had a bad connection earlier? I told you everything already," he replies without looking at her.

"Alright. Then I'll just have a word with him," she states coldly as she moves towards there room where she is sure the trickster is.

"Pepper..." Tony calls out.

Pepper stops and looks back.

"When you tell me how bad I screw up later, don't sugar coat it, okay?" He asks, turning to smile at her.

"Never do," she replies.

She goes to the bedroom door and stands outside for a moment. She goes over what Tony had told her on the phone. After a very long day, Tony had left Loki alone to work on some project that he swears will help Loki and help the team at the same time. Though he swears he didn't plan it, when Jarvis informed him that the only person current in the tower today was Clint, he expected there to be trouble. Instead of being reasonable, he had let things play out. At first he had thought things were going to be okay for the trickster for he cleaned two floors without any problems.

Then Jarvis informed him that Clint was making his way towards the same floor Loki was on. After that, he ran up the stairs and barely saving Loki from another mentally scarring episode. She didn't bother to tell him that Loki didn't need to be actually penetrated for that to have scarred him. Nor did she point out that part of the responsibility for that scar falls on him.

Taking in a deep breath, she knocks on the door.

"You may enter," she barely hears from the other side.
She opens the door and enters the familiar bedroom. She had expected to see Loki sitting on the bed or perhaps standing. Instead he is sitting against the wall, his legs curled to the sides his hands again laying still on his lap. He lifts his head but not enough to meet her gaze.

"Good afternoon Loki. How have you been?" She greets, remaining by the door for now.

"I am well," he answers.

She hears the tone that had worries Tony. He had described it as empty. Lifeless would be the word she would use.

"You don't sound well. Tony told me about what happened today. Do you need to talk about it?" She asks.

"No. Unless you wish me to," he replies.

"Loki, the choice is yours. I'm not Tony. It's okay to speak freely," she says, trying to coax him into saying more.

"He allows me to speak freely as well," Loki states, turning his head to the side.

"I imagine he does. He always believes everyone has an opinion, just not that everyone's opinion is right. Which is often why he ignores us," she shares with a smile.

Loki says nothing to this. She glances at the door, biting her lip in thought. She decides to try a more direct approach.

"Loki, how are things with Tony?" She asks.

She notices his hands jerk for a moment, as if they wanted to do something but he is resisting.

"There are no complaints worth speaking about," he replies, though there is a slight change in his tone.

"But there are some?"

"Y...yes," he says quietly.

"What are they? Go ahead and tell me."

"He...he is too lax with me. Too careless," Loki replies with a sigh.

"I see. Do you think that's why things happened earlier? That he was careless with you?" Pepper asks.

"He could have...used me differently."

"He shouldn't have used you at all Loki. Not like that," Pepper corrects, sliding herself off of the bed.

"Yes he should. I am nothing but his property now Ms. Potts. The fact does not shame me but..." He shares as he slowly looks toward her.

"But what?"

"What does he want from me? Why will he not use me directly? If he would, then I could please him. Show him I can serve a purpose. I don't need to be tricked Ms. Potts. I will do anything and
everything he asks. I swear I will," he tells her as tears are forming in his eyes from frustration. "I just need him to tell me. Order me so I can prove myself."

"I...see. You are upset because he used you without you being aware of it, am I right?" Pepper asks, trying to make sense of this.

"I...may not have liked it. Barton...has reasons for what he does but what he was going to do today," Loki pauses, shivering a little from the idea that had almost became a reality, "I would have done what he wanted. I...only want to...be able to gain his attention from time to time. To earn it Ms. Potts. To know that I can obtain this. That...it's not out of my reach like so many things in my life."

Pepper watches him lean his head back and close his eyes, letting the tears fall. A small smile forms on his lips. She thinks over what she has just heard. Loki wants to be given opportunities to prove his loyalty to Tony. To display his willingness to obey. Not all that different from a child who strives for straight a's on a report card in an attempt to gain attention from a parent.

That must have been what he was trying to do earlier. But without direction, Loki did only what he knew. As for the lack of emotions...

"Loki, is there a reason why...earlier when you first spoke to me it sounded like you were trying to do so without expressing your feelings or thoughts. Was that what you were trying to do? If so, why?" She asks.

"Slaves give up their will and being to their Masters. But what use are emotions and thoughts to them?" Loki replies.

"I see. Do you know why I am here?" She asks.

Loki looks at her, shaking his head slowly.

"Tony was concerned because of what happened and the way you were behaving. Loki, Tony is trying his best. This is new to him so he'll need a little time to figure out how to fit you into his life. Until now, he's been alone with his machines and Jarvis. But I do know that when he figures it out, he doesn't want you to be acting like some lifeless doll. He likes things with personality. Just look at Jarvis," she points out.

Loki looks away in thought for a moment. Very quietly he speaks. "You seem to be very knowledgeable about him. If you would, from this knowledge, can you tell me what he will want from me? What will he...desire from me?"

Pepper blows out a breath as she thinks this over. Honestly it's been a long time since she accurately predict Tony's actions. In fact, it is easy to do. Simply pick the most reckless plan of action and Tony usually would be doing just that. But it rarely involved other people. Even on a team with other super heroes, Tony had a way of doing things on his own.

Which is why she has been so concerned about this slave thing. She had told Tony that this means he is responsible for the broken man now. That means he has to stop and work with the Fallen God, finding out what his needs are and meeting them. And right now, Loki feels like he has to be tricked into fulfilling Tony's needs rather than being given the chance to show he would follow them willingly.

"I will talk to Tony and get him to figure that part out. Okay? I'm going to do that right now in fact," she tells him as she gets up and heads to the door.

"Thank you," Loki tells her.
She turns and smiles back at him. "You're welcome."

Leaving the fallen God in the bedroom, she walks back into the living room space, seeing Tony waiting for her.

"Well?" He asks.

"Well what?" She counters, widening her eyes in mock confusion.

"Come on Pepper. About Loki. How bad did I screw up this time?" Tony asks with a groan.

"Not so bad that you can't fix it. Would help if you thought things through now and then though," Pepper comments.

"So this is because of the Barton thing earlier."

"No. This is because of you," she corrects.

Tony looks at her, giving her the deer caught in head lights look. She shakes her head. For someone so brilliant...he can be so thick at times.

"Loki wants to be able to prove his devotion to you. His willingness to obey any order you give him. He doesn't want you to think he has to be tricked into things. He wants you to trust him Tony and he's willing to earn it," she explains.

"I wasn't tricking him! I really wasn't using him for bait either. I didn't have time is all," Tony replies, crossing his arms before rubbing his face.

"To him, that's exactly what you did. And I will admit, it sounds that way to me too. Look Tony, Loki was known for being a Master manipulator, right?"

"Among other things."

"Why? Why did he choose to master that kind of skill?" Pepper asks.

"Pepper, I know you think so highly of me, but honestly, I have no secret insight to his mind," Tony replies.

"Victims of abuse have a higher chance of becoming abusers themselves Tony. Now apply that to Loki."

"Wait, you are saying he became a Master of manipulation because...someone did it to him?"

"In his mind, yes. When victims become abusers, it's for a sense of control. They had none over what happened to them but now when they do it, they have that control. It's the same for Loki. He feels he was used and manipulated for whatever means, powerless to stop it. So he started doing it to get some of the control back," Pepper explains.

"Makes sense. But if it's all about the control, then this whole slave thing makes no sense what so ever."

"It does actually. The manipulation Loki feels that was used on him, was done so without him realizing it until much later. I'm guessing years later. Here, he gave you control over him. He knows you will use him for what ever. That in itself is a form of control he didn't have before. Knowing he will be used. But what you did with Barton, it took that away from him. That's what I meant earlier by you needing to think things through. With Loki and this situation with him, you need to do this,"
she tells him firmly.

"So how do I give him that control back? Should I just call it quits on the whole slave thing?" Tony asks, sounding a little hopeful at that last part.

"No. It's not going to be that easy Tony. Loki...has put everything into this agreement. Though I never will approve of it, the others were right. If you end this, you will do more harm then good to him. As for the control, I have a few suggestions. Got a notebook and pen handy?" She asks.

A little over an hour later, Ms. Potts is on her way to the lobby, returning to her work and life. Tony looks at the notebook, thinking over what they had gone through. On those pages is a set schedule for the former God. Everything planned out. He will be cleaning more floors as well as being shown how to do paperwork for Stark Industries. He will also be bringing in deliveries for the tower, carrying them up the stairs to their desired floors. Pepper hadn't liked that idea but when he explained his madness, she agreed though made it clear this should happen no more than twice a week. On top of this schedule, Tony will try his best to make the God feel useful by throwing orders whenever he is around the trickster. Pepper told him they didn't need to be much. It could be something as simple as getting him a glass of ice water or bringing him a magazine.

He believes he can handle that. In fact, he feels pretty good about it. He told her what he has in mind for Loki later on. The thing he had been working on. She had agreed it was a very good idea, for once. Before she left, she stressed out how important this is and he can't be firm on day then lax the next. He told her the only thing he could, that he'll try to keep that in mind.

He reads over the schedule again then gets up. Time to put his money where his mouth is. He opens the door and looks in.

"Need you out in the living room Rudolph," he tells the man before turning and returning to his spot before the window.

A moment later, he see's Loki's reflection.

"Take a seat on the couch. There's a notepad on the stand. That's for you. Read it," he orders.

He watches as Loki's reflection moves to the couch, sitting on the edge and picks up the notepad. Loki's reflection shows him studying the page then flipping to the next.

"That will be your day to day schedule starting tomorrow. From the moment you get up, you start on that list. Jarvis will be programmed to remind you of your tasks for the day. I will be checking with Jarvis on your progress. I expect those lists to be completed by the end of the day. You will also be doing paperwork for my company. No complaints. And you will be off loading deliveries for the tower. Again, I don't want to hear any complaints. Are we clear so far?" He asks as he turns towards the former deity.

"Yes sir," Loki replies as he looks at these lists, one for each day of the week. He could tell that Tony plans to keep him very busy from now on.

"Good. Now about the Barton thing, I should have warned you. But then again, I did tell you before that if he ever came for you, there was an order I expected you to follow, wasn't there?" Tony asks as he tries to keep his face blank. He had rehearsed this with Pepper. In order to give Loki back the sense of control he needs, he needs Tony to fulfill his role as Master completely.

Loki's eyes widen as he looks up at Tony. He had forgotten about that. "Y-yes."

"And what was that?"
"If anyone orders me to do something that will harm me, I should refuse and return to the bedroom. And ask for you," Loki recites.

"Did you do this?" Tony asks.

"No sir, I did not," Loki admits.

"Were you obeying orders that you knew were going to cause you harm?"

"Yes."

"So you disobeyed my order, right?"

"Yes."

"So what should I do about that?" Tony asks.

"You should...punish me," he says quietly.

"And I will. But answer this question first. How should I punish you?" Tony asks, walking slowly towards the man on the couch.

Loki suddenly very exposed. An answer comes to mind but he isn't sure he should suggest it. How will it play out? Will Tony laugh at him? Make lewd comments? Realize that this is too much and have him locked away?

"Still waiting for an answer pal."

Loki lowers his head. He can't think of anything else. There should be countless ways he can suggest for Tony to punish him but only one comes to mind. "Perhaps...you can repeat the first punishment you bestowed on me," he suggest before holding his breath.

"The first punishment..." Tony repeats, a bit confused. Then he realizes what Loki is referring to. He arches one of his eyebrows as he bends over and lifts Loki's chin, making the former God look off. He examines the deep green eyes, seeing the fear and uncertainty in them. "So you think I should kiss you again. Tell me, did you...enjoy it? Answer me honestly Loki."

Loki looks away, his cheeks reddening before Tony's eyes. "Yes."

"I see," Tony replies. He feels surprised that the man had admitted it so easily. That and hearing that the God of Mischief liked being kissed by Tony Stark. He wonders what that could mean. But before he could let his thoughts wander off, he needs to finish this little chat. He brings himself closer to Loki's face, until their lips are only inches apart.

"Then that won't work," he tells Loki, seeing the green eyes snap to his own as he pulls back and releases Loki's chin. "Punishments are not meant to be enjoyable. Elsewise it will just encourage the bad behavior rather than correcting it. Which we don't want to do, right?"

He see's the disappointment for a moment before Loki nods his head then lowers it. Tony's mouth curls up on the right. So the God had been telling the truth. He liked it and was hoping for it to happen again. With a smile, he again reaches out and lifts Loki's head. He see's the honest confusion in those sharp features of his for a moment before he closes his eyes and kisses Loki.

He can feel Loki tense at the moment of contact but then it passes. When he breaks it, Loki quickly lowers his head.
"Wh-why did you do that?" Loki whispers.

"Because you've been honest with me. And that is one behavior that should be encouraged. So consider it a reward for being honest. Keep it up, and it might happen again," Tony answers with a wink.

All he receives is a quick nod.

"As for your punishment...my workshop could use a little bit of organizing. So come on, I'll show you what I mean then we can both get to work."
Loki adapted quickly to the schedule he had been given. He woke early and after a quick shower and a light breakfast, he often started working long before Tony got out of bed. He carried the notebook everywhere he went, so he wouldn't have to check with Jarvis. The idea of relying on a voice seemed strange to him. Besides, he wanted to prove that he can handle this without help.

The daily lists themselves were much longer than the small cleaning list he had done before. More chores were added such as cleaning out the fridges, to which he would also do inventory on in case there was something they were short on, make beds complete with putting on fresh linens, and do the occasional dusting. The amount of floors he is responsible for have now doubled and included both the infirmary floor and Tony's workshop. Both rooms have their own unique chore list for him to complete.

In the afternoon, from one to three, he did various paperwork for Tony which was always set out for him on a corner desk in the workshop. This could involve making sure everything was order to be mailed out, organizing memos by date, correcting errors...or inserting the appropriate numbers and putting them in their respective files. At first he had been at a loss and therefore made several mistakes. But after a visit with Ms. Potts, he had been able to get a handle on things quickly.

Delivery days were the most physical. They were also the only days he was not expected to do paperwork and his cleaning chores were at a minimum. He was concern about this at first. Then he learned that the tower had over ninety-six floors. Though not all would have deliveries for them, many would. The deliveries would be in various boxes, some light, others quite the opposite. And he would have to take these boxes up the stairs to their floors because the notebook said that he couldn't use the elevator for this task. These days were the most exhausting for him. By the time he came
back to the floor, he would be ready to pass out.

Because of this, he often didn’t see Tony until sometime after he finished his list, which would be
around dinner time. This was the part of the day he looked forward to most. It never matters how
sore or tired he is. Things feel right when he returns to his shared floor.

They would eat together then talk. Well, Tony would talk. Loki would listen. Tony would also tell
him to do various things. ‘Pour me a drink. Take the dishes to the sink. Get the remote.’ All simple
orders that Loki didn’t mind following. And Tony would thank him and tell him how much he
appreciates his hard work. Now and then there would be little rewards, like a bowl of pudding
waiting for him or a movie night. He liked the way things have become. He felt...trusted.

His only complaint, if it could be called that, was that he hasn’t received that one particular reward
and he isn’t sure how to earn it. He finds himself often thinking about it. Especially the night when
Tony did kiss him again. It wasn’t like the aggressive kiss that Tony had given him before Odin
while in his true form. It was something similar to the first kiss but not quite. Then again, maybe
that's all in his mind.

He remembers how embarrassed he had felt when he suggested it. Even more so when Tony asked if
he liked it. Such actions would never have taken place before. No, he would have tried killing the
man first before uttering such a thing. In fact, he would have insulted the man and lied to him instead
of telling the truth. How things have changed for him. Yet, he doesn't mind it really.

He thinks about that one moment of disappointment. When he thought that by being honest, he was
going to lose something he had been hoping for. That this was another thing he had ruined with his
mouth. His thoughts had started taking a dark turn when Tony suddenly lifted his face and kissed
him.

At first he had thought he must be daydreaming. His mind producing a fantasy so he wouldn't have
to feel the pain of the reality of Tony’s rejection. But it felt so real. When Tony pulled back, that is
when he allowed himself to accept the truth. He had to quickly drop his head to hide the small smile
on his lips. He had asked why even though he wasn't sure if he wanted to hear the answer. He would
have been content if Tony had said nothing.

So he had been surprised to hear that it had been not a punishment as before but a reward for
something he would never have done before. Being honest. The idea had left him in a state of shock.
Honesty...had given him something he has been thinking about for days now. Something he
wouldn’t have if he had remained the same. Yes, he could have gotten such things before. He would
have tricked the man into or demanded it or forced it. But it wouldn’t have been the same as this. It
made him wonder what else he could gain from this new behavior. And what had he missed out
because of the way he was before?

He shakes his head. He is too tired for such musings at the moment. Today had been another
delivery day. He is beyond worn out, today was the biggest delivery he had done so far. His legs
ached from all the climbing he had done. His arms felt stiff. All he looks forward to is falling on his
mattress and getting a bit of sleep.

He is a bit disappointed though. Tony had stopped him around lunch and told him that Tony had a
charity event he has to attend so he won't be around by the time Loki finishes his work. This will be
the first time he will not be having dinner with the man. He sighs. He's not that hungry anyway so he
makes his way straight to the bedroom where he lays down and quickly closes his eyes so he won't
notice how empty it seems without the other man.

It feels like only minutes have passed since he laid down when he woke to the sound of banging.
Alarmed, he sits up and looks to the doorway when the door is opened. He is relieved to see Tony appear. But he could tell something is wrong. Tony's face is a little too flushed. His neat suit looks a mess. And it looks like the doorway it the only reason he is still standing.

"Heysss sleeping beauty! Did I wake you?" Tony asks, his speech slurring just a bit.

"Ton...Tony?" Loki asks in disbelief. During his whole stay here he hadn't seen Tony in such a state.

"Well who else would I be? How's about you be a chum and help me to the best?" Tony asks.

Loki quickly gets up and makes his way over to the billionaire. He can smell the alcohol now. It's almost as if the man had bathed in it. He wonders briefly if something happened to make the man consume so much before he maneuvers the man into a more or less standing position and starts to lead him to the bed.

Somehow Tony manages to take a wrong step and trips Loki. Both fall down onto the bed, Loki pinned under Tony. While Loki had cried out in surprise, Tony is laughing his head off.

"And I thought I was the drunk one! Did someone get into my stash while I was gone?" Tony asks.

Loki shakes his head and tries to gently push the man off of him so he can get up. The smell is starting to get to him.

"Now hold up. What's the rush? I thought you liked me," Tony comments with a pout before laughing again.

The comment makes Loki go still.

"You do, don't you?" Tony asks.

Loki quickly turns his face away. "Tony, you....you need some rest. Let me up and you can sleep."

"Who needs sleep when they have a god in their bed?" Tony replies before he starts kissing the exposed skin on the fallen God's neck.

"Ah! Tony, what are you doing?!" He cries out in surprise of Tony's actions. He bites his lip when the man starts sucking on the skin, bruising it.

Tony smiles when he pulls back. "You've been working hard. It's time I reward you, right? You want me to reward you, right?" Tony asks as he slides a hand over Loki's torso then sliding it under the cloth.

"Tony...you're drunk. Please...please stop. Let me go," Loki asks, fear is building in him as Tony's hand strokes lazily against his skin.

"But you want this, don't you? Come on, admit it. You want me to...how did your father word it? Oh, yeah. Bed you. That's what you want me to do, isn't it? Bed you? Tell me the truth Loki. Tell me you want it," Tony breathes into his ear, pinching one of the trickster's nipples when he says the word 'truth'.

Loki is starting to panic now. What Tony is saying, it's not untrue. He has been curious about what it would be like to be bedded by this man. Sometimes he fantasizes about this very thing. But he doesn't want it like this. Not while Tony is in this state. It feels all wrong to him.

"I..."
"The truth Loki. Do you want me to bed you?"

Loki closes his eyes and again tries to push Tony off of him. But Tony grips the bed, pinning him down. There is no escape he realizes.

"Y-y-yes," he whispers as tears form in his eyes.

"Yes what?"

"Yes, I want you to bed me," Loki replies, his voice cracking. "But not like this..."

"Shhh...no worries. You are in my hands now. So relax and enjoy," Tony replies before he goes back to the man's neck as his hand withdraws from under Loki's shirt and joins the other at the fallen god's pants.

"No...please Tony...stop," Loki pleas. He hisses out in pain when Tony bites his shoulder hard enough to break the skin. He realizes this is the man's way of telling him to be quiet. So he obeys.

He grabs fist gulls of the blankets beneath them and grips them tightly as Tony forces a hand down to his privates. He tries to fight off the mental images of the Agents and the men from the cabin. He tells himself it's not the same. That it's different. Tony isn't...

This is when he realizes Tony isn't doing anything at this moment. He turns his head and hears the faintest snore come from the man on top of him. He's out. Loki slowly sits himself up, rolling the man off of him. He removes his hand from his pants. He covers Tony with a blanket before quickly leaving the room.

Once the bedroom door is closed, he sinks to the floor. He is shaking badly. He tries desperately to keep himself under control. When he thinks he can, he gets up and goes into the bathroom. He turns the water on, Max hot. As the bathroom starts to steam, he strips. But he doesn't get in right away. Instead he looks at the mirror. He touches the bruised skin on his neck then the teeth marks on his shoulder. He feels...numb to these things. When he can no longer see himself, he steps into the scolding hot water. He spends the next few hours scrubbing himself, not to get rid of Tony, but the others that were there before. So that maybe next time, he'll be clean when Tony wants him.

The next morning, Tony woke with one of the top hangovers he's had in a long time. He hadn't planned to get so wasted. But then Pepper had announced her engagement to Hap. He couldn't explain why, it had been over between them for a long time now, but he suddenly didn't feel like being sober anymore. He spent the greater part of the evening making sure that was not a possibility.

He looks around. Somehow he managed to find his way back to the tower. Even made it to his floor. Pretty impressive really since he doesn't remember doing so. Sadly, he still remembers the announcement. He groans and covers his head with a pillow. He stayed like that for the next couple of hours.

Then his bladder told him it was time to get up. So with a few moans and groans, he does so. He gives himself a glance, not surprised to see himself still wearing his good suit. So he tosses off the jacket and tie before making his way to the bathroom.

When he comes out, he is feeling more...well feeling more. He had taken a nice long shower and it did wonders for him. He steps out of the bathroom in nothing more than a towel. He hears something and turns, seeing Loki carrying a basket of clean clothes. The trickster seems to be...nervous about something.
"Morning sunshine. You okay?" He asks, his eyebrow raised.

"Uh...morning sir. I'm fine. I...I was just bringing up the laundry..." Loki explains as he looks away.

