I Used To Be My Own Protection

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/4082947.

Rating: Mature
Archive Warning: Graphic Depictions Of Violence, Rape/Non-Con
Category: Gen, F/M, M/M
Fandom: Thor (Movies), The Avengers (Marvel Movies), Post Thor: The Dark World - Fandom
Relationship: Loki/Sigyn, Pepper Potts/Tony Stark, Jane Foster/Thor, Bruce Banner/Natasha Romanov, Darcy Lewis/Steve Rogers, Clint Barton/Phil Coulson
Character: Loki (Marvel), Thor (Marvel), Tony Stark, Pepper Potts, Natasha Romanov, Steve Rogers, Bruce Banner, Phil Coulson, Clint Barton, Darcy Lewis, Jane Foster (Marvel), Odin (Marvel), Sigyn, Nick Fury, Helblindi (Marvel), Byleistr (Marvel)
Additional Tags: Loki Feels, Jötunn Loki, Odin's A+ Parenting, BAMF Sigyn, Loki is married AND has kids???!!!, Sigyn is having none of the Avenger's shit, Steve is a blushing wuss, Tony Stark Has A Heart, Clint and Natasha are little shits, But then become really awesome, Avenger Loki, Avengers Family, Loki Angst, Implied/Referenced Rape/Non-con, Psychological Torture, Aftermath of Torture, Protective Loki, Thor is also a Little Shit, magical children, Ass-Kicking from children, Manipulative Nick Fury, Team as Family, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder - PTSD
Stats: Published: 2015-06-06 Updated: 2019-01-19 Chapters: 24/25 Words: 128208

I Used To Be My Own Protection

by Cadburytrooper96

Summary

Loki is sentenced to a century of serving and protecting Migard as an Avenger. It is as boring and dull as expected and Loki can't wait for it to be over when his wife surprises him with a visit. Together with her and their children, the Avengers discover more to Loki than they could've ever imagined and in the long run, Loki learns to accept himself.

In other words, Sigyn and her kids are having none of anyone's shit.

Title taken from the song 'Valentine's Day' by Linkin Park

Notes
See the end of the work for notes.
Chapter 1

Loki sighed as he entered his room. He flopped on his bed and buried his head in the pillow. He and the Avengers had just finished a fight against a Dr. Doom and he felt tuckered out. Loki had only just recently joined the Avengers after the discovery that he was alive.

Asgard had wanted to charge him for treason again after he took the throne from Odin.

In his defence no one had noticed and if not for Odin waking up from his damn sleep, no one would’ve suspected anything. They act as though Asgard crumbled in my hands. I took care of our realm and none was the wiser. Still, it was an act of treason and the penalty should’ve been death or at the very least, him being subject to an eternity of punishment.

Loki was ready to accept his fate, no matter what it was when Thor had stepped in. The golden haired hero had vouched for his honesty and bravery and had offered to take him back to Migard to become a part of those fools named Avengers.

Loki had immediately disagreed. He’d have preferred going to Jotunheim and living there but the AllFather seemed to think it was an agreeable task and had sentenced Loki to spend a century on Earth defending the people he wished to rule.

He’d never despised Thor more than he did in that moment.

His magic had been limited and he had immediately returned to Earth with Thor.

As you can imagine, he was welcomed with open fists.

To make matters worse, I have been subjected to living amongst Migard’s mightiest heroes. The one eyed man named Fury had thought it best to keep him in the tower of Tony Stark where he could be monitored. When he’d heard Fury’s decision, he was tempted to pull back the eye patch of the man at great distance before letting it go.

At least if that had been done I could’ve returned back to Asgard and carried out my sentence in peace. Loki huffed into the pillow.

Only ninety nine more years to go.

Tony reached for the bottle of scotch on the counter before it was snatched away. ‘Not cool, Rogers!’ Tony yelled after Steve as the blonde haired man. ‘You’ve already had three shots. If you need to numb the pain, take an aspirin.’ Steve said as he took the bottle and replaced it on the shelf.

‘Hey that’s medicinal okay?’ Tony shot back as he attempted to snatch back the bottle. Steve got to it first and held it out of his reach. ‘If you want something medicinal, take something with lemon or elderflower in it.’ Steve replied.

Tony gaped at the soldier. ‘Elderflower? What the fuck is that?’ He spat out. Steve gave a long suffering sigh.

‘It’s a plant Tony. It-‘

‘I know what the fuck it does, stars ‘n stripes. Give me my damn scotch.’
Steve held it further out of Tony’s reach and Tony pouted. ‘Jarvis, patch me to Bruce.’ He said. A second passed and Bruce’s voice was heard.

‘What do you want Tony?’ Bruce said in a tired voice. ‘Steve’s bullying me. He won’t let me have my special drink.’ Tony replied in a childish tone. ‘By all means don’t let him have it Steve.’ Bruce said. ‘He already had two shots this morning.’

Steve flashed Tony a shit eating grin and Tony glared at him. ‘I’ve been dropped in a nest of vipers.’ He said dramatically. ‘Just wait till Pepper gets back from Manhattan.’ Tony said to Steve.

‘Till then.’ Steve replaced the bottle of scotch and gave Tony a hard stare. ‘Bully.’ Tony shot back at him. ‘Speaking of bullies, where’s Loki?’ Clint said as he dumped his equipment on the table and reached for a bottle of whiskey.

‘Hey how come he’s allowed but I’m not?’ Tony protested. ‘Cause I’m not an alcoholic.’ Clint shot back as he poured himself a shot. ‘Shut it bird brain. Wasn’t asking you.’ Tony said back. Steve rolled his eyes at the both of them.

‘Where is my brother?’ Thor rumbled as he strode into the kitchen. ‘Was wondering that myself.’ Clint said.

‘Master Loki retreated to his room immediately he returned.’ Jarvis said. ‘He appears to be sleeping at the moment.’

Thor hummed. ‘I worry for his wellbeing. Tis not his normal behaviour to seclude himself after a fight.’ He said. ‘Works for me. If I had my way I’d prefer not to see him at all.’ Clint muttered. Tony and Steve exchanged a tense look but said nothing.

‘Nonetheless he is my brother and my charge on Migard.’ Thor said. ‘It will not–Thor didn’t have a chance to finish his sentence because they were interrupted by a blinding light coming from outside. ‘Jarvis sound the alarm.’ Tony yelled as he shielded his eyes from the light.

The light lasted for a few short seconds before fading away. Natasha, Bruce and Loki rushed into the living room, Loki still rubbing the sleep from his eyes.

‘What is it?’ Natasha asked. ‘We don’t know. Some kind of light.’ Clint said as he drew an arrow. The door to the balcony opened and to everyone’s surprise, out stepped a woman. She was tall and slender with ample curves. She had long silver hair with piercing blue eyes, a delicate nose and full lips. Tony was about to ask who the hell she was when Loki rushed forward and scooped her in a hug.

The woman giggled and wrapped her hands around him before pulling him into a deep kiss. ‘What the hell is going on?’ Clint whispered. ‘I don’t know but she’s smoking hot.’ Tony whispered back. Steve shot him a glare and Tony ignored him.

Thor was the only one who didn’t seem surprised but smiled to himself. Loki and the woman finally pulled apart and the woman nuzzled his cheek before turning to the rest of the Avengers. ‘You can replace your weapons; she’s not going to hurt you.’ Loki said, with a bite as he noticed his team mates still had their weapons drawn.

‘Well we don’t know that do we?’ Natasha said in a steady voice with her gun still pointed at the woman. The woman chuckled. ‘Loki said you were all a bunch of self-righteous, pecking hens but I think he meant defensive.’ She said.

‘No I meant self-righteous pecking hens.’ Loki muttered next to her. She shushed him affectionately.
before turning back to them.

‘My name is Sigyn and I’m Loki’s wife.’

‘So did you two just get married?’ Clint asked as Sigyn adjusted herself on Loki’s lap. ‘Newlyweds.’ She said with a snort. ‘Norns, no.’ Sigyn replied. ‘We’ve been married for…’ She turned to Loki for confirmation and he rolled his eyes playfully.

‘We’ve been married for three centuries now.’ Loki replied.

Steve choked on air.

‘Three centuries?’ Tony asked in disbelief. ‘Give or take a year or two.’ Sigyn said. She turned back to look at Loki before scrutinizing his features. ‘When did you last sleep?’ She asked.

‘I was asleep before you decided to grace us with your presence. There was a battle and afterwards I slept.’ Loki shot back. Sigyn ignored his first statement.

‘You need a woman after a battle then sleep.’ She said with a cheeky smile. ‘I like her already.’ Tony spat. Loki glared at him before turning to his wife.

‘Well seeing as I didn’t have a woman up until now, sleep was the only other option.’ Loki said to her with a mischievous smile. Sigyn returned his smile before standing up and tugging him to his feet.

‘We had better rectify that mistake, won’t you agree?’ She said with a sly grin as she led him towards his room.

Clint and Tony stared as Loki was led away by his very willing wife. ‘Lucky man.’ Bruce said as he stop up. ‘I’m going to bed and I suggest you do too Tony.’ He said to his science partner who was still staring at the disappearing figure of the God of Mischief.

Natasha followed Bruce's lead, her eyes still lingering on the godly duo. The woman didn't look like much of a challenge but she was bringing a change with her no doubt.

The question was, was it a good or bad one?
Sigyn stretched languidly as she woke up. Her hand instinctively reached out for Loki and her eyes flew open at her husband’s absence. For a split second she wondered where she was before the events of the day before came to her. She sat up in bed and that was when she spotted a piece of paper with her name on it in Loki’s handwriting.

She reached for it and read it over.

*My darling Sigyn,*

*I know how disgruntled you get when I awake you so I deemed to leave you be till you woke on you own. Breakfast is waiting for you in the kitchen.*

*Loki*

Sigyn smiled at her husband’s words before hauling herself out of bed. The sun looked to be high in the sky so she guessed it was early afternoon.

She winced a bit as she walked over to the bathroom. Loki had been very thorough with her the night before and she could still feel the effects. Her lips tugged in a smile.

She wouldn’t have it any other way. She was pretty sure his team mates heard the both of them but she couldn’t be bothered to care. He was hers as she was his and she was not ashamed of the pleasure she took in him.

She took a quick shower before scouting for what to wear. She hadn’t thought to bring any clothes with her and she supposed she’d just have to wear something of his. Her eyes raked through his room before landing on a particular piece of clothing.

A mischievous smile grew on her lips and her eyes shone with glee at her idea. She quickly donned on an outfit before leaving his room and finding her way to the kitchen.

The rest of the Avengers were sitting around a communal table. Thor seemed to be absent and she searched for Loki. She finally found him in a corner with a book in his hands. She frowned. *Is he normally always in the corner?*

She made up her mind to ask him about it later. In the mean time she walked up to him. Loki anticipated her coming and his eyes lit up at her arrival before he realised what she was wearing.

‘I see you’ve not grown out of the habit of wearing my clothes.’ He said as put down his book and she sat next to him. Sigyn grinned. She’d opted to wearing his inner armour and a pair of baggy trousers she’d seen in his wardrobe. It was a vest, with its trimming of leather and green highlights.

It didn’t look like much but Loki had enchanted it. A Valkyrie’s sword couldn’t get through it. ‘I had no clothes.’ Sigyn argued weakly.

‘What if there’s a battle and I need my armour?’ Loki argued. ‘Then take it off me.’ Sigyn replied with a shrug. ‘Although I will warn you, I’m not wearing anything beneath it.’
Loki who was used to his wife’s teasing ways only gave her a stern look while Tony wolf whistled. Sigyn turned around to face the Avengers. Steve who couldn’t help but overhear their conversation was trying very hard to ignore it but Tony was looking at them with an impressed face.

Sigyn giggled at their faces. ‘Forgive my manners. I haven’t seen him in a long while.’ She said. ‘We guessed as much from last night’s noise.’ Bruce mumbled. Loki flushed while Sigyn only smiled.

‘No need to be embarrassed.’ A red haired woman said. Sigyn rose from her place with Loki and walked towards the table. She was starving.

The woman’s comment registered to her and she shook her head. ‘Why should I be? After all tis a sign I have a husband who knows how to satisfy me.’ She said as she bit into a slice of bread. It was slathered with a sweet fruity spread and she hummed in delight.

Steve focused more on his food while Natasha and Clint arched a brow. ‘Well at least we don’t have to wonder about modesty with this one.’ The red haired woman said with a smile. Sigyn returned the smile.

‘Not to be rude but what’s the reason for your visit?’ Pepper said, the business woman in her coming out. Sigyn eyed the woman warily. She was dressed in casual clothing but Sigyn could sense the quiet confidence and power she held.

‘I’d like to know the answer to that question as well.’ Loki said as he came over to where she sat and began to toy with her hair. ‘Not that I mind having you here, but wherever you are, trouble seems to follow.’ He finished with a slight tug on her hair.

‘I learnt from the best.’ Sigyn shot back. She turned back to Pepper. ‘I’m afraid it’s something between my husband and I.’ She said firmly. ‘You might as well say it in front of them, no doubt they’ll find out soon enough.’ Loki said with a hint of distaste. ‘What do you mean?’ She asked, confused.

‘I’m afraid Master Loki is talking about me.’

Sigyn jolted at the voice that seemed to come out of nowhere and she looked up in an effort to locate it. ‘That’s Jarvis.’ Tony said, seeing her expression. ‘He’s artificial intelligence. I created him.’ Pepper rolled her eyes at her boyfriend.

He never missed an opportunity to point it out to anyone who would listen. ‘Magic?’ Sigyn asked. ‘Science.’ Tony replied with a huff. Sigyn hummed. ‘You’d be surprised how often the two intertwine.’ She said to him.

Sigyn sighed. ‘Very well. It’s about our children.’ She said. Clint who’d been quiet till then choked on his coffee. ‘Children?!’ The archer spluttered. Sigyn nodded slowly at everyone’s surprised face. ‘Yes.’ She answered.

‘As in the both of you have children?’ Tony asked. Sigyn nodded again. ‘Do you not have children on Migard?’ She asked with concern. Come to think of it, she hadn’t seen or heard any children since her arrival. But surely there must be some children around.

‘I think their surprise is at the fact that you choose to have children with me.’ Loki said lowly. There was a silence at the table as Sigyn’s eyes narrowed.

‘I see.’ She said shortly. ‘I don’t think that’s what Clint meant, ma’am.’ Steve said in an attempt to diffuse the tension.
‘No I think that’s exactly what he meant.’ Sigyn snapped. ‘You don’t think he’s fit to be a father or husband because he’s killed and hurt people right?’ She asked as she stared at Clint.


‘You are warriors am I right?’ Sigyn asked in a cool, calm tone. The two spies nodded. ‘And I believe you were…spies before you joined the Avengers?’ She asked. Again the two spies nodded.

‘Then look me in the eye and tell me you did not kill and murder in cold blood.’ She spat out, her tone furious.

‘It was-’ Natasha began but Sigyn cut her off.

‘What? Different?’ Sigyn sneered. ‘You were spies, selling secrets for money of all things. Where I come from, spies are killed not glorified.’ Sigyn stood up.

‘You have no more honour than my husband, less even because at least he owns up to the fact that he is a killer.’ She said. Sigyn took Loki’s hand.

‘We will discuss our children in private, by all means do listen.’ She bit out as she turned and walked out of the kitchen with Loki in her wake.

The silence at the table was overwhelming before Natasha pushed back her chair and stormed out of the kitchen. ‘Nat.’ Bruce called after her but it was no use. He sighed before following her.

Steve gave Clint a disapproving look before clearing out of the kitchen. It was just Tony, Pepper and Clint left. ‘I suppose you think I shouldn’t have replied either.’ Clint asked Tony. Tony shrugged.

‘I’m just happy I’m not the one who screwed up this time.’ He said. Clint stood up and left and Pepper smacked Tony on the arm.

Loki watched as his wife raged in front of him. He hadn’t seen her in moths and in just the few hours that she was here, he felt happier than he had in months.

Their marriage wasn’t very well known. Sigyn had been a captive from Vanaheim and he’d known her since she was a child. She’d shown exceptional skills as a fighter and she’d been drafted as a shield maiden much to Sif’s distaste.

For some strange reason, they’d become close friends and eventually lovers. She was bound by duty to remain unwed but she’d broken that vow to be with him and Loki would forever treasure her sacrifice.

Her outburst in the kitchen had only served to humour him and remind him of one of the many reasons he loved her.

Sigyn stopped at the smile on her husband’s face and she frowned. ‘Does my anger amuse you, Loki?’ She asked as she placed her hands on her hips. Loki wiped the smile of his face at her words.

‘Of course not.’ He replied smoothly as he drew her in his arms. ‘It’s just your anger only serves to enhance your beauty.’

Sigyn snorted. ‘Your words won’t win me over Silver tongue.’ She said but she let herself relax in his arms. ‘I do not like them.’ She stated.
‘I think they know.’ He said with a small laugh. ‘But enough about them. What about our children?’ He asked. Sigyn motioned for them to sit down and they did.

‘I want them to come to Migard.’

Loki spluttered. ‘Only for a little while.’ Sigyn said hurriedly. ‘Why?’ He asked. Sigyn glared at him. ‘Must your children need a reason before they can see their father?’ She shot back. Loki gave her look.

‘Do not try to guilt me into this, Sigyn. If you will recall, I taught you that trick.’ He said. Sigyn sighed in defeat. ‘Fine.’ She said.

‘They’re displaying magic, Loki.’ She said. Loki snorted. ‘Is that all? And here I thought it was a matter of urgency.’ He said.

‘I’m not talking about simple parlour tricks. Just the other day, Einar transformed himself into a foal.’ She exclaimed. Loki chuckled. ‘Tis not funny. I spent two hours trying to catch him.’ Sigyn said with a pout.

‘And Bodil and Brenna have started making use of their sei∂r which I will remind you is unusual seeing as they are not Æseir.’ She continued.

Loki sighed. ‘I understand your worry but I wonder if Earth is the best place for them with my reputation.’ He said. Sigyn stared at him.

‘What would you have me do? Send them to Jotunheim?’ She asked. ‘Oh no.’ Loki said forcefully. Sigyn pursed her lips at his unwillingness to visit his realm of birth but she let it go. For now.

‘You don’t have a better reputation on Asgard so Migard will have to do.’ She said. Sigyn cupped Loki’s face in her hands. ‘Your children miss you. I miss you.’ She said softly. ‘Even if ’tis just for a little while, let us live as a family once more.’

Loki looked in his wife’s pleading eyes and he knew he had lost. ‘You have me wrapped around your finger.’ He grumbled as he pulled her into his arms. Sigyn smiled in triumph.

‘Thank you.’ She whispered. ‘It’s not a done deal yet.’ Loki said. ‘What else?’ Sigyn asked impatiently. ‘You’ve convinced me but you are yet to convince a certain Director Fury.’

‘Ready to talk about it now?’ Bruce asked as he watched his girlfriend throw knives at a target. Natasha said nothing but continued to throw her knives. Bruce sighed.

‘Remember that time we went to this one restaurant and the waiter refused to serve us cause the Other Guy had torn through his house.’ Bruce said lightly. Natasha stopped. ‘Bruce that wasn’t you.’ She said as she turned to him.

‘And remember how you almost ripped the person apart?’ Bruce continued. ‘Loki knew what he was doing. You didn’t.’ Natasha said with an air of finality.

‘Just because I didn’t know doesn’t mean I didn’t do what I did. Other Guy or not. To someone else, Loki and I are no different.’ Bruce said as he drew nearer to her.

She opened her mouth to protest but Bruce cut her off. ‘I’m not saying throw him a party but cut him some slack.’ He kissed her on the forehead before walking off, leaving her to think on his words.
Yeah Sigyn might be a bit of a bitch now but in reality she's just really protective. Things smoothen over soon enough, you'll see.
Natasha dodged a blow from Clint and swung a kick at him. The two were sparring in the gym. Sigyn’s words the previous day had thrown the both of them off and they were trying to work it out of their system.

The door to the gym opened and the two spies stopped. A white haired figure poked through and Natasha sighed. *Speak of the devil.* Sigyn spotted the two and drew back. Loki’s head poked through next and he looked at the two.

‘Is it okay if we spar here?’ He asked. Clint raised a brow in surprise. Other than when they went on missions, he’d never seen the god fight and even on missions he preferred his tricks. ‘Sure.’ He said, wanting to see what the two were going to get up to.

Loki and Sigyn entered the gym, both of them dressed in loose fitting clothing. Sigyn had her hair up in a bun and she gave Clint and Natasha a dismissive look before facing Loki. Natasha’s lip curled in distaste but she stopped, eager to see what the two were going to do.

‘Knives first?’ Sigyn asked. Loki nodded and four knives appeared in Sigyn’s hands. She tossed two of them to Loki and he caught them. ‘First to draw blood.’ He said and she nodded. There was a pause before the two began.

Natasha and Clint stared as the two fought. It was almost like they were dancing with their knives, they looked so elegant. They could catch glints of metal as Loki and Sigyn sparred but they never seemed to hit each other.

Natasha looked down at their feet. They seemed to move in anticipation of each other. Before Sigyn could take a step forward to meet him, Loki had already taken a step backwards, making her blows fall short.

That kind of synchronization took years to perfect and Natasha’s level of respect for them grew. The two continued in perfect balance for a few more minutes before Sigyn made a mistake. She’d moved forward to meet Loki at the same time he’d moved towards her.

She wasn’t expecting it and attempted to fall back but Loki was too fast and he caught her with his knife. Immediately he saw the blood, Loki stopped. Sigyn’s hand went up to her face and she touched her cut.