"I can see...wait a second..." Tony says as he see's something on the former deity's neck. He walks over, ignoring Loki's panic expression. "Don't move," Tony tells him as he reaches up and pulls the collar of the shirt Loki is wearing aside. "Loki...did you have company over yesterday?"

Loki looks over at Tony in confusion. "No sir," he replies. Why would Tony ask him that? Doesn't he realize that there is no one he knows or even how to summon them here?

"It's no big deal Loki if you did. And I thought we agreed that you would tell me the truth from now on?" Tony asks.

"But...but I am. I had no company here," Loki insists.

"Loki, it's clear that you did. I'm really disappointed in you. Go take care of those. Then you are going to be locked in the room until you decide to tell the truth. Seriously, I hate treating you like a little kid but if you refuse to be honest..." Tony mutters before going into the bedroom.

Loki follows silently. There's a coldness forming in him. Again he is not being trusted. Despite all of his efforts, he is not being trusted yet again. It hurts him deeply. He focuses on putting the clothes away as Tony gets dressed. He flinches when the bedroom door is slammed shut. When he is finished with the clothes, he goes to the corner of the room and sits there with his knees drawn up to his chest. His mind tries to come up with ways to earn back the little bit of trust he somehow lost.

Tony goes straight to his workshop. The conversation with Loki has frustrated him. He thought things were going really well between them. Yeah, he screwed a few things up with the god but he's only a lowly mortal after all. So why is Loki still lying to him? Even with something as small as this, it makes no sense. Maybe the God is embarrassed by who left those his lies on his neck? Tony could understand that. He has woken up to Coyote ugly more than a few times. Still, why the lie?

"Jarvis, who paid Loki a visit last night? I want to see feed," he orders the AI.

"My apologies sir, but Mr. Laufeyson had no visitors last night," Jarvis replies.

"Oh really? Come on Jarvis, I saw the marks on his neck. At least show me who did that," he replies with irritation. Apparently Jarvis has a bug somewhere in his system.

"Very well sir. Displaying now," the AI replies.

"And showtime," Tony mocks as he turns to a holoscreen, grinning in satisfaction. The grin disappears when his eyes takes in what he is being shown.

"Jarvis, tell me this is some sort of a mistake."

"On your part, I believe it is sir. Perhaps now would be the time to address the matter of your consumption of alcohol?" The AI questions.

"Yeah...yeah I guess so. First, tell Loki he can return to his duties. We'll...we'll talk later."

"Very well sir."

Tony reaches a hand out after a moment and adjusts the volume on the feed he is still watching. He freezes when he hears what he is saying and making Loki say. Suddenly he is not to sure about...
talking to Loki. He's not even sure he can face the man at this moment. Or anyone else for that matter.
Chapter 38

Over the next few days, Loki had worked himself to exhaustion. He struggled to keep his eyes open as he worked on the paperwork for Stark Industries. He was a few days ahead already in this task. The same was true with most of his responsibilities.

Since that day, when it became clear that he had a ways to go in earning Tony's trust, he dedicated himself fully to the tasks the man had given him. Simply because that was all he knew to do. He wanted to earn back the little trust he had somehow lost, and had tried figuring out when he had lost it. Loki went over his own actions again and again.

The only thing that came to mind was when Tony had him pinned on the bed. He had a feeling that that was when it had happened. But what was it? Failing to help Tony? Maybe he had been hurt in that stumble? Or did it have something to do with what happened after? Maybe it was his protests. Maybe Tony had trusted him to...be more open about such suggestions?

In the end, he believed that was when it happened. He should not have protested. The fallen god had given away the right to protest to Tony. Yet he had acted as if he still had that right. This began the habit of taking hot showers after he was done with the day's work, while telling himself he will give himself over willingly, if Stark ever showed him any interest in him in that way, again.

In the meantime, he would do as expected. He would work. But when he finished the work early the first day after that night, he found himself alone. He had waited but Tony never showed that evening. As the minutes passed, he had begun to feel the weight of his failure. Loki had spent that night waiting for Tony, planning on begging for forgiveness. But, Tony never came back. As far as he knew, Tony hadn't come back to their floor since that night.

The next day, after he finished his work, he waited only an hour for Tony. He then left their floor
and started on the chores for the next day, cleaning until well after dark before he returned. No, he wasn't surprised to find himself alone. He had tried to sleep, succeeding in getting only a few hours before getting up and returning to his work. When the god looked out the window, the sun hadn't even risen yet.

This is what he had done ever since and he knew that it is wearing him down. But, he refused to quit. Not until he saw Tony and certainly not until he knew that Tony had forgiven him. He would work until Tony gave him a chance to earn that precious little thing he had lost. Loki swore to himself, that despite how it may make him feel, it would be worth it to have that trust back.

His closed his eyes for a moment before opening them again and shook his head, looking at the work before him. Staring in disbelief, because somehow, while lost in his thoughts, he had managed to complete the task. He looked over at the tiny display clock on the desk. It had taken him less than an hour to complete. Looking over at the box that would hold the paperwork he still needed to do. It has never been empty. Until now.

Loki stared at the box for a moment, wondering who filled it in the first place. He doubted it was Tony. Maybe Ms. Potts? Or some other employee? Will they come by and fill it for tomorrow or will it still be empty? Maybe it will be part of the deliveries he would be doing in two days. He shook his weary head. The answer doesn't matter. There was still work he could do.

He gets up and picks up the notebook he has grown accustomed to carrying with him all the time. He doesn't need to read the list, for he has memorized them, but he does so anyway. He turns, stumbling slightly before making it to the elevator. He hits the button for the desired floor before leaning against the side.

A moment later his eyes open as the elevator door opens. He walks out and stops cold. He hears music playing. Familiar music. His emerald green eyes look about the lab and see the gamma specialist sitting at a workbench, apparently studying some green liquid in a phial.

He hasn't seen much of any of the other Avengers over the last few days. He assumes it is because they are often away living their lives apart from that of being an Avenger or perhaps away fulfilling their roles as one. If he did run into one while on his way to some task, he said very little to them. If they arrived on their floor while he was cleaning it, he would quietly apologize and ask to be allowed to finish. This has happened only twice, both times with Steve Rogers. The man made excuses to leave the floor, leaving Loki to his work.

As far as Loki could tell, Bruce had not noticed his appearance. He could always come back later, he considers and takes a step back. Bruce sighs and puts the phial down before reaching over to turn off his music. The sound of Loki's step seems to echo in the suddenly silent room, gaining the other man's attention. Loki goes still as the man meets his gaze.

"Oh, Loki. Hey. I didn't hear you come in," Bruce greets as he stands up, adjusting his glasses. "If you don't mind my asking, why are you here?"

"I..." Loki looks down at the notebook in his hands. "Stark has given me certain responsibilities. One of them is...to clean in here. But that can wait. Until after you're done that is," he says quickly as he turns, planning to quickly take his leave.

Yet from exhaustion, his legs move clumsily. They twist around each other and this sends him falling to the ground.

"Loki? Loki are you alright?" Bruce asks as he moves quickly to the fallen man's side. When Loki turns towards him, Bruce gets his first good look at Loki. He makes note of the dark purple bags
under the man's eyes. He also appears paler, almost grayish. Right now Loki appears to be confused, looking down at his legs. Finally, with what seems to be to with some effort, he looks up at Bruce.

"I am fine. No need for concern. I...must have tripped is all," Loki replies as he stands up. He moves away from the gamma specialist and finds himself moving sluggishly.

"Loki...when is the last time you had a good, full night's sleep?" Bruce questions.

"I get the sleep I need. I am fine. I...I need to go. I still have other..." Loki starts to excuse himself when he feels his arm being gently grabbed.

"Loki...what you need to do is get some sleep. I'm sure Tony doesn't want you to do this to yourself. You are about to pass out for pete sake. Come on, I have a cot here you can use," Bruce tells him as he leads Loki over to the promised cot.

"I am alright. I will be fine. I...am almost done anyway," Loki mutters weakly.

"You will be fine after a few hours of sleep. Whatever you have left to do will be waiting for you when you get up. Now no more arguing," Bruce replies as he stands back, watching as Loki reluctantly lays down on the cot.

Even now, Bruce can see the man try to remain awake. He sits down nearby and pretends to be doing something with the holo screens. The deep green eyes would begin to close then open again before closing. He observes as those eyes would begin to stay closed longer and longer until finally, they stayed close. Bruce waited a few more minutes, watching Loki's breathing slow into a steady rhythm. Then he makes his way to the elevator, intending on asking a certain team mate a few questions. Knowing Tony as well as he does, he knows exactly where he will be.

He exits the elevator and enters the code to the workshop. He walks in, listening for the sounds of Tony hard at work at one project or another. He's not disappointed. Coming from the back, a small audio device is blasting away at what Tony insists is real music. Following it, he finds Tony sitting in a chair, holding what looks loosely to be one of his head pieces to his suit.

"Tony?"

Tony snaps his head up, seeing his fellow science buddy leaning against one of the nearby workstations. "Hey! What's up? Need to go over something?" He asks.

"Something like that. That head piece looks a little...big there Tony," Bruce comments.

"Yeah, well, can't judge everything by it's looks. Besides, it's not for a suit," he replies, grinning mischievously.

Bruce shakes his head. Tony is always very obvious with his attempts to lure him into asking about his projects. And sadly, he doesn't disappoint. "Really?"

"Yup. It's actually a little something I am working on for Loki. I think this will even blow the God of mischief away," he states proudly.

"I'm sure it will. Whatever it is," he replies. "Speaking of Loki, do you happen to know where he is?"

He watches as the light hearted mood shifts to a no none sense one in a heartbeat. "No. Why? Is he missing? I swear, if Barton has him again..." He starts to threaten, putting the head piece down as he gets up.
"Easy Tony. Loki's safe. He's sleeping on the cot in my lab," Bruce quickly tells him.

"He is? Then why did you ask..."

"Tony, he hasn't been sleeping well. He was focused on getting some...list done rather than getting the sleep he needs. To put it simply, he has been working himself ragged. Judging by the look of him, I'd say he has been at this for the last few days. I'm curious as to why," Bruce asks, crossing his arms.

Tony looks away, scratching the back of his neck. He knows Bruce isn't going to like this answer. "I...don't really know. I haven't...really talked to him the last couple of days. Been working on this," Tony tells him, gesturing to the head gear.

"Uh huh. I'm guessing that you have been sleeping here too instead of in your room?" Bruce asks.

"Maybe..." Tony replies, looking more like a kid who got caught staying up past his bedtime to read dirty magazines.

"When was the last time you talked to him?"

"A few days ago," Tony answers honestly. "I'm not avoiding him! I have just been caught up in this."

"Avoiding him? Why would you think I am accusing you of avoiding him? Unless that was your guilt speaking there?"

"Wha..." Tony starts to argue but falls quiet. He suddenly doesn't have the energy to argue. Specially when what Bruce had just said happens to be true.

Bruce sighs. This is certainly out of his field of expertise. "Look, whatever is going on between you two, needs to be put aside. Loki was literally on the verge of passing out. In the lab," he says this last part slowly, emphasizing how serious it has become. Tony of all people know's what is in the lab and why it is dangerous to have someone just passing out in there. "You don't need to listen to my advice but I think you should go talk to him. I have a feeling that if you don't, he'll start this crazy sleep depriving cycle all over again."

Tony nods, scratching his chin in thought. Bruce watches. He would be lying if he said his curiosity isn't peaked. But this seems to be a personal issue between the two men and he knows that there are just some questions better left unasked. Though the relationship between Tony and the former God...he senses things are slowly becoming...complicated.

"Well, I have some things to work on. Lab's open if you feel like checking in on him. I don't think he will be able to wake up anytime soon," Bruce tells him before leaving the workshop, considering spending the rest of the afternoon with some tea and meditation.

Tony watches him leave then looks back down at the head piece. Not far from it is a pair of mechanical gloves with similar wiring and such.

"Jarvis, how many more adjustments can be done before Loki tries this out?" Tony asks.

"I believe all the adjustments that can be made without Mr. Laufeyson has been completed sir," the AI answers.

"Alright then. Jarvis, lock things down. If things go right, we will be giving this baby a test run later tonight."
When Loki wakes up, he is at first disoriented. He doesn't remember laying down. Hadn't he been doing the paperwork for Tony's company? No, he finished that. He made it to the lab. Then found Dr. Banner there. He made him lay down. That is where he is now.

He opens his eyes slowly. When he see's Tony sitting there, not Dr. Banner, he quickly sits up.

"Sleep well?" Tony asks him while giving him an amused look.

"Ah...yes sir. I'm sorry. I...I hadn't planned to...I was..." Loki struggles to think of an explanation that wouldn't get him into further trouble. It can't be a good thing that he had been caught sleeping instead of carrying out his responsibilities. He should have argued with Dr. Banner or at the very least, left the lab.

"I know what you were doing Loki," Tony replies, turning to the workbench and lifting up the notebook Loki has been carrying around.

Loki swallows nervously when he see's the notebook. He lowers his gaze to floor. He considers telling Tony how far ahead he is in his work but decides that might come off as back talking or arguing, neither which would help him at this point.

Apparently after he had fallen asleep, Dr. Banner must have gone to Tony and told him that he was asleep. And now Tony must be under the assumption that he has been...careless in his tasks, sleeping instead of seeing to their completion.
All the hard work he has done over the last few days now mean nothing. His hope...is gone.

"Loki...Bruce thinks you have been trying to work yourself to death or something. Were you?" Tony asks, setting the notebook aside.

Loki shakes his head. He's not sure exactly what Tony is referring to but he wasn't making any attempt on his life.

"I don't mean you were trying to kill yourself," Tony corrects when he thinks his question over. Even with Thor, there were times like this when the simplest of expressions had to be explained. It is always a pain in the ass. He needs to remind himself that Loki came from the same strange world Thor did and so the human lango will still confuse the man. "Let me ask you this. How much sleep have you been having? And how much time have you spent on seeing to these daily lists?"

"I...have been working diligently on the responsibilities you have assigned me. As for sleep...I...a few hours at most. I only slept when I was unable to...stay awake any longer. I...am sorry," Loki answers, bracing himself for the worse. He is still very tired and concern whether or not he can go through whatever Tony has in mind for punishing him.

"Loki..." Tony says the former deity's name, seeing how the man flinched from just his name being spoken. "Does this...have to do with the other morning? And the events of the night before?"

Loki feels his stomach tighten. He can't think of an acceptable response to this question. If he confirms it, it may sound like he is making an accusation towards Tony. If he denies it, he will be lying and breaking the very agreement he had made, ruining any chance of restoring Tony's trust in him. So the only safe option is to remain silent.

Tony looks away, taking the silence as a confirmation. Silence that is also becoming very awkward. He knows he should say something. At least set the record straight. "Look, the other night I had...I got some news I wasn't ready for. And I didn't handle it well. So I let go of any self control I had. I...I just didn't want to give a damn. About anything. I guess that ended up involving you. What I did to you...what I made you say, there's no excuse for that. I'll own up to it. If I ever get that bad again, I'll have Jarvis ban me from the floor until I'm in my right mind," Tony promises.

Loki listens to Tony speak. As he takes responsibility for the event of that night. He has mixed feelings about it. Yes, there is relief for knowing that Tony will not be making such advances while intoxicated again. But does that mean he will never make any advances? Did it only happen because Tony was drunk? Maybe he has been misunderstanding things with Tony to this point.

"As for what happened after...accusing you of...well...having company then locking you up...that was an mistake on my part. I guess I still wasn't thinking straight. After all, how could you even have company over? You can't go outside and I'm willing to bet you are not familiar with cell phones or the Internet," Tony comments, receiving a nod in agreement to his assumption. "I'm sorry for doing that to you. I should have listened. I'll try not to make that mistake anytime soon. Best I can offer. Will you accept?"

Loki nods again though he's not sure what Tony means about him accepting. Tony hasn't offered anything from what he understood. But it does sound like...that possibly...

"Does that mean...you trust me again?" Loki asks quietly.

"Trust? Hmm," Tony repeats. He is surprised to be asked that of all things. Specially from a former God known for his lies. Then he reminds himself that Loki is no longer that person. Perhaps this Loki is very much concerned about such topics as trust. Looking at Loki, he wonders if this isn't
what has been driving him for the past few days.

He smiles. He has a plan to fix that problem. "You think you are up to helping me out with something?"

"Yes," Loki answers, standing himself up.

"Alright then, follow me," he tells the raven haired man, getting up himself and heading for the elevator.

Loki follows him, moving silently like a shadow. He doesn't ask about what Tony needs help with. Or where they are going. Neither matter to him right now. When the elevator doors open to Tony's workshop, he slows for a moment before returning to his former pace behind Tony.

Tony leads him to the chair where he had been sitting when Bruce paid him a visit. "Have seat," Tony gestures to the chair.

Loki complies though his nerves are slightly on edge.

"Hands out," Tony instructs.

Loki does so and Tony soon slips on the mechanical gloves. When the one on his right seems secured to Tony's satisfaction, Loki examines it as Tony moves to the other one. "If I may, what is..." Loki begins to ask.

"Patience," Tony scolds mockingly as he finishes with the glove. He is grinning when he lifts the head piece he had been messing with earlier.

Loki sits back as if trying to draw himself away from it. Now he is worried, slightly on the edge of fear. Something that...monstrous can't be good.

"I know it ain't pretty but trust me, once you put it on, that will change," Tony tells him, holding out the head piece to him.

Loki looks at it doubtfully but accepts it. Looking it over slowly, he takes a deep breath and puts it on.

He feels ridiculous. He is sitting in Tony's shop, wearing a huge head piece which he can't see out of and strange gloves that feel strange. Then he hears what sounds like a small motor sound.

"Tony?" He calls out, not sure if the billionaire can hear him.

He doesn't hear a verbal response but there is a squeeze on his shoulder. He waits it out and as he does, he feels the equipment on him somehow become lighter. He flexes his hands, no longer feeling the clunky mechanical gloves that have somehow smoothed out and feel more...mobile.

He sits still as whatever is taking place stops. Minutes tick by in silence. Finally he decides to try to call out again to Tony, wondering if there is something he is suppose to be doing. But before he can, a familiar voice speaks within the head piece.

"The Watcher Program is now fully installed. Activating now," Jarvis announces.

Suddenly the faceplate lights up. Loki is stunned by what he see's. It's the sky. The rich blue of the sky, only a faint line of pale clouds to the far right. Closer, he can just see the roof of a tower.

"Like the view?" Tony's voice asks.
"Tony?"

"It's me. So come on already and tell me what you think," Tony replies.

"Think...of what? What is this? A...sort of illusion?" Loki questions.

"Nope. You're way off. It's my latest project. The Watcher Program. I know the name isn't very original. I'll come up with something better later. Anyway, what you are seeing is exactly what I am seeing," Tony informs him.

"What you are seeing? Aren't you...in the workshop?"

"I may have sneaked out while the pieces were adjusted to your sizes. Which reminds me, everything fits better now, right?" Tony asks.

"Yes," Loki replies. He isn't understanding this one bit. He is seeing what Tony see's? If he is, then where is Tony? And what is the purpose behind all this.

"Want to see something really interesting? Using your right hand, feel for a pressure switch located just below your left wrist. Hit it when you find it," Tony instructs.

Loki does so and a small window pops up on his right. His eyes focus on this window, seeing Tony, or more precisely, Iron man, hovering in the air. It gives him a wave.

"See me?" Tony asks.

"Yes...yes I do," Loki replies, smiling slightly.

"Good, that means you are hooked up to all the security cameras in the city. That's going to be really important later on. Now we are going to run a quick test, you ready?" Tony asks.

"Yes sir?" Loki replies hesitantly.

"Good. Jarvis, hand over Mark forty-five's controls over to the Watcher's program," Tony orders.

"Watcher's program will fully operate Mark forty-five's control's in five seconds," Jarvis replies.

Loki see's a tiny bar that is filling. He doesn't understand what is happening. What is Tony up to?

"The Watcher program now operates Mark forty-five," Jarvis informs them.

Loki watches the image, waiting for something to happen. At first nothing seems to. Then he watches in horror as Tony, within his suit, begins to fall.

"Tony!" Loki cries out, standing up.

"Easy Reindeer games. Need you to focus. You are in charge of the Watcher's program which has connected to the nano bytes I injected in you earlier. All you need to do is think of me flying and I will. Which would be cool of you to do any minute now," Tony tells him.

"Wha...what?" Loki asks. He can't believe this. Tony is falling to his death and he is suppose to save him? With his thoughts? What is the billionaire thinking? His mind is racing with fear and his heart is pounding. "I...I can't...

"Loki, breath. You can do it," Tony tells him. He won't tell Loki that if he gets too close to impact, Jarvis will intervene and return control to him. He wants Loki to be able to do this. In the back of his
mind, a memory of a similar fall threatens to surface. He fights it by focusing on the image of Loki displaying in the corner. "I know you can do this Loki. Think."

Loki shakes his head. He can't. He can't do this. Who in their right mind would give him, the former God of Mischeif and lies responsibility over a life? Who would trust..

Loki let's out a shaky breath. Slowly he sits back down. So this is what this is about. Tony is showing that he trusts Loki. Not by any small amount either. And right now, he is proving to be unworthy of that level of trust. The thought angers him. He's tired of being 'unworthy'. Someone honestly trusts him with their life. He will not betray that trust. His days of betraying are over.

So he takes in a deep breath, closing his eyes and focuses on Tony. Picturing Tony in his suit hovering in the air as he has seen with his own eyes. He thinks one word, over and over. "Fly".

"Loki..."

Loki sighs, bowing his head. It's not working. He's trying but it's not enough. He's...he's still not worthy.

"Loki!" Tony shouts, snapping Loki from his thoughts.

Loki opens his eyes and stares at the screen in disbelief. Tony isn't falling anymore. He is slowly ascending in the air.

"You did it, Rudolph,"Tony tells him.

Loki just stares at the sceen. He can't possibly doing this. Can he?

"Ready to move on to the next test?" Tony asks.

"There's...more?" Loki asks weakly.

"Well the suit can do more than fly upwards. But if you need a break..." Tony starts to tell Loki before his suit suddenly launches itself forward, it's speed increasing as it dodges buildings in it's way. Soon Tony is laughing. "Someone is adapting quickly!"

Loki can't help but smile. He is starting to really enjoy this. Especially hearing Tony laugh and knowing that Tony trusts him like this.

The rest of the evening is spent teaching Loki the ins and outs of the Watcher program and it's capabilities. Tony tells him that he has plans for updates, including altering the head piece to something more functional. Which means Tony will need Loki's input and help for more tests.

In a wooded lot, Tony is explaining the gloves function in connection to the repulors. "It's fairly basic. You raise your hand and the suit will do the same. Think blast and..." Tony finds his hand raising and a second later, a tree blasted apart. "Yeah, just like that. Good job Lokes. When I finish the other updates, the gloves will mostly be used to interact with a holo keyboard. So you can get better control of the security cameras, access certain restricted files...Google stuff...whatever. With me so far?" He asks.

"What is...Google?" Loki asks. At first he had been nervous to ask questions but when Tony only provided answers instead of insults or remarks, he became comfortable with asking his questions.

"An Internet search engine. I'll show you when I get..." Tony starts to promise when the screen begins to flash red.
Loki looks confusingly at the screen. Then he can hear the familiar alarm go off in the tower. The Avengers are being assembled.

"And just when we're having fun. Guess duty calls. Can you..." Tony starts to ask.

"Controls returned to the Mark forty-five suit sir," Jarvis interrupts.

"Go be the Earth's savior Tony," Loki replies with a smirk.

"Hey, if things go right, you will be helping this savior next time," Tony replies before taking off.

"Terminating the Watcher's current session," Jarvis announces as the screens go dark.

Loki sighs as he takes off the head piece. He looks it over, trying to see what changes had been made when it reshaped to fit him. Not seeing any, he shakes his head. There must be a way for this to work without something so...hideous. He sets it down on the table before peeling over the gloves. These he didn't mind so much. A little bulky but not bad. Setting these down carefully besides the headpiece, he stands up.

The alarm has stop so now there was nothing but silence. He muffles a yawn. He is still worn out from his efforts the last few days. Some sleep sounds very good to him. The protocol that has been set up after the last time the Avengers had been assembled was for him to be locked down in Tony's workshop which should now have a protective barrier around it.

"Jarvis? Is the...barrier Tony set up in place?" Loki asks as he looks for the cot he knows must be here.

"It is indeed. I believe what you are looking for is in the far left corner," Jarvis informs him.

Loki looks and see's the plush couch with a blanket and pillow. "Thank you," he replies and takes a few steps in that direction.

Then he smells something. Something burning. Almost like ozone. It is making him light headed.

"Jarvis!" He calls out in alarm when he realizes what is happening. Before he can hear the AI's reply, he is blinded by a flash of white light. He quickly covers his eyes as he feels the pressure build around him. He feels as if there is no air, that he may very well be crushed to death by the pressure that sends him to his knees before it suddenly stops.

A deep, almost menacing voice greets his ears. "Even in your fallen state, but here is no need to kneel before me, fallen God of Mischief."

Loki lowers his arms and meets the gaze of Victor Von Doom.
Loki slowly stands up, his eyes not leaving the green cloak man. "What do you want from me?" he asks, forcing his voice to remain steady. Tony's new electrical barrier had been created to prevent surprise guests. But apparently it's useless when it comes to someone summoning him away.

"To offer you a proposition. One I think you could...appreciate," Doom replies before moving slowly across the room.

Loki watches his movements. He can see Amora and Skurge standing back watching this with some amusement. In the other corner, there looks to be a bone thin man who is rubbing his hands nervously. He looks like someone who lives in the back alleys, content on being unseen and forgotten.

"That remains to be seen," Loki replies. He again straightens, and he knows they know he is Stark's slave. But he refuses to let them think he is broken down and can be used against Tony in way. He doubts he is fooling them.

"Yes, you do have good reason to be suspicious. Perhaps I should get to the point. I am sure you have information that I require for my...current ambitions. I want that information," Doom tells him.

"I have already heard this offer Doom. Do I really need to reject it again?" Loki asks, faking the coyness in his tone.

"No, you haven't heard this part of my offer. Join me, give your knowledge to me willingly, and I will restore you to a place of power Loki. Here, see what I offer is true," Doom tells him before
he holds his metal covered hands out, a blue vapor rising from them.

Loki watches as an intricate staff materializes in Doom's hands. It's a deep black with red vine like designs spiraling it from the bottom to the top till it encircles a grey stone.

"Take it. There is no spell on it, I assure you," Doom swears.

There is a chill running through his veins. He knows he shouldn't accept. But maybe, he can stall for time. Tony told him that he can be tracked. Which means Tony may very well be on his way. So he will play Doom's little game...at least for the moment.

He reaches for the staff, his eyes not leaving the ones peering out from a metal mask. When his fingers wrap around the strange surface of the staff, he feels something. Almost like a pulse. It goes up his arm then through out his body. He looks down and his eyes widen as he see's red mist crawl over his arm. As quickly as it happens, it's gone. Loki examines his arms. He is now wearing his former armor. Armor he hasn't worn since he had been stripped of it in the dungeons of Asgard.

There were differences from his old armor. This one seems to dawn the colors of red and black instead of his green and gold colors. The intricate designs were not Asgardian but rather old runes. He didn't need to wonder what they were for. He could feel it in the armor. Magik. It's as if this armor breathes it. A small smile forms. He has so missed the feel. Even if it's not his, he still controls it. He can actually feel it.

"I see that you are pleased with this. I may be unable to restore your true powers Loki, but what I am willing to offer you should be satisfying. I can only imagine the emptiness you have felt at it's loss. Join me Loki, tell me your secrets and you will never feel that emptiness again. Even more promising, you will never have to kneel before a lowly mortal again. No one. Specially not that of Tony Stark," Doom tells him.

What Doom says is true. The emptiness of his magic, of his powers sealed away, have been nothing short of torturous. He could feel the moments of weakness slip away, the magic making him stronger. It's riveting. Time almost feels like it's moving backwards. He is returning to his old self. His smile widens. Yes, he is no longer the fallen God. No longer the sorry, miserable trickster. He is once again Loki, God of Mischief.

He barely hears Doom's words. His mind is already whirling with ways to bring his brother to his knees. Him and the Avengers. Especially Tony...

His smile falters, something that doesn't go unnoticed by Doom. Tony Stark. His former enemy. A man who for reasons of his own, has risked his neck and much more for Loki. Who accepted his offer to be his Master and yet has not abused his position. A man that only moments ago put his very life in Loki's hands.

There is a loud clatter as Loki drops the staff. He feels the magic fade and the armor vanishes. He looks up at Doom, looking him directly in the eyes.

"I rather kneel to Tony Stark than be enslaved to that madness again," Loki states firmly.

"I see. So it seems you will not be persuaded. How disappointing," Doom replies. He had seen the gleam in the fallen deity's eyes. For a moment, it seemed that his plan would go smoothly. Then something changed. First it was the smile. Then a strange intensity began to burn in those emerald orbs. Something he doesn't recognize. But it's there. And he wants nothing more than to extinguish it.
He turns to his allies and gives them a nod. Skurge moves forward, slowly stalking Loki. Amora walks over to a pair of chairs. One is made of steel and has various bindings. This is the one that Skurge takes Loki to once he seizes hold of him. He listens to the fallen God's struggles. He is almost impressed by the spirit. Almost. With patience, he waits for the Enchantress to finish her little spell. For his plans, he can't waste anymore of his power. But hers can be used, and she has sworn that her magic can seal the trickster from Stark's technology as well as S.H.I.E.L.D's.

He turns and faces the former Demi God who is now strapped down in place. "Things didn't need to be so difficult Loki. They still don't. Agree to answer my questions and I swear, I will send you back to your Master unharmed. If he will still have you," Doom adds.

"Will you just get on with it? I don't want to miss the look on your face after the Avengers tear apart yet another one of your schemes," Loki replies with a bored tone.

"It's good to see that you haven't been completely broken down by your current situation. Is this all because you have placed faith in someone? Trust? Which reminds me, there is something I have been dying to ask. How did you come to be the great Tony Stark's slave? Why him of all people?" Doom asks.

"I learned that he really doesn't like people taking his stuff. Something I hope you learn the hard way," Loki tells him with a confident smirk. "And as for the question about trust...well, I'm afraid that with your...limited intelligence...you could never understand my explanation."

He knows this isn't a smart play. But it's the only one he has. Yes, Doom and the others know he has been reduced to nothing of a mere human and somehow they know he is Tony's slave. But he can still be dangerous. He still has his mind. A thing twisted and filled with ill content. At least, that is what he wants them to believe. He doesn't expect much from this act. What will be done will be done. But maybe they will be cautious with him. Treat him like a venomous snake, afraid to even handle him. They will focus on preventing him from biting but ignore his claws. That is how mistakes happen. All he needs is one mistake to gain his freedom from this place. Maybe just a moment to contact Tony...

He is alerted when Doom sits down in the chair besides him. The filthy, nervous looking man slowly approaches them. His left hand stretches toward Doom while his right towards Loki. Loki cringes back, suddenly sure that the last thing he wants is this man's disgusting hand to touch him. Out of the corner of his eye, he see's Doom grab wrist of the hand that had been reaching out to him. "This had better work Sybil," Doom warns.

"It will sir, it will," the man promises.

"What is this about Doom?" Loki asks, his eyes not looking away from the man's hand that is hovering inches from his face.

"It's quite simple. Since you will not give me the information I seek willingly, Sybil take it from your mind and transfer it to me. Thought I must warn you, he told me the process for you...will be very painful," Doom answers as Sybil's hand moves again forward, his finger tips touching Loki's forehead.

At first Loki feels nothing. His eyes turn towards Doom, possibly to seek some sort of answer. But before a word can escape his lips, the man's other hand touches the same spot of Doom's metallic mask. At that instant, Loki felt as if a burning knife had been embedded into his skull. He clenches his jaw, the only thing he can do to keep from crying out in pain. The burning pain slowly spreads, feeling like claw as that are tearing at his mind.
He doesn't know when he started screaming out in pain. Nor for how long. He is only fully aware of it finally ending and the hand withdrawing. He moans in sweet relief. His body is shaking, covered in sweat. His mind...his mind feels like it's bleeding some how.

Doom stands up and walks forward. For him the experience had been...revitalizing. He felt younger somehow. Energy coursed through his veins, stronger than it has been in years. And above all else, he know posses the final piece to his plan.

"Amora, clear the room," he orders. He doesn't see her wave her hand indigently. But he does see the various objects in the room vanish, enlarging the space in the room. When she is clearly finished, he wastes no time.

Loki lifts his gaze as he feels the air move about in the room. It's growing colder and colder by the second. He see's Doom standing nearby, his arms out stretched. Runes appear on the ground before him. Loki knows what he is doing. He summoning something. But what?

Loki doesn't have to wait long. There is a loud pop as the air stills and a sudden flash as if lightening had strikes the center of the room. When Loki can see clearly, he hesitantly looks over to Doom. What he see's makes his stomach see.

Before Doom in a gigantic serpent. One that Loki recognizes. It's the fabled Basilisk from the forgotten caverns on Asgard. On more than one occasion, he and Thor had hunted for the creature. They were never successful. But here it is. It's bright yellow eyes focused on Doom, it's tongue, the size of an Asgardian warrior, tastes the air. It's body coils as if uncomfortable in the open space that barely accommodates it.

He can hear Doom speaking an incantation. The serpent seems to sense something and it lifts it's head which begins to flatten out. Loki watches as the thing that his brother and himself once hunted prepares itself to strike. It's mouth opens...then closes. It lowers it's head and Doom walks up to it confidently. He runs a metal encased hand over it's smooth skin. Doom has succeeded in binding it.

"A marvelous creature. An excellent specimen for the first summoning, don't you agree trickster?" Doom asks.

Loki blinks. 'For the first summoning.' Then Doom intends to summon more? What other creatures does he plan to bring to this realm? For the first time, he fears for Tony and the other Avengers. It also makes clear what Doom took from him. Knowledge of the various living creatures. And the spell to bind them to oneself. Old knowledge he had obtained from his studies years ago.

"It's venom is suppose to be acidic, is that correct?" He hears Doom ask.

"Yes," he answers quietly. It would do him no good to deny it. Doom would know any other answer to be a lie.

"Interesting," Doom comments as he summons a metal bowl in his hand. The beast opens it's mouth obediently. Loki watches as a single drop fills the bowl. He continues to watch the bowl warily as Doom walks back over to him. "Your information has been most useful Trickster. It will aid me well. However, I have no further need of you."

Loki holds his breath as Doom moves closer to him with the bowl of venom. He nearly sighs with relief when he turns away, setting the bowl down on the counter of a steel table.

"Did you think I would use the acid to kill you? I am not some mere murder Loki. You wound me with such thoughts," Doom comments with his back turned to Loki.
"I'm a God of Mischief Doom. I know better than anyone when someone is up to no good," Loki replies.

"You were a God. Still, I don't doubt that you still have many skills. So this will come as no surprise to you," he says as he quickly turns, flinging the metal bowl with the venom.

Loki see's the spilled venom fly towards him. Yet he is helpless to defend himself from the spray. He closes his eyes but he is a second to late. His screams of agony soon fill the room.

"A pity. You could have had your hearts desires. But you threw it away. As I said, I am not some common murderer Loki. But I do not take kindly to my offers being refused," Doom states.

Loki is withering in pain in the chair he is restrained in. There is a faint sizzling sound as the acid burns his eyes. Doom watches this for a moment before lowering himself, so he is just a breath from Loki's ear.

"I took more than your precious knowledge Loki. I saw your memories. I saw what happened to you in that cabin. And in the cell of S.H.I.E.L.D's. It was disgusting," he whispers. His words gain him the tiniest of whimpers. "I know that is your fear. That your body be used in such a manner against your will. It terrifies you more than death. Only one fear is stronger. To be forgotten. Well Loki, I have something in mind that you are not going to like. Do think of me in the days to come."

Doom straightens up and walks over to Amora. "I will have a location set up for him. You are to deliver him. Is that understood?" Doom asks.

"As you wish," she replies. "What do you have in mind?"

Doom tells her and she smiles wickedly. When he is finished, Doom leaves.

Amora strolls over to Loki and sits down on his lap. "Oh Loki dear, I bet you are wishing you had accepted his offer now, don't you? If not now, you will soon," she coos before planting a kiss on his cheek. She then gets up and leaves the room with a laugh.

Loki can't stop the trembling of his body. He is in such pain...only one other time had been worse. But not by much. What bothers him isn't the pain though. It's what Doom had said. An enemy that knows your fears, your weakness, is one to be feared. So what does Doom have in store for him?

He wills his eyes to open. He knows the venom got to them. He needs to know how bad they are. For a moment, he thinks that maybe he is too weak to do even this. Then he realizes the darkness isn't behind his eyelids. It's all he can see. Fear twists in his stomach. What will Tony think when he learns that his slave is now blind? Everything he could do before...he is now useless.

Moments later he hears the clicking of heels. Amora must be wearing her earth attire. He feels a hand touch his face to which he jerks away from. He hears a sigh and feels the restraints loosen then fall away. Skurge must have followed for before he could do anything, he is yanked up on his feet and his arms pulled behind his back to be restrained again. Then he is tossed over the large Asgardian's shoulder as if he was nothing more than a bag of goods.

Later, when he is set down on the ground after being taken out of some vehicle, he finds his voice.

"What does Doom intend to have done with me?" He asks, his voice strained as his throat still raw.

"Oh, nothing much. He considered your situation with Stark and those...special incidents you had and decided to relocate you. Specially since he doubts that fool, Tony Stark will have much use for you now. But there is still one way you can serve. Which makes this place perfect," Amora replies
with a child like tone.

Loki turns towards the direction of her voice. Nothing she saws is making much sense. "And what is this place?" He asks, lacing his voice with his own venom.

"Oh what was the name they give these places again Skurge dear?" Amora asks.

"Brothel, my lady," Skurge answers.

"That's right. A male Brothel. Honestly, this realm still surprises me," she comments with a giggle.

"A...male Brothel?" Loki repeats in disbelief.

"That's what I said. A place for male whores. Like yourself," she replies.

Loki backs up, his back hitting the vehicle. He is shaking his head. This can't be happening. Doom would never sink so low as this. This is too vile.

The hit to his stomach catches him by surprise and sends him to his knees. He isn't given a moment to recover as he is again lifted and carried. He tries to squirm. He shouts then pleas for mercy. Before the doors close, he shouts for Tony.
Chapter 41

Chapter Notes

A Fallen God

Chapter 41

A Frostiron fic

Disclaimer: I don't own the characters, movies, comics or anything else. All that belongs to Marvel and the creators. I don't even know the actors, though I'd like to.

Warnings: Since this is a story in progress, Not sure what to warn ya about. This will be a Tony Stark/Loki. Which means guy/guy. There will be some cussing (Tony does have a mouth) and angst. Some violence. There are references to past rape as well as rape and improper use of a fire poker. So be careful while reading.

I would also like to give my thanks to my beta, witch-of-sound! Without them, well...ya guys know...

Hope you enjoy and please leave comments! Thank you all for reading this and the support! And for the tears and such resulting in this chapter...I deeply apologize. Will make it up, I swear!

________________________________________________________________________________________

Tony Stark sits at his work bench, glaring at the displays. It's strangely silent and he has the lights reduced. The floor is littered with parts and tools. It has been three months since Loki had been taken, and despite all his efforts and all his resources, he has been unable to find him. It's as if he fell off the face of the planet. Which is why he is waiting to hear back from Thor. To hear if there has been any word of Loki in the other realms.

In the mean time, he has allowed himself to fall apart. He has a small screen in the corner that replays the moment where Loki takes off the old Watcher helmet, which since then he has upgraded to a simple visor like piece and gloves, to the moment he vanishes in a white flash. He has it set on an endless loop. This is what he is watching as his hand gropes for a bottle of scotch. Tony takes a swig before looking at the other displays. Various displays show foreign and local locations, a single word in white sits squarely in the middle of these. 'Searching'

There is a clatter behind him and with a sigh he turns and faces the uncomfortable looking Captain.

"So they sent out a search party of one for me, I'm flattered," Tony states.

"Everyone's worried about you Tony. No one has seen you in a few weeks," Steve replies.

"Well now someone has. So you can run along and tell everyone I'm alive and well. For the most part anyway," Tony tells him before turning back to the screens.

"He is still missing, isn't he?" Steve asks, moving closer instead of retreating.
"If he wasn't, he would be here."

"Tony...have you considered that maybe...he wasn't taken?" Steve asks hesitantly.

"Captain, I'm going to say this because we're team mates and I don't feel like punching anyone today. Don't go there," Tony warns.

"I'm sorry Tony. It's just that the others are starting to think that maybe...Doom made a deal with him."

"And of course you think he betrayed me to side with Doom, right? Of course he would! Doom probably lured him away with promises of candy and toys, no bed time, and he could stay up all night playing video games. Heck, where do I sign up?" Tony asks mockingly.

"Tony..."

"Tell the others to keep their opinions to themselves. They didn't know him. None of you did. Except maybe Bruce. He's not saying this, is he?" Tony asks.

"No. No, he's not. In fact he keeps reminding us that Loki has been de-powered. That we need to find him quickly. Doom isn't one to keep those that serve no further purpose...never mind. Bruce is on your side Tony," Steve tells him.

"At least someone is," Tony mutters.

"I didn't mean it like that. Look, I'll back off, pass your message along if you agree to cleaning yourself a bit and eat something," Steve promises.

"The last part was from Pepper, wasn't it?"

"Yeah," Steve confirms.

"Good ol' Pep..." He starts to reply when one of the screens starts to beep, drawing his attention as he stands up to look more closely at it.

"Tony, what is it?" Steve asks with alarm, his body growing tense as if expecting a battle to suddenly take place right there in the workshop.

"It's Loki." Tony replies with a smile. "Jarvis, give everything you can on his location."

"Mr. Laufeyson appears to be located in Mexicali, Mexico sir. I am uploading the coordinates now," Jarvis replies.

"What kind of place..." Steve starts to ask.

"It seems that Mr. Laufyson is being kept in a Mexican brothel. One that is running illegally might I add," Jarvis adds.

"A what?" Both men ask at the same time.

In that same Brothel, Loki is woken by a kick to the stomach. He cries out in pain and quickly feels for the bed. He hadn't meant to fall asleep. He had just been so tired. The room is filled with yelling in a foreign language but he pays it no heed. It will stop when he gets into position, which he does. He hears the satisfied grunt then a door opening. There's the familiar exchange of foreign words then he feels the bed dip. It is time to work.
As he forces a small smile onto his lips, he notices something. Something is different. He feels strangely...more exposed. Which makes no sense. He's not allowed to wear clothing so he is always exposed, and he doesn't need to concern himself with it. If they think he's too distracted, they will hurt him. Or give him drugs that make him sick. So he tries focus on what he can feel and how foreign hands manipulate his body.

Without his sight, his imagination steps in. At first, he would see what must be the likely sight. Of him whoring himself to whoever has entered the room. But he quickly alters this horrific image to something more...pleasant. As the stranger enters him and uses him, he pictures not a stranger but a man who has short dark hair, deep brown eyes full of confidence. He's not drunk this time. And Loki wants this. Wants him.

Then it's over. The stranger leaves and the fantasy ends. It hurts. He always feels as if he could almost summon the man to him. That it really is him there, touching him, using him. That it didn't matter that he meet his own climax, much less be stimulated. If it pleases him, he would gladly give his body over to him. But when they leave, he has to face the truth. That he has allowed his body to be defiled. That the man he imagines is miles away, living his life without him.

He must have forgotten him by now. The life of Tony Stark is one that is destined to continue on, always moving forward to some goal. The man has no time to look back for what has been lost. In some way, Loki is sure that Tony is glad to be free of him. It pains him to think this. But it's the lie he must tell himself over and over to keep from going over the edge. To keep the pain from being too much to bare.

Still, when he feels the air grow cold and the door remains closed, he allows himself to hope. That maybe he hasn't been forgotten. That Tony is looking for him. That he will find him and take him home. That somehow he will look past the filth and defilement, past the blindness and see him as he once did. Even if it's only that of a slave, it's better than this. But such wishful thinking ends come morning and the first set of hands touch him. Instead there is a new wish he makes, which is to be forgotten. He can't bare the thought of Tony seeing him like this.

He turns towards the door when he hears it open. He shifts himself to the expected position. It seems that he is in for a long day. But he realizes something is wrong when his arm is grabbed and he is pulled off the bed. There is a warning slap, to tell him to behave or he will receive worse. He goes limp as expected. His eyes get covered, not to blind him but to hide the scarring from the acidic venom, and his arms are restrained behind his back. His jaw is squeezed until he obediently opens his mouth which is gagged. Then he is left alone in his confusion. All he can do is curl up and wait.

Back at the tower, Tony is heading for his awaiting suits and Steve is trying to stop him.

"Tony! You need to think here, really! You can't just go there and take him! You need to come up with a plan here," Steve tries to persuade him.