‘Are you okay?’ Loki asked in concern as he dropped his knives and took her face in his hands. ‘I’m more than okay. I’m impressed.’ Sigyn replied.

‘You haven’t been able to hit me in a long while. Have you been sparring with someone other than me?’ She asked the last question with a mock pout and Loki laughed. ‘I wouldn’t dare.’ He replied.

His hand went to the cut and he healed it till it was a faint scar. Sigyn had also dropped her knives and she stepped back. ‘Let’s see if you can equally impress me with your fists.’ She said.

Loki scowled. ‘You know I hate fighting with you.’ He said. ‘Well that’s a shame because I love
fighting with you.’ Sigyn replied with a smile. ‘And it looks like your team mates would love to see it.’

Loki looked to Clint and Natasha who were now sitting down and watching the both of them. Loki shot them a glare before facing his wife. ‘If I win, you’ll play a game of chess with me.’ He stated. Sigyn made a face but she nodded.

Loki grinned in triumph and settled into a fighting stance. This time he attacked Sigyn first with a punch. She easily dodged it and delivered a hit of her own. She caught Loki square in the jaw and stumbled back.

‘You’re slow. Don’t be slow.’ Sigyn said to him as she attempted another punch. This time Loki dodged it and slammed her into the ground using the arm she’d used to punch him. Sigyn landed on her back but used her feet to deliver a kick to her husband’s face that landed him on his ass.

‘Don’t hesitate. You had me on the ground, you were supposed to attack.’ Sigyn said as she pushed herself up. ‘You’re my wife, I don’t feel comfortable hurting you.’ Loki muttered as he got to his feet.

‘As of right now, I’m not your wife, I’m your opponent. Treat me like one.’ Sigyn demanded as she took a stance. Clint smiled at Sigyn’s words. They remind him of when Phil used to train him and the thought brought good memories to mind.

Loki gritted his teeth and took his stance. There was another pause as they both collected their bearings. Again Sigyn moved to attack but instead of dodging them, Loki began to block and push back.

‘Good.’ Sigyn muttered. Loki delivered a punch straight to Sigyn face and before she could blink, he’d delivered another one before getting her in a chock hold. ‘Yield?’ Loki asked her. Sigyn’s hand went to the arm around her neck before she dug her elbow deep into his stomach.

The shock loosened Loki’s grip and Sigyn was able to break free and she immediately performed a roundhouse kick that landed Loki on his back. Sigyn placed her foot squarely on his chest as she towered over him. ‘Yield?’ She asked.

Natasha watched the two fight with interest. Before today she wasn’t aware Loki knew how to raise an arm but he’d proved her wrong. Loki placed his hands on her foot and used that to throw Sigyn off him. She stumbled and Loki immediately attempted to push her to the floor.

However Sigyn saw that coming and she steadied herself before pushing Loki back down to the floor and wrapping her arm around his neck. Her hold was much tighter than his and although Loki tried to hit her, she didn’t budge.

Finally he tapped out and Sigyn released him. ‘Are you alright?’ She asked as she pulled him to his feet. Loki nodded breathlessly and Sigyn smiled. ‘I haven’t put that much effort in for years. Norns, you’ve impressed me.’ She said as she hugged him to her.

‘Back to being my wife now?’ Loki asked with a small grin. Sigyn nodded and the two walked out the door leaving Clint and Natasha behind.

‘They’re okay.’ Natasha murmured after a while. ‘I know. It’s fucking annoying.’ Clint agreed. The two spies sat in silence before Natasha pulled Clint up. ‘Come on, show’s over. Back to sparring.’ She said. Clint grumbled good naturedly but got to his feet.
Sigyn re-tied her up in a bun and drank from the bottle of water Loki handed her. 'So can we see this...Man of Fury today?' She said to Loki. 'If you wish.' He replied. 'Although I implore you to not threaten him too greatly.'

'When have I ever threatened anyone?' Sigyn said with mock innocence. Loki chose not to answer her question. 'Where is Thor?' She asked after a moment. She'd seen the god of thunder only once since her arrival. She knew he and Loki had bad blood between them but at Loki’s trial, Thor had promised to always be by his brother’s side.

'He’s probably with his human plaything.' Loki said. Sigyn gave him a look and Loki shrugged. 'What? You know I’m right. She’s hardly going to live long enough for him and Odin would never have a human Queen in Asgard.' He said.

'She’s the one who slapped you?' Sigyn asked. Loki said nothing and Sigyn snickered. ‘She sounds like she has steel for a human; she’ll make a good ally.’ Loki scowled. ‘You just love to spite me.’ He said to her.

Bruce and Tony walked into the living room, oil and grease smeared all over their chests. Sigyn smiled at them. So far they were the only one’s she liked in the group. ‘So where are you all going to stay?’ Tony asked as he stood in front of them.

Loki and Sigyn exchanged a look. They hadn’t thought that far. ‘We could stay in a...flat, I think? New York is a big city. There will definitely be someplace to stay.’ Loki said slowly.

‘Yeah, there’s no way I’m letting you guys stay somewhere else.’ Tony said when Loki finished. ‘Where would you have us stay then? In your precious tower?’ Loki snapped.

‘Why not, it’ll be fun.’ Tony spouted. 'I don’t think you understand what you’re signing up for.' Sigyn added. ‘We have five children, three have started displaying magic and all of them are as mischievous as their father. Are you sure you’re ready for that?’

Loki smiled at the ‘mischievous as their father’ comment and Sigyn rolled her eyes. ‘We handled Loki; I think we can handle his children. Besides it’s been a while since Brucey’s been around kids.’ Tony said. Bruce shot Tony a look. Loki hummed. ‘I hope so for your sake.’ He said.

‘And your team mates don’t mind?’ Sigyn asked. ‘Because I will not put my children in an environment where they will be judged because of who their father is.’ Bruce and Tony had the decency to look a bit ashamed.

‘We may not be huge fans of Loki but we would never treat your children any different.’ Bruce said. Sigyn and Loki exchanged a look before looking back at Tony and Bruce. ‘Alright.’ They said in unison. Tony grinned.

‘Awesome.’ He said in triumph. ‘Age, favourite colours, tell me everything. Jarvis, take notes.’ Sigyn smiled. She definitely liked this Tony persona. Loki watched as his wife and Tony conversed. He never though he’d be saying this but the first time since being there, he was thankful for the billionaire.

Clint watched as Sigyn walked next to Loki. If Loki was the cool and calculating side then she was the domineering and aggressive side. He wouldn’t have thought so at first glance but after seeing her and Loki spar that morning he had no doubt in his mind.
They got to Fury’s office and Loki went in first followed by Sigyn. They all filed in and Fury looked up. ‘To what do I owe the pleasure?’ He asked in a tone that said there was nothing he found pleasurable about their visit.

‘I believe they’re here because of me.’ Sigyn said as she sat down, getting right down to business. ‘And you are?’ He asked. ‘Sigyn of Vanheim, former shield maiden to Odin and Loki’s wife.’ She said as she looked straight at Fury. Loki’s mouth quirked upwards in a slight smile. Sigyn was putting on her battle face and Fury had no idea what he was getting into.

‘Well…Sigyn of Vanheim, what can I do for you?’ Fury asked. Sigyn tried not to purse her lips. She had a feeling she wouldn’t like this man of Fury much. Migard was such a nicer place centuries past. ‘I wish to bring our children to this realm.’ She answered.

‘We have five of them and to be honest, I see no point in asking you for permission seeing as you weren’t there at their conception or birth but…I hear it’s protocol.’ She continued. Steve chuckled at her words.

‘Why should I let you and why the hell are the rest of you here, are they your kids too?’ Fury asked, glaring at the Avengers. ‘We’re here for team support.’ Tony spouted with a shit eating grin.

‘And I think you should let her because she’s asking nicely.’ Natasha piped up to everyone’s surprise. ‘I saw her take Loki down with one hand today. She’s not someone you want on your bad side.’ Sigyn shot her a grateful look before turning back to Fury.

‘Alright.’ Fury gritted out. ‘But how do we know they won’t be a danger to Earth?’ He asked. ‘They’re kids, Fury. I don’t think they’re going to tear down New York.’ Bruce said with a hint of irritation.

‘Yes but they’re his kids.’ Fury said gesturing to Loki. Sigyn flushed in outrage and opened her mouth to retort when Loki beat her to it.

‘They are my children and they are like me in that they are smart and cunning and sharp.’ Loki said to him. ‘But they are also like me in the fact that if they feel threatened they will lash out.’ Fury stared down at Loki but he just stared back coolly.

‘Is that a threat?’ Fury asked. ‘Tis a fact.’ Sigyn replied with an edge to her voice. Fury looked between the two. They were a power couple if he’d ever seen one. He hadn’t known Sigyn for more than five minutes but he knew for a fact that if she’d followed Loki to Earth, they wouldn’t have stood a chance.

‘And if I say no?’ He asked, testing her. ‘I shall still bring them here.’ Sigyn said with a cold smile. ‘My husband is under Odin’s orders to follow your command but I’m not.’ Fury looked at the group of people standing in front of him, knowing he didn’t stand a chance.

‘Alright.’ Fury grit out. Sigyn and Loki burst into smug smiles. ‘Thank you.’ Sigyn said as she got up and left without a glance back.

Bruce watched her walk past. She’d achieved, in a couple of minutes in a shirt and gym pants, what some grown men couldn’t do with a couple of hours and overpriced suits.

He was impressed. Sigyn undid her top knot as she walked along. ‘The nerve of him.’ She muttered to herself. I have the good mind to tell the children to wreak havoc on him with their pranks. Sigyn accidentally ran into someone and she stumbled back.

‘Oh my god, I’m so sorry.’ She heard a voice say. She looked up to see a busty, black haired woman
with thick set glasses. ‘You didn’t do any harm.’ Sigyn replied.

‘Hello Darcy.’ She heard her husband say as he came behind her. The woman now known as ‘Darcy’ looked up at Loki and smiled. ‘Hey. What’s up? You in trouble again?’ She asked with a good natured smile.

‘Not this time.’ Loki replied. Sigyn looked between the two. The playful familiarity between them was unexpected. _He never said anything about her._ ‘Darcy, this is Sigyn.’ Loki said, noticing the way his wife scrutinized the black head.

Darcy’s eyes widened. ‘Oh this is her?’ She asked as she focused her attention on Sigyn. ‘You fucking liar. She’s so much sexier than you said.’ Sigyn chuckled. _I like her._ ‘Hey Darcy.’ Steve said as the rest of the Avengers caught up to them.

Darcy wrapped her arm around Steve’s waist. ‘You didn’t tell me Loki brought his wife around.’ She said to him. Steve’s eyes widened in surprise. ‘You know her?’ He asked. ‘Well not really, Loki talks about her all the time.’ Darcy replied.

‘Wait, how do you know that?’ Tony asked as the group begins walking. ‘Well when Loki got here, you guys dumped him at S.H.E.I.L.D and Fury put me on babysitting duty so…’ Her voice trailed off.

‘Well I’m grateful he had someone to talk to.’ Sigyn said with a smile to Darcy. ‘Yeah sure, no problem.’ Darcy said. ‘And is talking all that took place?’ Sigyn asked simply. Loki stared at her in surprise and she gave a simple shrug.

‘Oh no, I’m-I’m dating Steve.’ Darcy said with a small laugh as she patted Steve’s arm. Sigyn paused and looked Steve up and down. He was a well-built man and Sigyn was sure he had more to show underneath his armour.

‘I didn’t say he couldn’t join in.’ Sigyn replied with a coy smile. Steve turned a shade of beetroot while Darcy, Tony and Natasha burst into laughter. ‘I like her already.’ Darcy said as Sigyn finally gave way to laughter too.

‘You’ve been holding back on us.’ Tony said to Loki. Loki wrapped an arm around Sigyn. ‘I’m afraid I’m quite selfish with the things I hold dear.’ He replied. Sigyn smiled up at him and he smiled back at her.

‘Hey where’s Clint?’ Bruce asked. ‘Coulson.’ Natasha replied. That seemed to answer the question for the rest of them and they continued to move on. ‘Darcy don’t you have a job to do?’ Natasha spat.

‘Finished for the day, thanks for asking.’ Darcy snapped back. The playful banter between the group continued on till they piled back in the Quinjet and flew back to the tower.

‘Perhaps I was too quick to judge. They are not as bad as they first appeared.’ Sigyn said as she cuddled into Loki’s arms. She’d spent the entire day with them, laughing and talking. She’d given Tony all the information he needed for the children and he’d set to organizing rooms. She and Natasha had even managed to come to some sort of understanding.

They weren’t best friends but they weren’t as ready to kill themselves as they were in the beginning. All in all, it had been a day of wins for Sigyn. ‘They do it because of you not me. They hate me.’ Loki replied.
Sigyn frowned. ‘I don’t think they hate you. They don’t like you but they don’t hate you.’ She said.

Loki scoffed. ‘Why shouldn’t they? I do. I have done nothing worthy of anyone’s admiration.’ He said, his voice tinged with spite.

Sigyn stared at him in shock. ‘I…Why would you say that?’ She asked. ‘Because it’s the truth.’ Loki replied. ‘Laufey knew it from my birth and he did the right thing by leaving me to die until Odin came along and ruined everything.’

Sigyn’s mouth fell open. She wanted to ask him if he believed a word of what he just said but the look in his eyes told her he did. ‘Loki.’ She whispered as she sat up. She opened her mouth to say more but a piercing alarm cut her off.

Loki looked to the ceiling with a groan before getting out of bed. ‘I have to go.’ He said as he dressed in his armour. Sigyn sat on the bed, his previous words running through her mind. Has he always thought like this? But…surely I would know if he did.

Loki stepped forward to kiss her forehead and Sigyn pulled him down for a real kiss. ‘I love you and do not think this talk is over.’ She whispered as she let him go.

Loki smiled but said nothing. Sigyn watched him leave with a heavy heart. She’d always known he had moments when he didn’t particularly like himself and she knew he had a rocky childhood but after the birth of their firstborn, it had seemed to disappear.

Apparently he was just hiding it from me. Sigyn settled back in bed with a frown. Hopefully having the children around will teach him that he is more than he thinks he is.

Chapter End Notes

Another chapter down! So glad for the feedback and glad you’re all loving Sigyn. The children are coming up in the next chapter and the Avengers see a side to Loki they have never seen. Also, Thor finally appears. Thanks for reading and suggestions are always welcome!
Chapter 4

Loki waited nervously for his family to arrive. Sigyn had left the day before to bring back the children and Loki had realized just how lonely he had been before she came. His bed suddenly felt too big.

A month had passed since she’d arrived and she’d fit in better than expected. Not that it surprised him. His wife was a ray of sunshine; she made anyone who came into her company feel warm and happy. A gift he did not possess.

*It is just as well that our children take after her or else they’d have a childhood much like mine.* As a child he was an outsider. Despite him being royalty, people did not have the urge to be around him like they did with his brother.

*At least now I know why.* ‘Missing her already?’ Bruce piped up as he spotted Loki’s distant look. Loki looked up at him with a start and Bruce smiled. ‘It would seem so.’ Loki said ruefully. ‘Well I don’t blame you; she’s a hell of a woman.’ He replied, remembering the time when Sigyn had seen the Other Guy.

He thought she’d run or scream in terror but according to others, she was fascinated by him. It took Jarvis showing him the recording for him to believe it. He’d told her he was willing to live somewhere else in case he hulked out in front of her children but she’d only brushed him off and told him it would be a good learning experience for them.

Frankly, it blew his mind. ‘Yes she is.’ Loki replied with pride. Bruce poured himself a cup of coffee and slowly the Avengers all came down for a late breakfast. Loki sat down in a corner of the kitchen while they ate, his mind elsewhere.

Natasha watched him as she toasted bread for everyone. She could tell he was nervous about his children coming. From what she knew, they knew nothing about who he was and that made her pity him.

She knew nothing about children but she did know that he and Sigyn cherished theirs and she was eager to see how he behaved around them.

‘There’s a plate here if you want it.’ Steve called to his brooding teammate. Loki shook his head. ‘Thank you but I wouldn’t want to intrude.’ He replied. Steve frowned. ‘You’re not.’ He said but Loki declined all the same.

Tony caught Loki glancing at the clock and he smiled. ‘When are they coming?’ He asked. ‘They should’ve been here a while ago but we do have five children.’ He said lightly. It seemed he spoke too soon because a flash of light appeared outside.

They all shielded their eyes till it dimmed.

‘I told you to hold my hand but you refused so tis your fault.’

They all smiled as they heard the distinct voice of Sigyn. The doors to the balcony opened and she walked in with a child in her arms. Four other children came sulking after her but their demeanour changed as soon as they caught sight of Loki.
Loki barely had the time to stand up before he was attacked by his children. Their weight made him lose his balance and he was knocked down. The children all gathered around him, all of them talking at the same time.

‘You never greet me like that.’ Sigyn remarked but she bore a huge smile on her face as she watched her family.

The Avengers watched in awe as Loki was knocked down by his swarm of kids. His face was lit with joy as they all attempted to climb into his arms at once. Loki laughed as his children all hustled for his attention.

‘…turned into a foal and made mother catch me…’

‘…and we poured water over his head so we had to…’

‘…found this book which teaches you all the spells in the library…’

‘…Brenna made me jump over the fence so we could…’

It was a cacophony of voices and Sigyn smiled at them before speaking up. ‘Give him space to breathe, he cannot hear you all at once.’ She said. The children all fell silent and Loki chuckled before swooping them up in a huge hug.

‘Norns, look at you.’ He said to them. ‘I only left you for a little while and you’ve all grown so big.’ Steve watched as Loki stood up. Even though he knew the man was a father, it was one thing to know and another to actually see him with children.

Reminds you that he’s just as human as any of us. The toddler in Sigyn’s arms began to fuss as he reached out for his father. Loki took him from Sigyn’s arms and immediately the boy stopped crying and buried his face in his father’s neck with a giggle.

Sigyn looked at the Avengers who were watching Loki with surprise. She knew they still found it hard to believe he had children and was a loving father and although they were all friendly now, she felt glad she could prove them wrong.

‘Perhaps now that you’ve seen your father, you might want to greet the other people in the room?’ Sigyn said in a not so subtle tone. It was then that the children and Loki realised the presence of the Avengers.

One of them immediately hid behind Loki’s legs and Tony laughed. ‘We’re not that scary.’ He said before crouching down to their level.

‘Let’s see, you’re Bodil and you’re Brenna.’ He said to the twin girls. They both giggled and shook their heads. They were the spitting image of their mother, with her long white hair and blue eyes. The girls were the Earth equivalent of thirteen and there was no doubt in Tony’s mind that they would be just as beautiful as her when they grew up.

‘Okay so you’re Brenna and you’re Bodil?’ He asked again. They shook their heads again and Tony frowned. ‘You were right the first time.’ Loki said with a soft smile.

‘I knew it.’ Tony said as the two girls giggled again. ‘Okay so the little cutie behind you is Ragna and the one holding your hand is Einar and the one in your hand is Aric.’ Tony finished. Loki
nodded, a bit impressed that Tony managed to remember all of their names.

Ragna was an adorable girl who had took exactly after her father and was the Earth equivalent of nine. She peeked out from behind her father’s legs before darting back. Einar had his mother’s hair but Loki’s eyes.

He looked to be a cheerful boy, the Earth equivalent of six and he waved a chubby hand at Tony. Aric had his mother’s eyes but Loki’s hair. At the Earth equivalent of three, he was their last child and he smiled at Tony.

‘Alright, I’m Tony, the blonde one is Steve, the guy lurking behind him trying to look invisible is Bruce, the redhead is Natasha and the last one staring like he’s never seen kids is Clint.’

‘It’s a lot to take in, give them a moment.’ Steve said as the children stared at them.

‘Uncle Tony.’

‘Uncle Steve.’

‘Uncle Bruce.’

‘Aunt Natasha.’

‘Uncle Clint.’

The twins smiled as they called out the names in unison. ‘We’ve got it.’ They said again. Bruce’s throat did something weird at the sound of the two girls putting the world ‘Uncle’ in front of his name and Natasha put a supporting hand on his shoulder.

‘Okay, you all need to go have a bath most especially you Einar because I know you did not have one before we left Asgard.’ Sigyn said as she began to usher the children away.

‘I wore clean clothes!’ Einar protested as he looked to his father for support.

Natasha and Steve chuckled at the young boy’s words. ‘Go on, do what your mother says.’ Loki said to them. ‘But I haven’t told you about the book I found.’ Ragna’s small voice said. Loki reached behind him and patted his daughter’s head.

‘I’ll still be here when you come back.’ Loki said reassuringly. ‘Promise?’ She said in a small voice and everyone’s heart shattered at the vulnerability in that one word.

That was the sound of a girl who wasn’t used to always having her father around and Tony winced mentally as the memory of him saying the same to his father resurfaced. Loki hugged his little girl to him. ‘I promise. I’ll be right here.’ He said to her and the rest of them.

‘Come on.’ Sigyn said gently and they all trailed after her. Aric waved at his siblings and Einar stuck his tongue out at him. Loki tried to drop his lastborn so he could follow his siblings and take a shower but Aric held tight to him and Loki gave up.

‘Da!’ Aric repeated as Loki sat him down on the counter where the Avengers were. ‘What is it?’ Loki said as his son held on to him. ‘M’ hungry.’ The boy spouted and Loki chuckled. ‘No surprise there.’ He murmured.

‘There’s still breakfast and pizza.’ Clint offered. ‘Or we could order out.’ Tony added. ‘Pizza’s fine. He doesn’t care what he puts in his mouth so long as it tastes good.’ Loki replied. Natasha opened
the fridge and took a pizza box out before placing it in the microwave.