"No time Captain. Sometimes you have to jump into the pool to learn to swim," Tony replies. "Or you could drown. Or worse, Loki will. You don't know what to expect to find there Tony."

"Sorry to burst your bubbles pal, but I do know. It's a whore house. Not some villian's liar or a secret malitia's hideout. A simple Mexican whore house. But in case they get fiesty, I'll have my suit," he tells Steve in a similar manner that one might tell a child that there is no monster under the bed.

"Which is exactly my point. You can't go there in a suit. Not unless you want Fury breathing down your neck, and you know he will blame Loki. Maybe even place an order for him to be detained. You know what that will do to Loki?" Steve points out.
The words sink in and Tony stops. He hates that the Captain is right.

"What do you suggest Steve?" Tony asks.

"Is there someone you could ask to do you a favor?" Steve asks as he pulls out his cell phone.

"Depends on the favor. Actually, no, it doesn't," Tony replies.

"Okay good. I have a friend who could join yours. He's a good man. But you are buying him dinner," Steve tells him.

"But what will our friends be doing? I mean, you won't let me just go in and do a smash and grab..." Tony questions.

"If I may interrupt," Jarvis injects, "Sir, I have taken the liberty of hacking into all communications from the location where Mr. Laufeyson is being held. There appears to be some sort of auction scheduled to take place there. One such item fits the description of the God of Mischief."

"Auction?" Steve repeats in disbelief. At times likes this, he wishes he was still frozen in a block of ice, safe from having to face the depravity of his fellow men.

"Don't worry Spangles, when our buddies get there, that place will no longer be operational," Tony swears. "So call your friend and send him on his way. My friend will meet him there."

"And who will he be meeting?" Steve asks as he dials a number.

"Jarvis, could you be a dear and get Rhodey on the phone for me?"

"Tell him to look for a Sam Wilson," Steve tells Tony before walking away to talk on his cell.

Hours later, Rhodey, Tony Stark's long time friend, walks into what appears to be nothing more than a rusty colored barn. But inside there is awful country music, cheap cigarette smoke, and the smell of beer to greet him. There were small tables set up everywhere except towards the back which had been set up with a makeshift stage.

He lowers his sunglasses and takes a look around. One would think that being in Mexico, the place would be filled with it's people. Nothing could be further from the truth. There seemed to be all kinds gathered here. The sight of so many people for this kind of thing made him sick. Still, he agreed and he is not one to back out of an agreement. But Tony will seriously owe him one after this.

He spots a fellow on the far left that looked just uncomfortable as he does and decides to walk over.

"Sam Wilson?"

"You must be Rhodey. Tony's friend, right?" Sam greets, standing up and shaking the man's hand.

"Well, maybe not after today. Can't believe I agreed to this," Rhodey mutters as he sits down.

"It certainly makes you wonder about humanity, doesn't it?"

"I'd rather be in a foreign country, fighting in some war than be here right now."

"At least we will be helping someone out of here. Wish we could help the others," Sam says sadly.

"They will be helped. Here, look at this," Rhodey says as he pulls out what looks to be an ordinary cell phone.
"Does it come with bluetooth?" Sam asks, a bit puzzled as to why he is being shown a cell phone.

"Better. It has a portable hacking program that just downloaded itself in every cell phone here. Once they leave here, authorities will be picking them up within the hour," Rhodey explains.

"Stark Industries?"

"Nah, just one of Tony's little toys he whipped up for the occasion. You won't believe what he comes up with when something riles him up," Rhodey tells him knowingly.

"Sounds like a good man to have on your side. So, how well do you know the lady we are watching out for?" Sam asks, looking towards the stage where there is starting to be some activity.

"You don't know?"

"Know what? She ain't some politician's daughter, is she?"

"It's not a 'she' we're here for. It's a 'he'. And he happens to be Thor's brother," Rhodey tells him.

"Thor's brother? As in the God of Thunder? Ain't his brother Loki? The guy who tried taking over the planet some time back?" Sam questions. Steve hadn't told him too many details. Just that there was someone that needs assistance in a rescue. Steve mentioned that his skills in counseling those with PTSD might be needed. But he can't imagine how that can be true when dealing with beings that are practically Gods.

"That's the one. It's a long story but the short version is that Loki has no powers, he's like you and me, and somehow he ended up here thanks to Victor Von Doom. He's the one we're here for," Rhodey shares.

"Wow..."

"Yeah, wow. After this, I say we should spend an evening at a local bar and have Tony pick up the tab," Rhodey mutters as they see people gather around the stage. Soon a woman is brought out and an auction begins.

"Count me in. I only hope we don't have to be here long," Sam replies, shaking his head in disgust.

They watch the auctions go on in silence. Men come and go with their prize, both men or women. Both hope that Tony's program works and these smug bastards will soon be behind bars. Finally, there is a small beep from Rhodey's cell.

"Someone texting you?" Sam asks.

"No. It means the person we are here for is up next," Rhodey replies as he stands up.

Sam joins him and both men go to the stage area. On stage is a bound pale skinned man, forced into a position that fully exposes him. To Sam, the man looks like a far cry from a supposed God.

"Are we sure this is the right one?" Sam whispers as he looks at the few other people who have come forward and seem to look over the naked man before walking away or remaining where they are.

"According to this, it's him," Rhodey replies.

Soon the bidding starts. Both men remain silent as the number increases. Finally, it seems to stop at fifty thousand. The auctioneer is saying 'going once, going twice,'.
"One hundred thousand, American," Rhodey calls out. "Curtesy of Stark Industries," he adds, looking at the other bidders, clearly issuing a challenge.

There is a stunning silence in the room. Then the auctioneer seems to recover himself and makes the final calls. None of the other bidders speak.

"Sold! Please go to your left to pay for your prize then he is all yours," the auctioneer tells them.

Sam and Rhodey follow the man's directions and soon are walking out a back door with the former deity walking slowly between them. A dusty blanket barely covers the former god.

"Um, I kinda flew into town then walked here," Sam says quietly.

"No worries. I got a company van parked over there," Rhodey replies. He leans over towards Loki, dropping his voice. "Hey, once we get you in the van, we'll get you dressed and take that stuff off of you. We just have to be careful because someone might be watching us. We did draw some serious attention back there. But we should be fine once we're out of sight."

The man gave no visible response nor verbal. He kept his head low and allowed himself to be guided to a vehicle.

Sam opens the back door and looks around as Loki carefully crawls backwards inside, his hands feeling out the floor of the van. As Sam climbs in, Rhodey gets in the driver's seat and starts the van.

"There's a pack that got sent to me with some of his clothes. There's some water too. We'll be picked up in an hour's time," Rhody tells him.

"Hey, I need to make a stop at the local bus station. There's something I need to pick up," Sam replies. "I can give ya directions once we're in town."

"Alright," Rhodey replies.

Sam turns his attention to the huddled form before him. He moves himself closer to the man who seems to not even be aware of his presence.

"Loki?" Sam calls out quietly.

Loki lifts his head towards the direction of the voice. It has been a long time since he heard his own name. It may have been spoken by foreign tongues but he doubts it. If those people wanted his attention, they used pain to get it.

"Hey. Listen, I am going to take that thing out of your mouth. It looks really uncomfortable. That's all I am going to do, will you be alright with me doing that?" Sam asks.

Loki nods his head slowly, almost hesitantly. Being spoken to...being asked questions...he's not sure what to expect nor how to respond. He feels hands at the back of his head, untying the strings that keep the gag in place.

Sam moves slowly, his fingers untangling the knots. Soon he is gently pulling the gag out from the former deity's mouth. Sam tosses the thing into a bag and finds a bottle of water.

"I'll take off the other restraints but first, would you like a drink of water?" Sam offers, receiving another nod. He unscrews the cap and gently places the open bottle to the man's lips, slowly tipping it.
Loki drinks the water eagerly when he tastes that the water is pure, not the dirty water he is usually given to drink. A small moan leaves him when the bottle is pulled away.

"Don't worry, you can have more in a few minutes. I'm going to remove the blindfold now, alright?" Sam tells him. He caps the bottle, setting it aside and reaches behind Loki's head again, noticing that the man seems to be holding his breath.

He finds out why when he pulls the blindfold away, revealing the scarred skin. Fearing the worse, he asks Loki to open his eyes. When the man does, he lowers lowers his own head. "Damn."

"What's up?" Rhodey asks as he pulls over, fearing that something is seriously wrong.

"Did Tony mention anything about him being blind?" Sam asks.

"What did you say?" Rhodey asks before twisting to look back. "Damn," he mutters when he see's Loki's eyes.

Loki however isn't responding to their reaction to his condition. Instead, something has caught his attention. "Tony? Tony Stark?" He asks.

"Yeah, that's right. Tony. He sent us to rescue you," Rhodey tells him.

"Then...he didn't...he didn't forget me?" Loki asks quietly.

"No. No, he didn't. He's been looking for you," Rhodey answers.

Both he and Sam wait to see how the man will react to this. But all Loki does is lower his head. The men exchange a look before Rhodey turns back to the road, shaking his head. Sam pulls out a key from his pocket.

"Okay, now I am going to take off the cuffs. But I need you to agree to remain calm. Once that's done, I will pass you some clothes and you can get dressed, alright?" Sam asks.

Loki nods his head again and remains still as Sam removes the cuffs, freeing his hands. He let's his arms fall into his lap and waits for the clothing. His mind is in a state of shock. Tony has been looking for him? He hadn't forgotten him? Then why is he not here? Does he not want to see him? Does he know what has been done with him? Maybe he only wants to be sure that he didn't give Doom any information about the Avengers? It can't be because he missed Loki. It can't be.

With a little help, he dresses quickly. He is given the bottle of water and is told he can lay down which he does. He curls himself up tightly, flinching when they stop and Sam get out. But soon he returns and he feels the van move.

As Loki closes his sightless eyes, he wonders where he is being taken to. It can't be to Tony or the tower. He almost doesn't want to 'see' Tony. Or more accurately, he doesn't want Tony to see him. He's too ashamed. He feels too dirty to stand before Tony now, and when Tony finds out that he is useless...except for that certain purpose...what will the billionaire do with him then?

But he can't help but want to hear Tony's voice. Even if it only tells him what he already knows. Even if it rejects him or tears him down, he wants to hear it. The voice belongs to the only other person who has truly seen him at what had been his lowest, had seen him as both a monster and as a creature of madness, has seen the true version of himself, and never once looked away. Even when he willingly became something less, Tony didn't look away.

But will he now? Loki is almost sure he will.
Meanwhile, Tony is stepping out of the shower. After pacing impatiently for a phone call, Jarvis had delivered a message from Pepper which suggests that he clean up a bit before Loki arrives. It had provided him with a temporary distraction from the wait. But now the distraction has passed.

"Jarvis, update."

"There has been no word from Mr. Rhodes or Agent Romanoff as of yet sir," Jarvis replies. He had asked Natasha to pick them up in her jet. Bruce went with her in case Loki needed medical attention.

Everyone had promised to contact him as soon as they have Loki. Yet no one has. It is driving him crazy. Was Loki in too bad of shape? Is that why they haven’t contacted him? Or were there complications? Maybe Jarvis's Intel was incorrect. Or maybe there is an error in the nano bytes, giving him faulty information? Or maybe there is no information to receive, that he is too late to save him and the nano bytes are sending faulty information out.

Or maybe Loki has asked them not to contact him for some reason. Maybe he is mad at him for taking so long to find him. That still puzzles him. Why couldn't any of his programs connect to the nano bytes in Loki's system? They appear to be in working order for himself and Clint. He ran enough tests on both to be sure. So something had to be interfering. But what? And why did it suddenly stop interfering? It almost seems as if someone wanted to hide Loki from him and now wanted him to find Loki at this moment, as if it was somehow planned. But why? And who?

"Sir, Agent Romanoff has confirmed that Mr. Laufeyson is now on board her jet. They will be on their way to the tower shortly."

Tony sighs with relief. Finally, some good news. "Did she say anything about his conditions?"

"No sir, she did not," Jarvis answers.

So much for good news. Still, if it is anything serious, Bruce would insist on her telling him. Regardless, there is only one thing he can do. Wait. So he does.
Chapter 42

Loki wakes with a start when the jet lands. He waits, expecting a kick or hit for falling asleep without being told he could do so. Instead, a hand places itself on his shoulder.

"It's alright Loki. We've landed. We are at the tower now," the familiar voice of Dr. Banner tells him. Another hand touches his own and gives him a comforting squeeze.

Loki returns it, though timidly. There is so much going through his mind at the moment. He's back at the tower. The tower is where Tony is. Is he waiting for him? If so, will he be pleased to see the trickster? Or will it be a mask he wears for his friends? Or will he not even bother, and reject him upon sight?

He has been wanting to see Tony again for so long. Even though it was impossible with his damaged eyes, he still wanted this very thing. Yet his fear, fear of rejection, fear of Tony's discontent, fear of Tony himself, has him trying to curl up tightly. He stops when he feels another squeeze, this time on his shoulder.

"Easy. Everything will be alright," Bruce's voice tells him quietly.

He doesn't mean to doubt the doctor. But how can what he is saying be true? How can he be so sure?

He feels a rush of air hit his face. The loading ramp has been opened. It's time.

Tony is standing nearby, his nerves tingling. He really wants a drink right now. There had been no
report on Loki's condition. So he had no idea what to expect. He keeps telling himself that if there had been anything serious, Bruce would have told him.

When a hand claps him on the back, he nearly jumps out of his skin.

"At ease solider," Steve tells him.

"How many times do I have to tell you? I'm not a solider, boy wonder. Getting old must really be a pain," he mutters to cover for his embarrassment.

"You're worried about him, aren't you?"

"No more than I would for anyone else," Tony replies a little too quickly.

"I'm sure he will..." Is as far as Steve got when the ramp lowered.

Sam, carrying his pack, walked down it first, greeting Tony with a nod then shaking hands with Steve as they walked off to the side. Rhodes followed. He claps Tony on the shoulder.

"So what happened to calling me as soon as you had him?" Tony asks.

"Crappy cell reception. That and I was a bit distracted..." Rhodes explains.

"How is he?" Tony asks, his voice sounding as raw as his nerves.

"You need to brace yourself Tony," Rhodey tells him. Before he can explain any further, he hears the man take in a deep breath.

Tony is watching as a familiar raven haired man comes into view. But right away he could tell something is wrong. Loki's head is hanging so low, he can't see the trickster's face. His hands seem to be gripping Bruce's arm tight enough to leave bruises as he is led down the ramp. They stop a few feet from Tony. Bruce whispers something to Loki and for the first time, he raises his head as if to look at Tony.

Tony stops breathing. He can't believe what he is seeing. What happened to those emerald green orbs? When did it happen? Did Doom do this? Or did it happen at the Brothel? But it's more than the white glazed eyes or the acid burns around them that bother him. It's the fear in his face. Is that fear caused by something Bruce said? Or is it because he knows Tony is there?

Bruce whispers something else and gently removes Loki's hands from his arm. With a gentle pat, Bruce walks over to Tony.

"Sorry I didn't warn you ahead of time, Tony. I felt that this was something you needed to see for yourself. Of course, I can't say how serious his blindness is, or if it's permanent without a proper examination but I wouldn't be surprise if it is. I'm sorry Tony. I can see he needs you right now. Say something to him," Bruce encourages.

Tony nods as Bruce walks into the tower. He wants to say something to Loki. But his mind is drawing a blank. He watches Loki as the man seems to look around, giving off an image of someone who appears lost. For the life of him, Tony doesn't know what to do or say to the former God.

Loki is trying to keep himself under control. But his stomach is twisting itself into knots. His heart is hammering in his chest. His hands are shaking. Dr. Banner told him that Tony is there. But why is Tony not saying anything? Is he horrified? Loki hadn't meant to lift his head. He wanted to hide the unsightly scars and his blindness for as long as he possibly could. But when Bruce told him Tony
was there, he lifted his head as if he could see him. A grave mistake it seems.

Minutes pass in silence. Neither move. Neither speak. Natasha leaves her jet, pressing the button to close the ramp. Loki turns towards the sound, startled.

Tony doesn't realize that Loki is only startled. To him, it looks as if the former God is about to try and run back onto the jet, to flee.

"Loki!" He calls out, not realizing the name has left his lips.

Loki freezes. Then slowly, he turns towards the source of the voice, his head lowered cautiously.

Tony knows he needs to say something. What Bruce had said is true. Loki needs him to say something. Loki needs him. Loki needs... Then it clicks. A light of understanding goes on in his mind. Tony straightens himself up, taking on a pose of a man with authority.

"Loki, come here," he orders.

Loki jerks his head up at the order. Did Tony just order him to come to him? Does that mean he still wants the damaged trickster? But how is that even possible? Does he not see that with his blindness he is useless? Worthless? And surely by now the man knows what he has been forced to do. How he gave himself to strangers to avoid beatings he knows he should have endured but his cowardice couldn't bare it. So it can't be true. He must be mistaken.

"I said come here, Loki. Now."

Hearing this order, Loki understand. There is no mistake. Tony Stark, for what ever reason, still wants him. His feet move slowly towards the source of the voice. His hands stretch out before him, desperate to come into contact.

And when they do, he has to fight the urge to grasp at the person he feels.

"S-Sir?" He calls out hesitantly.

"It's me Reindeer games, and it's Tony, remember?" Tony corrects.

"Tony..." Loki repeats in a near whisper. Moving slowly, Loki lowers himself into a kneeling position before Tony.

Tony nods, as if answering some unspoken question. He reaches down and runs a hand through the dark hair. Loki practically leans into the touch. "It's good to have you back Lokes," Tony tells Loki quietly. "Stand up. You need to go to the infirmary and get checked out. Take my hand."

Loki stands up and puts his hands out to feel for Tony's. But he finds Tony slipping his calloused hand into his without any hesitation and he allows himself to be led inside the tower.

Hours later, Loki is sitting on a medical table. He had just dressed himself with a little help from Bruce and is now left alone. The good doctor had ran some tests on him and asked his questions with kindness. He could tell by the man's tone that the tests didn't reveal any good news. Test after test, the hope started to leave the man's voice. Eventually he told him what he already knew. The blindness is permanent.

As for what he did at the Brothel, this is where the man's tone had become lighter. The tests came back negative, meaning that he hadn't caught some disease from the men who used him. Nor was there any permanent damage. Loki had told the doctor that he learned quickly not to resist, for the
struggling made things worse, painful. Dr. Banner quickly left the room when he told him that.

Bruce told him that he is going to have a word with Tony then send Tony in to get him. So now Loki is waiting. He wants to be alone with Tony. He has some questions he needs to ask. Is it true that Tony had been looking for him all this time? Why? And why does he still want him even after seeing the noticeable damage? He is useless now except for one purpose. Could the answer be that?

If so, he tells himself that it wouldn't bother him. Even if he is only being used, nothing more, he will accept it. In a way, he hopes for this. After all, it was thoughts of Tony, imagining him being so intimate with him, that has kept him from becoming like some of the others at the Brothel. The ones without emotions and stare blankly ahead. Their voice gone. All they know is the basic of commands. There had been several men in this condition.

During the first month, he had nearly joined their numbers. Day after day, every few hours, he had been beaten then painfully raped if he did not follow the few English orders they threw at him. One day in particular had been the worst. He couldn't eat. Couldn't drink. His jaw was badly bruised, and his stomach is covered in deep purple bruises. Moving even slightly sent waves of agony through his body.

He had not only felt the pain though. He had also felt very ill. Loki remembers how his body burned, yet he seemed to shiver constantly. It was too much and he wanted it to end. THE Loki, God of Mischief was already gone. Now, he was neither Loki Odinson nor Loki Laufeyson. As time passes, each morning he wakes to find himself still within this brutalizing nightmare, he believes Tony has given up on his slave and has forgotten him.

Loki had stopped crying out in pain and stopped his threats and pleas. He even stopped pulling away. Then one night, another prostitute at the Brothel had been thrown into his room, to be trained in the rarely requested threesome. This man still had some fight in him. Loki listened as they beat him and heard the men grumble sometimes in English about how he would still glare up at them despite the blood covering his face. It was after a rather rough session where they were left alone, that this new prostitute came over to him and began speaking to him.

At first Loki had said nothing. Finally the man seemed to have given up and stopped talking. So he had been surprised when the man slapped him hard. The man yelled at him, demanded to know where his pride is. Loki slowly moved away from him, while telling him that pride is a dangerous thing. He was afraid that the noise would bring the men and he would be beaten for this fool's actions.

The other man would not be quiet. He kept asking questions, wanting to know things about Loki's life before this. Most he ignored. Until he was asked if there was someone he wants to touch him like these men do. Someone he wants to lie in bed with. So finally, Loki answered. He'd never spoken Tony's name to the other prostitute. But he talked about him. After sometime, the other prostitute had commented on how important this man must be to him. Then asked if this man was worth surviving this hell hole for. Loki remembers how confused he had been by such a strange comment. The other man seemed to realize this and explained that if there was a chance that he got out of this hell hole, doesn't he want to be in a better state than that of a shattered soul like the other prostitutes.

Loki had laughed at the suggestion. He was so sure that he wasn't going to get out of this, that he will never 'see' Tony again. He told the other male that he doesn't want Tony to see him now. This did make the other man silent. Before he was taken away, he gave Loki some advice as a way of an apology. The advice was simple. Unless he is sure he wants to end up as one of the broken, he should picture this man while clients use him. To remind him that there was something more beyond this.
"Loki? Loki, are you alright?" He hears a familiar voice calling him from his thoughts.

"Tony?"

"The one and only. Ready to get out of here? Steve's cooking chicken for everyone on his floor if you're hungry. Trust me, it's actually pretty good. Apron's embarrassing though. The guy shouldn't be wearing a flowery apron," Tony comments, earning a smile from Loki.

"May we...may we perhaps talk first?" Loki asks.

"Sure," Tony replies and Loki hears something roll across the floor. "But first, I have something to ask you real quick. It's about your eyes."

Loki swallows and nods his head, encouraging Tony to continue.

"Don't take this the wrong way, the scarring doesn't bother me in the least. Understand? But maybe, it bothers you?" Tony asks as he reaches into his back pocket.

Loki thinks about this for a moment. He hadn't really thought about it. His appearance had ceased to matter before. He raises a hand and gently touches the damage skin around his eyes, even touching some of the scars on his cheeks where drops of acid burned the flesh. He lowers his hand and nods his head.

"Okay, well, Natasha gave me something to help with that. It's just a sash. Here, you can feel it," Tony tells him and gently takes Loki's hand and pulls the emerald green sash from his pocket and places it in Loki's hand. "It's a deep green of course. If you would like, I could cover your eyes with this. But that's only if you want me to. Like I said, your scars don't bother me in the least. Or anyone else here."

Loki runs the silky fabric between his fingers. It felt almost like water. "If it is not a bother, then please," he says quietly, holding it out.

Tony takes the sash and moves around Loki, placing a hand on his shoulder so the man would know where he is. He sets the sash down and pulls Loki's grown hair back away from his face. When he is satisfied that he won't be tying any hair into Loki's face, he picks up the sash.

"Close your eyes," Tony instructs him and Loki compiles.

Loki feels the sash as it is lowered across the bridge of his nose, being adjusted on the sides to cover his scars. Then he feels it tighten as Tony ties it in place.

"There, all done. Looks good," Tony comments. Loki hears a faint squeak sound as Tony sits down on the doctor stool. "Alright, you said you wanted to talk. The floor is all yours."

Loki takes in a slow deep breath. Now that he can ask his questions, he is suddenly doubting whether he wants to or not.

Before he can decide, there is a knock on the door. Loki turns towards the source as the door opens.

"Tony, Loki, I'm sorry if I am interrupting something but Director Fury is demanding a video conference upstairs. He has some questions for Loki," Bruce informs them with a look of concern.

"Knowing Fury, he wants to do this right this minute, am I right?" Tony asks.

"I'm sorry Tony. Natasha is stalling him for the minute but unless we want the tower filled with
"I get the message. We'll be right there," Tony tells him.

Loki hears the door close softly.

"Looks like we have to wait for that talk," Tony mutters.

Loki nods and tries to push away the panic he is feeling about being questioned by Director Fury. He is afraid that he will be taken and thrown back in that cell again. He had just returned to the tower, to Tony...

Suddenly Loki finds himself being pulled forward until he is against Tony's chest. He feels Tony's arms wrap around him.

"I'm no good this sort of thing. But I want you to know that I won't let Fury take you from me. Or anyone else," Tony swears, speaking the words into Loki's ear.

"Wh-why?" Loki asks.

"Because you're mine," Tony replies as he pulls away. "Now, let's go chat with Mr. Popeye so we can get something to eat that isn't Mexican."

Loki feels Tony's hand wrap around his wrist, ready to lead him to this conference. Loki stands up and is lead out of the infirmary. In his mind, he is replaying Tony's words. 'Because you're mine.' He wonders what exactly does Tony mean by that?
Loki follows Tony silently to the conference room. Though he can't see, he can hear others breathing. He assumes the other Avengers have gathered for this conference as well. He allows Tony to position him in front of a chair and sits down when Tony tells him to. He believes Tony has moved to take a seat and therefore jumps when he feels a hand on his shoulder.

"Easy Lokes. Now listen carefully. Fury will be on the screen right in front of you. He will be able to see you. He will ask you questions, answer them. That's all you have to do. Hopefully he will get bored and let us get out of here. But for now, try not to let him rattle you, okay?" Tony whispers into his ear.

Loki nods and does his best to face forward. Tony straightens up and hits a button which produces a holo screen of the director of the Avengers.

"Hey Fury," Tony greets. "Hope this isn't just a social call."

"Stark, take a seat. And what the hell is he wearing?" Director Fury asks.

"Well, it looks to be a green silky blindfold. Why, want one for yourself? If so, you'll have to ask Agent Romanoff where she bought hers," Tony replies, not moving to take a seat as he had been told to do.

"And why is he wearing it? Take it off," Fury orders.

Loki feels his face go red. He has yet to be addressed personally. It's almost as if he has been reduced

Chapter Notes

A Fallen God

Chapter 43

A Frostiron fic

Disclaimer: I don't own the characters, movies, comics or anything else. All that belongs to Marvel and the creators. I don't even know the actors, though I'd like to.

Warnings: Since this is a story in progress, Not sure what to warn ya about. This will be a Tony Stark/Loki. Which means guy/guy. There will be some cussing (Tony does have a mouth) and angst. Some violence. There are references to past rape as well as rape and improper use of a fire poker. So be careful while reading.

I would also like to give my thanks to my beta, witch-of-sound! Without them, well...ya guys know...

Hope you enjoy and please leave comments! Thank you all for reading this and the support!
to that of a mere object in the Director's eyes rather than the threat he made him out to be last time they interacted. Then again, the director isn't too far off. He feels the blindfold be untied and slip down his face. With a deep breath, he decides to add to the effect and open his sightless eyes, hoping he is staring at the direction of the holoscreen.

"So you take off with Victor Von Doom and end up coming back blind. Need to pick better friends Loki," Fury comments, finally speaking directly to the fallen God.

"I did not take off with him. He summoned me to him. I had no choice," Loki replies.

"Oh? And what did he want? Chat about the weather? Have tea?" Fury mocks. "See what useful information you've gathers on the Avengers?"

"He wanted information. But not on the Avengers."

"What information did he want then?"

"Old magik. Forgotten magik. To summon creatures and to bind them to himself," Loki answers. He hears a faint squeak to his right and knows that Tony has finally sat down.

"Sounds like a load of BS to me. I assume he offered you something for all this information?"

"Yes," Loki answers quietly, lowering his head just slightly.

"I'm sorry, I didn't catch that. Mind saying it again?" Fury asks.

"Yes, he did offer me something," Loki repeats, speaking up.

"And that something was?"

"Power. Not quite like I had before but..."

"But more than you have right now. And you took him up on that offer, didn't you?"

"No," Loki answers, his blind eyes narrowing.

"Who do you thinking you're talking to Loki? You might be blind, but not everyone is. It's clear that you hate the fact you are without your powers. Probably hate serving Stark as well. Though I can't blame you. So who would blame you if you jumped at the opportunity to have power once again. Knowing this, I'm a bit concerned about you walking around so freely. I'm tempted to send my men in and take you back to your cell here..." Fury trails off, letting the threat sink in. He isn't surprised to see Loki react to the threat.

Hearing the threat, Loki bolts up into a standing position. "But I already told you that I didn't accept it! I refused his offer, can't you see that?! If I had that power still, I wouldn't be like this," he shouts, gesturing to his eyes. "Nor would I be at...at that foul place! Not for so long!"

"Cute act Loki. But I've seen better performances. If you didn't accept, like you're claiming, then tell me this. Why didn't you accept it?"

"I didn't accept because..." Loki turns towards the direction of Tony, unable to see the man raising his eyebrows in surprise. "Because I have given my word to serve," he answers quietly.

"Since when did your word mean anything?" Someone asks, to Loki it sounds like Barton.

"So you gave up power, power, to remain Tony's personal slave? Did I hear that right?" Fury
"Yes," Loki confirms as he sits back down slowly.

"Not buying that Bullshit for a minute. But for now, I'm willing to put this issue aside. What I need to hear about right now is about this forgotten magic. You mentioned something about summoning creatures? Binding them to him? Explain that to me," Director Fury orders.

So with a shaky sigh, Loki explains how Doom had used a meta human to take his knowledge and about the summoning he witnessed. When he stops, the room is eerily silent for a few minutes.

"He summoned...a snake?" Fury asks questionably.

"Not any snake. A fearsome one from Asgard. With it's size, it can easily coil itself around this tower. And with it's thick scales, it will be hard to strike at. It's venom...it's what blinded me," Loki informs them.

"And how many more does he plan to summon? What does he plan to summon?"

"I...I don't know. I only know that he plans to summon more," Loki turns his face towards the direction of Tony. "How long have I been missing?"

"Three months," Tony answers him.

Loki's eyes widen. He had thought it was much longer than that.

"Does that information mean anything to you?" Fury asks.

"It takes a large amount of magic energy to summon creatures to another realm. The bigger the creature, the more energy needed. With Doom's level of skill, he could have summoned and blinded such large creatures every two weeks without exhausting himself," Loki informs them.

"So he could have half a dozen creatures here by now," Banner comments.

"Loki, would you know how to fight them?" Steve asks.

"I...I don't know. Without knowing what he summoned...."

"What about the snake?"

"Thor and I used to try to hunt the creature but we were never successful. It's lived a long time and through many battles," Loki replies.

"So that's a no then," Barton commented.

Loki could only nod his head.

"Alright. Then there is only one more bit of Intel I want. After Doom supposedly blinded you, what have you been doing?" Fury questions.

Loki opens his mouth then closes it as he lowers his head. He isn't ready to talk about this part yet.

"Either you start talking or my men will be there in five," Fury threatens.

"He was thrown into a brothel," Tony speaks up.
"I didn't ask you Stark. I want to hear it from his own mouth," Fury growls out.

"Why does it matter who you hear it from? As long as it's the truth, it shouldn't matter," Tony fires back.

"Stark, there's room in the cell for you too if you don't shut up."

"What he says is true!" Loki cries out when he hears the threat made towards Tony.

"Is it? And what did you do there?" Fury asks.

"What part of Brothel didn't you understand, Fury? Just because you couldn't go to one and get serviced..."

"Final warning Stark."

"I...I entertained men who came into the room I was being kept," Loki answers vaguely.

"Entertain them how?"

"Oh come on, why is this even necessary?! He was raped! That's all you need to know and I'm not even sure if you needed to know that much!" Tony shouts, clearly enraged.

"Really? Are you really telling that story again Loki?" Director Fury asks.

"It's...it's not a story," Loki argues weakly.

"Alright then. Tell me, how many men did you kill for trying to rape you? How many did you put in the hospital?"

"None."

"Okay so then at least tell me how many left that room with broken bones or scratches or black eyes at least," Fury continues.

"None."

"Now how is that possibles? Surely you put up a fight."

"No...no I didn't," Loki replies, his voice dropping.

"So you didn't resist? Is that correct?"

"It...is."

"Doesn't sound like rape to me. Sounds like you just whored yourself out is all," Fury comments.

"That is uncalled for!" Banner shouts.

Loki looks up, though he can't see. He is waiting to hear something, someone, tell him if the gentle man is changing. Becoming green.

"Bruce?" Natasha quietly calls out.

"I'm fine. But I think I'm going to step out," Bruce replies through what sounded like grinding teeth.

Loki hears the sound of movement to his left followed by the door slamming shut.
"I will make sure we don't have a code green," Natasha tells the room before the door closes again.

"He's right. That was uncalled for," Tony comments, his tone lacking the laid back nature it had earlier.

"And I say you are going soft. There is no need to handle him with kid gloves. If he didn't fight, didn't resist, then it's not classified as rape. So knock it off with painting him as some kind of victim. This is Loki Laufeyson we are talking about. And as far as I am concerned, he is a class one threat to this planet. I don't even know why I thought it was a good idea to let him stay at the tower," Fury rants.

Loki is trembling at this point. He knows what the director will say next. That he will be taken back and placed in the cell. Then the pattern will start all over again. He will be used again. He won't be able to stop it. Why had he been rescued if he was doomed to return to such a position?

"Because you need me. Or more accurately, you need Stark Industries. Which I own," Tony states as he gets up slowly. He doesn't like how pale Loki is becoming. This conference needs to come to an end.

"Tony, you don't seriously think..."

"No, I don't think. I know. Now yes, you get government funding. But you use that government funding to buy from Stark Industries. Or you send us these interesting blue prints and ask us to build them. Under a fake company name of course. But you see, when you first gathered us all together and I hacked your systems, I didn't just learn about your plans on how to weaponize the tesseract. No, I gathered all your dirty little secrets," Tony explains as he walks over to Loki and places a hand on his shoulder.

"Tony..."

"I'm not finished. Here's the deal Fury. You want to keep getting supplied by Stark Industries, then Loki stays right where he is. Even if you don't, you will have to come here and try to take him. Then you will see how far I will go to protect what is mine. It won't be pretty. So how about you back off and leave things be. He gave you what information he had on Doom. There is nothing further he can offer," Tony challenges, glaring at the screen.

The room is silent for several minutes. Steve and Barton exchange looks. It wasn't anything special with Tony fighting with Fury but this is on a whole different level.

"You are walking on a thin line Stark. Very thin. Loki, if I was you, I'd do my best to stay out of my sight," he warns before the holoscreen blinks out.

"Finally! Steve, you still making that chicken?" Tony asks.

"Uh...yes?" Steve replies.

"Good! Loki and I will be there shortly. But first there are some things we need to talk about," Tony tells him before moving close to Loki's ear. "We are going to our room first. To talk. Alright?" He asks.

Loki nods and stands up, his hands feeling for Tony's. Unknown to him, the silk sash falls to the ground.

Tony does see this and picks it up. Then he takes Loki's wrist and leads him slowly from the conference room. Within a few minutes they are riding in the elevator.
"How are you holding up?" Tony asks quietly.

"I am well," Loki answers quickly.

"No one is okay after talking to Fury. The guy has that way about him. So tell me, how are you really? Please don't make me order you to tell me," Tony pleas.

Loki doesn't say anything however. When the elevator door opens, he walks forward without the aid of Tony. Tony follows, quickly becoming concerned. Loki takes a few steps then stops and closes his eyes. He tries to visualize the layout of the room. Straight ahead of him should be a clear path to the bedroom. To his left should be the couch and entertainment setup. To his right, the kitchen area. He turns towards his left and slowly steps towards where he believes the couch should be. He resists stretching his hands out. At first he begins to feel confident. He has yet to bump into anything. In his mind's eye, he should be just about there. A small smile starts to form.

Then it happens. His left leg bangs roughly into a hard surface. He tries to step back but something hits the back of his legs, sending him falling. Then something stops him. No, someone.

"Loki?"

He had failed. He had tried to do one simple independent act and failed miserably. "Let go of me," he whispers.

He feels the arms withdraw and allow him to sink to the ground. But he could sense Tony remained close.

"What's going on Lokes?"

"I'm...I'm really worthless now, aren't I?"
"I'm...I'm worthless now, aren't I?" Loki asks brokenly.

"No. No Loki, you're not," Tony replies as he watches Loki curl up on himself. Loki appeared to be shaking violently. "Come on Loki, let me help you to the couch," he offers as he kneels down and gently touches Loki on the shoulder.

"Don't touch me!" Loki shouts as he jerks away from the touch, banging his side against the coffee table. "You shouldn't touch me."


"There is nothing going on."

"Loki, don't bullshit me. Now talk to me," Tony orders.

To Tony's surprise, Loki shakes his head at the order. It's the first time the trickster has refused to obey. He's tempted to leave the man be. To give him space. But something was bothering him about this. He doesn't like how Loki seems to be falling apart.

"At least tell me why I shouldn't touch you," he asks, wanting an answer for something at least.

"Be...because I am...I am corrupted. Defiled. Filthy," Loki nearly whispers.
"What?" Tony asks in disbelief.

"Filthy. Disgusting. That is why...why you shouldn't touch me," Loki repeats.

"Filthy..." Tony repeats. His mind turning the word over and over again. Loki said something similar before. He looks over at Loki, still shaking, still curling in on himself. He knows this pattern. It's the edge of the cliff, before the fall. But this time he is not going to let Loki fall.

"Get up," Tony orders, grabbing Loki's arm, ignoring the flimsy attempt the man makes to pull away. Tony hauls Loki up onto his feet and drags him along into the small hallway. He only glances at their bedroom door before pushing open the bathroom door.

"Jarvis, start the shower," Tony orders as he slams the bathroom door shut behind him. He then releases Loki long enough to strip off his shirt before turning to Loki. "Take off your shirt," he orders as he kicks off his shoes.

Loki's head is spinning. He can't make sense of what is going on. He knows they are in the bathroom. But why? Why did Tony drag him in here? Is he about to be...punished perhaps? He flinches at the order to take off his shirt but complies though his hands are shaking. As soon as he peels off his shirt, he feels Tony grab his arm again.

"Don't pull away," Tony tells him as he moves around to where his back is facing the shower. Slowly, he steps backward into the running water, pulling Loki into it.

Loki's body shivers violently when it comes into contact with the warm water and he feels his pants quickly become soaked. After a moment, he finally finds his voice. "Tony?"

"I'm going to let go of your arm. Don't run. Don't even try to leave," Tony tells him before releasing his arm.

Loki remains still. After a few minutes, he feels something begin to make small circles on his back. He jerks away at the sudden contact.

"Easy. I'm only washing your back. Just stay still," Tony tells him.

Loki turns, his blank eyes blinking as the water hit them. "What is the purpose of this?"

"To get clean. Now turn back around. And close your eyes," Tony replies before continuing his task when Loki does as he instructed. With a heavy sigh, he works on scrubbing the taller man's back. Then he moved to the man's sides then up to his shoulders. Slowly, when Tony finished with this side of him, he moved slowly around the man until he stood in front of him.

The warm water hits Tony's back as he runs the bar of soap over Loki's pale chest. He could see how the past three months have affected him. Loki has small finger sized bruises on his chest amongst the various scratches. The man had also lost some weight. Loki is constantly shivering despite the warm water. Tony continues up the man's right shoulder than down his arm, running the bar of soap around in lazy circles before taking his hand and washing it lightly. He then let's it fall and moves to the left arm. When he is completely done, he steps out of the way, allowing the water to rinse Loki off.

Loki feels the water rinse away the soap. Despite his confusion, he enjoys feeling the warm water against his skin. Washing up at the Brothel was done with a bowl of cold, often dirty water and a rag. But he doesn't forget Tony's presence. That it was Tony that brought him in there. That Tony has been washing him. What will Tony do now, he wonders. Will he strip him the rest of the way so he can continue washing him? Or leave him here to finish washing himself? Will Tony explain what
this is all about?

He takes in a sharp breath when he feels arms wrap around him. Startled, he opens his eyes despite the running water. One of the arms moves quickly and a hand covers his eyes.

"You really should keep your eyes closed. I don't think the water could make anything worse but still..." Tony tells him with a sigh as he gently presses his body against Loki's.

"Why...why are you doing this?" Loki asks weakly.

"Haven't you figured it out Rudolph? You said that you didn't want to be touched because you were filthy. Now you're not. So now that has been taken care of, how about you start telling me what is going on? What was that in the living room earlier? Why did you say you were worthless? And I know that chat with Fury got to you. So start talking," Tony encourages. "Preferably before this guy hug moment becomes awkward."


"Come on Loki. I know a lot has happened in the past three months but..."

"Why couldn't you find me?" Loki interrupts, asking the one question that has been on his mind. "If you didn't quit looking for me, then why couldn't you find me?"

He hears Tony sigh and his arms drop away.

"I don't know. I don't know why I couldn't find you. The nano bytes...something was...interfering with them somehow. I ran so many tests on the ones inside me and Barton. Even gave myself a second dose. But you need to know that I didn't stop looking for you," Tony states firmly as he gently takes Loki's shoulders and turns the taller man to face him.

"Did you...did you not think I...I left willingly? That I finally betrayed you? Did you not have any doubt?" Loki asks, trying to face Tony.

"Not even for a second," Tony replies with a smirk. "I'm sorry I didn't find you sooner though Lokes. I know that doesn't make up for...for what you've been through."

"It...it wasn't so bad. Your Director was right. I didn't fight. I stopped resisting," Loki says quietly.

"Screw Fury. He talks out of his ass most of the time. What happened to you there...it was rape Loki. No matter what anyone says, that's what happened. And I'm sorry I couldn't have stopped it," Tony apologizes.

"Tony..."

"Hmm? What's up?" Tony asks, hoping this is when Loki opens up finally.

"It was you," Loki tells him, feeling his face burn.

"Me?"

"When the men would come in...I...I imagined them to be you," Loki admits.

The silence that follows slowly begins to terrify him. Maybe he shouldn't have said that. Why did he say such a thing in the first place? He hadn't intended to. It had slipped from his lips. He steps back hesitantly.
"What does that even mean?" Tony finally asks. When Loki had said that, his mind had gone blank. As Loki was being raped, he pretended the men were him? Him? What does that say? Before Loki had been taken, he had thought things were going well. Very well in fact. Did he miss something? Or was Loki that upset for him not finding him sooner?

Loki senses the tension in those words. He backs up more until his back hits the shower wall. "My apologies," he whispers, lowering his head.

He let's out a startled cry when he feels a hand grab his chin, lifting it forcibly.

"Tell me what that means," he hears Tony order him.

He knows there is no way out of this. He is not being left any other choice. "It was the only way. To keep from being completely broken. It was close. I thought you forgot. Or that you were repulsed after learning what was happening to me. That again I was being...used. That you didn't want me, not even as a slave. Another man who was also being used...he told me to hold on. Don't become broken. He said to imagine the men to be the one person...one person I wouldn't mind giving myself to. That person is you," he tells the shorter man as he braces himself for the worst reaction. He knows he is about to feel pain, one way or another.

Tony stares at the former God in disbelief. Loki had pretended those men were him...because Loki was trying not to break? And to do this, he imagined himself being with Tony. The one person he wouldn't mind giving himself to. Tony remembers what Loki had said on the security footage after the drinking episode. Loki had said then that he wanted Tony in that way. Does that mean, that Loki has developed something for him?

He releases Loki's chin and snakes his hand around to the back of Loki's neck. "You wouldn't mind giving yourself to me? And what does that mean Loki? Do you...do you have feelings for me?" Tony asks.

Loki closes his unseeing eyes. So Tony wants to humiliate him first. He won't deny him such a moment then. He is his Master after all. "Yes," he answers quietly.

When he feels the hand at the back of his neck pull him down, he embarrasses himself with the whimper that leaves him. With the sudden action, his foot slips and he finds himself sliding down the wall. But before he lands on the floor, a body presses against his, keeping it from sliding further.

Then something surprises him. He feels lips press against his. But that couldn't be right. Tony wouldn't...not after being told that. But he knows it's Tony. They may have kissed only twice before but he knows. He moans when he feels a hand run through his hair. There is a lick across his bottom lip. Parting his lips, he feels Tony invade his mouth. He lifts his hands, shaking ever so slightly, before feeling Tony's bare sides under his finger tips. He let's them travel around to the man's back before suddenly pulling the man closer to him.

Tony chuckles into the kiss. For a moment he thought this had been a very bad idea. That he may be making things worse. The man he's making out with was just rescued from a Brothel. But judging from Loki's reaction, the man is anything but afraid. Still he has to stop this. He's not sure why but he has a bad feeling about actually rushing this to the bedroom. He wonders when he developed such a way of thinking. Before he would have jumped the former God in a nanosecond.

Loki moans disappointingly when Tony pulls back, breaking the kiss. He allows Tony to help straighten him up. A moment later he feels the shower water stop running.

"Well, I think we should go get dried off and dressed. If we don't go to Steve's floor soon, he'll send
a search and rescue team," Tony tells him as he starts to lead Loki out of the shower.