‘Red hair.’ Aric said suddenly and it took them a few seconds before they guessed he meant Natasha. Natasha’s hand went to her hair and she laughed. ‘You like my hair?’ She asked and the boy nodded enthusiastically at her.

The microwave dinged and Natasha took the box out before plating up a slice. Aric reached for the plate and Loki drew it away. ‘It’s hot. You’ll burn yourself.’ Loki chided but Aric still reached for it all the same.

Loki tore off a piece and blew on it several times before feeding it to his son. Clint watched as Loki fed the little boy in front of him. It wasn’t a secret that Loki wasn’t his favourite person. After the battle of New York, when the dust had finally settled, the enormity of what he’d done hit him.

Even though Natasha had told him not to, he’d gone back and looked at the number of people that had died on the helicarrier. The figure made his eyes water especially when he’d seen names that he recognized.

Then Steve had told him about Phil and the floor vanished under his feet. Phil was his entire world and the fact that he was gone threw him off for a long while. Of course, he’d later found out that Phil was alive and Fury had been a bastard about the whole thing but he still focused the blame on Loki.

To him, the day he’d met Loki was the day his life had taken a sharp drop downhill and he had never forgiven him about it. To see him now, playing the role of a loving father annoyed the hell out of Clint because he’d been through the wringer all because of him.

He couldn’t reconcile that Loki with the one standing in front of him. Deciding it won’t do to make a scene, he quietly drew away from kitchen.

Loki watched as Clint abruptly left. He knew the archer still loathed him. He didn’t mind it much so long as Clint kept all that anger on him. *If he even dares to hurt my children…* Loki’s hand tightened against Aric at the thought and he shook it out of his mind.

He felt a set of arms wrap around his legs and he looked down to see Einar. ‘Done already?’ He asked in surprise. Einar nodded and Loki gave him a look.

‘Mother said I can bathe later!’ Einar protested and Loki chuckled. ‘Alright, alright.’ He relented. Einar grinned before noticing what his brother eating. ‘What is that?’ He asked as he jumped in an attempt to see.

Steve, who’d been watching the vivacious boy with a smile, hoisted him up and Loki shot him a grateful look. Einar scrambled towards the pizza box and Bruce’s hand shot out to steady him. ‘It’s called pizza and it’s hot so be careful.’ Loki replied.

Einar grabbed a slice and tentatively took a bite. Natasha watched with a smile as the boy’s face lit up and he stuffed the entire slice in his mouth.

‘Chew! You’ll choke if you don’t.’ Loki reprimanded and Einar slowed down on his eating. Steve snorted. It was almost like having his mother there.

The elevator opened and out came his daughters. They had huge smiles on their faces and they all made a beeline for Tony.

‘Thank you so much for the rooms.’ Brenna said as she wrapped him in a hug. Tony patted her head
awkwardly. ‘They’re lovely and we’re grateful.’ Bodil said politely, stressing the ‘we’re’ as she glared at Einar. ‘Thank you.’ He mumbled through a mouth full of food and Bodil rolled her eyes.

Brenna glanced at her brothers. ‘What are they eating?’ She asked. ‘Pizza. It’s delicious!’ Einar exclaimed as he reached for another slice. Brenna frowned and Loki handed her and her sister a piece, knowing how they could get.

Tony watched as the children fought over the pizza box. *They’re alright.* He felt a tug on his trousers and looked down to see Loki’s look alike daughter. ‘Thank you for the rooms.’ She said shyly and Tony’s heart melted.

She was completely adorable. ‘It was a pleasure.’ He replied. Sigyn smiled as the Avengers interacted with her children. It was obvious that they were smitten with them and she was glad her friends on Earth were fond of her children.

She frowned as she noticed the archer was missing. Sigyn sighed. *I suppose you cannot win everyone over.* There was a rumble of thunder and she looked outside. The skies were clear enough so there was only one explanation for the thunder.

There was a thud outside and Loki rolled his eyes at what was next to come. The doors to the balcony opened and out stepped Loki’s brother, Thor.

The children exclaimed in delight at the sight of their uncle and ran to hug him, all except for Aric who seemed content to stay in his father’s arms.

Thor’s laughter boomed as he hugged the children and Sigyn couldn’t help but smile. ‘They grow like weeds.’ Thor said good naturedly as he came over to hug her. Sigyn returned the hug and that was when she noticed someone standing behind her brother-in-law.

‘And who is this?’ She asked as she drew away from Thor’s embrace although she already guessed who the woman was. ‘This is Jane Foster; she is what Migardians call my girlfriend.’ Thor announced. Jane raised a hand in a friendly wave and Sigyn shot her a small albeit vibrant smile. The Avengers all said their greetings to her while Loki kept quiet.

Sigyn eyed the woman in front of her. Jane Foster was unlike anything she’d expected. Knowing Thor to be a loud, boisterous man she expected his woman to be someone bold and firm footed, someone to temper him.

The brown haired woman in front of her was more of a mouse than anything else. *Well they do say opposites in nature tend to find each other.* Still the fact that this frail looking thing shared Thor’s bed was surprising.

*I’m surprised he hasn’t broken her.* Thor looked at her expectantly and that was when she realized she hadn’t said a thing. ‘Sorry, it’s just…you’re not what I was expecting.’ Sigyn said pleasantly. ‘Oh…well…sorry about that.’ Jane said with a nervous laugh.

Sigyn shook his head. ‘No need to apologize, Lady Jane.’ She replied. ‘Loki tells me you slapped him when you last met.’ Jane flushed. ‘I didn’t-It was the heat of the moment.’ She stammered. Sigyn chuckled.

‘Don’t be alarmed, I’m not offended. I hear he was being quite difficult.’ She said. Loki scoffed. ‘Like that isn’t why you married me.’ He murmured. Sigyn shot him a good natured smile. Jane watched the duo curiously.

Thor had told her of Loki and Sigyn’s affection for each other but she didn’t believe him until right
now. They looked like any other married couple.

It was weird.

*I don’t understand how she can love him after everything he did but I suppose she’s known him for longer.* Loki glanced down at the toddler in his arms. ‘I think our little prince is ready for a nap.’ He said fondly. Aric rubbed his eyes.

‘Not sleepy.’ He mumbled even as his eyes dropped. Sigyn smiled at her son. ‘Shall I take him to bed?’ Loki asked. Sigyn shook her head.

‘No, if he wakes up alone he brings the entire house down with his crying.’ She replied. Loki complied and pulled Aric unto his lap so he was in a better position. He looked down at his son and carefully brushed a strand of hair from his face.

Aric squirmed slightly and Loki smiled. Thor watched his brother with a smile. Sigyn’s arrival had done him much good and he was glad for it. Loki needed to be surrounded by the one’s he loved and Sigyn had done a good job of that.

‘Does father know they’re here?’ Thor asked by way of conversation. Apparently that was the wrong thing to say, by the way Loki’s body stiffened.

‘Odin knows all things, I’m sure he’s aware.’ Loki said tightly. The atmosphere suddenly became tense and Sigyn looked between the two brothers. She’d been spared having to deal with them thanks to Thor visiting Jane but now that he was here, she knew his presence would likely rub her husband off in a wrong way.

‘I did not inform the AllFather but Heimdall let me go without question so I suppose he is fine with it.’ Sigyn said with a soft smile. ‘Now then, I hear you are some sort of astrologist, you study the stars yes?’ She said to Jane, changing the subject.

Jane’s face lit up as she explained her job to Sigyn. Thor watched his brother and his sister-in-law. Their union seemed strange to anyone who did not know them but he knew they were perfectly suited. She understood him and it gave him relief to know that there was at least one person in the nine realms who did.

‘Did you bring Mjolnir?’ Bodil asked excitedly as she tugged at his shirt. Thor brought out the famous hammer and she and her siblings chattered with excitement as they attempted to pull it.

Loki gently moved his daughter’s arm as he slipped into his bed. The children had all decided to sleep with their parents and he didn’t have the will power to refuse them.

He’d forgotten how it was, having them there. The last time he’d seen them was shortly after he discovered he was a Frost Giant. With Odin’s lies and the insecurity in Asgard he didn’t feel they’d be safe so he sent them to Vanaheim.

After the battle of New York, Sigyn hadn’t let them see him, for reasons he understood, and coupled with the one year when he was ‘dead’, his children hadn’t seen him in years.

He didn’t realize how much he missed them until he held them in his arms and heard their voices. Ragna cuddled closer to her father and Loki planted a kiss on her forehead.

‘Still think I shouldn’t have brought them?’ Sigyn asked with a smug smile as she carried Aric into bed. She leaned over to kiss him and Loki returned the kiss before they settled into bed. ‘I still think
they’ll be safer in Asgard but I’m glad they’re here.’ He replied.

Sigyn smiled. ‘I’m glad you’re happy. Your team mates seem to like them as well.’ She murmured. Loki hummed in agreement. He’d been surprised at how easily they took to his children. He was prepared to shield them lest the Avengers hated them for his crimes but they showed nothing of the sort.

*But then again my children are nothing like me.* ‘Loki?’ Sigyn asked after some moments of silence. Loki hummed in reply. ‘You never told me why you attacked Migard.’ She said softly. Loki shifted uncomfortably.

‘I thought Odin would’ve told you of my narcissistic tendencies and my ability to ruin everything I touch.’ Loki murmured lightly. Sigyn gave him a playful shove. ‘I’ve heard a lot of things from a lot of people but not from you.’

Loki kept quiet. ‘I attacked Migard because I knew I could and I was defeated. Not much to talk about.’ He replied. Sigyn frowned. ‘Do you take me for a fool, Loki?’ She asked. Loki turned to look at her in surprise. ‘I would never.’ He replied fiercely.

‘Then why won’t you tell me the truth?’ Sigyn demanded as she sat up. ‘I know you. If you truly wanted Migard you’d have it.’ Loki scoffed. ‘You put too much faith in me.’ He said.

‘Tis not faith. I know you.’ Sigyn repeated. She looked at him expectantly and Loki sighed. Memories of the Chitauri and of Thanos came to him and shook them away. ‘Sigyn.’ Loki began and she waited for him to continue.

‘I…I don’t want to talk about it.’ He said. Sigyn frowned. ‘Does it have to do with keeping me or the children away from danger?’ She asked. Loki shook his head.

‘Then why don’t you want-‘

‘Sigyn.’

Sigyn stopped short at the call of her name. She’d never heard Loki use that tone of voice, that tone that was demanding yet pleading at the same time. ‘Okay.’ She relented, knowing he wasn’t ready. She settled back in bed and proceeded to go to sleep.

Loki watched as his wife adjusted. Her in-depth knowledge of him sometimes scared him. He’d been on Earth for months and no one had seen through him enough to ask his reasons for attacking Migard.

He knew he should tell her everything but he just couldn’t do it. To him she was too pure, too delicate to be dragged down into the deep, dark crevices of his mind. He would prefer she knew nothing.

He sank back into bed, listening to the ebb and flow of his children’s breaths. Soon, he felt himself getting sleepier and before long, he was asleep.

Clint listened to the familiar thump of his husband’s heartbeat. It was silly but he liked hearing it, it reassured him that Phil was still alive. ‘I hear Loki brought his kids today.’ Phil said lightly. ‘Who told you?’ Clint asked.

‘I’m an agent Clint. It’s my job to know everything.’ Phil replied. Clint snorted. ‘Don’t even. Darcy did didn’t she?’ He asked. The silence from his partner was enough and he chuckled.
'Well, why aren’t you there?’ Phil asked. Clint looked up at him. ‘Are you trying to get rid of me Coulson?’ He asked with a raised brow. ‘I couldn’t if I tried.’ Phil replied with a smile. ‘Nat tells me you and him don’t see eye to eye.’ He continued.

‘Are you really surprised? The guy’s a lunatic.’ Clint murmured. ‘True but he’s a teammate now. If you guys are working together you have to like him.’ Phil reminded. Clint automatically tensed and Phil sighed.

‘Look I know he’s done terrible things but Tony won’t let him near the tower if he was still that same person.’ He said. Clint sat up abruptly and Phil looked at him expectantly.

‘That man got into my mind, made me do things, kill people that I did not want to kill and then, as if that wasn’t enough, he killed you. You can’t-You don’t-’

Again Clint clamed up and Phil rubbed his shoulder soothingly. ‘I know I can’t understand how that was but you holding on to it isn’t helping you.’ He said. When that didn’t have an effect on him, Phil tried another approach.

‘Have I ever told you what my hardest assignment was?’ He said, changing the subject. Clint blinked. ‘No.’ He muttered. ‘Well, Fury told me to pick up some killer. He told me to be careful and said I should take my best men with me. I followed his orders but I didn’t think I’d need them. I was wrong.’ Phil said.

‘He killed my men and then attempted to kill me as well. Fury eventually had to step in and get the man himself.’ Clint had relaxed slightly now. ‘I was put in charge of training said killer and I hated it. Told Fury he was reckless, undisciplined and would probably end up killing everyone in their sleep.’

Clint chuckled weakly. ‘Did Fury listen?’ He asked, going along with the story. Phil shook his head. ‘Told me to keep at it and I did until I realized something.’

‘You’d fallen in love with his good looks?’ Clint asked and Phil snorted. ‘You wish. That came much later. I realized how skilled he was. He used a bow and arrow like it was an extension of his arm. It blew me away.’

‘I’m not getting the moral lesson of this story.’ Clint murmured. ‘My point is-’ Phil said as he toyed with his husband’s hair. ‘I couldn’t realize how much potential you had until I looked past the things you’d done.’

Clint fell silent. ‘I’m not saying fall in love with him but you are going to need to let go of what he’s done if you plan on working with him.’ Phil said gently. ‘I am working with him.’ Clint grumbled and Phil shook his head.

‘I’ve seen you two on the field. You’re not working with him, you’re tolerating him.’ He said. Clint sighed. ‘Did Nat put you up to this?’ He asked and Phil shook his head. ‘She mentioned it but I’m talking to you out of love not Nat’s concern.’

Clint pouted. ‘I will…attempt to do what you’ve said.’ He replied with a heavy sigh. ‘That’s all I’m asking for.’ Phil said. Clint sank back into the bed and resumed his position on his husband’s chest. ‘I’m not saying it’ll happen immediately.’ He reminded.

Phil smiled. ‘If it did I’ll accuse Loki of controlling your mind again.’ Clint chuckled and Phil ran his fingers through his hair.

‘And just for the record, it’s going to take more than a leather bound villain to kill me.’
So there we have it! Him and his children. I hope everyone liked it and like them. We'll be seeing more of them in the next chapter and much more of Loki's fathering skills. Also Clint's gotten a good talking to yaay to that!

The amount of feedback has been awesome, thanks so much. Suggestions and comments are also welcome!
‘Alright let me see.’ Loki said to his son. Loki watched as Einar concentrated on transforming. His body shuddered and within the blink of an eye, a foal was standing in place of his son. It was a dark grey haired one with a white muzzle and a white diamond shaped birthmark on its head.

Loki was suddenly hit with the memory of Sleipnir at the same age. With that memory came the memory of his other children being taken away from him and the pain of it hit him so hard, he felt his eyes water.

Einar nudged his father with his head and Loki snapped out of it. ‘Well done. I’m proud of you.’ He said as he plastered on a smile and blinked his tears away. Einar pranced about happily and Loki chuckled. ‘Alright let’s see you change back.’

Einar looked down meekly and Loki frowned. ‘You can’t change back?’ He asked. Einar shook his head and Loki sighed. He would do it himself but he didn’t have that kind of magic right now and most importantly, he didn’t want to intrude in Einar’s learning process.

‘Do you stay like this for long?’ He asked. Einar shook his head and Loki shrugged. If it’s not for long then there’s no reason why we can’t wait it out. ‘Well we can wait till it wears out.’ He said to him. Einar neighed and licked his father’s hand.

Loki smiled and ruffled his son’s hair before getting up. ‘I’m sure we can find you an apple or something to eat.’ He murmured as he walked towards the elevator. Einar cheerfully trotted behind him. Loki entered the elevator and waited for Einar to get in.

The boy (well horse) looked at it with apprehension and Loki shook his head fondly. ‘It’s alright, it’s just going to take us to another floor.’ He said softly. Einar rumbled but stepped in. The doors closed and the elevator started moving.

Einar inched closer to his father and Loki gently patted his head. Within seconds, they had arrived to their floor. It was quiet and Loki briefly wondered where everyone was. He got to the fridge and opened it before getting out an apple.

He fed it to his son who munched it happily before wondering where the rest of his children were. He knew Sigyn was with the twins but what about the rest. ‘Where’s your sister?’ He asked Einar. Einar trotted towards Ragna’s room and he followed.

She was sitting on her bed, wrapped up in blankets with a book in her hands. She looked up when she saw him and she smiled. ‘Perhaps you could show me the book now?’ he asked. Ragna nodded in excitement and went to get it.

‘You want to read it now?’ She asked. Loki shook his head. ‘Let’s go find your other brother and then we’ll read.’

‘Asha!’

Natasha chuckled. ‘Na-ta-sha.’ She said, drawing it out for him. ‘Asha!’ Aric insisted with a giggle. Natasha smiled. The boy was just adorable. ‘Can you say Pepper?’ Pepper asked as she looked at the
little boy.

‘Pepper!’ He repeated and she smiled. ‘Oh my god, I just want to take him home.’ Darcy squealed as she pinched the little boy’s cheeks. Tony, Steve and Bruce watched as their women fawned over the little boy.

‘We’re in trouble.’ Tony said as he took a sip of his coffee. Bruce chuckled. ‘Just because she’s playing with a child doesn’t mean she wants kids you know.’ He said. Tony snorted. ‘Easy for you to say. Next thing you know they’ll be leaving baby catalogues round the house. Before you can blink, they’ll be wanting to settle down and raise a family.’

Tony shook his head sadly. ‘Our partying days are swiftly drawing to an end.’ Bruce chuckled. ‘You’re the only one who parties, Tony.’ He reminded. ‘Besides a family doesn’t sound so bad.’ Steve said as he looked at Darcy wistfully.

Tony rolled his eyes. ‘I don’t know why I bother. Where’s Rhodes when you need him?’ He murmured to himself. The elevator doors pinged and Loki walked in with his daughter and what appeared to be a grey foal.

‘What in the hell?’ Tony murmured to himself. Aric squealed at the sight of his father and raised his hands for Loki to carry him. The girls moved back and Loki scooped his son into his arms and gave him a kiss on the forehead.

‘Have you eaten?’ He asked and Aric nodded. ‘Aunt Pepper gave me ceweal.’ He replied. Loki smiled. Aric could not pronounce his ‘r’s and replaced it with ‘w’s. ‘And did you say thank you?’ He asked. Aric nodded and Loki looked to Pepper for confirmation.

‘Oh he did.’ Pepper said with a smile. ‘He’s a sweet boy.’ Darcy and Natasha nodded in agreement. Aric wriggled out of his father’s hands and on to the floor. He made his way over to Einar and soon the two were playing.

‘Why is there a baby horse in my tower?’ Tony said, asking the question everyone was wondering. Loki, who had sat down with Ragna, looked back at Tony. ‘It’s Einar.’ Loki replied. Tony did a double take.

‘Sorry to break it to you but I’m pretty sure the boy I saw yesterday had two legs not four.’ Tony replied. Loki rolled his eyes and made to reply but Ragna beat him to it.

‘He is a shape shifter.’ The little girl said. ‘He can take the form of any animal although so far he can only turn into a foal.’

‘Shape shifter. Why didn’t I think of that?’ Tony muttered. Aric climbed on his brother’s back and held on to him while he rode. Loki smiled at them before turning to Ragna. ‘Alright, let’s see this book of spells.’ He said to her.

She handed him a thick leather bound book and Loki opened it. ‘This is an old book, Ragna. It is written in the Old Tongue.’ He muttered as he read it. ‘I know. No one seems to be able to understand it except for grandfather and…’ Her voice trailed off and Loki snapped to attention.

‘What? What did Odin do?’ He asked. *If he did so much as threaten my children, there will be no place for him to hide.* ‘Grandfather told me that they were dark spells and that I had no business in trying to learn them.’ Ragna mumbled. ‘He said such books were meant for the mages and not for a lady.’

Loki seethed. *How dare he?* Ragna noticed her father’s murderous look and quickly backtracked.
'It was my fault. I was snooping instead of learning my lessons.’ Loki shook his head.

‘No. You have as much right as anyone to read whatever book you wish and not all of them are dark spells.’ He said as he stroked his daughter’s cheek. ‘Odin is not your grandfather so he does not have the right to tell you what you can or cannot do.’

Ragna frowned at his words. She was about to ask what he meant but then thought better of it. ‘Luckily for you, I understand it perfectly.’ Loki said to her with a smile. Ragna grinned in delight and scooted closer to her father as he began to explain the spells to her.

Tony squirmed as he watched Loki. There was something about seeing the god be a father that just dredged up memories of his own father. Howard Stark was a great inventor and engineer but when it came to being a father, he was rather lacking.

He’d always been more interested in his inventions than his son and Tony had hated him for it until that fateful day when he saw the video of his father telling him that he was his most important creation. His opinion of his father had become muddled after that.

Seeing Loki with his children made him want to know his father. Who he was, who he really was not just what people said about him. And I’m too sober for these kind of thoughts.

Tony swiped a bottle of brandy from his stocked shelf.

‘Jarvis, how’s the new bot looking?’

‘You’re yet to install thrusters sir.’

‘Why’s that?’

‘I believe you were modifying new ones, sir.’

‘How’s that looking?’

‘From the dent in the wall, I’d say not so well.’

Tony glared at the ceiling. Sometimes the amount of sass his AI had worried him. ‘It’s alright.’ He heard Loki say in a soothing voice. The dialogue between Tony and the seemingly invisible voice had frightened the children. Einar had transformed back to his normal form out of sheer terror and he and his siblings clung to their father.

‘That’s just Jarvis, our…well for lack of better terms, butler.’ Pepper said. ‘Yeah Jarvis is totally cool, Tony made him.’ Darcy said in a consoling voice.

‘Made?’ Ragna asked as her grip on her father slightly loosed. ‘Artificial intelligence.’ Bruce clarified although he doubted she’d understand him. ‘So the voice is not a real person?’ She asked. Tony hummed.

‘Not exactly but I’m sure Jarvis considers himself a real person with the way he mouths off.’ He said with another glare to the ceiling. ‘I was created by you, sir.’ Jarvis reminded with a hint of smugness.

Natasha chuckled. The interactions between Tony and his inventions never failed to put her in a good mood. ‘I do not understand.’ Ragna said to her father with wide eyes. Loki smiled at her. Ragna was the only one of her siblings who displayed his thirst for knowledge and it pleased him to no end.
'It’s really complicated, honey. Even I don’t get it.’ Steve said to the girl. ‘You don’t get 3D Steve. Jarvis is way outta your league.’ Tony said. Steve ignored him.

‘If I may explain-‘ Jarvis said suddenly. ‘-I am a machine created with the ability to think like a human. My purpose is to serve Mr. Stark as well as Mrs. Potts and the Avengers in any way I can.’ Ragna blinked as she absorbed the information.

‘So you are a creation of Uncle Tony but you think as coherently as we do?’ She asked slowly. ‘Yes.’ Jarvis responded. Ragna’s eyes shone. ‘Genius. How is this done?’ She asked eagerly.

Tony smiled at her enthusiasm. ‘It’s a bit advanced for your age but I could show you a bit of it sometime.’ He said to her. Ragna nodded enthusiastically before stopping and looking at her father for permission.

Loki nodded in agreement and she turned back to Tony. ‘I would love to.’ She replied. Tony smiled. ‘See you around kid. Brucey, you know where to find me.’ He called as he walked away. Pepper smiled at her boyfriend’s disappearing figure.

He was a softie no matter how much he tried to hide it. The bottle of brandy in his hand troubled her a bit but she knew whatever it was, he’d say when he was ready. The elevator doors opened and out came Sigyn and the twins.

The sight would’ve been completely normal if not for the fact that one had blood running down her nose and the other had a bruise on her cheek. Loki did a double take when he saw them.

‘What in seven hells happened?!’

Bruce watched as Loki fretted over the twins. It was amazing how he could switch from a cocky, self-absorbed god to a caring, loving father. Sigyn rolled her eyes at her husband as he tended to their kids. ‘Perhaps next time you shouldn’t be so hard on them.’ Loki said pointedly to his wife.

‘Tis only a broken nose, father. I’ve had worse.’ Bodil protested but she kept still as Loki healed her. ‘If she’d practised like I told her to, she would be in a better condition.’ Sigyn replied. Loki shot a glare at his wife but she only ignored him.

‘So are they going to school?’ Jane asked. ‘No!’ The twins said in unison while Ragna perked up. ‘What do they teach at these schools?’ She asked. Bodil and Brenna shot their sister a glare. ‘Ragna may go if she wishes but we’re not going.’ Brenna said.

‘Yes they will.’ Sigyn said to Jane, ignoring her children. There was a loud noise of protest. ‘But we don’t want to go!’ The twins said. ‘Just you two against three.’ Loki said with a smile. The twins turned to their brother.

‘Do you want to go to school, Einar?’ Bodil asked, giving her brother a look. ‘No?’ Einar whimpered. ‘Don’t bully him.’ Loki admonished.

‘School’s not that bad.’ Steve said. ‘You get to meet other children, you’ll get to go outside of the tower. It’ll be fun.’ Sigyn nodded in agreement and the girls scowled. ‘We have no wish to meet other children.’ They replied.

‘I want to go.’ Ragna piped up and the twins rolled their eyes. ‘Migard seems like such an interesting place, I want to learn as much as I can from it.’ She said. ‘Well that is a journey you will have to take on your own.’ Brenna snapped.
Trust me, you’ll get bored real quick if you stay here.’ Darcy said to the girls. ‘We have each other, why should we be bored?’ Bodil asked. Loki chuckled at their reply. ‘You’re more stubborn than I remember.’ He said with a smile.

‘Ragna is interested in Migard, we’re not.’ Brenna said pleadingly. ‘What are you interested in then?’ Bruce asked. ‘Fighting.’ The twins replied. ‘You don’t have to go to school to learn that.’

‘Oh but you do.’ Sigyn said. The twins frowned. ‘I did.’ She said. Sigyn sat on the sofa with her children. ‘Let me explain. If I were to stage an attack on Asgard, what would be their first line of defence?’ She asked.

‘Arrows.’ Bodil replied. ‘And assuming I ignored the arrows and attacked?’ Sigyn asked. ‘You would be killed before you got to the gates.’ Brenna replied. ‘Exactly.’ Sigyn replied. ‘If you want to be a good fighter you need to learn about your opponents, their way of thought, how they fight, everything about them.’

‘But Migardians are not our opponents.’ Bodil murmured. ‘They may not be yours but who’s to say you’re not theirs?’ Sigyn said softly. The playful mood had disappeared and everyone felt the weight of Sigyn’s words.

Steve squirmed. *Children should never have to keep thinking about who’s trying to harm them or not.* A glance at Bruce and Natasha said they thought the same. Bodil and Brenna looked at each other. ‘I suppose we could try it.’ Brenna said.

‘Besides if you don’t like it, you could always learn to fight.’ Darcy said. The twins frowned. ‘Learn? They teach women fighting here?’ Bodil asked. Natasha nodded. ‘What did you think I was?’ She asked. The twins shrugged.

‘We assumed you were here for…the men’s…pleasure.’ The two mumbled, their voices dropping at the last word. ‘Girls!’ Sigyn exclaimed while the men flushed. ‘You said she lives with them, you did not say she fought!’ Brenna said in their defense.

‘She obviously fights with them, you’d have to be stupid not to see it.’ Ragna muttered. ‘Thank you, dear sister.’ Bodil snapped.

Loki chuckled at his daughters. ‘Why would you think that?’ Natasha asked with an amused face. ‘On Asgard, the soldiers take women from the pleasure houses.’ Ragna said. ‘Or from places they’ve conquered.’ Sigyn mumbled darkly.

‘How on earth do you know this?’ Steve said. ‘People assume that just because we’re children, we don’t have ears.’ Ragna said with a shrug. ‘Well here on Earth women can and do fight.’ Natasha said with a pat on Bodil’s head.

‘They’re also free to do whatever the hell they want.’ Pepper chipped in. The twins grinned. ‘Perhaps we shall enjoy staying here after all.’ They said with a smile. Einar tugged on his mother hand and she looked down at him.

‘I’m hungry.’ He said simply and the roomful of adults smiled. ‘Me too!’ The twins piped up. ‘Chinese?’ Natasha prompted and Sigyn nodded gratefully.

Darcy crawled into bed and Steve wrapped his arms around her. The two sat in silence for a few more moments before Darcy sighed. ‘I can practically hear you thinking, Rogers. Spit it out.’ She said. Steve smiled weakly at her words.
‘It’s nothing serious really, it’s just…’ His voice trailed off. ‘Children shouldn’t have to look over their shoulder and wonder about who’s coming to get them.’ He said. Darcy bit her lip. ‘It’s not their fault.’ She murmured.

‘I know it’s not but Sigyn and Loki’s job as parents is to shield them from the world.’ Steve said with exasperation. Darcy turned to face her boyfriend. ‘What makes you think they’re not?’ She asked. Steve raised a brow.

‘I’m pretty sure breaking your daughter’s nose and then telling her that she has to school so she can know how to get into people’s minds isn’t shielding them from anything.’ He replied. Darcy kept quiet for a while.

‘Have you ever asked Loki about his childhood?’ She said out of the blue. Steve scoffed. ‘He barely eats with us, I don’t think he’s going to be telling us that anytime soon.’ He replied.

‘You should.’ Darcy said. ‘I don’t know everything but from what I get, Loki was basically kidnapped from his home and then raised in Asgard until he accidentally found out. When he confronted his ‘father’ he was basically told that the only reason he was saved was so he could be a bargaining chip.’

Steve winced. ‘I know huh?’ Darcy said, noticing his expression. ‘And Sigyn…all I can gather is that she was a prisoner of war and she did not have the best time growing up.’ Darcy stroked his cheek. ‘They’re just two people who’ve learnt not to trust anyone and to them, the only way they can save their children from the pain of betrayal is to teach them to be careful.’

‘It sucks but to them that’s the best they can do.’ She said. Steve tweaked her nose. ‘When did you get so wise?’ He asked playfully. Darcy’s mouth dropped in mock indignation. ‘I’ll have you know I’ve always been this wise.’ She said with a pout.

Steve smiled. ‘You’ll be a good mother Darcy.’ He said suddenly. Darcy’s eyes widened. ‘Where is this coming from?’ She asked. Steve shrugged. ‘I saw you with the children today. You looked happy.’ He said. Steve’s face suddenly became serious.

‘I don’t know what the serum did to me and I don’t know if I could ever give you perfect children, but I—’

Darcy placed a finger to his lips. ‘It’s alright, captain.’ She said with a soft smile. ‘I knew what I was getting into when I started dating you. Kids or no kids, I’m perfectly happy with you.’ Steve leaned down to kiss her and she wrapped her arms around him.

It quickly descended into a steamy makeout session and Darcy pulled back so she could tear off her pyjamas. Steve smiled down at her. He was so in love with her it hurt sometimes and he didn’t know if she always knew that but he was damn sure going to show her just how much.

He tugged off his pyjama bottom before crawling back on her and kissing her deeply.

‘Pep, have we got any of my dad’s things?’ He asked. Pepper stopped short. ‘I…I think we do. Why?’ She asked.

‘Just asking.’ He said. Pepper pursed her lips but dropped it. When he’s ready. She slid closer to him and threw an arm around him, cuddling into his chest. She loved the way he smelled. Aftershave, a little bit of booze and a hint of engine oil. It was weird but that smell was home to her.

She was just about to drift off when Tony spoke up again.
‘Ever thought of kids, Pep?’

Her eyes flew open and she sat up. ‘Wha-Where did that come from?’ She asked. Tony shrugged. ‘Just a question.’ He replied coolly. Pepper’s eyes narrowed. ‘Anthony Stark, are you in trouble?’ She asked. Tony opened his mouth to reply but she stopped him.

‘Oh my god are you dying?’ She asked in concern.

Tony sighed.

‘Pep-‘

‘They said they got all the shrapnel out, they did didn’t they?’

‘Sweetie-‘

‘Jarvis book an appointment for the hospital tomorrow.’

‘Virginia,’ Pepper stopped at the sound of her full name. Tony cupped her face in his hands. ‘I’m not dying. Well, not right now.’ He said. Pepper glared at him. ‘That’s not funny, Tony.’ She said sharply. He sighed.

‘Yeah I know.’ He replied. He sat up. ‘It’s just today, seeing Loki with his kids got me thinking about my dad which made me think about me and that’s never a recipe for happy thoughts.’ He explained.

Pepper chewed on her bottom lip. ‘Where did thinking of kids come in?’ She asked softly. Tony shrugged. ‘Well, we’re not getting any younger.’ He said with a slight laugh. ‘Plus I saw the way you took care of Aric today.’

‘So because I took care of one child, you assumed I want to have some of my own?’ Pepper asked lightly. ‘Hey don’t judge okay?’ Tony said in his defence. ‘God knows what goes on in you women’s heads plus isn’t it supposed to be a built in drive?’

Pepper gave him a look. ‘I’m going to ignore that last statement if you tell me what’s really bothering you.’ She said. Tony swallowed.

‘It’s stupid but I was just…if you-we eventually have kids…mine wasn’t exactly the dad of the year and Obadiah…’ His voice trailed off and Pepper rubbed his arm in comfort. When she saw he wasn’t going to offer more, she decided to step in.

‘Look I’m not saying it’s going to happen or not, I mean we’re not even married yet-‘ Pepper said. ‘Which is your fault not mine.’ Tony cut in. Pepper smiled. ‘Yes it is but if we do end up with children, you will be a fantastic father.’

Tony looked at her. ‘You really mean it?’ He asked in a small voice. She nodded. ‘Are you kidding me? You built an entire floor for Loki and his family, you know all their names, you’ll be great.’ She said. ‘A bit eccentric but great.’

Tony smiled. ‘Thanks Pep.’ He said. She smiled. ‘Quite frankly, I’m surprised we don’t have any yet with your libido.’ She said with a smile. ‘Speaking of my libido…’ Tony said with a suggestive eyebrow wriggle.

‘Forget it, I need some sleep.’ Pepper said as she laid back on him. ‘I have a six o’clock appointment tomorrow which you’re supposed to be in.’ She said pointedly.
‘You were saying something about sleep.’ Tony murmured. Pepper chuckled softly and cuddled back into his chest.

Loki groaned as Thor came to join him on the balcony. ‘I have no wish for company.’ He said to him. ‘Well I wish for yours.’ Thor replied. Loki rolled his eyes. ‘Suit yourself.’ He mumbled before taking another sip of the whiskey in his hands.

‘I see Tony has won you over with his drinks,’ Thor commented. Loki looked at the tumbler of whiskey with a shrug. ‘It is nothing compared to Asgardian wine but it serves its purpose.’ He replied. An uncomfortable silence settled between them until Thor broke it.

‘I convinced father to halve your term.’ Thor said. Loki hummed. ‘And what did the AllFather want in return, Odinson?’ He shot back. Thor winced at the comment.

‘He requires that you tell him how you came to know the Chitauri as well as how you came about the sceptre.’ Thor said. Loki gave a bitter laugh. ‘Of course he does, when does Odin give me anything for free?’ He murmured.

‘Brother-‘

‘Call me brother again and I shall throw you off this balcony.’

Thor pursed his lips. ‘Alright. Do you agree to his terms, Loki?’ He said, stressing the trickster’s name. ‘Odin and his terms can go to hell for all I care. I will serve my full hundred years here.’ Loki replied. Thor made a sound of frustration.

‘When will you stop this madness, he wants to help you.’ Thor exclaimed. Loki snorted. ‘Help me? He chooses now to help me?’ Loki asked incredulously. ‘Where was he was I was teased and taunted as a child? Where was he when I longed for affection and kindness? Where was his help then?’

‘He’s trying now.’ Thor said softly. Loki scoffed. ‘If he truly wants to help me, he should give me my full power back. I’m not interested in anything else.’ Loki walked away from Thor and the god of thunder sighed.

Loki was making this difficult for him but he wasn’t going to give up. His brother was in there somewhere and he was going to do everything he could to bring him back.

Chapter End Notes

Another chapter down! I rewrote this so many times. Will y’all prefer more angst of fluff or is this pace okay? Lemme know and thank to everyone who bookmarked and gave kudos. You all rock! I’m trying to write a Bruce part but he’s so difficult to put down. Any tips?

P.S Suggestions are always welcome!
Clint walked into the gym. He’d forgotten his bow and quiver in there during practice last night and he wanted to retrieve it before the day began. Phil’s talk had weighed heavily on his mind no matter how hard he’d tried not to think about it. His husband was right as usual.

They couldn’t work as a team if he hated Loki. For the sake of the world, they had to put their differences aside and work as a team and no matter how much he hated to admit it, he couldn’t let his history with the god get in the way of work.

He realized all that.

Acting it out however was the problem.

Clint sighed. One day at a time buddy. He opened the door to the gym but then stopped short at what he saw. Bodil and Brenna were holding his bow and Brenna had an arrow in her hands.

What the hell are they doing up at 5:00am? He thought to stop them but waited to see what they’d do next. Bodil drew the arrow and aimed at a target. ‘It’s quite stiff, don’t hurt yourself.’ Brenna murmured to her sister.

Bodil nodded and concentrated on her target before letting go of the arrow. Clint didn’t expect it to go far and he was surprised when the arrow landed a little outside of the target. Bodil let the bow go and rubbed her arm with a wince.

‘Harder than it looks.’ She said to her sister with a small smile. ‘You didn’t pull back far enough.’ Clint said as he stepped in. The two girls jumped in surprise at Clint’s voice. ‘We meant no disrespect, we only wanted to try it.’ They said in a rush, their eyes widened in fear.

Clint smiled. ‘It’s alright, I’m surprised you managed that much.’ He replied. Bodil handed him his bow and Clint drew an arrow before letting it go. It was, of course, a perfect shot. The girls looked at him in awe.

‘What are you two doing up so early anyway?’ He asked. ‘We wanted to practice before school.’ Brenna replied. ‘You could do it after school.’ Clint said but the girls shook their heads. ‘We prefer the morning, it helps us…wake up.’ Bodil answered.

Clint could relate to that. There was something about early morning training that kept you alert throughout the whole day. He looked at the girls. ‘Well I suppose it won’t hurt to teach you a bit.’ He said slowly.

Their faces lit up and Clint smiled. Loki was an asshole, that was for sure but if he could raise such beautiful kids then maybe he could try and be civil.

Sigyn’s eyes brows knitted. ‘I’m not sure I want to know this secret of Victoria.’ She murmured to herself. Darcy laughed. ‘It’s not an actual secret, it’s a lingerie store.’ She corrected.

‘Lingerie?’ Sigyn questioned, looking to Loki for explanation. He sighed. ‘Undergarments. Like what I hope you have on.’ He said pointedly. Sigyn giggled.
Back on Asgard, before him finding out his true heritage, there were days when she opted not to wear anything under her clothes, opting to tease him through the whole day before he finally gave in and took her.

_I haven’t done that in a long while._ ‘But I already have these…lingerie. Why buy more?’ Sigyn asked, getting back to the topic. ‘Trust me when we get there you’ll want some.’ Darcy goaded. ‘Plus all the girls are coming along. It’ll be fun!’ She pleaded.

‘Well I suppose it will be a fun outing.’ She mused. ‘Oh it will. Trust me, he’ll thank you later.’ Darcy said referring to Loki. Loki rolled his eyes at the women and fished out his debt card. ‘I’m beginning to think you’re a bad influence, Darcy.’ He said to the black haired woman as he handed his wife his card.

‘Oh please.’ Darcy replied. Sigyn pocketed the card and hugged Loki. ‘Don’t forget what we talked about this morning.’ She whispered in his ear. Loki grumbled and Sigyn gave him a look.

‘Alright.’ He relented; catching his wife’s disappointed face. Darcy smiled at the two. They were the cutest couple she’d ever seen and it was nice to see Loki smile once in a while. Sigyn gave him a kiss on the forehead before leaving with Darcy.

Loki smiled as he watched her leave. It had been two weeks since she and the children had been at the Tower and he didn’t think he could remember a time when he was happier. The children had all been enrolled in school and although they’d complained in the beginning, they seemed to fit in.

For the first time in a long while, things had come together for Loki and he was torn between basking in it and being on alert for when something shattered his joy. _Because something always does._

‘Uncle Bwuce! Uncle Bwuce!’

Bruce turned to see Aric standing next to him. _How’d he get into the lab?_ ‘Yes Aric?’ He replied. ‘What’s that?’ He asked as he stood on his tiptoes to look at the work table.

Bruce looked down at his designs. He and Tony had come up with it. It was a last defence mechanism for him in case he hulked and no one could stop him. It would deliver different parts of Tony’s suits to him, encasing his suit in a bigger suit which would help him fight the Hulk.

Bruce was calling it Vicky.

‘It’s a…it’s…’ Bruce was lost for words. How was he going to explain the need of such an invention to a little boy? ‘Fighting?’ Aric asked with wide eyes. Bruce nodded, relieved that he understood.

The boy looked at the designs.

’Bwenna said-Bwenna said that you fight but I didn’t see you.’ Aric said. Bruce frowned. ‘Fighting? Where did you see that?’ He asked.

‘Jawvis put a…video?’ The boy continued, looking to Bruce to see if he got the word correctly. ‘Video? Jarvis which video did you show him?’ He asked the AI. A video of the Avengers fighting Dr. Doom came up.

‘See! Uncle Tony, Uncle Steve, Aunt Asha, Uncle Clint but no Uncle Bwuce.’ Aric said with a frown. Bruce gave a small smile. ‘I’m right there.’ He said. Aric squinted at the video.

‘Right there, the big…green…thing.’ Bruce’s voice got considerably lower with every word and
Aric looked at the screen before staring back at Bruce. ‘Hulk?’ Aric asked and Bruce nodded. Aric stood there speechless and Bruce could feel his insecurities flooding him. Well what did you expect Bruce? You’re a fucking monster, of course the kid’s going to be terrified. Bruce was well on his way into wallowing in self-pity when he heard Aric’s voice.

‘Show me! Show me! Show me!’ The boy bounded up and down in excitement. Bruce frowned. ‘I can’t show you, Aric.’ He said gently. The boy’s face wilted. ‘But-but-I wanna see. Please! I’ll be quiet!’ Bruce shook his head.

Tears began to appear in the boy’s eyes and his bottom lip quivered. ‘Whoa, don’t cry.’ Bruce said in a rush as he carried the boy and placed him on the table but it was too late and the boy had already exploded into noisy tears.

Bruce stared in horror. He had no idea how to handle children. Luckily for him, the lab doors opened and in stepped Loki.