"Tony..."

"Hmm?"

"What was that just now?" Loki asks.

"Did ya forget Lokes? Being honest is a habit worth rewarding," Tony replies.

"I...see," Loki replies.

"And it may have also been my way of saying that I care about you too," Tony adds with a wink despite knowing Loki can't see him. But it doesn't matter. The only thing that matters at the moment is that small smile on the former God of Mischief's lips.
Chapter 45

A Fallen God

Chapter 45

A Frostiron fic

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________________________________________________________________________________________

Loki wakes the next morning and for a moment he is afraid. He had slept in. He didn't mean to but it doesn't matter to them. The only thing that matters was that he hadn't been awake to serve his only purpose. Any second now they will come in and berate him in their strange language as they beat him. He needs to quickly get on the bed and into position. It's the only thing that might save him from some bruises.

He stretches his hand to feel for the pad that is meant to act as a bed. But instead of feeling the pad, he feels nothing but air. He shifts, so he could reach further as his mind wonders how he could have moved so far from the pad when the room is so small. Then he realizes the ground beneath him is soft.

Slowly, he lowers his arm as he remembers. He's no longer there in that room. He's back at the tower. With the Avengers. With Tony. He is in Tony's room. On Tony's bed. The events from the day before had caught up with him after he ate with Tony, Steve and the others. He found himself growing slower in his responses then his eyelids growing heavy. Tony had noticed and excused them as he led Loki to the elevator. When they reached their floor, then their shared room, he had tried to walk towards where he believed his bed was. Sadly, he stumbled and ended up bouncing off the dresser and landing on Tony's bed. Embarrassed, he tried to recover but Tony grabbed his arm, stopping him. Tony told him that it might be better for him to use his bed since his mattress is standing up and the bedding on the top shelf of the closet. When he started to refuse, Tony made the suggestion into an order which ended any further argument.

He wonders if Tony had ever come back to the room after that. He thought Tony had gathered some
things before he left but he's not sure what they were. Did Tony have to sleep somewhere else because of him? Where is he now? Loki slowly feels out the edges of the bed then stands up. With one hand on the wall, he moves to towards the door.

"Are you in need of assistance Mr. Laufeyson?"

Loki jumps at hearing the automated voice of Tony's AI. "Ah, no. I...I am fine," he replies as he moves across the hall to the bathroom. When he touches the door handle, a thought occurs to him. "Jarvis? Where is Tony at this moment?"

"Mr. Stark is attending a meeting with the other Avengers. He has given instructions to provide you with any aid should you require it. He also set some clothes for you in the bathroom and a meal in the fridge for your convenience," Jarvis informs him.

"Thank you," Loki replies quietly before entering the bathroom.

An hour later, he steps out of the steamy shower and slowly dries himself. He had again scrubbed his skin raw from the waist down, mentally washing the filth away. The towel brushes over the sensitive skin, making him wince. But when he gets to his chest, he found himself getting goosebumps as he remembers how Tony had washed him. And how it was followed by his own confession of sorts. And then Tony...again had kissed him.

A small smile forms as he gets himself dressed. The memory is more than enough to push away the fear he had woken with. It serves to remind him that things are right again. Somehow, he survived another ordeal. The last thing he puts on is the silk sash over his eyes.

He makes his way out of the bathroom and down the hallway to the living space. He is hungry but there is something he wants to take care of first. He carefully lines himself with the corner edge of the hallway and slowly walks forward. In his mind he is counting his steps, his hands out, waiting to come into contact with the opposite wall.

But when he gets half way there, he stops. His right hand had brushed against the couch, startling him and causing him to lose count. The same couch he had tried to sit down on his own and instead humiliated himself. Maybe his idea to map out the living space is just as futile as well. His hand slowly raises to the sash covering his eyes.

"Jarvis?"

"How may I be of service Mr. Laufeyson?"

"Did...did Tony leave any instructions for me? Tasks he wishes for me to perform?" Loki asks.

"He did not."

"I...see," Loki mutters, feeling his heart sink. It seems that Tony's expectations of him were to shower, dress, eat, and then...wait. Nothing further. Because he has been rendered useless.

He sighs as he feels the weight of the situation begin to crush him. For the past three months, his blindness had not been too much of an issue. In fact, in many ways it had been a blessing. And it did not get in the way of his usefulness. One doesn't need eyes to lay on their back or stomach. To be used in pleasuring others. If he had needed any guidance, the men who entered were more than willing to provide him with it. A slap, a pull at his hair, his arm being pulled painfully behind his back were very helpful in teaching him his tasks. It's not a way he would ever want to be used again but at least he could be used.
But here, back under the care of Tony Stark, in the position of chosen enslavement to make even his
debt, how could he ever be of use? Tony has made it clear he doesn't want him to perform sexually.
Though, perhaps that has changed since yesterday? But even then...he wouldn't be able to see the
man that has ensnared his whole being.

He shakes his head. This isn't the time for such fantasies. Besides, he knows it's his minds way to
distract him from dwelling on his now useless state. But he can't allow himself to run away so easily
from this issue. He needs to think of some function he can provide, a use he can fulfill. He moves
around the couch, his hand gliding across the foreign material. Sure that he is facing the floor to
ceiling window, he withdraws his hand from the couch and moves slowly forward.

After a few steps, his hands touch a familiar shape. The spine of several of his books that sit upon the
book shelf. He feels these out, trying to recall the order of them so he may know what titles are
beneath his fingertips. Then he allows his hand to fall. Something else that is futile. He can't
remember. Perhaps that is better since he is not able to read these transcripts anyway. Does it bother
Tony, to have spent his money to entertain the former deity only to end up being a wasted effort?

Without thinking, his hand raises again to the books and pulls one of them out. The weight feels
good in his hand. Opening the book, he let's his hands feel the pages. When he closes the book, he
goes to put it on the shelf but stops. Instead he hugs the book to his chest and feels out the side of the
bookcase to the window.

There he holds his hand against the cool surface. He moves himself closer and presses his forehead
against it. The coolness is refreshing. In his mind he see's the city and it's citizens moving about. Tall
building with their glass windows reflecting the sun's bright rays. A cloudless royal blue sky. A
world he once nearly destroyed. And now it's a world he can no longer see.

"You're safe from me," he whispers as he sinks down to his knees. "But there are other threats taking
my place, aren't there?"

He had only spoken his thoughts out loud. But with this last line, something sparks in his mind.
There is another threat. Victor Von Doom. He has been working on some plan. A plan he had
offered to let Loki in on. A plan in which he needed information. Information from him.

"Jarvis?"

"Do you require some aid Mr. Laufeyson?" The AI questions.

"Can you record things? Information I tell you? Information you could give to Tony and the other
Avengers?" Loki asks, his thoughts racing.

"Indeed I can. I can begin recording whenever you are ready Mr. Laufeyson."

Loki nods. He might not be physically useful but maybe his mind can still provide Tony some aid.
He had told the other Avengers that he had no idea what creatures Doom may have summoned by
now. But whatever they are, they came from his knowledge. So he will share this knowledge. He
will tell them of every fearsome creature he knows of.

"I am ready," he tells the AI and begins by describing in great detail of the fearsome Jörmungandr.

Meanwhile Tony is eyeing a mini bar that stands behind Steve Rogers. He is so tempted to get up
and see what forgotten forms of alcohol are contained there. So very tempted.

"So we know Doom is up to something and the only link we have to him is Loki," Steve repeats.
"Old age really stinks, huh," Tony mutters.

"What?"

"Hmm? Oh, sorry, was thinking out loud. Nothing important. So you were saying that Loki is our only link but he has already given us every bit of information he had on Doom's plan," Tony replies, sitting up and stretching his arms.

"Which was jack shit," Clint mutters.

"Not Loki's fault that Doom was keeping his plan tight lipped for once."

"He may have more information that he's not aware of. Tony, let me speak to him," Natasha suggests.

"No."

"Tony..."

"'Tony' me all you want but the answer will be the same. No one is going to bother him. No interrogations, no questions, no little chats. I hear that someone so much as mention the past few months to him and I will personally launch you out of here. Everyone got the message? Loki is off limits," Tony states firmly.

"There is still the concern about Loki possibly working with Doom."

Tony glares at Natasha. She meets his gaze with her usual cool even headed facade. "It's something we can not afford to take a risk with. He admits to being with Doom. That information came from him. And it's not the first time Doom has had some interaction with Loki," Natasha points out.

"Each 'interaction' left him being in a worse state than before. Starting with being tossed out of a window, which I can vouche is no small thing, to him being sent to a Brothel. Blind. I don't think Loki would ever choose to 'interact' with Doom after all that," Tony argues.

"Maybe. Or perhaps this has been a clever act. He is known as the God of Mischief. Of Lies and Trickery."

"Was. And it's not an act. I would know if it was."

"Would you?"

"Guys, before you two really start getting into it, you both have pointed out some very important points. Things we have to take into consideration. We don't have much to work with here so we can't risk overlooking anything. The smallest detail could give us an edge," Steve intervenes.

"So what, I'm suppose to let you guys do what you want to him? Just because he might know something?" Tony asks.

"No, of course not. But maybe someone should make sure he is not playing us. I know you don't like that Tony, but we have to make sure. Maybe he should be put on a type of lockdown. Just for the time being. Until after we take care of Doom," Steve tells Tony. He doesn't like making this suggestion. He believes that everything Loki has been through has not been some part of a grander scheme. Even he wouldn't lower himself to such degrees for a sake of a plan. But Steve knows what is more important here. That he needs to keep the peace between his team mates. With whatever Doom has in mind, they can not afford to fall apart.
"Lockdown? As in put him in a cell?" Tony questions in disbelief.

"Yes Tony. Or at least return him to the room you had him in originally. Someone can bring him his meals..."

"That is bullshit. Total bullshit! He did nothing wrong! Come on Caps, you can see what the damage was! He was blinded then thrown into a brothel where he was raped for three months and you want to treat him like a criminal? What the hell?!" Tony shouts as he stands up. He is ready to storm on out of here and order Jarvis to kick them all out except for Bruce. Speaking of which, he looks over at the fellow scientist. "Can you believe this?"

Bruce sighs and shakes his head. He doesn't like this one bit and feels just as distressed as Tony. But he also understands Steve's position. He hopes the next few words don't cost him a friendship.

"Tony, I think that if we do put Loki on lockdown and he remains that way while we take care of Doom, then it will serve a purpose. It will...prove Loki's innocence."

Tony's eye brows rise up. He didn't hear Bruce just say that they should lock Loki up. Not Bruce. He more than the others know what Loki has been through. He knows Loki isn't faking his blindness or the other injuries he has obtained since the mighty Alfather dumped him here. But the look on Bruce's face tells him he did hear him correctly. There had been no mistake.

"This isn't right," he states.

"It's only a precaution," Steve comments.

"An unnecessary one. You guys forget I have Jarvis watching him twenty-four seven?"

"No. But we haven't forgotten that Doom has either sent someone to see him or taken him from the tower, either," Natasha comments.

"And something isn't right with his story. Why would Doom send him to a Brothel in the first place? He has never sent someone to one of those before. Usually he just...disposes of them. So why the Brothel? Why not kill him? If I am understanding this right, Loki can be killed now," Clint points out.

"So he's guilty because he's alive?" Tony asks mockingly. "How did I miss that? It's so obvious that he's guilty when you take that into consideration. And since we are all still breathing, I wonder what we are all guilty of. Well, some of you I don't need to wonder why," he says as he looks at the two assassins.

"Tony, this..."

"Don't bother. I know when I'm out numbered. You guys just need to remember what I tend to do when I'm out numbered," Tony warns as he takes a step back from the conference table. "If it's alright, I am going to give him the bad news."

"I will give you a few minutes to explain the situation to him then I will take him to his room. Tony...because there is a relationship between you two, it may be best that you keep your distance from him. After this of course."

"You going to put me under house arrest too?" Tony asks evenly.

"Of course not! Anyway, umm...I will be restraining him as well," Steve tells him with a sigh.

"No muzzle. Cuffs, fine but I don't want to see that freaking muzzle on him ever again," Tony hisses
out. It is taking every bit of his self control not to attack the Captain and start an all out brawl.

"Okay Tony. Okay. I'll be up in a bit," Steve tells him as Tony turns his back on them and storms out of the room, slamming the door shut behind him hard enough that he hears a crack.

He doesn't care. He's too angry to care. Why can't his idiotic teammates see that locking Loki up is the wrong thing to do here? When did they start locking up innocent people? Is it only because Loki was once a villain? When are they going to let that go? Open their damn eyes and see that Loki is no longer that person? That the insanity and power hunger is gone? That it had literally been stripped out of him? He had thought that at least Bruce and Steve had seen that their one time nemesis was gone. He even thought that Natasha had seen it too. This all feels as if he had been kicked in the balls. And he knows it will fail in comparison to how Loki will feel.

He gets in the elevator and jams his finger as he hits the number for his floor. Now he needs a drink. Several of them in fact. But first he has to tell Loki that despite everything that has happened, the Avengers still deem him a threat. So he has to be locked up like the evil diabolical villain he once was. It doesn't matter that anyone with eyes could see he couldn't be further from that if he had tried. He replays every moment from the second he had arrived at the cabin. How he had been a bit excited to see the very man who had brought an alien army to earth and tossed him out a window, be brought down to the same level as them. And how that quickly changed the moment he realized that the man fell from greater heights than expected.

How he had poked at Loki, to get some reaction out of him instead of the dull zombie-like look Loki had. And the outburst that revealed more than Loki had intended. From there things seemed to get worse. Shield came in and captured Loki while he was busy trying to put some dents into Thor's thick skull. There Loki had been first 'softened up' by Fury's agents before they were used by some being called the Other to rape Loki. That forced Loki to new lows. He remembers how Loki had tried to give himself to Tony, thinking that eventually all the Avengers will do so to him.

Then there was Barton and his little punishments. Torture. That's all it really was. Now maybe Barton can't be totally to blame for his actions since he seemed to be under the Other's influence but still. Everyone knows Barton has a grudge against the former God and he doubts the actions weren't completely out of his control. Add Doom using him as a fastball, Shield again taking him, then Doom's little goons paying Loki a few visits...then finally this. Blinding him and sending him to a freaking Brothel.

The man should be a basket case by now. Yes, all of this has chipped away at him. Broken him down to new levels. But he is still there. Still holding on. And recently he had been told directly from the man himself, that the reason he hasn't given up was because of him, Tony Stark. Because somewhere along this chaotic roller coaster of events, Loki has developed something for him. No, not something. Feelings. A very certain feeling that he can not bring himself to say. Not even in his head.

Tony will admit that he feels the same way, whether he will say it or not. It's why he went off on his team mates. And it's why he doesn't want to step off the elevator as he watches the door open. But he needs to tell Loki. If Steve were to suddenly come in and restrain him and drag him off... without any explanation, well, that would make things worse for Loki. So he has to do this.

He steps off and looks around the large living space. Living space he has gotten use to sharing with the trickster. The same space he had avoided when Loki had been missing. But now that he was back, it felt right again. Now Loki will be taken again. He doubts he will be sleeping here tonight.

He see's the man in question sitting on the floor, his face resting against the glass. A book sits on his lap, his hand tracing shapes on the cover. Slowly the head turns towards him, having heard the ping
of the elevator and knowing someone was there.

"Tony?"

"The great and powerful...no wait, that's Oz. Yeah, it's just me," he replies, smiling at the confused head tilt he receives. "A movie reference. We'll watch it sometime. It's a classic. So what have you been up to?"

"I...have been thinking about Doom and his plan," Loki admits.

Hearing Loki say this makes Tony's throat constrict. He coughs to loosen it. "Really?"

"Yes. I...realized something."

"Like what?"

"He took information from me. And with that he summoned the great serpent of Asgard. Information I had. So I asked your 'Jarvis' to make a recording. Of all the creatures within my knowledge," Loki tells him.

"That's...that's a great idea, Lokes. Really good thinking."

"It's incomplete. I...I had to stop for a moment. My apologies. I'll have it finished soon. I'll also add what I know of binding spells. Perhaps it can assist you," Loki says quietly.

"I'm sure it will. Loki...there is something we need to talk about. You know I was at a meeting with the other Avengers," Tony states.

"Yes. I inquired about your location from Jarvis."

"Well, we were scratching our heads about Doom's plan. And...you were brought up," Tony explains.

"That...is understandable," Loki replies, lowering his head. Something in Tony's tone tells him that it had not been a pleasant conversation.

"Listen Loki, I tried to persuade them. I tried. But they feel that for the time being you should be locked up."

Loki's head shot up. His voice trembles as he asks "Not...not at the Hellicarrier? Please, not there."

"No. No not there. Here. In the tower. In the room you were in before," Tony tells him, moving closer to Loki.

"So I will not be here? Perhaps that is for the best," Loki replies dejectedly.

"Lokes, I...I am not okay with this decision," Tony tells him as he squats down. He desperately needs Loki to understand that he isn't behind this.

"I understand. Besides, due to this," Loki gestures to his eyes," I can not be of any use to you. I can not perform any of my previous duties. I...make a very poor slave."

"Your eyes have nothing to do with this! Or being a poor slave or not! And you are not a poor slave, by the way. Loki," he grabs the man by the sides of his face and lifts it so they would be eye level if not for the sash. "This has nothing to do with you. The others...I couldn't convince them that you are not working with Doom. They seem stuck on...on why he didn't kill you once he took the
information from your mind. I'm sorry. I tried..."

He is cut off when Loki's hands reach up, grabbing his shirt.

"I will be fine," Loki tells him. "I understand that it is necessary. And...it is common practice to put away..." He stops there, not wanting to make Tony feel any worse with the decision. He could hear the guilt in the man's voice. He doesn't like the idea that he will be locked away again. But it will be here, in the tower. Not far from Tony. Perhaps it will give him time to think of how he can better serve Tony. But for now, he only has his mind, his knowledge. "Allow me to finish giving your computer the knowledge I have. It's what Doom has. Perhaps if you have the same, your future battle with Victor von Doom. Please, allow me to provide you with this much."

"Of course. We can use all the help we can get. Loki..." Again he is cut off when there is a soft ping, signifying that someone has joined them. Tony doesn't need to turn around to know the Captain is stepping out of the elevator. "It's only Steve. Guess our time is up. If you haven't guessed, the team wants me to keep my distance."

Loki nods though this bit of information seems to take the breath from him. He had thought that Tony would be visiting him. But to think he will be in a room alone without even the hope of Tony seeing him bothers him more than he is willing to admit. His fingers dig into Tony's shirt. Suddenly he feels Tony pull him closer, his breath tickling his left ear. "Tell me right now Loki, if this is too much, if you think being locked up will do more harm to you. Tell me and I will fight them. Or take you out of here. I have a place in Malibu that no one knows about. With no Avengers. No Doom. No reason to be locked up like some criminal. Is that something you would want?" Tony whispers, feeling desperate.

He is alarmed when Loki pulls back and begins to laugh.

"Loki?" Tony hears Steve say nervously.

"Thank you for the humorous story. It did cheer me up," Loki says out loud before moving back, hoping he is near Tony's ear. "Do not be foolish Tony. The world needs you with Doom at large. I will be safe. I will be fine. Do not worry. Focus on Doom," Loki whispers as he carefully stands up.

Tony watches him in shock, then when he hears a thud he looks down, seeing the book that had been on Loki's lap now laying open on the floor. He stands up as Steve walks over to them.

"I'm sorry Loki. This is just until...things clear up," Steve mutters as he pulls out the cuffs.

"Remember Captain, he can't see them. Loki, Steve needs you to put your hands out. He is going to cuff you. Another of their precautions," Tony states dryly.

Loki puts his hands out and flinches when he feels the metal encircle them. With the collar around his neck and now these, memories of being led to face the Allfather surface. He quickly pushes them aside. He doesn't want to further upset Tony. Tony's voice makes no attempt to hide the rage the man is feeling.

"Take care of Doom Tony."

"Don't worry Lokes, I will. And I'll have Jarvis download some audio books for you," Tony replies.

Loki smiles faintly before he allows himself to be led away by the Captain. He believes in Tony and the other Avengers. Once he is taken to what will be acting as his cell, he will continue pouring out his knowledge of the many creatures he has studied. Perhaps he will continue to explain the aspects
of magic, at least that which concerns Doom's plan. And while he does this, he could think about the question that has lead him to this.

Why did Doom allow him to live?
Chapter 46

Chapter Notes

A Fallen God

Chapter 45

A Frostiron fic

Disclaimer: I don't own the characters, movies, comics or anything else. All that belongs to Marvel and the creators. I don't even know the actors, though I'd like to.

Warnings: Since this is a story in progress, Not sure what to warn ya about. This will be a Tony Stark/Loki. Which means guy/guy. There will be some cussing (Tony does have a mouth) and angst. Some violence. There are references to past rape as well as rape and improper use of a fire poker. So be careful while reading.

I would also like to give my thanks to my beta, witch-of-sound! Without them, well...ya guys know...

Hope you enjoy and please leave comments! Thank you all for reading this and the support!

________________________________________________________________________________________

Destruction is everywhere. He can hear the sounds of explosions and buildings crumbling all around him. Listening closely, he could also hear the screaming and weeping. It is almost more deafening than the chaos happening around him. Chaos that he is responsible for.

He walks down the ruined streets, passing the fleeing people unseen. He knows where he is going. He doesn't want to go there. He's going to witness something he doesn't want to see. But he can't resist. His body is being drawn like a magnet. So he walks as the world seems to be ending around him.

Soon he sees his destination. It's every bit the beacon it was meant to be. With the war going around, it seems to stand out even more. Even from his position at ground level, he can read the glowing name on the building. "Stark" as he moves closer he wonders how it is remaining untouched. He can hear buildings crumble and collapse. Yet this one seems untouchable.

Then he hears it. Shattering glass. He feels the icy cold feeling of terror surge through his veins as he looks up. A familiar form is plummeting. He knows who it is. After all, it was him who through the man out of a window. He tells himself that it will be okay. Any second, Tony's suit will appear and assemble around his body, saving him in the nick of time. He tells himself this over and over as Tony falls closer and closer to the ground.

The breath leaves him when Tony's body hits the pavement. There was a meaty crunch sound then nothing. He stares at the bloody scene in horror. His mind begins to scream that this isn't right. Where is the suit? He is suppose to have been saved by the suit. Then in his own cocky way, he flies back up to the window and blasts him in the name of his fallen comrade. That is what is suppose to
happen. What went wrong?