‘You were supposed to be napping.’ Loki said sternly as he walked towards his son. Noticing Aric’s tears, he walked faster and scooped his son up in his arms. ‘What happened?’ He asked sharply. Bruce winced.

‘He asked me to hulk out for him and I refused.’ He replied. Loki’s face softened. He set his son back on the table and wiped away his tears. ‘It’s alright.’ He said soothingly.

‘Doesn’t like me…won’t show me Hulk…mean…’

Loki caught a few words from his son’s sobs and he sighed. ‘It’s not because I don’t like you. I could hurt you if I show you.’ Bruce said to the little boy. The words registered to Aric and his sobs slowly stopped. ‘Dangewous?’ He said with a hiccup.

‘Yes it’s very dangerous.’ Loki agreed. Aric swiped at the tears running down his cheeks. ‘So… Uncle BWuce still likes me?’ He asked in a small voice. Bruce gave a chocked laugh. ‘Yes, I still like you very much.’ He replied.

There was a pause before Aric grabbed Bruce in a hug. Bruce’s eyes widened in surprise but he patted Aric’s back. ‘Sowie.’ The little boy mumbled.

‘For what?’ Bruce asked as he pulled back. ‘Cwying.’ Aric said. Bruce shook his head. ‘No need to apologize.’ He replied with a smile. Loki felt his heart swell with love and a bit of pride at his son’s display. It was at moments like this that he was so happy they had someone like Sigyn to teach them love and affection, things he knew nothing about.

‘Alright, nap time now.’ He said to his son. Aric pouted but let his father carry him. ‘Stowie?’ He asked his father as they walked out of the lab.

‘One story and then sleep.’

Bruce watched the duo go with a sad smile. Loki was perfect with his kids, very unlike his father. Aric was a joy and Bruce felt his heart throb at the thought that he and Natasha might never be able to have a kid.

Not that Natasha wasn’t enough-sometimes he looked at her and wondered how in the hell she’d fallen for him—but it would’ve been nice to have one of their own. He sighed and looked back to the plans. He was better off focusing on the things he could do rather than the things he couldn’t.
Sigyn stared down at the pieces of clothing in her hands. She’d never dreamt that such things existed. *They make my life so much easier.* Immediately she’d entered the store, she’d set to picking out things in different colours and designs.

It still blew her mind that such a store was so exposed. She could see men and women shopping together. None of the outrageous modesty they had back on Asgard. *It’s like a breath of fresh air.* Sigyn held up a thong.

Darcy was right; Loki most definitely would appreciate her buying such things. Her mind travelled to their different sexcapades over the years and she smiled.

*Perhaps I should purchase more of these ‘thongs’ as well as some…what did Darcy call them? Bustiers I believe?* Sigyn made a point to ask when she could. There was a knock on the changing room door.

‘Okay in there Sigyn?’ She heard Pepper call. ‘I’m fine.’ Sigyn replied as she hastily dressed. She carried her purchases to the till and swiped Loki’s card before punching in the pin.

The technology of this world never failed to amaze her. Things were so simple here. None of the haggling and frustration she had at the markets in Asgard. ‘Looks like Steve’s in for a wild night.’ Natasha commented as she peeked at Darcy’s bag.

‘Hey I saw what you had in your bag, Black Widow. Handcuffs?’ Darcy shot back. Natasha flushed. ‘Bruce likes it.’ She mumbled. Jane chuckled. ‘Let your freak flag fly, Nat.’ She said. Natasha flipped the finger at the girls and they all giggled.

Pepper watched Sigyn as the girls ate. She’d been tad bit too quiet, only offering a laugh and a few comments now and again. There was something wrong.

‘Why so quiet, Sigyn?’ Natasha asked. Sigyn looked up from her plate with a start. ‘Oh I…I just have some things on my mind.’ She said politely. ‘Well show and tell bitch.’ Darcy sassed. Sigyn smiled slightly.

‘It’s just…Loki.’ Sigyn murmured. ‘Oh, what did he do?’ Jane asked softly. ‘It’s not what he did; it’s what he didn’t do.’ Sigyn replied. Darcy raised a brow. ‘What he didn’t do? Is it the sex because I’ve heard you two.’ She said.

‘We’ve all heard you two.’ Pepper said. Sigyn laughed. ‘Blame my soldier upbringing. I had to yell to scores of men so as a result, I don’t know how to be quiet.’ The girls all chuckled. ‘Really though, what’s wrong?’ Jane asked.

Sigyn took in a deep breath. On a normal day, she wouldn’t tell a soul, her husband’s business was his and hers alone, but she needed help with him. ‘It’s about what happened after he fell off the Bifrost.’ She said.

‘Before that moment Loki was the brightest thing in my life. He was my pillar of strength but when he came back, he was a shadow.’ Sigyn ran her fingers through her hair. ‘I know you all think he’s a killer and a murderer and I’m an idiot because I still love him.’

The girls all tried to protest but Sigyn shut them up. ‘It’s okay. I’ve seen what he’s done. It’s just…’ Her voice trailed off. ‘He’s hiding something from me and it’s hurting him. Loki carries his fair share of demons with him, we all do, but this is just different.’
‘Have you tried asking him?’ Natasha asks. ‘I’ve tried everything. Even sex which I genuinely thought would help but has done nothing to crack him.’ Sigyn replied. ‘Maybe he’s just not ready.’ Pepper added, talking from experience with Tony.

‘Yes but there’s a difference between not being ready and not wanting to speak ever.’ Sigyn replied. Pepper nodded to that. There had been times when she had to threaten to have Jarvis shut down his lab before he cracked open.

‘I mean, taking over Migard. No offence Jane but that is something Thor will do.’ Sigyn continued. Jane smiled. ‘No it’s okay. I completely understand what you mean.’ She replied. ‘Loki is practical. Calculated. When he looks at something he’s trying to find the best way to break it.’

‘I’ve been on the receiving end of that.’ Natasha murmured and Sigyn shot her an apologetic look. ‘You could ask Thor about it.’ Jane said. Sigyn hummed. ‘I doubt if he’d know but it’s worth a try.’ She replied.

Sigyn looked at the time. ‘The children should be home soon and I promised them a home cooked meal.’ She said as she stood up. ‘Oh we could all go.’ Pepper said as she made to stand up but Sigyn stopped her. ‘It’s fine, your driver can drop me at the tower. Thank you for a fun day.’ She said.

The girls watched as Sigyn walked away. ‘I like her but there’s something about her that sends all my signals crazy.’ Natasha said. ‘You too huh?’ Pepper said.

‘She’s not a bad person.’ Darcy said, coming to her friend’s defence. ‘No she’s not but…there’s just something…wrong.’ Natasha said. ‘Whatever it is, we’ll find out soon enough.’ Jane said. Darcy rolled her eyes.

‘This is why no one befriends spies and female CEO’s. Too damn suspicious.’ She said to them. Pepper stuck her tongue out at her while Natasha ignored her.

‘No Aric, no more cookies.’ Sigyn said as she took the jar from her son and placed it on a high shelf. The boy pouted but allowed his mother to take the jar from him.

Loki watched as his two daughters tried to levitate two books. They were a few feet in the air and what he wanted them to do was put them on a shelf using their magic. ‘You’re doing great.’ He said to them with a smile as they concentrated on the task.

They were a few inches from the shelf when the books suddenly spiralled out of control and hit Tony and Thor respectively. The twins gasped. ‘Sorry. We’re so sorry.’ They said apologetically. Tony shook his head. ‘It’s alright.’

Loki waved his hand and the books flew to the shelf. ‘You did great.’ He said to them. The girls nodded and went off to their rooms.

‘What’s wrong with them?’ Sigyn asked as she watched her daughters leave. Loki shrugged. ‘I don’t know.’ He replied. He heard the sound of a neigh and turned to Einar who was in his other form and was playing with Clint. Loki smiled softly.

‘He reminds me so much of Sleipnir.’

Loki blinked in shock as his wife spoke. She was also looking at their son with a faraway look in her eyes. ‘Yes he does.’ Loki murmured. ‘I miss them so much.’ He said in a soft whisper. The rest of his children were sent away to Earth in their childhood but Loki had watched Sleipnir grow.
The minute he was born, Odin had set eyes on him and made him his royal steed. It had gone on for a while until Loki had pleaded that Odin set him free. Odin agreed but on the condition that if he was sent to Earth with his siblings, Loki could never contact him.

He agreed.

It broke his heart knowing he could never find his children but he would do anything for their freedom. Sigyn caught the gleam of unshed tears in her husband’s eyes and she immediately hugged him to her. *Some father Odin pretends to be. I should’ve killed him when I had the chance.* ‘Wherever they are, I’m sure they’re safe and happy.’ She whispered.

Loki looked down at his wife. ‘You always know the best things to say.’ He said with a soft smile. Sigyn only placed a kiss on his jaw before pulling back.

‘Hey no making out in public places.’ Tony sang as he passed by them. ‘Oh shut up Stark.’ Sigyn called out to him with a smile. Loki shook his head. The pot on the cooker bubbled and Sigyn went to go check it.

The children had already started missing home cooking and she figured it had been a while since Loki ate anything from home so she was making a traditional yellow pea soup. It wasn’t anything complicated but she knew her family would appreciate it.

She’d also decided to make for the Avengers too, thinking they might not mind. ‘I don’t see why we have to share our food with them.’ Loki complained. Sigyn gave him a look. ‘I may not have been raised as a lady but even I have manners.’ She replied.

‘Do you?’ Loki said snarkily and she gave him a light punch. The elevator doors opened and out stepped Steve. Sigyn smiled at the soldier. ‘Joining us for lunch, captain?’ Sigyn asked playfully. Steve blushed.

‘I just…the smell goes all the way to my floor, I couldn’t help it.’ He admitted. Sigyn smiled. ‘I made plenty.’ She replied. ‘I would’ve made bread too but I did not want the stress of that.’

‘We could buy some.’ Loki said to her and she nodded. ‘I know but homemade bread tastes better.’ She murmured. ‘I could help.’ Steve piped up. Sigyn looked at him in surprise. ‘You don’t have to, we could do without it.’

Steve rolled up his sleeves. ‘I used to help my mother cook back in the day. It would be my pleasure.’ He said. Loki rolled his eyes at Steve’s words. Sigyn beamed at him. ‘Thank you.’ She said softly. ‘What kind of bread would you like, ma’am?’ He asked.

‘Firstly, it’s Sigyn and secondly, we call it havrebrød, we will need oats for it.’ She said to him. ‘Jarvis do we have any oats?’ Steve asked.

‘I believe we do, Captain Rogers. It should be in the pantry.’ The AI replied. Steve went off into the pantry and Sigyn smiled. ‘He’s such a lovely, helpful man.’ She murmured as she watched him leave.

Loki scoffed and she chuckled. ‘Don’t get jealous, I didn’t say you weren’t.’ She said to him. ‘He’s not bad looking either.’ She said as an afterthought.

‘Okay now I’m beginning to get concerned.’ Loki said with a frown. ‘If you weren’t on such bad terms with the rest of your team mates, we could have had a little fun.’ Sigyn said, ignoring her husband. Loki shook his head at her.
‘You’re a bad influence.’ He said with a tweak to her nose and she giggled. ‘Like that’s not why you married me.’ She replied. Steve came back with a bag of oats and all-purpose white flour as well as some yeast.

Sigyn pulled out butter, milk and eggs from the fridge and got out some brown sugar and salt from a cupboard. ‘Heat up the milk and then pour the oats in.’ She said to Steve. ‘How much of each?’ He asked.

Sigyn shrugged. ‘I’ve never had to use measurements, when it’s enough I’ll let you know.’ She said to him. Steve burst in a smile and Sigyn raised a brow. ‘What?’ She asked.

‘It’s just something my mom used to say. She always said she’d cooked enough dinners to do without measurements.’ Steve replied. Sigyn smiled. ‘She was most likely right.’ She replied. Sigyn handed Steve and Loki separate bowls.

‘You can make yourself useful and crack eggs.’ She said. Loki shot her a glare but took the bowl all the same. Sigyn smiled as the two men did her bidding. Slowly but surely, the Avengers were starting to treat Loki like one of their own and she would help in any way she could.

Loki watched as his twins sullenly ate their soup. They’d been quiet all day and he could tell something was on their minds. It couldn’t be a fight with their siblings because he’d have heard that as soon as it happened. It had to be school. ‘What happened at school?’ He asked casually. Their heads shot up in surprise.

‘You told him?’ Brenna said accusingly to Ragna. Ragna shook her head. ‘No. You said not to.’ She said. ‘No one told me anything but now I’m curious.’ Loki said gently. The twins shared a look before facing their father.

‘I broke a boy’s nose.’

‘And I broke his wrist.’

Everyone stopped short. ‘Why would you do that?’ Jane asked. ‘He said something we didn’t like.’ The twins replied. ‘You can’t attack everyone that says something you don’t like.’ Steve said gently.

‘What did he say?’ Sigyn asked. ‘He was what Migardians call a senior and he asked if Brenna and I share everything.’ Bodil said. Tony winced. He could tell where this was going already.

‘We said of course we did and then he said we wouldn’t have a problem sharing him as well as his friends.’ Brenna continued. Loki’s eyes hardened. ‘We did not understand till he tried to touch me and that was when I broke his wrist.’

‘How many of them?’ Sigyn asked. ‘Three.’ Bodil answered. ‘Once we broke his wrist, the others got the message.’ Brenna said. ‘You guys are like my heroes right now.’ Darcy said in awe. They blushed.

‘Well you handled it well.’ Sigyn said again. ‘I wouldn’t say that’s handling it well but sounds like he deserved it.’ Bruce said as he ate his soup. ‘I would’ve done the same.’ Natasha said.

‘They deserved worse.’ Loki said under his breath. ‘Had he been on Asgard, he would have been punished for threatening my niece’s honour.’ Thor said as he dipped his bread in his bowl of soup. ‘Having his wrist broken isn’t punishment enough?’ Steve asked.

Loki, Sigyn and Thor shook their heads. ‘So why were you keeping it a secret?’ Jane asked. The
twins looked down guiltily. ‘We were punished. It’s called a…suspension?’ Brenna said. ‘We can’t
go to school for a week.’ Bodil clarified.

‘Wait, you get harassed by some idiot and you end up suspended?’ Clint asked incredulously. ‘He
was put in a medical centre and I suppose we shouldn’t have reacted so hastily.’ Bodil murmured.

‘Fuck that, he totally deserved it. If not for anything, for his lame ass pick up line.’ Tony cut in. Steve
opened his mouth to scold him but then decided it wasn’t worth it. ‘I’ll make a few calls, this is
ridiculous.’ Pepper added. ‘We didn’t mean to cause trouble.’ The girls said but they were
immediately hushed by the team.

‘It’s best they handle it than we did.’ Sigyn said to her daughters. ‘If your father and I go there, there
won’t be a school left for you to go back to.’ Loki nodded in agreement. ‘So you’re not upset?’
Brenna asked. Loki shook his head.

‘Just…be more discrete next time.’ He said with a smile and they nodded enthusiastically. Normal
chatter resumed within the group. Natasha was about to stand up and get more soup when she
stopped short.

‘Guys…’ She said slowly as she looked up. The chatter stopped and everyone looked in her
direction of sight.

The jar of cookies was floating in midair. ‘Girls?’ Loki asked. The twins shook their heads. Loki
blinked. *Ragna has no abilities and Einar is only a shape shifter. I’m not doing that either which
could only mean…*

‘Aric?’ He said in surprise as he turned to his youngest. Aric was sitting down, his eyes trained on
the jar and his tongue sticking out in concentration. Tony made to get the jar but Loki stopped him.
‘No, let him do it.’ He murmured as he watched his son.

‘Did you know about this?’ Sigyn asked him. Loki shook his head. The jar finally hovered over
Aric’s head before tipping over and raining cookies down on him. Aric clapped in excitement and
his hold on the jar was lost.

It would’ve hit him if not for Thor grabbing it in midair. Sigyn shot him a grateful look before
looking back at her son. Aric was stuffing as many cookies as he could find into his mouth while
glaring at his mother. She laughed.

‘I suppose you earned it but just this once.’ She said to him. ‘Good job, little man.’ Bruce said to the
boy. Aric beamed with joy. An alarm was heard and the Avengers groaned.

‘It was good while it lasted.’ Tony murmured as he stood up. ‘What’s happening?’ Ragna asked as
her father stood up. ‘Duty calls.’ Loki said with a kiss to her head. He gave the other children a hug
before going off with the rest.

Darcy watched the confused looks on the children’s faces. ‘Come on, we’ll watch it on TV.’ She
said to them as she and Jane started clearing the plates. Sigyn watched her husband go with a sigh.
Loki was a god but that didn’t mean he couldn’t be killed.

Her stomach clenched in worry. *Please come back to me in one piece.*
There we go! Hope you like it! A lot of you have been suggesting roping in the rest of Loki's children and while that wasn't part of the original plot, it's beginning to grow on me. The next chapter is going to be slightly more angsty so brace yourselves.

Oh and I wanted to ask, am I getting all the characters right? I've never written them before and I worry. Do let me know and thanks for reading!
Sigyn woke up with a start. Her eyes swept across the room looking for a threat until her ears drew her to the little whimpers and moans of pain coming from Loki’s side of the bed. He was curled up in a foetal position and his features were contorted in what she could only describe as sheer terror.

‘Loki?’ She whispered as she gently shook him.

No reply.

His body suddenly jerked and Sigyn moved back in surprise. He was murmuring something under his breath and she drew closer to hear what it was.

‘Please…please…don’t…Thanos…’

Sigyn frowned. Who in the nine realms was Thanos? ‘Loki.’ Sigyn said with more force as she shook him again.

Still no reply.

Deciding to climb over to his side of the bed, Sigyn put her hands on his shoulders and attempted to shake him harder.

A huge mistake.

Loki’s eyes suddenly flew open and he flipped her over and placed his hands on her throat before she could even think. At any other time, she’d be impressed but there was something abnormal about this. Loki’s hands began to apply brutal pressure to her throat and that was when she began to panic.

In all her years of fighting, she’d prepared herself for any eventuality. She knew there was a good chance she could be killed by an enemy at any given time and she’d come to accept it with the grace of a warrior.

What she’d never prepared for was for her husband, the man she loved more than herself, to be looming above her with every intent to kill. Gone was the love and adoration she normally found in his eyes. Instead they were replaced with a cold, unfeeling gaze.

Sigyn felt the air draining out of her lungs. ‘Loki. Loki.’ She choked out but he didn’t react. It was as if something else had taken over him. Sigyn’s hands flailed to the side, looking for something to hit her husband with. All her hands grasped were the sheets and a pillow.

Tears leaked out of her eyes and her hands weakly hit him. She was running out of energy and her heart was breaking at the thought that he could actually kill her. Summoning the last bit of her strength, she raised her knee and hit him right in the crotch. Loki fell off her and she gulped down mouthfuls of precious air.

Loki lay on the bed, dazed. ‘Sigyn?’ He murmled in confusion as he looked at her. She had rolled over to the edge of the bed and was coughing, her hand around her neck. Even from where he sat, he could see the bruises already forming on her skin.
His blood ran cold and he scrambled towards her. ‘Sigyn did I-did I-’ His voice trailed off as he
caught the sheen of tears in her eyes and the way she flinched away from him. ‘No. No, no, no, no.’ He said in a flurry as he pieced together what he had done.

Tears welled up in his eyes and he reached out to hold her. Sigyn drew back from his touch and his
tears spilled over. ‘Just-Just let me-let me heal you. I didn’t-I’m so sorry, so sorry.’ His hands were
shaking now and he was crying harder.

Sigyn looked at the weeping man in front of her. To say she was confused was an understatement.
What is going on? Mood swings were more of her thing not his. Loki’s heart was breaking at the
look on his wife’s face.

It was her hardened, warrior expression and for someone who was so used to seeing her every
emotion displayed on her face, Sigyn’s shut down was tearing him apart. ‘I’m sorry. I’m sorry.’ He
gasped out, trying to make her understand.

He didn’t deserve her forgiveness but he needed her to know that he didn’t mean it. What have I
done? Loki was quickly slipping into his personal pit of despair. In all his life, she and his mother
were the only people who’d loved and accepted him for who he was. Frigga was gone-also my fault-
and if he lost her, then there was no point in living anymore.

Sigyn watched as sobs wracked through Loki’s body. Her every instinct was telling her to get out of
the room and run away from the person who’d just tried to kill her but she couldn’t. It was stupid and
if she’d heard it from another woman, she’d have scoffed but whoever had just tried to choke her
wasn’t her husband.

Loki would never do something like that. Without any further thought, she threw her arms around
him in a hug and pulled him to her. The feel of her body pressed to his, the knowledge that she
wasn’t pushing him away after what he’d done washed over Loki and he completely broke down.

Sigyn held her husband in her arms, tears prickling at the corners of her eyes before she sharply drew
them back. This was the first time in a long while that she’d seen him like this and it terrified her.
Loki clutched at her body, unwilling to let go and Sigyn let him.

She made soft soothing sounds and her hand rubbed his back as he let it out. Over the years, she’d
broken down a number of times and Loki was always there to hold her and be her pillar. She would
get to the bottom of this even if it killed her. And it looks like Thanos is the right place to start.

Bruce frowned at the marks on Sigyn’s neck. At first glance he’d have chalked it up to hickey’s but
upon closer inspection, he could tell they were from choking. A childhood with an abusive father
who had taken every opportunity to hit his mother had made such injuries jump out to him and he felt
the Other Guy nudge at his mind when he thought of Sigyn being put in the same situation.

He would’ve put it off till later but he just couldn’t. ‘Sigyn, are you alright?’ He asked gently. Sigyn
looked up from her cup of coffee and nodded. Her eyes were slightly puffy and she looked
extremely worn out.

‘Are you sure? You can tell us anything.’ Steve added, catching on. ‘I’m fi-‘Sigyn’s voice cracked
and she swallowed before trying again. ‘I’m fine.’ She said again. Tony looked up from his bowl of
cereal, wondering what the hell everyone was bugging her for when he noticed.

‘Fucking hell, did Loki choke you?’ He spat out. Bruce sighed. So much for subtlety. Sigyn’s eyes
widened in shock at Tony’s words. On Asgard, things like that were ignored. If one saw a woman
who looked like she’d received some unwanted attention from her husband, the polite thing was to ignore it and move on.

She’d expected the same thing on Migard and Tony’s words had thrown her off. The three men stood in front of her expectantly and Sigyn didn’t know what to do. ‘He did didn’t he?’ Steve said. ‘He didn’t mean to.’ Sigyn said lowly. ‘That little shit.’ Tony swore and for once, Steve agreed with him.

‘They never mean to but then they do it over and over again.’ Bruce said to her. ‘I’m going to kill him.’ Tony declared. ‘Get in line.’ Steve shot back as he started moving towards the elevator. Sigyn could see them coming to the wrong conclusion and she panicked. ‘Don’t. He's sleeping.’ She pleaded. ‘Oh we'll give him a hell of a wake up.’ Bruce said. Sigyn stood in front of the men.

‘I’ll tell you everything, I swear. Just wait.’ She said to them, her voice still strained. The three exchanged glances but stood down. ‘Jarvis could you tell Thor to come here please?’ She said to the AI. ‘Certainly.’ The AI responded.

After a few minutes, Thor came in through the elevator. ‘Greetings friends.’ He boomed as he came towards the group. Sigyn sighed in relief. At least this was someone who understood what not to say. Thor took one look and her and his expression changed.

‘That churl. How dare he lay a hand on you?’ Thor said in a dangerously low voice. Sigyn sighed in despair. *Why did I think he of all people would stay silent?* ‘He didn’t mean it.’ Sigyn said through her teeth.

‘Fear not, dear Sigyn. Mjollnir and I shall teach him a lesson.’ Thor said with a gentle hand on her shoulder. Sigyn resisted the urge to throw her cup of coffee in his face. ‘Jarvis is it possible to play the…video of Loki and I this morning without hearing our voices?’ Sigyn asked.

‘Yes.’ The AI replied. ‘Could you please do that?’ Sigyn requested. She wanted the Avengers to understand but she wanted to save his dignity. The video played through and with every passing second, the men’s features softened.

The video ended right where Sigyn pulled Loki into her arms and Sigyn turned to look at them. Thor felt himself color with shame. Here he was attempting to repair the bridge between him and his brother and yet he’d jumped at the slightest inclination that Loki hadn’t changed.

Tony had the most sober expression, remembering the night when his suit had attempted to attack Pepper because he’d called it from one of his nightmares. Steve and Bruce also looked quite contrite and Sigyn stared them down.

‘What troubles Loki?’ Thor asked. ‘That’s what I need you for.’ Sigyn replied. ‘I need you to go to Asgard and learn all you can about something or someone named Thanos.’ Thor nodded.

‘Certainly. I’m sure father will know.’ He began but Sigyn swiftly cut him off. ‘Odin must never find out.’ Thor frowned. ‘But he could help.’ He insisted. ‘Yeah I’m sure Loki’s dad will know something about it.’ Steve added. Sigyn glared at the group.

‘Firstly, he’s not Loki’s father. No father treats his child the way Odin has treated Loki.’ Sigyn said hotly. ‘You may not always see it Thor but Odin doesn’t treasure Loki. Not the way he treasures you.’ Thor felt a pang in his heart at that. He’d always noticed the fact that Odin played favourites, basked in it even but to hear Sigyn put it that way made him feel worse.

‘Alright. Father shall know nothing. What of Heimdall?’ He asked. Sigyn shook her head. ‘Heimdall
cares only for the wellbeing of Asgard. As long as we don’t threaten that we’ll be just fine.’ Thor
nodded. ‘And if Odin finds out?’ Thor asked.

‘Take a page from your brother’s book. Lie.’ Sigyn said. ‘You spent years with him; you must have
picked something up.’ Thor’s mouth twitched but he nodded. ‘I mean it Thor. If Odin finds out about
this from you, I will choke you with your hair.’

Thor chuckled but nodded along with her. ‘I shall do as you request.’ He said with finality before
reaching out his hand to call Mjollnir. ‘Hey, hey, hey.’ Tony said hurriedly, seeing what he was
doing.

‘Go pick up your fucking hammer yourself; I’ve had too many hammer shaped holes in this tower.’
Tony said as he pointed to the elevator. Thor huffed but he did as Tony said and took the elevator.

Sigyn turned the remaining men. ‘Please let this stay between us. Loki is…a private person.’ She
said to them. ‘I would greatly appreciate it if you said nothing about this.’ She said to them. They all
nodded. ‘Whatever you need.’ Tony said.

Steve and Bruce nodded. ‘Take good care of him.’ Steve said. Sigyn smiled in surprise. ‘Why if I
didn’t know any better, I’d think you cared.’ She said coyly. ‘He’s…crazy but he’s a member of the
team. A good one.’ Bruce said.

Sigyn grinned. ‘I’m glad you’re finally realizing that.’ She said before walking off. The guys all
exchanged looks. Truth be told, they taken to Loki. They couldn’t ignore the crimes he’d committed
but they’d seen the way he treated his family. No man who treasured his family that way was truly a
bad person.

‘Think you can find out who this Thanos person is?’ Steve asked Tony. ‘I could try. Earth’s like the
holiday resort for every fucking mythological figure. The bastard’s gotta have touched down at some
point.’ He said.

Bruce nodded. ‘We’ll figure something out.’ Steve nodded. It might be little but they were damn sure
going to make an effort.

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Sigyn rolled over to her husband’s side of the bed and woke up when she found it to be empty. She
opened her eyes and squinted at the clock. It was 3:30 in the morning. She frowned. Where is he?
She got up from the bed and donned a robe before stepping out of their room.

She padded over to the living room, only to be met with her husband lying on one of the couches.
He was wrapped up in a blanket and was using one of Tony Stark’s devices. ‘What are you doing?’
She asked with a yawn. Loki started at the sound of her voice. ‘I…I thought it would be best for me
to stay here where it’s safer for you.’ He replied.

Sigyn growled. I’m too tired for this. ‘Did I tell you I wanted to be safer?’ She asked. Now it was
Loki’s turn to frown. ‘No but-‘He began but she cut him off. ‘It’s too late for this. You had better be
in that bed by the time I get back to that room.’ She said as she turned around.

Loki looked at his wife. Her voice was heavy with sleep but he knew she was being serious. I don’t
deserve this woman. He got up and dragged his blanket behind him before trailing after her.

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Loki watched as the twins fired their arrows at targets. They were getting better and he knew it was
thanks to the bow and arrow carrying Avenger. He’d woken up that morning with the need to set
things straight. He and Clint still didn’t get along but due to recent events and nightmares, he’d done
a lot of thinking.

Sigyn had talked to him about it, well more of scolded him when she’d found out what he’d done to
the archer. She still wasn’t a fan of him but she’d insisted that he be the bigger man and apologize.

That was weeks ago.

She’d decided to drop it but he could tell that she still wanted him to do so. To be honest, he hadn’t
felt like he had to at first. Clint wasn’t the only one who was affected by his attack on New York,
why was he whining so much, but then he’d thought about it.

Really thought about it.

He could push the fact that he’d controlled Clint’s mind away but the fact that he’d attempted to kill
his…husband made him feel…guilty. Anyone could do anything to him, but Sigyn was his world. If
anyone did so much as look at her wrong, he’d go crazy.

He was kind of surprised Clint was still letting him live. Probably our good captain’s influence.
Norns forbid there’s discord within the ranks. Loki sighed. Here we go.

‘You’re good with them. Sigyn would be happy they’re learning from you.’ He said to Clint. Clint
eyed him from the corner of his eye. ‘Can I help you?’ He asked curtly. Loki bristled and opened his
mouth to retort before stopping.

‘Look I’m not-I’m not really good at apologies but I just wanted to say that I’m sorry.’ He said
grudgingly. Clint snorted. ‘Sigyn put you up to this?’ He asked. Loki shook his head. ‘She…
complained earlier but I’m doing this of my own accord.’ He said.

‘Real generous of you.’ Clint said snarkily. Loki took in a deep breath. ‘I’m sorry for everything,
Controlling your mind, making you kill your comrades and most importantly, for harming your
beloved.’ Clint turned to look at him.

‘Look, I’m sure wherever you come from, people trip all over themselves to get an apology from the
prince of Asgard but I’m not biting.’ Clint said as he folded his arms. Loki raised a brow. ‘You can’t
even comprehend how much you ruined my life.’

‘I can.’ Loki said lowly. Clint scoffed. ‘I’m sure you can try but-’Loki cut the archer short. ‘I do
understand. I know how it feels like to have your mind taken apart and played with so many times
that you feel like you can’t trust yourself.’

Clint stepped back in surprise. ‘I know what it feels like to have people look at you and mistrust your
every move because you’re known as a traitor.’ Loki said as he stepped closer to Clint. ‘I understand
perfectly. I shouldn’t have done what I did and I know there’s no way I can change it or have your
forgiveness but I do want you to know that I’m sorry for it.’

‘Father!’

Loki stepped back at the sound of his daughter’s voice. ‘Please tell your partner the same.’ He said to
Clint before turning back to see meet his children. Loki listened to the excited chatter of his daughters
while Clint watched in a daze.

He wasn’t quite ready to jump on the god but his apology had definitely surprised him as well as
Loki’s knowledge of how it felt to be controlled. He watched as the god listened to his children and
smiled softly. Perhaps we could be friends.
Pepper sighed as they watched the news. Pictures of Sigyn had been splashed everywhere. People were wondering if she was the new Avenger and Fury had been on her neck about it. *I’m tempted to set Sigyn loose on him and let her handle it.*

‘Am I still on these news stations?’ Sigyn asked as she exited the elevator. She was wearing a backless sun dress with a floral print. She had no shoes on and her hair was in a ponytail. ‘Yes, you’re everywhere.’ Pepper replied.

‘They’re calling you the new Avenger.’ Bruce said. Sigyn snorted. ‘New Avenger. What do you think Loki? Shall I join you on your avenging expeditions?’ She asked. Loki was sitting by the table and was eating a slice of toast. After his confrontation with Clint he’d decided to get some breakfast. ‘No thank you. You join us and we won’t have any more avenging expeditions.’ He said with a smirk. ‘You’ll scare everyone off.’

Sigyn grabbed a cushion and threw it at him while Loki burst into laughter. ‘I’d be a perfect Avenger.’ She murmured to him as she headed over to the fridge.

‘Sigyn…what…what happened to your back?’ Natasha asked slowly as Sigyn poked her head into the fridge. Everyone turned to see what Natasha was talking about. On Sigyn’s back was a criss-cross of scars. They looked to be inflicted by flogging, with new scars layered on old ones. ‘A sign of Odin’s generosity.’ Loki replied sourly.

Sigyn clicked her tongue. ‘It was no more than I deserved.’ She said lightly. She pulled out a pie from the fridge and cut out a slice before returning it. ‘How…why…’ Steve said, his eyes and everyone else’s still trained on her back.

Sigyn sighed. ‘Do you really want to hear all of it?’ She asked. They all nodded. Sigyn sighed again. ‘Well I suppose it all began with the head of my village.’ She began.

‘He refused to pay tribute to Asgard. Asgard was taking everything we had, we were starving. He should’ve just appealed for more time with Odin but he didn’t. Odin saw it as an act of defiance and decided to punish us. Asgardian soldiers came in and slaughtered my people. They killed my father and raped my mother in front of me before killing her as well.’

Sigyn took a bite of her pie. ‘They took me, figuring I could be sold off at a pleasure house but the road from Vanir to Asgard is quite lengthy and being the only female amongst men, they took their turns with me as well.’ By now everyone’s face was pale at the words coming from Sigyn’s mouth.

‘When we got to Asgard…well let’s just say they noticed I had a way with weapons.’ Sigyn said. She and Loki smiled softly as if recalling some secret between them before Sigyn continued. ‘I was allowed to train with the men. I was lucky, most weren’t.’

‘As you can imagine it was difficult being a woman but there were these two soldiers who made it worse. Aldil and Fastr.’ Sigyn’s mouth curled in distaste as she said the men’s names. ‘They were part of the men who killed my family and had their way with me. I won’t have hated them so much if they didn’t always lord it over me for years. Like what they did was some sort of accomplishment.’ Sigyn shook her head softly. ‘I would’ve let it be but Odin made them generals in his army and for some reason I just couldn’t bear it.’

‘So you killed them?’ Bruce asked in a soft tone. Sigyn looked up at him. ‘Not immediately.’ She replied as she took another bite of pie. ‘I rounded them and their families up before torturing their wives and children while they watched. Then I killed them.’

You could hear a pin drop in the silence. Sigyn looked at their shocked and horrified faces before
sighing. ‘I admit I should have left their families out of it, if anything their children. I look at mine now and I can’t even imagine anything harming them but…’ Her voice trailed off.

‘I wanted it to hurt. I wanted them to feel the same pain I’d felt.’ She said. There was a pause. ‘When Odin found out he was furious. I was certain I was going to die and I had no problems with it but he obviously didn’t kill me. He said someone who could kill without thought to her own personal safety was too valuable to waste.’

‘Ever the opportunist.’ Loki murmured darkly. Sigyn unconsciously ran a hand down his arm to calm him down. ‘So that was when…’ Tony said vaguely and Sigyn nodded. ‘Odin ordered for me to be whipped two hundred times and it was public too.’ She said making a face.

‘Oh my god.’ Pepper said faintly. Sigyn frowned. ‘Don’t worry, I lost consciousness by fifty.’ She said, meaning to appease Pepper. It did the exact opposite. Sigyn looked at the group with a raised brow. Tony looked like he was going to be sick, Steve had a vengeful look on his face, Bruce’s skin had taken on a slight shade of green, Pepper looked horrified and Natasha looked like she was ready to run out of the room any second.

Sigyn’s frown deepened. ‘Look I know you’re all thinking that I’m some sort of monster and while I don’t fault that, hating me won’t bring them back to life.’ She said in a firm voice. Loki’s hand snaked around his wife’s waist ready to pull her back if any of them attacked.

Tony gave a strangled laugh. ‘You think we hate you because of that?’ He asked, incredulously. Sigyn shrugged. ‘Do you not? You won’t be the first.’ She replied. Bruce took in a deep breath. ‘We don’t hate you. Granted you did horrible things but…no person should ever have to go through what you did.’ He said.

‘Tis the way of war.’ Sigyn said in a flippant tone. Loki relaxed at the knowledge that they weren’t going to hurt her and took a bite out of her pie. Sigyn shot him a glare. ‘Go take your slice from the cooling container.’ She said to him but Loki only took another bite.

‘That’s not-No honourable soldier behaves that way.’ Steve said in a strained voice. ‘They deserved it. Not their families but they deserved that.’ Pepper said suddenly with so much venom that Sigyn leaned back in surprise.

‘And what of you, Natasha?’ Sigyn asked the spy. ‘How do you feel knowing that I’ve killed and murdered in cold blood?’ She said using the same terms she and Clint had insulted Loki with. Natasha said nothing and Sigyn smiled.

No surprise there. ‘How old were you when you were taken?’ Natasha asked, dodging the question. ‘A little older than Ragna.’ Sigyn replied. ‘Ragna’s like nine.’ Tony said in disbelief. Sigyn nodded then laughed at his shocked expression.

‘I appreciate the concern, I really do but it happened a long time ago and while it was not enjoyable, it’s made me who I am today.’ Sigyn said with a small smile. ‘Besides I would not be…what does Darcy say…a hard-core bitch?’ She asked, turning to Steve to see if she’d gotten it right. He nodded with a smile.

Sigyn smiled triumphantly. ‘Yes that.’ Bruce snorted weakly. ‘You’re a strong woman.’ He said. Sigyn nodded. ‘I know.’ She said simply.

‘How did your talk with Clint go?’ Sigyn asked as she stirred a pot. They were back on their floor and she was making lunch for the children. Loki glared at her. ‘Shouldn’t you know seeing as you
were spying.’ He spat out. ‘I merely told Jarvis to check on you.’ Sigyn replied coolly.

She subtly glanced at him. ‘Well?’ She asked. Loki huffed. ‘It went as expected. He still hates me.’ He replied. She clicked her tongue. ‘Would you stop assuming everyone hates you? They do not.’ Sigyn said.

‘They tolerate me. Had they their way they would’ve killed me.’ Loki said. Sigyn rolled her eyes. ‘I do not understand why you refuse to see yourself the way others see you.’ She murmured. Loki opened his mouth to reply but was cut off by the sound of the elevator opening.

Aric and Einar came running into the kitchen, both crying. Loki and Sigyn immediately snapped into parent mood and Sigyn crouched down to pick Aric up while Einar ran into his mother’s arms. There was blood smeared all over Einar’s hands and Aric had a bruise on the side of his head.

‘What happened?’ Loki asked as he led Einar to the sink to clean up. ‘We were playing and then Ragna hit us!!’ Einar said as he sobbed. Loki and Sigyn’s eyes widened. ‘Ragna?’ Sigyn said in disbelief. Aric nodded vehemently.

Loki inspected Einar’s palms. He had a long cut on his left palm, spanning from his pinkie to his thumb. It wasn’t very deep but it would sting for Einar to use his left palm. Loki sighed and crouched down to heal him before scooping him up and consoling him.

Sigyn had managed to pacify Aric and the two parents sat down to soothe their sons. ‘It’s alright. It’s alright.’ Loki said as he rubbed Einar’s back. ‘Jarvis do you know where Ragna is?’ Sigyn asked. ‘In her room. I believe she is in a state of distress.’ The AI responded.

Loki and Sigyn exchanged a look before sighing. ‘Why don’t you two go spend some time with the others hmm?’ Loki said as they looked down at the two. ‘We’ll be right there and you can have as much ice cream as you want.’ Sigyn added.

‘As much as we want?’ Einar asked slowly. ‘Within reason.’ Sigyn amended. The boys looked at each other before nodding and scampering off their parent’s laps. Loki shook his head. ‘The way those two react to food worries me.’ He murmured. Sigyn chuckled.

‘They got Thor’s appetite.’ She replied. Loki made a face and she laughed. ‘Come on. Let’s go see what troubles our daughter.’ Loki said as he stood up and Sigyn followed him.

Loki opened Ragna’s door and poked his head in. She was curled up on her bed, her face buried in her pillow. He and Sigyn came in and they quietly sat down on her bed. ‘Ragna? Do you want to tell us what happened?’ Loki asked.

Ragna raised her head from the pillow and that was when Loki and Sigyn saw her tear streaked face and red eyes. ‘Are they going to be okay?’ She asked in a chocked voice. ‘Aric and Einar?’ Sigyn asked and Ragna nodded.

Loki snorted. ‘Those pushovers. They’ll be fine after a few bowls of ice cream.’ He said with a small smile. ‘They said you hit them but I know that’s not something you’d ever do. What happened?’ Sigyn asked. Ragna bit her bottom lip.

‘It’s stupid.’ She mumbled. ‘Not to us.’ Loki reassured. Ragna sighed. ‘I was in watching Bodil and Brenna train and Aric and Einar came in and said that they wanted to practice magic so I asked if I could help and then Bodil said what would I know about magic and I said that I knew a lot and I had the book of spells. Then Einar said…he said that magic wasn’t for boring little girls and I don’t have any so I shouldn’t bother.’
Sigyn sighed. ‘So you hit them?’ She asked. Tears welled up in Ragna’s eyes. ‘I know I shouldn’t have but…they always rub it in my face that I’m the only one who can’t do anything and you never say anything about it.’ She said quietly.

Loki’s eyes widened. ‘We’ve never noticed.’ He said gently. Ragna sat up. ‘How would you, all you care about is them. The twins are awesome fighters and good at magic. Einar is a shape shifter and Aric, who shouldn’t even be good at anything, is already practising spells the twins can’t. Then there’s me. Ragna who’s not good at anything.’

‘That’s not true.’ Sigyn said with a frown. ‘Yes it is.’ Ragna insisted. ‘I’m not special. You even call Brenna and Bodil your little princesses.’ She said, more tears rolling down her cheeks. ‘They’re our daughters too.’ Loki said wryly.

‘Yes but you only used to call me that.’ Ragna sobbed. ‘And now you don’t and you don’t love me anymore.’ Loki and Sigyn simultaneously hugged their little girl to them. ‘Ragna how could you think that?’ Sigyn murmured as she rubbed her daughter’s back.

‘We love you so so much.’ Loki said repeatedly. When she’d calmed down enough, Loki decided to talk to her. ‘Do you know why we named you Ragna?’ He asked. She shook her head. ‘It has many meanings. It could mean goddess or warrior which you are. It could also mean advise giver or decision maker. Over all it means wisdom.’

‘When you came out of your mother’s womb, you were as quiet as anything. You didn’t make a sound, we thought you were dead.’ He continued. Sigyn nodded. ‘I was terrified, I was weeping like a child because I thought I’d lost my little one.’

‘And just about when we began to lose hope, you opened your eyes. ‘ Loki continued. ‘You didn’t cry, you just looked at us with the most beautiful green eyes that we’d ever seen. And then you smiled, like there wasn’t a worry in the world.’