With tears in his eyes, he slowly looks up. He can see the form standing at the broken window. He see's himself smiling down triumphantly, his very own eyes filled with malice. He looks back down and sees himself wearing the familiar battle armor. In his hand is the staff he had been given. Both are covered in Tony's blood. He looks at Tony's shattered body. His brown dead eyes are staring at him. His bloody mouth is impossibly moving. He doesn't need to get closer to hear the deadly whisper. He knows it's his name.

Then slowly, Tony's body turns to dust and soon there is nothing left. He is confused for a moment before he hears the sound again. The sound of broken glass. Terrified, he looks up. Again Tony is falling. He thinks that maybe this time he can save him. Stop the fall. He tries to move forward. But he finds himself frozen, unable to move. Doomed to watch the man hit the pavement before him, his blood spraying onto Loki's armor. This time he screams when Tony's body lands before him.

He is still screaming when he wakes. He barely hears a voice break through it's echoes.

"Loki! Come on Loki, talk to me!"

"Ton...Tony?" He calls out hesitantly, unsure if he is really hearing his voice.

"The one and only. Are you alright, though?" Tony asks.

"I...it was nothing. A...terrifying dream. Childish," he admits, feeling his face burn. He turns his face around the room, trying to detect Tony's presence.

"I know what those are like. I'm guessing you don't want to talk about it, though."

"I...prefer not to. But if you..."

"Order it you will, I know. And I'm not going to do that. I hated it when people tried getting me to talk about mine. But are you sure you are alright? Do you need anything?" Tony questions with concern.

"You worry too much Tony. And didn't you agree to...stay away from me?" Loki asks.

"Now who do you think you are talking to? Like I would break my word or a few rules, please. Actually I'm not. I'm actually in my workshop right now. Using the intercoms to talk to you. That's why you can't pinpoint my location," Tony explains.

"I...see. And you are also monitoring me?" Loki asks, trying to feign annoyance but he is smiling.

"You know how sexy you look when you're sleeping? But not when you're having a nightmare. Though you do look hot being all sweaty..."

"Tony..."

"Just teasing Rudolph. But seriously, are you okay?"

"I am well Tony. Shouldn't you be putting your efforts into finding Doom? He will be putting his plan into action soon," Loki replies with a sigh.

"I've got every possible scanner and program searching for a trace of him. Not to mention everyone else's efforts looking for him. If he so much as cause a spark, we'll have him. Don't worry, I'm not a total slacker. And you might not have realized this but I'm a Master at multitasking. For example I
can sing 'Have a drink on me" while hacking the Pentagon, hopping on one foot and patting my head," Tony brags.

"While sober?"

"I didn't say that. Anyway, the point is, while I have been trying to find out copy cat tin man, I worked on a little gift for you," Tony continues.

Loki is caught off guard by this, his blank eyes widening as he stands up from the bed. "A...gift?"

"Yeah, ya know, like a present? Something you give to another person. If you'll sit down, I'll show you," Tony suggests.

"You do remember that I'm blind, don't you? So I doubt very much that I'll see anything," Loki replies with a sigh as he sits back down. He doesn't mean to sound bitter about it. He is just reminding Tony of the fact.

"Oh really?" Tony replies.

Before Loki can question those two words, he feels a strange stinging sensation behind his eyes. With a groan, he covers his eyes, waiting for the sharp pains to subside.

"Loki?"

"Tony...is this your..." Loki begins to ask as he lowers his hands but stops suddenly. He can see his hands. There is no color, instead what he see's is in black and white and several shades of grey. But despite the lack of color, he is slowly realizing he can see.

To make sure this isn't a trick his mind is playing, he hesitantly lifts his head and looks around the room. Again there is no color, no reds, blues, greens, or any other color besides black, white, and grey. But he can see the bed he is sitting on. He can see the nightstand and dresser. The window and wall clock.

"Tony...how is this possible?" Loki asks breathlessly.

"Technology at it's best. Remember the nano bytes I injected into you? Well, I upgraded their program. They are currently by passing your damaged eyes and feeding information directly into the nerves that send the information to your brain for processing. They are showing you what the monitors are seeing and adjusting it to your level of sight. The only thing I can't work out is the color issue. Sorry about that," Tony apologizes.

"It is fine. This...this is more than I could hope for in my current state. You have my thanks Tony," Loki replies, taking in everything surrounding him with near giddiness.

"Want to see more than your bedroom?" Tony asks as the door to Loki's room automatically opens.

"Tony..."

"Hey, Jarvis isn't perfect. He can have bugs in his security system."

"A creation is only as good as it's creator sir," Jarvis adds, sounding strangely insulted.

Loki can't resist the laugh that erupts from deep inside him.

"I feel so loved. I think I'm going to go back to my scanners. At least they can't laugh at me," Tony grumbles.
"If you wish sir, I could download several sound files..."

"Mute!"

Loki is clutching his side at this little exchange between machine and creator. It has been a long time since he has laughed like this and he is finding it hard to gain some self control. He slowly manages to, and without a second thought, he stands up.

There is a moment where he again sees nothing but darkness and for a moment he thought that Tony's upgrade had sadly failed. But then the new sight returns. Experimentally, he sits back down and experiences the same thing but the sight returns quicker than before. Apparently there is a slight delay in aligning the sensors to his sight level. Still, he will not complain.

He stands up again and leaves the room. He is still smiling as he looks around the nearly bare floor. He can see the kitchen set up, the simple couch and chairs. What draws his attention the most are the windows.

Moving again with fluid steps rather than the hesitant ones he has taken before, he nearly runs to the glass. There is another moment of darkness before he could see the world once again. With a contented sigh, he rests his forehead against the cool glass and gazes out.

Tony meanwhile is smiling himself as he watches the screen that is displaying Loki. He always has a sense of accomplishment when he completes a new suit or program or some other type of device. Sometimes he even feels a bit of pride swelling within. But nothing matches what he is feeling at this moment. So he enjoys it along with the view of a very contented former God of mischief for much of the day. In fact, it is the sight he has in mind when the call for the Avengers to assemble finally comes.

Loki feels only minor disappointment when Jarvis instructs him to return to his room. He isn't surprised though when the tower rings with the alarm. When the door closes behind him, he wonders if the moment has finally come. Is Doom about to play out whatever scheme he has been working on? Will his information help Tony and the others? Or has he possibly forgotten some creature and Tony is going in blind?

But in the end, he knows he gave everything he could to Tony and the other Avengers. He spent whole days where he did else but talk about the creatures then the secret knowledge of magic. He could give them nothing more. So he sits on the bed and waits, hoping that he will receive some bit of news, though unlikely since he is still untrustworthy in the eyes of the other Avengers, on their battle. He sincerely wishes them a fruitful victory.

As Loki waits, Tony is doing what he does best. Flying into the very center of trouble. Which in this case appears to be a a swarm of strange tiny black insects. Cennits according to Loki's information. A alien bug that devours everything in it's path, living or non. Though not hard to kill, the problem with these things is the extreme rate of reproduction. You could kill thousands of them only to have the swarm triple in size. The Queen is the source and therefore the one that needs to be killed. Again not an easy matter since the queen dies every five minutes and a new one takes it's place. You can easily focus on killing the old queen and if you are not quick enough, the new queen will already be a thriving and swelling mother bug army. Tony almost wishes he was fighting against a cockroach infestation.

Loki's information assures him that if Doom is using this creature it is mostly likely as a distraction for some greater beast. Hopefully not a giant centipede. He is quickly getting sick of the bugs.

"Jarvis, location on the queen. And count down to its expiration date," he orders his AI.
"Detecting the Queen now. You are in luck sir, this one has just come into power. You have precisely four minutes and fifteen seconds in which to put an end to her reign," his AI reports as the Queen is highlighted on his screen.

"All hail the king," Tony mutters as he locks on to the Queen and fires not one but two mini missiles at her. He watches as she seems to swell then explode. "Tell me I got the right one," he says as he notices the swarm still trying to attack his suit which he fights off with his repulsors.

Before his AI can confirm the kill, the insects suddenly fall to the ground before turning to dust.

"Never mind Jarvis. What's next?" Tony asks as he scans the area.

"The Hulk may need assistance with the Jörmungandr. Or Agent Romanoff and Agent Barton are fighting against a creature called Thesalude. I can give you the data on that as you make your way to their location," Jarvis suggests.

"Giant snake or weird funny named creature. Some choices. I'll give Bruce a hand first...Jarvis, what are these energy readings I'm picking up?" Tony asks as his display screen begins flashing warning signs.

"I am detecting them as well sir. Strange, the source appears to be a living entity of pure energy. There is no match to any of the descriptions Mr. Laufeyson has provided," Jarvis reports.

"Okay so a surprise guest. Jarvis, instruct Loki to go to my workshop and start up the watcher program. Either he forgot something or he can help come up with a way to take this out because something tells me that these energies are not from this world. The sooner the better."

"Mr. Laufeyson, Mr. Stark is requesting your assistance. He has ordered to direct you to his workshop and to have you activate the Watcher program," Jarvis's voice.

"Is Tony alright? Is he injured?" He asks as he gets up and quickly moves towards the opening door.

"He is stable."

Loki nearly growls in frustration of the lack of information in that simple sentence. But he pushes it aside as he moves quickly across the room and into the elevator. As it descends, he decides to try and ask for more information on the situation at hand.

"Has Doom's plan been put into action? Are the Avengers facing any of the creatures I have provided information on?"

"It appears so. So far, four creatures have been confirmed from your information. Tony has just defeated the Cennits, the AI informs him after a few moments, probably gaining permission from Tony to reveal such details.

"And what is he facing no way?"

"Unconfirmed. That is why he has requested your assistance. From my sensors, it seems to be small beings of pure energy. Strangely, they are not react to Tony's presence. They are completely stationary. However their energy levels are building."

Loki is searching his memories on the texts he long ago studied, trying to come up with anything that remotely matches what the AI is referring to. His frustration grows as he comes up with nothing.

When the elevator door opens he runs into the workshop that opens itself to him, lights turning on in
his wake. He is barely giving the nano bytes time to adjust as he approaches the work bench where the Watcher program pieces are waiting. He notices the obvious upgrades Tony has made to them but doesn't waste time for closer examination. He grabs a near by chair and sits down, quickly pulling the gloves on then the head piece which is now smaller and lighter.

Once in place he hears the mechanical humming as the program is starting up. The gloves shift as they have done before, becoming close to a second skin. Already Loki is flexing his fingers, impatience showing in his every movement.

"Watcher program activated," Jarvis's voice announces.

"Show me what Tony is seeing," he orders.

The displays turn on at his order and he studies the sight before him. He nearly jumps when he hears Tony's voice.

"You with me yet Lokes?"

"I am here. Are you well?" Loki asks.

"Perfect as always. So, you seeing these? Any clue as to what they are?" Tony asks.

"How many of these are there?"

"Nine....no correction, eleven. They are just standing there. And they are not grouped together either."

Loki looks at the different ones. They are all identical. Human like beings of energy standing still. They appear to be a certain distance from one another. Nothing comes to his mind though at seeing them. Just what are they? Then an idea comes to him.

"Tony, fly up above them. Try to get them all on your display reading at the same time," he instructs.

"Alright, piece of cake," Tony replies.

Loki watches as the black and white version of what Tony is seeing seems to zoom out. Soon the beings who were blinding white were now becoming dots that were growing smaller but their numbers seem to be increasing.

When Tony stops, Loki let's out a sigh of irritation. He can now see eleven white dots. But they appear to be in no obvious pattern.

"My apologies Tony. But I see nothing," Loki shares defeatedly.

"Now hold up Lokes. Maybe you don't but I think I do. You guys have connect the dots in Asgard?" Tony asks.

"Not that I am aware of," Loki answers, wondering what Tony is getting at.

"Figures. Okay, basically you got a page full of nothing but dots. Your job is to connect them to make a picture. Like so," Tony explains as he runs a finger from one dot to the next.

Loki watches this intently, trying to complete the image in his head. Slowly it comes together. With that comes a old image from a ancient book from his studies.

"Tony! Get out of there now! You are in the center of the summoning..." He begins to shout as the
beings raise their arms.

"What the..." He hears Tony say before everything goes blinding white as energy shouts out of the beings and hit directly where Tony is hovering.

"Tony!" Loki shouts, hoping the man of iron had been able to descend quick enough to avoid the hit. Then to his horror, all he see's is the ground zooming in rapidly. He knows what this means. Like his nightmare, Tony Stark is falling to his death.
Loki is locked in his current state of terror. The man that had once been his enemy but has become something else, is about to die if he's not already. And it will be his fault. He told Tony to fly higher, putting him in danger. It will not matter that it was not his intention. The other Avengers will blame him. Director Fury will blame him. But none will hold him accountable as much as himself. For he is the God of lies. Known only bringing chaos. And now death to even those he cares for. Those that even care for him in return.

No. No, he can't allow this. That Loki is gone, isn't he? Isn't he someone different now? He may be a stranger to himself but someone knows him. Someone trusts him. And right now, he's failing that person.

He grits his teeth and his hands grip the sides of the chair. He focuses all of his energy one one thought. One word. Fly. It repeats itself over and over in his mind, becoming a chant.

The ground is much closer now. Any second Tony's body will crash against it. The image is in his mind, much like his nightmare. But he will not allow that to happen. He can't.

"Fly. Damn you, fly!" he screams out.

At the same second, he hears Jarvis announce that the Watcher program is in complete control. Without any hesitation, he stretches his hands out and thinks of the repulsors. Tony's suit follows the same movements and shoots at the ground, slowing its' descent. Then it rights itself and instead of falling, it raises into the sky.

Loki's heart is hammering away in his chest. He stares at the display screen in disbelief. He...he
saved him. He saved Tony. He let's out a deep breath, closing his eyes for a moment in relief.

"Mr. Laufeyson, Mr. Stark is in need of medical attention. I have placed a destination marker for you if you wish to remain in control. If not, I can override..." is as far as Jarvis got before Loki opened his eyes and followed the blinking icon.

Soon he has the suit land at the doors of a local hospital's emergency entrance. He walks it in

"I am in need of medical assistance!" he shouts to the people who are gawking at him.

The staff still look at him in confusion. He growls out in frustration before thinking of opening the suit. Maybe these people need to see a person and not a machine in order to act. At first he sees nothing but a dull, tile ceiling as the head piece raises but when it lowers back in place, he sees Tony slowly fall forward from the suit.

Carefully turns the man over, noticing the electrical like burns on his face and neck. He maneuvers the suit so it lifts Tony up. Finally, one of the other humans move towards him.

"My god, its Tony Stark. I need a gurney over here now!" The man shouts.

Two women suddenly appear with a bed on wheels and Loki carefully lays Tony down on it.

"Take care of him," he tell the humans before taking one last look at Tony before walking out of the hospital.

"Mr. Laufeyson, do you intend to continue to run the Watcher program?" Jarvis questions.

"If I can..." Loki replies, pausing for just a moment. He knows Tony's creation can shut down the Watcher program, locking him out of any control over the suit.

"Mr. Stark has not given me any instructions concerning disconnecting you from the Watcher program. In fact, his instruction was to have you aid him and the Avengers in their current battle. The Avengers could still benefit from your assistance sir," Jarvis replies.

"Then they shall have it," Loki states, mentally ordering the suit to fly up. Once in the air, he looks around at the chaos. He see's the large serpent wrapped around the bridge in the distance. A small icon highlights the Hulk. To his left, he see's two more icons, this time of the assassins fighting against the hulking two headed Thesalude. And the brave Captain is fighting against the Sarnaris, a large winter spider with the upper body of a beautiful woman. The captain is keeping his gaze lowered with his shield while avoiding being turned to ice with it's legs. But he doesn't see what is coming from behind. The creature that had just been summoned and took out Tony. The Quetzalcoatl.

An ancient being that can be summoned by the Quetzians, beings that are neither living nor dead. They are simply a form of energy that mimics the main life form of the planet they dwell on. Some people referred to them as beings of judgement, for if they think the life forms are too wicked, they will summon their god to destroy it, sacrificing themselves to bring it into being. That is what the Quetzalcoatl is. That is it's sole purpose.

He had long forgotten about the Quetzians, and therefore when he was giving his information to Tony's creation, he had not mentioned them. After all, they had not been seen for centuries. He flies towards the Captain, his mind recalling the text he once studied about the foreign god of judgement. It is weakest at the time of being summoned, before it can stabilize it's energy and therefore solidify it's form. If something were to interfere with this process, it's energy can be dispersed and would have to be summon by a new set of Quetzians. He doubts Doom has a backup set.
"Connect me to the Avengers coms," Loki orders. For his plan to work, he will need the Captain's assistance.

"Connecting now."

"Captain?" Loki calls out.

"Loki? What are you doing? How are you..." Steve asks as he raises his shield to dodge another attack before rolling for cover by an abandoned car.

"No time for questions. The Quetzalcoatl is quickly approaching your current location," Loki tells him.

"The what?"

"Turn around, you should be able to see it," Loki replies with an eye roll.

He hovers in the air above the Captain and see's the man turn around.

"Oh. That," the Captain mutters.

"Don't be afraid. I have a plan. But, I need your assistance and we need the Sarnaris. The spider woman," he adds before the Captain can ask.

"Alright. What do you need me to do?"

"Can you get on her back?" Loki asks.

"You know, Tony would be giving me advice on that. But I think I can manage. Where are you by the way?" The captain asks as he opens the car door and jumps inside as the spider leaps on top of it.

"All in good time Captain. Now hurry," Loki instructs.

"Whatever you say," Steve replies before quickly moving to the other side of the car and climbs out the window. He pulls himself onto the roof, dodging it's legs before embedding his shield into one of them and using it to climb on to the creature's back that is now shrieking in pain.

Loki watches as the Captain grapples his way to the womanly part of it.

"You're about there, grab her and pull her backwards. And brace yourself," Loki warns before diving down.

"Got her!" Steve shouts, as he laces his Shield in front of her body and with his hands gripping either side of his Shield, he pulls back. His grip tightens when he feels the creature slowly lift upward.

"Loki?"

"A bit busy at the moment Captain," he mutters as he mentally orders the suit to lift the creature. The Quetzalcoatl is moving slowly due to being newly created but it will be on them any second. He needs to time this just right.

The Sarnaris is screeching in fury as it's upper body tries to free itself from the Captain while it's legs try to come in contact with the Iron man suit. Loki ignores all of this though as he watches the great god approach. soon it pulls it's powerful wings close to it's body as it dives right for them. It's now or never.

"Jump now!" Loki orders as he mentally orders the suit to throw the Sanaris at the Quetzalcoatl. The
throw isn't very far but the Quetzalcoatl has picked up speed. He sees the Captain jump down, using his trusty shield to brace him from impact as he landed in the bed of some truck.

Loki watches as the Sanaris tries to turn itself away. But it futile. It's spidery legs are embedded into the Quetzalcoatl, acting as a concurrent for the energy stored within the Quetzalcoatl. It's screams last less than a minute as the energy burns and consumes it. At the same time, the ice created from it's legs form within the Quetzalcoatl's body quickly melt and vaporize but dampens the energy. There is one bright burst of energy and the sound of a loud gasp before both creatures vanish.

"Well, that is two down. Thanks Loki, wherever you are. Tony, good timing," Steve says as he stands up.

"You're welcome Captain. Now, I think I will go have a chat with Doom," Loki replies, having the suit give a wave to the Captain before flying off.

"Wait! Loki, are you in the suit?!" he hears the Captain ask.

Loki smiles for a moment at this but doesn't reply. Instead he turns his attention to the display icons.

"Which of these are Doom?" He asks, knowing Tony's machine will answer him.

"Highlighting him now sir."

There, to his far right is a brightly lit icon. Loki growls at this as he directs the suit to it's location. As it gets closer, Loki's anger builds. This man has taunted him, blinded him, mocked him, stole from him, and then discarded him like trash to a place that could easily be hell. He has threatened not only his life but Tony's life and the kind Pepper Pott's life. He even added to the Avengers distrust of him.

Before Doom could say a word, he fired the repulsors, hissing in frustration when he see's their energy disappear when hitting a protective barrier.

"Well, if it isn't world renowned Tony Stark. I had thought the Captain would have been the one to greet me first," Doom comments casually.

"Oh, but Doom, I am not Tony Stark," Loki replies.

"Lo-Loki?"

"Yes, that is my name. And before I end your miserable little game, I want some answers," Loki hisses out.

He hears Doom laugh for a moment before fixing his gaze onto the suit. "Very well. I have time. Ask your questions."
"Very well. I have time. Ask your questions."

The condescending tone grates against Loki's nerves. Had he once sounded like this?

"In Stark tower, you said you were looking for me. It was to gain the knowledge of these creatures. But that could not have been your only plan, since you could not easily find me. So is this...chaos truly your only goal?" Loki asks.

"I will admit, this was not the plan I had originally. I had begun gathering materials to create a similar plan of chaos. One with more...explosive results. It would not have costed me much. A few debts, your brother being one of the necessary payments that would have to be paid. Was he always such a lady's man? Must have been hard to go unnoticed under that kind of presence," Doom replies. "But I have gone off topic, haven't I? With this, I no longer need to worry about fulfilling such agreements. The end result will be the same."

"Why chaos?"

"This coming from the God of Mischief? Chaos is the absolute power, as you well know. The Avengers have risen from overcoming such dilemmas time and time again. But if there is enough chaos, enough power, they will fall and the world will witness their descent. Each battle I have come up short in obtaining this power. But thanks to you, I finally have enough," Doom says in mock praise.

"Such small ambitions. Little wonder you have failed. And today will be no different," Loki tells
him, his anger building as this exchange continues.

"We will see. I will admit, the Avengers as well as another team of four, have been my greatest hurdle in achieving my goals. But I have been slowly gaining an upper hand by distracting them. With you."

Loki's eyes widen. He had his suspicions.

"You have been using me."

"Of course. After our chance encounter at the tower, I turned you into a pawn. Sending Amora and her pet to have that little chat with you. Those Avengers were already watching you closely before then but you felt their eye even more so after that, didn't you? Especially the eyes of a certain Tony Stark? I will admit, besides the Hulk, he is the one that provides me the most aggravation. So you can see how beneficial it was for me that his attention was on you," Doom explains as he begins to pace in boredom.

"I was a distraction..."

"Of course. What other purpose could I have for a powerless, fallen God that no one wants? Well, I did find another purpose for you, didn't I? That place I sent you was able to use the few skills you still had, weren't they?" Doom asks.

"You are known to destroy what is no longer useful to you, like a little child bored with a toy. So why didn't you kill me when you had the chance?"

"Who said you were no longer useful? You were still serving a purpose Loki, little as it is. I did underestimate you. When I removed the cloak spell, I was sure you would be nothing more than a shell of man. Broken beyond repair. Stark would have tried. It's in his nature. His whole focus would be on you and nothing else. Even in battle," Doom says before stopping to turn towards Loki.