‘Didn’t you notice me breathing?’ Ragan asked with a watery smile. ‘That didn’t occur to us.’ Sigyn said with a laugh. Ragan shook her head. ‘And that’s exactly why we picked out that name for you. You are the smartest girl of your age that I’ve ever met. You keep a cool head and you are so…wise that it scares me sometimes.’ Sigyn finished with a smile.

‘But that’s nothing compared to knowing how to fight and magic.’ Ragna mumbled. ‘Says who?’ Loki asked. ‘The most powerful men are not the ones who know how to fight but the ones who can think ahead. You need knowledge for that.’

Loki cupped her face in his hands. ‘And you are a very knowledgeable lady. Honestly, sometimes I feel you must be the only child which is mine because I cannot understand how any child that comes from my loins would not enjoy reading or chess.’ Sigyn threw one of the pillows at her husband.

‘You’re welcome to look for their fathers.’ She shot back to him and Loki and Ragna giggled. ‘We spent so much time on the others because magic is a dangerous thing. Used wrongly it could cause so much hurt and pain and we need to teach them how to use it correctly.’ Sigyn said to her daughter.

‘You are beautiful and extraordinarily special and the fact that you feel less than that is our fault not yours.’ Loki said in a serious voice to Ragna. ‘We’re so sorry.’ Ragna smiled. ‘It’s okay. I should’ve told you how I felt.’ She replied. Sigyn nodded.

‘Don’t repeat it in the future. If you’re upset with us, let us know. And we will have a good talk to the others too. Okay?’ Loki asked. Ragna nodded and Loki pulled her into a hug. ‘Can I join in
too?’ Sigyn asked with a smile. Ragna nodded and Sigyn wrapped her arms around her family.

‘We love you. Don’t ever forget that.’ Sigyn said with a kiss to the top of Ragna’s head. Sigyn and Loki locked eyes above her head. They could easily tell what the other was thinking. Perhaps they should focus more attention on their daughter for now.

Tony squinted at his Stark Pad. He’d spent all day looking through every database he could find for the word ‘Thanos’. It had been running all day with no luck and he was quite ready to call it a day when something had popped up.

It indicated that it was from his father’s files, where he’d documented Steve’s transformation as well as the going-on’s of the war. Tony opened it with trepidation. It contained information about Red Skull. Tony skimmed through it, ignoring most of it until his eyes caught the highlighted word ‘Thanos’.

He read through it, his eyes widening with every word. According to Howard Stark, Red Skull’s obsession with the Tesseract was to deliver it to his mater, a figure he’d only mentioned in a diary of his and who went by the name ‘Thanos’.

Tony swallowed.

If that was the same Thanos that was bothering Loki, then there was a huge problem.

Chapter End Notes

Okidokes! I hope this was fine. Took e a while to come up with all this. I won't be focusing much on Thanos, he isn't going to take up much plot. My main focus is Loki and everyone else. I'm still not sure about bringing in the rest of Loki's children. This story is quite busy and adding more characters may be more than I can handle.

I also didn't include the Aseir-Vanir war in Sigyn's back story. I wanted to but then I didn't know how that would work in the time line and I just decided to leave it. Hope her story doesn't put you all off. Oh and I know there's not that much Clint in the stories but for the life of me I just don't know how to incorporate him in.

If you want to see more of the kids or any of the other characters just let me know. Thanks for reading!
Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

‘Ragna?’

Ragna’s head rose from her spell book. Her siblings were standing in front of her with sober looks on their faces. ‘What happened? What’s wrong?’ She asked dropping her book. ‘We just wanted to say we’re sorry.’ Einar said.

Ragna shrugged. ‘It’s okay.’ She mumbled. Brenna shook her head. ‘It’s not. We didn’t mean to hurt you.’ Ragna patted her bed and they all clambered on. Aric scampered into her lap and Ragna kissed the top of his head.

‘And we’d like you to teach us spells if you still want to.’ Bodil said. ‘And we can go to the library with you and play chess if you like.’ Einar said, pulling a face. ‘I know it’s not much of a challenge but…’ Brenna said. Ragna snorted. ‘No need for harsh statements.’ She said as she ruffled her brother’s hair.

‘Are we forgiven?’ Bodil asked. Ragna pulled her sisters into hugs. ‘Of course you are.’ She said with a smile. ‘I’m taking you up on the chess though.’ They all groaned in unison and Ragna chuckled.

Aric made the book levitate and Ragna snatched it out of the air. ‘There’s a spell here that could transform you into a bird, Einar.’ She said as she flipped the pages. Einar scrambled towards her. ‘Lemme see!’ He said with excitement.

Ragna readjusted and tilted the book so he could see. ‘Can it work on all of us or just him?’ Bodil asked as she looked at it. ‘I don’t know. It’ll work better for him because he’s a shape shifter but I don’t know if it will for you.’

Brenna looked at the smudged ink and garbled words on the page in front of her. ‘How can you read this?’ She asked her sister. ‘Father taught me. He said there are darker spells at the back, ones we should never touch but the ones in front are okay.’ Ragna said.

Bodil hummed. ‘Could you teach us?’ She asked Ragna. Ragna beamed at her older sister. ‘Certainly.’ She replied.

Natasha took in a big breath as she relaxed on the Quinjet. They had been dragged all the way to Asia, trying to track down some scientist who was messing with children’s genetic sequence before they were born by experimenting on pregnant women. They’d managed to shut down the lab but it was tough work.

Tony’s suit had been short circuited by an EMP and his suit had been paralyzed for two minutes while it rebooted. Loki had covered him while Bruce had hulked out and broke into the building. Thor was MIA so it was down to Clint, Natasha and Steve.

All she wanted to do now was take a shower and collapse into bed, preferably curled around her favourite Avenger. Natasha brushed her hand over his hair. As usual, he’d fallen asleep after hulking out and most likely won’t wake till they got back home.
Steve was sleeping with his shield within reach. Natasha forever envied his ability to sleep no matter the environment he was in. His life as a soldier made it possible for him to fall asleep within minutes and wake up looking he’d had a full day’s sleep.

She hated him.

Clint was in a corner, scrolling through his phone. No doubt talking to Coulson. He and her couldn’t sleep unless they were in their safe zones. For her it was in her room with Bruce, for him it was wherever his husband was. He’d had such a rough patch with loosing Clint and being controlled and she was so glad he was finally finding his feet.

There was a sharp intake of breath and Natasha and Clint snapped to attention. It was Tony. He was clenching on to his seat and she could see he was breathing heavily. ‘Tony?’ Natasha said in concern. ‘Are you dying, Stark?’ Clint said as he put down his phone. Natasha shot a look at Clint.

The mention of the word ‘dying’ seemed to aggravate Stark all the more and he started gasping for breath. Natasha moved away from Bruce and came over to his side. ‘Tony? Can you hear me?’ She said as she rubbed his back.

Loki who had been watching the entire scene, rolled his eyes. ‘For the love of Odin.’ He muttered under his breath before crouching in front of the billionaire. ‘Tony. Tony. Look at me.’ He said in a calm, slow voice.

Tony focused his attention on him and Loki nodded. ‘Where are you? Tell me where you are.’ He said softly. ‘I-Obadiah-Tony stuttered. Loki shook his head. ‘That’s not where you are. Tell me where you are.’

Tony had stopped gasping but was still taking in deep breaths. He swallowed. ‘I’m on the Quinjet.’ He replied. Loki nodded. ‘Good. That’s good. Why are you on the Quinjet?’ Loki asked. ‘A mission. We had a mission.’ Tony answered.

He had calmed down considerably now and Loki straightened up. He left Tony’s side and walked to the front of the Quinjet where the control panel was. He opened one of the shelves and pulled out a flask. ‘Drink it slowly.’ Loki said as he held it out to Tony.

Tony reached out for it and Loki held it back. ‘Slowly.’ He warned and Tony nodded. Loki handed it over to him and Tony took a sip out before turning to look at Clint. ‘Did you actually ask me if I was dying Clint?’ He asked.

‘Hey you sounded like it. Are you alright?’ He asked. ‘Yes no thanks to your comforting words. You’re shit in a panic situation.’ Tony replied. ‘Yeah you’re better.’ Natasha said with a squeeze to his arm before she went back to Bruce.

Tony looked around. ‘Steve! Wake up!’ He called. Steve woke up with a start, his arm already going for his shield. ‘Put the fucking shield down, I was literally dying and you slept through it.’ He said with a mock hurt tone.

‘Dying? What happened?’ Steve said, his body suddenly on alert. ‘Never mind what happened, all that matters is that you were asleep.’ Tony said. Steve sighed. ‘Alright. I’m sorry I missed it. Are you okay?’ Tony asked with genuine concern.

Tony nodded and Steve smiled. ‘Good. Can I go back to sleep now?’ He asked. Tony nodded again and Steve shook his head fondly. ‘Want me to wake Bruce up and tell him too?’ Natasha asked sarcastically. ‘Like you’d do it if I begged.’ Tony shot back.
Loki rolled his eyes before curling back up in his corner of the Quinjet and looking at his phone. ‘What are you doing?’ He asked. Loki sighed. ‘Not that it’s any of your business but it’s my children.’ Loki replied.

‘Are they okay?’ Clint asked. Loki nodded. ‘They’re fine, they’re just…’ Loki sighed again. ‘They do this thing, it’s silly but they do this thing where they all sleep together on the same bed when they’re scared or upset and they’ve been doing it every time we go on a mission.’

‘Why?’ Natasha asked. ‘They’re scared we’ll die. Mostly me but there’s concern for the rest of you.’ Loki replied. ‘Well thank God for that.’ Clint mumbled. ‘I can understand us but why you? I thought gods don’t die.’ Steve asked. ‘I’ve died twice so I can understand their worry.’ Loki replied.

‘They’ll be fine. They have Sigyn as a mother and while we’re talking about your wife, I just wanted to say that she’s an amazing woman and she scares the hell out of me.’ Tony said. Loki smiled. ‘You should tell her, she’ll be thrilled.’ He said with a small laugh.

‘You really love her don’t you?’ Natasha said, seeing the way his eyes lit up at the topic of his family. She’d watched him in various situations and seen him angry, frustrated even sad but she’d never seen him happy.

An occurrence that was taking place much too often with his family around. Loki cocked his head at her. ‘It surprises you doesn’t it?’ Loki replied. ‘You find it hard to believe that a man like me is capable of loving don’t you?’

Natasha swallowed. ‘I didn’t mean to offend you.’ She said apologetically. ‘I’m not offended, you’re not the first person to say so. Once upon a time I too believed I’d never be capable of love.’ Loki said in a soft voice.

‘What changed?’ Steve asked. ‘I saw her.’ Loki replied simply. He plugged a set of earphones in the phone in his hands and closed his eyes before leaning back into his seat, effectively ending the conversation.

Tony sighed as he walked into the tower. The others had already headed towards their floors to get some much needed sleep. The fight and the panic attack had drained him of all his energy and all he wanted to do was curl up in a bed with a cup of tea (yes he drank fluids other than alcohol) and beg Pepper to skip work and come back home.

‘Father!’

There was a rush of wind as Loki was swamped by his children.

‘Are you hurt?’

‘Are you okay?’

‘Did you win?’

‘How did the battle go?’

Loki smiled. ‘No, I’m not hurt. Yes, I’m okay. Yes, we won and the battle was fine.’ He answered in a tired tone as he tweaked Ragna’s nose. Tony watched the scene with a smile. ‘Is everyone okay?’ Einar asked, looking at Tony.

‘Of course we are, short stuff.’ Tony replied with a smile. ‘Alright. School. Now.’ Sigyn said as she
kissed Loki on his temple. ‘But father just came back, shouldn’t we just stay home?’ Bodil asked with pleading eyes.

‘And do what, watch me sleep?’ Loki asked as he looked down at her. His daughter pouted and he ran his hands through her hair. ‘I’ll be here when you get back.’ He said to them. ‘You heard him.’ Sigyn said with a stern look. The children gave noises of discontent but began to walk away.

Loki wrapped his arms around Sigyn and Tony watched as they walked away. Tony felt a sudden wave of want flood him. He wanted that. He wanted children of his own to love and to worry about, he wanted Pepper as his wife, he just wanted a family. Tony sighed as he trudged to the elevator.

No point in wanting something you can’t get right now. It arrived at his floor and Tony forwent the thought of a shower for collapsing in his bed. He could sort out the paperwork and everything else some well-earned hours of sleep.

He closed his eyes, expecting to doze off into a dreamless sleep but all he was hit with was images of Obadiah and Afghanistan. Images of him being water boarded and threatened and Obi paralyzing him in his house and –

Tony started gasping for breath again. He curled up into a ball and tried to force himself to take in deep breaths but all he could hear was gun fire and screaming. He could faintly hear his name being called but what use was that to him when he could barely draw any breath?

‘Tony! Tony! Tony!’

Tony squeezed his eyes shut. He knew the science behind this. He knew that his lungs were fully functional and he wasn’t in danger but for the life of him, he couldn’t get his body to co-operate.

Tony felt slender arms wrap around him and he attempted to fight it off.

‘It’s me, honey. It’s just me.’

The scent of white floral and vanilla hit him and Tony opened his eyes. Pepper had her hands on his shoulders and was straddled around his waist. ‘Breathe. Just breathe.’ Pepper said softly. Tony’s breathing began to even out and Pepper planted a kiss on his head.

‘H-How did you-‘ Tony stuttered but Pepper just smiled. ‘Jarvis told me what happened in the jet so I decided to leave work and keep you company.’ She said. Pepper rolled off him and flopped on the bed. ‘Sorry I had to pull you away from work.’ Tony mumbled.

Pepper shook her head. ‘Don’t worry about that, Jarvis can take care of all my meetings. All I care about is you.’ She said with another kiss to the head. ‘Mint tea and a movie?’ She asked as she got up and began to change out of her skirt suit.

Tony nodded and she beamed at him. Tony felt his heart swell with affection at the red haired goddess in front of him. ‘Fuck, I don’t deserve you.’ Tony spouted. Pepper chuckled. ‘Nope but you’ve got me anyway.’ She said with a grin before going to the shower.

Sigyn heard the rumble of thunder and she jumped from her seat in excitement. Thor. Loki was fast asleep in bed and most likely won’t wake up till much later giving her an ample amount of time to talk to her brother-in-law.

She took the elevator to the balcony and it opened just as Thor was stepping into the room. He had a book in his hands and Sigyn felt herself sigh in relief at the fact that he was able to find something.
Thor hugged her before the duo sat on one of the sofas.

Thor handed the heavy looking book to her. ‘I had to search through Odin’s personal collection for that.’ He said, pointing to it. ‘Thank you.’ Sigyn murmured with a pat to his arm before opening the book. ‘And you were not found out?’ She asked. Thor shook his head in denial.

‘Tis an old book.’ She murmured as she flipped the pages. She got to a page and stopped. Her eyes scanned through the page before she spoke up again. ‘It doesn’t say much. It says Thanos was a Titan. They were an advanced race. Not like the Æsir or Vanir or even Jötnar but they were much more advanced than humans.’

‘Why have we heard no word of them?’ Thor asked. Sigyn looked back to the book. ‘I don’t know. It does say that Thanos developed an unusual obsession for death and murdered his family as a tribute to it. He was ultimately captured but escaped. That is all.’ Thor rubbed his hand with his face. How did such a man become involved with Loki? ‘Do you think Loki met him during the time when he…died?’ Sigyn asked hesitantly. ‘He told me he’d been to worlds I’d never dreamt of.’ Thor replied. Sigyn made a noise of despair.

‘Why is he doing this? What did he hope to gain for partnering with such a person?’ Sigyn wondered aloud. Thor placed a heavy but comforting hand on his sister-in-law. ‘We shall find out but we need the help of the others.’

Sigyn looked uneasy and Thor sighed. Loki and Sigyn were so alike in the fact that they never trusted anyone but each other. He understood why, no one else had given them a reason to trust them, definitely not him but they needed help.

‘This is beyond us Sigyn. They should know what we are up against.’ Thor said softly. Sigyn nibbled on her bottom lip. The rational part of her mind told her that Thor was speaking the truth. The Avengers needed to know what was going on with their team mate but she didn’t know if she could fully trust them.

What if they interpret it wrongly and harm him? What if they stand by and do nothing? It will not be the first time the so called ‘allies’ of Loki abandon him when he is in need. ‘I will not let harm come to him Sigyn.’ Thor said as though he was reading her mind. ‘He is my brother even though he will not admit it.’

Sigyn’s jaw clenched. I hope I’m not making a mistake.

‘Okay.’

‘So you’re telling me that Red Skull was working for this Thanos person?’ Steve asked Tony. Tony nodded. He and Pepper had had a relaxing day in before he’d decided to deal with their Thanos issue. Steve kneaded his temples with his fingers. ‘Johann Schmidt was as crazy as it gets and now you’re telling me that someone else was pulling the strings.’ He murmured.

‘That’s what we’ve got.’ Tony replied. ‘You tell the team?’ Steve shook his head. ‘I found it in my dad’s files, I figured you’d want to know first.’ Tony said. Steve arched a brow. ‘That’s awfully considerate of you, Tony.’ Steve said in what Tony assumed was an approving tone.

‘Yeah well don’t let it spread.’ Tony said back. Steve clapped him on the back. ‘Thank you, Tony.’ Steve said, ignoring Tony’s first remark. ‘And while we’re being considerate, Clint told me what happen on the jet.’
‘You would’ve caught the whole thing live if you were awake,’ Tony said casually. Steve sighed. ‘Look Tony, we all have flashbacks and we all go through PTSD.’

‘It’s not PTSD,’ Tony said, his voice slightly wavering.

‘-but I just wanted to say that no matter what it is, we’ve got your back. Okay?’ Steve said not even skipping a beat. ‘You don’t have to say anything, just know we’ve got you. And if you ever feel like talking, well…’ Steve let his voice trail off. Tony looked away but nodded.

‘Good.’ Steve said, patting Tony’s arm. He was about to go when the duo heard the voice of Jarvis. ‘Mr. Thor and Lady Sigyn wish for the attention of the team in the game room.’ Tony frowned. He didn’t even know Thor was back.

‘You think he found something?’ Steve asked. ‘Only one way to find out.’ Tony replied and the both of them made their way to the game room.

Sigyn watched the expression on the team’s faces as Thor related what they had learnt. They were all looking between themselves and she found herself getting wary. ‘Where’s Loki?’ Bruce asked. Sigyn felt her stomach jump to her throat. ‘If you think that I will stand aside and let you hurt my husband, you’re wrong.’ She said as she stood in front of them. ‘That goes for me as well.’ Thor added, glaring at them.

‘We’re not going to do anything to him.’ Steve assured. Sigyn scoffed. ‘So people say. Touch him and I swear I will-‘

‘Nothing’s going to happen to him, Sigyn. You have our word.’ Tony said to her. Sigyn eyed him suspiciously but decided to hold her peace. ‘Thanos has touched down on earth before. Apparently he wanted Red Skull to get the Tesseract for him.’ Steve said to the team.

‘Red Skull?’ Thor and Sigyn asked in confusion. ‘He’s not important. What is important is that this Thanos person sent him to get the Tesseract and after he failed, he assigned Loki with the task of stealing the Tesseract as well.’ Tony said.

‘You think he’s still working with him?’ Bruce murmured. ‘Loki would not still be in allegiance with such a person.’ Thor said, coming to his brother’s defence. ‘No offense Thor but you thought he was dead when he showed up and attacked.’ Natasha said gently. ‘You said he was missing for a year, who knows what happened within that time.’

‘If he was working with such a person then why agree to work with us and bring Sigyn and his family here?’ Thor asked. ‘To cover up, I’d do the same if I were in his position.’ Clint replied. Thor’s face fell slightly. Although he did not want to believe it, that was the thing about Loki, he was unpredictable.

_He had the audacity to sit on Odin’s throne and rule, one never knows what he might have up his sleeve_. There was a huge possibility that Natasha was right but Thor found himself not caring. He had promised Sigyn that he would not let harm befall his brother and he meant to keep his words.

Sigyn who had been listening to the team debate, finally decided to speak up. ‘You know for Migard’s mightiest heroes, you’re not very bright.’ She said. Thor frowned. ‘Sigyn, I understand this is a troubling moment for all of us but there is no need to offend my shield brothers.’ He said.

Sigyn ignored him. ‘Look Sigyn, I know you love your husband but you have to face reality.’ Steve said. ‘Loki is a good man but sometimes good people make bad choices. If he is in cohorts with this…Thanos person then it’s best we sort it out now.’
Sigyn glared at him. She loved the group of people in front of her like they were her own family but sometimes they could be so dense. How were they not seeing what was clearly in front of their faces? ‘You want reality? Fine. I shall give you reality.’ Sigyn replied.

‘Who did Loki actually kill?’ She asked. Bruce snorted. ‘Do you want a list?’ He asked. ‘Yes. Give me a list.’ Sigyn replied hotly. ‘Well there’s all the people who died in the battle, how bout we start with that?’ Tony shot back.

Sigyn sighed. ‘I’m going to be very realistic with you. It’s not that I don’t value life, I do but let’s be honest, they were in the way. They were…’ Her voice trailed off. ‘You have a name for it, it begins with ‘c’.’ She said, looking to them to help her out.

‘Collateral damage.’ Natasha offered and Sigyn nodded. ‘Those were innocent lives, Sigyn. Innocent lives that your husband took.’ Clint said. Sigyn pursed her lips and turned to Steve. ‘You were a soldier, correct?’ She asked.