Loki glares at the man hidden in metal. So it was true. Since their first encounter after his fall, he had been used. Against Tony. To bring the brilliant man down. Unforgivable. UNFORGIVABLE. His rage burns as it runs through his veins. His only desire now is to bring this fool to his knees. Vengeance for Tony.

"I think we have chatted enough," Doom begins to say.

"I could not agree more," Loki growls back, his mind ordering the suit to charge the repulsors at a hundred percent as he raises his arms.

"Don't be foolish, Loki," Doom warns when he see's the arms raised, palms of the suit facing towards him and glowing brightly.

Loki ignores him, smiling when he fires. There is a blinding light upon impact. When it fades, he see's a pleasing sight. Doom is flying backwards, on a collision course with the building behind him. Loki goes to send the suit after him.

But something is wrong. It's not moving. He tries to focus his thoughts. Still nothing. Then he hears Doom laughing. He watches as the mastermind stops himself from smashing into the building and now is slowly returning to where he was standing before.

"Oh Loki, how you have fallen. A great mind as yours should have been aware that our chat was also a ruse. Summoning those creatures did take much power from me. But I made sure to keep enough to deal with any who dare to challenge me. You wondered why I didn't bother to kill you?
Well, if you want death that badly, after all, who can blame you, then let me be the one to grant it!"
He shouts.

Suddenly Doombots arrived in flocks and before Loki could react, they dived at him, knocking him
to the ground. Their sole mission seems to be to tear the suit and him apart. Loki tries to get the suit
to move, to fight. What ever magik Doom had used against the suit held firm. Soon his vision
through the visor began to black out.

He hears Doom make one last comment. "It is too bad that you no longer have an army." Then
everything was gone.

Loki let's out a cry of frustration. The suit had been destroyed. Now he cant do anything more for the
Avengers or Tony. He tears off his piece and throws it on the table. His still gloved hands dig
through his hair. He failed. He should have known better.

Now he is once again powerless to do anything. He can't even aid the Avengers or avenge Tony.
There is nothing he can do.

"Mr. Laufeyson? Mr. Laufeyson?"
"Am I to return to my room?" he asks, his voice lacking any energy.

"I have not received such orders, Mr. Laufeyson. The Watcher Program has been completely
installed in all of the Mark suits currently in the suit room. All are ready to be activated," Jarvis
informs him.

"All?" Loki asks, looking up.

"All sir. Mr. Stark has altered the program so that while you control one suit, the others that are
linked by the Watcher program will provide support. If the suit you control is no longer operational,
then you will be given control of another. They are all at your command."

Loki slowly begins to smile.

"So Doom wants me to have an army. So be it," he says as he picks up the head piece again and puts
it on.

He takes a deep breath and focuses his thoughts. He can hear the now familiar humming from the
head piece. But something more was happening. In the back of his mind he could feel something.
Them. Suits turning on somewhere beyond his sight. When he opens his eyes, he can see a
massively large circular room. He moves the suit forward and looks around. Pods were opening and
more suits of various sizes and designs step out, copying his looking around motions. He flexes his
hands, watching this also be copied.

He looks at them all, in silent awe. But there is time to admire Tony's creations later. Now is time for
action. For avenging. This time he will not fail.

In moments, the suits fill the sky. Loki's heart is racing as he has a suit, mostly in gold, fly forward.
Around him, the other suits follow. All locked on the same target. Doom. This time there will be no
conversation.

Doom was still staring at the pieces of suit in what could be interpreted as confusion. He had
expected to find a body of flesh and blood. Not an empty suit. Loki focused in on the man. Already
the other suits were engaging in battle blasting apart the doombots, giving him a clear path to Doom.
He doesn't hesitate.
He sees the flicker of shock in Doom's eyes as he tackles the madman, this time successfully smashing him into the building and through it. Armored fists pound against the metal covering Dooms' body. He twists the suit and tosses Doom into the air. Another suit turns and fires at him, sending him flying back towards the suit Loki is controlling. Right into a fist.

He watches as Doom crashes into another roof. Slowly he moves towards him.

"Stop!" Doom shouts, raising a hand.

"I am not that foolish," Loki growls, readying another attack.

"Then you don't care for your Master?"

This stops Loki cold.

Suddenly Jarvis's voice reaches his ears.

"Mr. Laufeyson, the foreign life forms under Doom's control are changing their current course of action. They all appear to be abandoning their targets and are heading directly to the hospital Mr. Stark is currently being treated," Jarvis informs him.

"Doom..."

"Didn't you know? Heroes are not allowed to have vengeance Loki. So you have two choices. Defeat me, once and for all. Or save your precious...'Master'. Which path will the once mighty Loki, burdened with glorious purpose, take I wonder?"
"Tony," Loki says quietly. He doesn't know what he should do. He is actually unable to move, to act. Why? He must protect Tony above all else. Tony must live. Even if the world is destroyed, Tony has to survive. So why can he not act?

"What's wrong Loki? Does your Master mean so little to you? Is he not worth saving?" Doom mocks.

"He is. He is even worth dying for," Loki responds quietly. The words are true. So why was acting so difficult?

Then his mind replays the memory of Doom summoning the serpent. The man had his normal air of arrogance around him. But there was something else. He had over looked it before. When Doom walked over to the table with the bowl of venom that would blind him, his pace had been slow. As if he he was struggling to walk the short distance.

Of course he had been. Loki knew that summons required a lot of energy. But he also spent energy in casting the spell to control the serpent and he was controlling all these other creatures. To use such power is taxing. His concentration must be undisturbed. However, if it were to break...

"I am no hero Doom," Loki states firmly. Mentally he sends the other suits to the hospital. He doesn't need them for this.

"What are you saying? You will let Tony Stark die? Some poor slave you have become then. If only he would live, I wonder how disappointed he would be in you," Doom comments as he takes a small
"Only time will tell whether I am a poor slave or not, and it will not be decided by the likes of you," Loki replies to Doom.

In this mind, he is going over everything he knows about magik and Doom himself. Doom is nothing but a mere human. He has incredible power for a human but in the end he is still a human. This plan of his, to summon these creatures, to take out any who opposed him, must have been suggested to him.....Amora!!! The Enchantress. She would also know of this magik, only, she lacked the knowledge on the creatures. She never saw any importance with such information. She would boost Doom's ego. Convince him to take on such a huge task. One that is far too large for him.

He see's it now. Doom is moving slowly. There is fear in his eyes. The attack on the hospital is a final resort. When did Doom realize he had been turned into a pawn himself?

"You are nothing Doom. Not compared to the likes of an Asgardian. You maybe unique human, but nothing more. What did she promise you?" Loki asks evenly.

"What you once had. A godhood," Doom answers, glaring at Loki.

"A Godhood? Then you are truly a fool. For we were never Gods," Loki tells him, a memory of a similar conversation surfaces. Words he had sneered at. He too had been a fool once then. "Amora used her skill to charm you for her purposes Doom. She lied. And I believe you know that."

"No...I was not her pawn. She was mine. Just like you were," Doom hisses out.

"Then where is she? What is the end game of this little ploy of yours?"

"The end? With the defeat and death of the Avengers here on Earth. Then, when I gain more power, we will take Asgard. All she asked in return was for your brother," Doom tells him.

"And how will she get him?" Loki asks before whispering to Jarvis to cut this transmission feed for a moment.

"Your brother Thor is a mighty adversary. But he has too much heart. With the death of his friends, then his loved ones, he will crumble. And that is when she will strike."

Loki glares at the holoscreen before his eyes. He is enraged at this. At all of this. A grand scheme for such meager ends. Such pettiness. He hears the reports from the other Avengers. The destruction that is being caused. How many lives have been lost? Or endangered? All for a woman's petty obsession. Much like the obsession he once had. His schemes were just as grand and the chaos was no different. Like Amora, like Doom he cared little for the lives of the innocent. How many were lost in his attempted take over? How much greater in number is it to those passing now? He must act quickly to keep it from exceeding that number at all costs.

"Jarvis, I believe Doom is exercising control over these creatures telepathically. We need to sever that connection. If we do, it may be enough to also sever the link that is keeping them in this world. Knocking him unconscious will not be enough though. We need something that resets the mental flow," he explains to the AI.

"I believe what you are looking for is something similar to what is commonly known as electroshock therapy. Electrical pulses are admitted directly into the brain as a means to cure certain mental illnesses. Or that is the theory," Jarvis replies.
"Electricity. Controlled lightning. Jarvis, do we have a suit that could hold Doom? And where is my brother and that hammer of his?" Loki asks, grinning wickedly.

"I am informing Mr. Rogers that Thor's assistance is needed at your location. And I believe the suit best suited for Mr. Doom is the Mach 56. It's on its way now. The target will need to be kept stationary as the suit fits itself over him," Jarvis tells him.

"You are clearly his best invention," Loki compliments before flexing his hands. He has never been one for such direct fighting methods but he does know a few things concerning hand to hand combat.

So without hesitation, he mentally dives at Doom, balling up the suit's fist and connecting it to the left side of the man's head. He keeps the suit moving, landing blows until icons begin to appear.

"Mach 56 has arrived sir," Jarvis confirms.

"Thank you Jarvis," Loki replies before he begins to grapple with Doom.

With one fluid movement, he has Doom down on one knee, his right arm stretched out. As he had hoped, the suit saw the opening and soon had covered both of Doom's legs and arm. Doom however isn't willing to go down without a fight and quickly uses a flash spell directed at the suit's headpiece. This blinds Loki for a moment but the nano bytes quickly recover, giving him sight once again.

With a few exchanges of hits, Doom opens himself unexpectedly and Loki does not waste the chance. He gives Doom a powerful kick to the chest, sending him flying back into the brick siding of a maintenance opening to the roof they are on. Loki watches as the suit finishes assembling itself onto Doom.

With a sigh he looks around.

"Where is that idiotic brother of mine?" he questions.

"My apologies sir. It seems Thor got caught up with one of the creatures. He is on his way now," Jarvis informs him.

"Seriously, can he not resist hitting something with that hammer of his?" Loki mutters.

"It appears he has little self restraint in that regard sir," Jarvis replies, earning a smile from Loki. He is quickly becoming fond of this disembodied voice.

"What a waste."

Loki's eyes widen as he looks back at Doom. The suit that has assembled itself is starting to glow at the seams.

"I was expecting much more from you Loki than encasing me in some poor quality suit," he hears Doom say in disgust.

"Like he can judge quality," a familiar voice adds.

"Tony?" Loki calls out in surprise, his eyes though never leaving Doom.

"The one and only. How is it going Loki? Jarvis informs me that you have a plan," Tony replies.

"Yes, that is true. But what are you doing? You were severely injured..."
"Now don't go all Pepper on me Loki. If you're worried I'm flying around, rest assure that I'm currently grounded. Just borrowed Romanoff's earpiece. And she won't let me out of this hospital bed believe it or not," Tony complains. "Anyway, what is that low rate wanna be up to?"

"I...am not sure," Loki admits.

"It appears that Doom is using his abilities to take control of the suit, sir," Jarvis informs them.

"Where is..." Loki starts to repeat when there is a loud thunderous crack. "There he is."

He feels the ground beneath him shake and glances over his right shoulder. He sees the familiar cape, grey in his sight but he knows it is vibrantly red.

"I see you have finally arrived," Loki greets, his gaze turning back to the suit with Doom which has just begun to turn black from it's silver coloring.

"You know me Brother. Better late than never," Thor replies. "What is the plan?"

"It is a very simple one. Strike him with lightning," Loki replies, pointing at the suit.

"As you wish Brother," Thor replies as he begins to raise his hammer.

"You will find that I will not be such an easy target!" Doom shouts as he sends a blast at both brothers.

Thor and Loki separate, nearly dodging the blasts.

"I can not risk hitting a moving target!" Thor shouts.

"Then I'll keep him from moving. Thor, when you see your chance...do take it!" He orders his brother before sending the suit to tackle Doom, missing him just barely.

Doom quickly turns and fires another blast, effectively sending Loki off of the roof. But Loki quickly recovers and flies back up, picking up speed as he fires off a few repulsor blasts of his own. Doom tries to fire back but something appears to have gone wrong.

"The Mach 56 has limited firepower. It appears that Doom has already extinguished that supply," Jarvis informs him.

"It's meant to be more of a support suit that an offensive one," Tony adds.

Loki ignores both of them as he quickly tries to dive at Doom. But Doom runs and jumps off the side of the building, the flight repulsors kicking on. With a growl of frustration, Loki follows pursuit. He needs to catch Doom. Somehow restrain him long enough for Thor to strike.

"What is the situation on the attack on the hospital?" Loki asks.

"The other Avengers are working hard to keep them at bay. But if things continue to progress as they are, they will be overpowered," Jarvis informs him.

Loki tries to make the suit move faster but it seems to already be at its max speed. Yet he is still a few feet behind Doom.

Suddenly something seems to hit the head of Doom's suit and explodes, throwing him off course and letting Loki gain on him. The next time it happens, he can see what it is. Explosive arrows. He casts a quick glance and can see the archer that had terrorized him before, now aiding him. A third arrow
explodes against Doom's side, sending him into a spin.

Loki wastes no time and soon latches onto Doom's suit. He mentally redirects it back towards where his brother is waiting. Doom is struggling, hitting and punching at the suit. Still, Loki wills it to hold on tightly.

"I will not be defeated Loki! The moment I am released, I will not remain still!" Doom swears.

"Then I better not let go," Loki replies coolly.

"Sir, I must warn you that while the Watcher program is operational in the suit you are currently controlling, if you were to be hit directly with a lightening strike, the power will override the program. Possibly causing an electrical flare up of sorts at your actual location. In short, you may possibly be electrocuted," Jarvis informs him.

"You better not let that happen Loki. That's an order, you hear me? No matter what, stay clear of Thor's lightning!" Tony shouts.

Loki sees his brother, waiting and ready. He can feel Doom's struggle. And he knows that if this fails, they may not have time to try again. Tony is not the only one at risk. There are others as well. None who have done anything to become a victim in this madness.

He takes in a deep breath as he gets within range and watches the hammer light up with power.

"It appears that I do make a poor slave after all," Loki says quietly before quickly standing his suit and Doom's upright. "Now Thor!" he shouts.

"Loki! Loki get clear! Get clear God damnit! That's an order! Listen to me!" He hears Tony shout.

"It was a pleasure serving you Tony Stark," he says as Thor directs his hammer in his direction, sending a beam directly at them.

He no longer can hear Tony's shouts when the lightening strikes. At first all he sees is blinding white. Then he hears things explode around him. Then he feels it. Millions of volts of electricity shooting through him. He feels pain only for a moment before everything goes black.

"Loki..."

Loki feels as if he is floating in empty space. He doesn't feel warmth or coolness. Nor can he make any sense of anything solid above or beneath him. He is just there.

"Loki..."

But he's not alone. There's that voice. Who is it? Frigga?

"Loki, wake up..."

No, that voice does not belong to the woman he sees as his mother. In fact the voice does not belong to any woman. It's a man's voice.

"Loki...please..."

Is it his brother perhaps? No, that isn't right either. If it was Thor he would call him Brother instead of using his name. Like they did as children and before he lost his way.

"Loki, man, I need you to wake up. Come on Lokes, show me those sexy emerald eyes of yours."
That voice. So familiar. Of course it is. It belongs to the one that he enslaved himself to. Both body, and soul.
"To-Tony?" Loki calls out weakly, opening his eyes slowly.

He doesn't expect to see anything at first. He hasn't forgotten that he is blind now. And he has little doubt that he possibly destroyed the nano bytes Tony used to give him sight. So he expected to see nothing but darkness. Yet, when he can see the white light, then a blurry image of Tony, he is rendered speechless.

"There you are," Tony says, smiling with relief.

Loki blinks his eyes. Yes, he can see Tony, and it's not in some black and white view. He can see the dark brown hair, the brown eyes, the red T-shirt. He glances around, seeing that he is in a bed with deep blue blankets. On the other side of him is Thor, in his battle worn Asgardian armor and red cape.

"How..." he starts to ask before he notices the figure standing at the foot of the bed. His eyes widen at the sight of Odin, King of Asgard. His single eye stares down at him for a moment before he turns and silently leaves the room.

"Your brother there convinced the mighty king to come off his throne and actually do something for his son. He healed you. Even your eyes," Tony explains, his hand stretching out to brush some loose hair out of his face.

"Thor?" Loki croaks out in disbelief.

"Of course Brother. I told him of your daring deed here on Earth. How you truly sacrificed your life to save others, including Mr. Stark's," Thor tells him.

"So it did work?" Loki questions.

"Yeah. The second Doom was fried the creatures went wild then...kinda exploded into little sparking dust. Or something. So it worked," Tony tells him.

Loki nods as he lets this sink in. He is glad that it did. A warmth is developing in his chest at the thought. He meets Tony's gaze.

"I am glad it did. I...did not want any further harm to come to you," Loki tells him.

"Thanks. But you know, the idea of the Watcher program is to provide support. Not play hero by nearly getting your ass killed. That's my job for the record," Tony scolds him.

"I will inform the others that he is awake and well. Tony, please take care of my brother," Thor tells Tony before leaving the room.

"Of course I will," Tony replies. "I think he's over the whole Master-slave thing now. What do you think?"

"Hmm," Loki hums in agreement as he tries to sit up. Surprisingly he feels very good right now. Did Odin heal all of his injuries then?

"Hold up! You Mister, are ordered to bed rest. At least until I am sure Odin healed you completely like Thor said he did. Not sure if you noticed but he took that collar off of you as well. Kinda nice since it was an eye sore," Tony jokes weakly.
Loki blinks and raises his hand to his neck. He feels nothing but smooth skin. He had gotten so used to it that he had completely forgotten about it. Now that it is gone, he feels...exposed somehow.

"Which brings me to this next part. While you were unconscious, and I was scared out of my damn mind, I thought about our arrangement. The whole Master-slave thing? Well, I think after completely ignoring my order and thus saving the world I think you fulfilled..."

Loki doesn't allow Tony to finish the statement. The same hand that had just touched his neck quickly reaches out and grabs the front of Tony's shirt, pulling him down. Soon he has the billionaire's lips pressed against his for a long, sweet moment before breaking the kiss.

He meets Tony's gaze evenly. "Do not do that Tony. Please. It may be hard for you to understand but I prefer to remain in this arrangement. Till the day I die preferably," Loki tells him.

"But why? Loki, you're not the same evil maniac you were before. And you paid off your debt to me," Tony tells him with a confused look.

"Because that evil maniac is still inside me Tony. And through you, he will remain locked away in me. So I must serve you. With you," Loki adds quietly.

Tony is quiet for a few minutes. He can tell from the look in Loki's eyes that this is very important to him and he let's out a long sigh.

"If you're sure. Honestly I think you're selling yourself short. You deserve a fucking parade after what you did," Tony tells him.

"I will be content in being allowed to continue to serve you," Loki replied with a sly smile. "Besides, I believe you would like a few of the bonuses that come from this arrangement."

"Oh? Such as?"

"Oh yes. Such as," Loki says quietly as he gently pulls Tony down until he can whisper into his ear, "Please Master, tell me how to please you."

This gets a chuckle out of Tony before he turns and kisses Loki for a moment. "I think I could get use to that," he replies when they pull apart.

"Well, you'll have to wait. Sadly, I still feel quite exhausted after all that," Loki tells him.

"Same here. Mind some company?" Tony asks.

Loki shakes his head and carefully scoots over for the shorter man. His eyes roam about, taking in everything he could see before looking over Tony. Tony greets him with a smile and wraps an arm around him. Loki returns the smile and as he rests his head on Tony's chest he let's his mind wander.

Ever since his descent from Asgard, he often wondered how far he would fall and what would he become. Now he has his answer. True, it is one he never even considered. But still, it does hold a very promising future. One without the madness. One without the anger and self loathing. A simple life without glory. And he can't be happier.

Three Months later...

Loki reads the last few sentences of his book before sighing and closing it. He looks up and see's Tony smiling down at him. He had made himself comfortable, stretching out on the couch while resting his head on Tony's lap as Tony read some documents on his Stark pad.
"Finished another book I see," Tony comments.

"Yes. Sadly it's the last of the series I have been reading," Loki replies, carefully setting the book down.

"Maybe we should go on another shopping trip then? I looked into a few different bookstores with the largest selections available. And there is one right down from a true old fashion burger joint where the waitresses still wear roller skates to serve you. I think we should check it out," Tony suggests.

"An outing for you to chase skirts?" Loki mocks offense, though he is smiling.

"No, an outing for you to get some new reading material and me a tasty burger. I should at least get something out of the deal," Tony replies with a grin.

"Sounds like a marvelous plan. When should we..." Loki begins to ask as he sits up when the familiar red alarm goes off.

"My apologies sir but the Avengers are being assembled," Jarvis announces.

"Damn timing!" Tony cries out as both he and Loki stand up. "Sorry Lokes, looks like our outing will have to wait."

"I understand. Go, be a hero. Save the world," Loki tells him before giving him a light kiss.

Tony smiles and walks to the elevator. Loki meanwhile walks over to the windows and within a few minutes he see's Tony's suit flying off.

"Alright people, what's so important that my evening got interrupted?" Tony asks as he goes to the meeting spot.

"Oh I am sorry, did I interrupt something important Mr. Stark?" Nick Fury questions.

"Do not mind him Director Fury, he is just disappointed that he is not able to get served a burger by a waitress in roller skates," Loki's voice comes over the comms.

"I will never understand you Stark. The fate of the world is at hand and you are more interested in a burger."

"Change to private chat with Watcher program," Tony orders.

"Private chat initiated," Jarvis informs him.

"I appreciate the help Loki but I don't think it worked," Tony comments.

"Who said I was helping?" Loki asks.

"Oh so that's how it is. And here I thought the Watcher Program 2.0 was meant to support me?" Tony comments.

"The great Tony Stark needs help? Will wonders never cease. But I guess you do need someone to watch your back. And it is a lovely view," Loki replies.

"That's what I hear. So how is the program working so far?" Tony asks.

"Perfectly. Though there is a slight problem with the workshop itself," Loki tells him.
"Oh? What's that? Dumm-E glitching again?"

"No, nothing like that. It's just a bit...chilly in here. Makes the metal so cold against my skin," Loki says quietly.

"Loki...you're not..."

"You will have to come home safely to find out, now won't you?" Loki says with a seductive tone.

"You will be the death of me."

"I live to please. Now, get to work Tony," Loki replies as he leans back in the Watcher seat, smiling at the screen.

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