‘Don’t bring me into this.’ Steve warned. ‘Were you or were not?’ Sigyn demanded. ‘He was.’ Natasha answered, curious to where Sigyn was taking this talk to. ‘And let us say that during one of these…battles you partook in, the battlefield was in the middle of a town or a city. Of course there would be stray…gunfire and people you don’t intend to get hurt will get hurt. What would you call that?’

Steve went red. How dare she compare what he and Loki did? He was fighting for his country, Loki was fighting for his own selfish needs. Sigyn took Steve’s silence as an agreement. ‘Now that we’ve settled that, who else is on this list?’ She asked.

‘There is the son of Coul too or is he also this collateral damage you speak of?’ Thor asked quietly. ‘Loki apologized and so did I on his behalf.’ Sigyn replied. ‘Phil is a good man and from what I’ve seen, a good partner but we all know the person to blame for his disappearance is not Loki.’

Clint opened his mouth to retort but Sigyn beat him to it. ‘He was dead, agreed but from my understanding, it was your Man of Fury who pronounced him dead to you and then brought him back to life behind your backs. Now unless the Phil you and I have seen is some sort of apparition concocted up by Tony and Bruce in their labs, Phil Coulson is not dead.’

‘You can talk, he wasn’t your partner!’ Clint yelled. ‘I lost Loki twice.’ Sigyn said in a small voice. ‘The first time was when he threw himself off the Bifrost while his beloved father held on to Thor and the second time was when Thor took him out of the safety of his cell and lead him to his death all for the sake of a woman.’

‘He agreed to help me.’ Thor said in an equally small voice. ‘Had I known he would’ve fallen to his death I would’ve never-‘ Sigyn shook her head to stop him. ‘I know.’ She said to him with a reassuring smile before facing the others.

‘Do you think I don’t want to hate Thor sometimes? I do but I don’t because I know that there were circumstances surrounding both events. Loki let himself fall off the Bifrost while his beloved father held on to Thor and the second time was when Thor took him out of the safety of his cell and lead him to his death all for the sake of a woman.’

‘I’m not saying Loki is a hero. He’s done a lot of harm to your realm and I understand that. However, some things just doesn’t add up.’ She said.

‘Okay well what? What do you think?’ Natasha asked. Sigyn shrugged. ‘I don’t know, he won’t speak to me of it. All I know is that if he wanted to take Earth, truly take it, he won’t have gone about it the way he did.’
‘What would he have done?’ Steve asked. ‘He’d have killed you.’ Sigyn replied. ‘Trust me, he tried.’ Tony murmured. ‘No you don’t understand. My point is if Loki wanted to take this realm by making your people fear him, he would’ve separated you all firstly.’ Sigyn said.

‘Then he would’ve killed you. Slowly and on one of those large viewing screens you have in the Garden of Times and Squares so everyone would see and so they would know that no one is coming to their aid. Then he would’ve come in with the Chitauri and disabled your S.H.E.I.L.D.’

‘Migard on a platter.’ Thor murmured. ‘So you’re saying the fact that we won and defeated Loki was because…’ Steve trailed off.

‘Because he let us.’ Tony finished. Sigyn nodded. ‘Well how do we find out?’ Bruce asked. ‘He won’t talk to me about it but maybe you’ll be able to get it out of him.’ She replied. They all exchanged glances. The team was finally in sync. They were all on a good page now and no one wanted to upset the balance.

Confronting Loki was just going to push them back to square one. ‘What about Fury? Shouldn’t he know this?’ Natasha asked looking at Sigyn. ‘If you wish to tell him, do so. But Loki might not be so willing to co-operate if he’s involved.’ She replied.

‘Tis true. Loki will not reveal the truth if he feels as though he is pressured.’ Thor added. ‘Well that’s just fucking great.’ Tony spouted. ‘We can’t push him into telling us cause of his delicate sensibilities and we can’t ignore it because it could mean disaster for everyone.’

‘Nothing you can do about it now is there? Might as well just get it over with.’ Clint muttered. Thor and Sigyn exchanged a look. They could tell what was running through the other’s mind. Once they called Loki’s attention to this matter, there was no going back. Sigyn nibbled on her bottom lip before turning to Steve and nodding her assent.

‘Jarvis is Loki awake?’ Steve asked. There was a pause. ‘Yes. Would you like me to tell him to meet you?’ The AI asked. Steve looked to the members of the team and they all agreed.

‘Yes.’

Loki blinked lazily at the request from Steve to meet him in the game room. He had just woken up a few moments ago and he was hungry and confused as to where his wife was. He looked out the window. It was early evening which meant the children had returned from school.

Loki had promised to spend more time with Ragna teaching her more about the Old Tongue and generally spending more time with her. Her words to he and Sigyn had shaken him up. It was exactly how he felt growing up with Thor and he never wanted any of his children to know how it felt to be inadequate.

Loki swung himself out of bed. *I’ll go to her after this *meeting* with Steve.* He pulled on a shirt and some joggers before making his way to the game room. To his surprise he was met with not only Steve but the rest of the team as well as Sigyn and Thor.

Loki surveyed their tight expressions before turning to his wife. ‘What’s going on?’ He asked Sigyn in a controlled tone. Sigyn swallowed. Seeing the apprehension on Sigyn’s face, Thor decided to speak up for her.

‘What is your affiliation with Thanos, brother?’ He asked carefully. At the sound of the name ‘Thanos’, Loki tensed up. Memories of torture and beatings echoed in his mind and Loki could feel bile rising in his throat at the recollection of mentioned events.
Loki swallowed and forced himself to remain calm. ‘H-How did you come to know that name?’ He asked, his voice wavering against his wishes. ‘You said it in your sleep,’ Sigyn said softly. Loki’s eyes widened at that.

‘Sigyn tasked me with finding out more about him so I which is why I returned to Asgard.’ Thor continued. Loki turned to Thor. ‘Did you tell Odin?’ He asked in a strained voice. If Odin caught wind of Thanos then he was in more trouble than he could imagine.

‘Why do you care if he told your dad?’ Bruce asked suspiciously. Loki ignored the question and focused his attention on Thor. ‘Did you tell him?’ He repeated, desperation tingeing his tone. ‘No I did not.’ Thor replied also becoming suspicious.

Loki sagged in relief. If Odin had no knowledge of this then perhaps he was safe after all. ‘I dug around and we found out that this Thanos person has been on Earth before looking for the Tesseract which is ironic considering the fact that you came for it as well.’ Tony said.

Loki licked his lips nervously. He had no idea that Thanos had visited Earth previously but it didn’t change anything. Didn’t change the fact he had worked for Thanos, didn’t change the fact that he never wanted to think about what he’d endured at Thanos’ hands talk less of speak about it and it didn’t change the fact that he was moments away from having a full-fledged panic attack if they didn’t stop talking about it.

‘Loki are you working with him?’ Steve asked with his arms crossed. He was hoping the answer was in the negative but if it wasn’t then he had the duty as the captain of the team to find out. Loki quelled the panic rising in him. *I will not break. Not now. Not in front of them.*

‘If you must know I am not working with him. Not anymore.’ Loki said in the firmest tone he could muster. ‘Not anymore?’ Sigyn exclaimed. ‘He’s a mad man, Loki.’

‘You think I don’t know that?!’ Loki yelled back. Sigyn flinched. ‘Look all you need to know is that I don’t work for him anymore and I never will. Goodnight.’ Loki made to go but Steve stopped him.

‘That’s not enough for us.’ Steve spoke up. ‘Isn’t that unfortunate?’ Loki said mockingly. He knew he was being unbelievably difficult and insensitive especially towards Sigyn but he was at the point where he just wanted the conversation to be over.

‘What did you do for him and why did you stop working for him?’ Natasha asked, wanting to see his reaction. ‘I don’t-Tha-That’s none of your business.’ He stuttered out. Natasha frowned. He almost sounded…afraid?

*Why would he be afraid?* ‘Loki if it’s something bad, it’s okay.’ Natasha said in what she hoped was a reassuring voice. ‘We’ve all done things we’re ashamed of.’ Loki squirmed. If he’d known what he was walking into, he won’t have taken a step near the game room.

‘Natasha speaks the truth, brother. We only wish to know what happened.’ Thor added. Loki gave a bitter laugh. ‘I appreciate your attempts at comfort, however feeble they may be but Thanos is none of your business.’ Loki snapped at them. Pleading wasn’t working and he was resorting to being defensive. *Anything to get them to drop it.*

‘It’s my business.’ Sigyn said in a dangerously quiet voice. ‘It’s my business when someone terrifies you so much you choke me because of it.’ A shard of pain ripped through Loki’s heart. The fact that she brought that up now only told him that he wasn’t forgiven and the thought alone was enough to tear him up again.
‘He choked you?’ Clint and Natasha asked in alarm. ‘It was an accident.’ Sigyn, Steve, Bruce and Tony said in unison. ‘You told them?’ Loki said to Sigyn, feeling a bit betrayed. She never told their secrets to anyone else, he was always confident in the fact that whatever happened between them stayed between them.

‘It wasn’t exactly subtle.’ Sigyn shot back. ‘I know you won’t be in cohorts with such a person but something’s wrong and we deserve to know.’ She said firmly. Suddenly Loki felt a wave of anger wash over him. Deserve? Deserve? They deserve nothing! I owe them nothing! In his eyes, the Avengers had done nothing that warranted him letting them in and trusting them fully.

Sigyn did but he was too upset at the fact that she told everyone. ‘Deserve?’ Loki replied with a scoff. ‘I don’t owe any of you a thing. Let this go, it’s not a problem. It’s taken care of and I do not ever want to talk about it. That day’s not going to come any soon so I advise you to drop it.’ He was glaring at all of them with an intensity that made even Thor shake.

‘Or else what?’ Tony asked. ‘Or else, I just might show you.’ Loki said stepping closer to the group. ‘If you think you’ve gone through horrors, you do not want to step into my brain. I’ll make those panic attacks seem like mere over-excitement.’

Tony’s face went pale and Bruce flushed in anger. ‘That was uncalled for, Loki.’ He reprimanded. ‘This entire meeting was uncalled for.’ Loki shot back before storming out of the room. There was a moment of silence in which the team took in what had just happened and wondered how to make sense of it all before they heard a growl coming from Sigyn.

She made a sound of annoyance and stomped off towards the door. ‘Sigyn don’t bother.’ Steve said but Sigyn shook her head. ‘Don’t worry I’m not upset for you. This is more personal.’ She said before exiting the room. Tony also followed her leave and Steve sighed.

‘Bruce could you-’ He began but the doctor was already following Tony. Thor sighed. ‘I apologize for my brother’s words.’ He said gently but the team waved his apology away. ‘It’s okay, Thor. Your brother’s an ass, no need to apologize for that.’ Clint said but Natasha shook her head.

‘It’s not that. I mean he is but there’s something else. He’s…afraid.’ Natasha said slowly. Steve glanced at her. ‘Afraid?’ He echoed in a surprised tone. ‘Yes.’ Natasha replied. ‘Loki’s cocky, arrogant. If he truly was working with this Thanos person, he’d be so ecstatic to rub it in our faces that we’re only just realizing it.’

‘But he’s not.’ Clint said, catching on. ‘It’s almost like he doesn’t want us to find out.’ Natasha nodded. Thor frowned. ‘I have never known Loki to be so frightened of someone that he lies through his teeth to bury it.’ He said. ‘Whoever it is must have something of vast importance to hold over his head.’

Steve’s brows furrowed in thought. ‘What d’you want us to do, captain?’ Natasha asked. Steve frowned. Pushing Loki had only pushed him further into his shell and it was going to take months before the team returned to the well-oiled machine that they were. ‘Pressuring Loki hasn’t done us any favours. He’ll speak when ready.’ Steve replied.

‘And Fury?’ Clint asked. Steve shook his head. ‘Not yet. We’ll tell him when there’s a reason to.’ He said. The team nodded. ‘Think Loki’s gonna make it past tonight?’ Natasha asked. ‘Not if Sigyn has her way with him.’ Thor replied.

‘Jarvis, where are my children?’ Sigyn asked the AI as she tapped her foot. She was in the elevator, on her way to their bedroom where she knew Loki would be and she was enraged. ‘They seem to be
practising spells.’ Jarvis replied.

Sigyn frowned slightly. They knew not to practice without the monitoring of their parents. *I shall deal with them later.* The elevator doors opened on their floor and Sigyn walked towards the bedroom. As predicted, Loki was pacing at the foot of their bed. He looked up when she came in but said nothing.

‘What was that?’ Sigyn demanded as she stood in front of Loki. ‘I might have to ask the same thing.’ Loki shoot back. ‘How dare you tell them of our business?’ Sigyn raised a brow in disbelief. ‘How dare I? Like you said it is our business and I am free to tell whoever I choose.’ She said.

Loki growled at her and turned around but Sigyn held her ground. ‘What is going on Loki?’ Sigyn asked. ‘If the others don’t deserve to know, surely I do.’ Loki turned around to face her. ‘Why? Because we share a bed?’

The moment the words left his lips, Loki regretted them but it was too late to take them back. Sigyn’s eyes welled with tears at his words and she raised her hand to slap him before dropping it.

‘I am not just a warm body for you lie with, I am your wife.’ Sigyn said, her voice wavering. ‘Sigyn I didn’t mean-‘ Loki began but she cut him off. ‘I told them because I wanted to help you because you shouldn’t have to bear this alone. As your wife, I am your partner. We share our problems but seeing as you think me as something to only warm your bed with-‘

‘That’s not true.’ Loki said, guilt and shame overwhelming him at his words.

‘-perhaps I was wrong.’ Sigyn finished, a tear streaming down her cheek. Loki took a step towards her and gathered her in his arms. ‘You know that’s not true. You know you’re the most important thing to me.’

‘You don’t act like it.’ Sigyn mumbled, pushing him away. Loki sighed. ‘Sigyn…I can’t-I don’t- Please.’ Loki said settling to pleading. He knew it was hurting her but the words just won’t make it past his mouth. He couldn’t speak to her, couldn’t tell her anything.

Sigyn swiped at another tear trailing down her cheek. She had been angry before confronting Loki but now all she felt was sadness. It was obvious that this Thanos person had done horrible things to her husband. She could see the pain in his eyes, hear it in his voice. She identified with it. That used to be her years ago. Loki had helped her through it and she was determined to help him through his.

‘Do you remember when we’d just got married and every time you touched me, I flinched or I burst into tears?’ She asked softly.

Loki nodded. Sigyn had been terrified of his touch. The slightest brush of his fingers against her skin in an intimate way sent her backing away from him or freezing stiff. He understood why and he let her set the pace for their physical relationship but something had to be done. ‘Do you remember what you told me?’ She asked again.

‘I told you that as long as you let what happened to you control your actions, you were giving them the power to control you.’ Loki said softly, recalling the words he’d said to her centuries ago. Sigyn nodded. ‘And it took me a few months but I eventually came to share a bed with you.’ Her hand reached out to stroke his jaw.

‘The longer you keep this in and let it hurt you, the longer he has control over you. It pains me to see you like this. I love you so much and the fact that you feel like you can’t share this with me breaks my heart.’ Sigyn said to him, more tears trailing down her cheeks.
Loki wiped them away. ‘I wish I could but I can’t.’ He replied, sounding just as heartbroken as his wife. ‘Yes you can. You don’t have to live in fear of anyone, you taught me that.’ Sigyn said with a sniffle. She pressed a kiss to his cheek. ‘Don’t let him win.’ She whispered to him before turning and leaving the room.

Loki stood in the room, letting the silence envelop him. Sigyn’s words echoed in his ears and it wasn’t until he felt his cheeks that he realised he was crying.

Chapter End Notes

Another chapter down! This was honestly more angsty than I intended and the next chapter doesn't look to be much better so sorry for that. Loki is being difficult now but only cause of the trauma he suffered which he shall soon reveal to the others. This is a long chapter but I had to get all of this in. Some of you seem to be confused about the children's ages so lemme just clarify.

Bodil & Brenna - 13 (originally 12 but I decided to add a year to their ages. I'll make the necessary changes.)

Ragna - 9

Einar - 6

Aric - 3

Hope you enjoy and suggestions are always welcome. If you want to see more of a certain character let me know and if there are any mistakes do let me know and I shall try to rectify them.
Sigyn wriggled her toes in the lukewarm water. ‘So Steve told me what happened.’ Darcy said slowly. ‘Wanna talk about it?’ She asked. Sigyn shrugged. ‘Nothing much to talk about. I’m beginning to feel like I made a mistake.’ She mumbled.

‘Why?’ Natasha asked as she leaned over to look at Sigyn. ‘Because Loki and I…he trusts me. More than anyone and by going to you, I betrayed that trust.’ Sigyn replied. ‘You did it to help him.’ Natasha said.

‘Yes but what good has that done? I’ve only succeeded in pushing him further away.’ Sigyn said, her voice laced with frustration. ‘He hasn’t spoken to me since Friday and I will be surprised if he ever tells me what happened. I am most likely his most hated person now.’

‘Nah, that’s not possible.’ Darcy jumped in. ‘Loki hates a lot of people but I don’t think he could ever hate you. You’re like the only thing he talks about. He didn’t even tell me he had children, he just talked about you.’

Sigyn managed a small smile. ‘Loki does not speak of the children because he fears someone will take them from him.’ She said a bit sadly. ‘Has that happened before?’ Natasha asked. Sigyn nodded. ‘Not to ours but to his other children.’ She replied.

‘Other children?’ Darcy said in amazement. ‘He has four others.’ Sigyn said. ‘Hela, Sleipnr, Fenrir and Jormungand.’ Natasha’s eyes widened. ‘Someone’s fertile. Where are they? Back on Asgard?’ She asked. Sigyn shook her head.

‘Hela is the queen of Helheim which is the land of the dead, Sleipnr, Fenrir and Jormungand are here on Earth.’ She said. ‘If they’re here on Earth, why doesn’t Loki go see them?’ Darcy asked. ‘Odin banished Fenrir and Jormungand to Earth when they were still children. There was a prophecy that they would bring about Ragnarök which means the end of the world so Odin sent Hela to the land of the dead and he cast a spell on Fenrir and Jormungand so Loki can never find them.’

Darcy and Natasha stared at Sigyn. ‘That’s horrible.’ Natasha said in a soft voice. ‘What about the other one? Sep-something?’ Darcy asked. ‘He was an eight legged horse. Loki gave birth to him, himself. When Odin saw him, he took Sleipnir to be his royal steed. Odin let him go eventually but under the promise that Loki would never contact him.’

Natasha and Darcy stared in horror. ‘That’s…I can’t even…that’s sad.’ Darcy said. ‘I just want to give him a hug.’ Sigyn smiled. ‘I know what you mean. After that, it was like the light went out in his eyes. It took years before I saw him smile.’

‘How did you guys meet?’ Natasha asked suddenly. Sigyn’s brows furrowed. ‘It’s a long story.’ She replied. Darcy wriggled her toes. ‘Well we’ve got time. Unless you don’t want to say, which is fine.’ Sigyn shook her head. ‘It’s fine. It’s something I treasure.’

…β…

Sigyn’s legs trembled as she stood under the sweltering heat. She was caked in dust and dirt and her body was sore from days of riding. She looked ahead of the soldiers but could see nothing that was holding them up.
All she wanted was to be free of them. She knew what they intended to do with her and she didn’t care. At least at a brothel she would be fed and bathed. The soldiers didn’t care about her, they used her as they wished. At least in a brothel she could find someone, anyone to take care of her.

She heard some talking from the front but took no notice of it until a soldier turned to her and pushed her forward. She was pushed from man to man until she found herself in the front. She kept her head down, having learnt to only look when she was asked to.

She felt fingers reach under her chin before her face was tilted up. Standing in front of her was a tall boy. He looked to be about seventeen or eighteen years of age and had raven hair and eyes a peculiar shade of green. She could tell from his dressing that he was of high birth. ‘What is your name, little one?’ The boy asked.

Sigyn glared at him. Had they changed their mind? Was she to be some personal slave for a high born brat? ‘Your prince asked for your name.’ The commander said in a harsh tone, nudging her. Sigyn felt her stomach sink. So she was to be the whore of the son of the man who’d killed her family. She couldn’t do it, she’d rather die.

‘He is not my prince!’ She spat out, glaring at the boy. He laughed and Sigyn felt her anger grow. How dare he laugh at her after everything she’d been through. He did not deserve to laugh, not after what his murderous father did.

‘Brother what are you doing?’

Sigyn’s gaze shifted as a golden haired boy came up to them. He was well built and there was no guessing who he was. Thor, the golden boy of Asgard. Sigyn turned to look at the dark haired boy. He must be Loki, she reasoned. The cunning one.

The commander raised his hand to hit her for her impudence and Sigyn braced herself. To her surprise, the blow never came. ‘Leave her.’ Loki said to the commander. Thor looked down at her. ‘Who is this?’ He asked. ‘Another tribute to one of Asgard’s many pleasure houses.’ Loki murmured before turning his brother to a side to talk to him in private.

The two conversed amongst themselves and Thor darted a look at her. Sigyn frowned. Where they discussing how to share her? Sigyn swallowed. If it came down to that then she would look for the easiest way to escape. Palace brats were unlike soldiers. They didn’t keep watch, didn’t know how to fight.

The first chance I get, she thought. She heard Thor groan and she snapped out of her thoughts before looking at him. He stood in front of the commander. ‘We would like to see her fight.’ Thor announced. Sigyn’s mouth opened in surprise. Of all the things she was expecting, that was not it.

There was a chorus of laughter from the men before they realised he was serious. ‘She is a whore not a soldier.’ The commander said. Sigyn found herself agreeing with him on that one. So far, she’d only been able to do one thing with her body and it was not to fight. She had no experience, no training.

Was this some sort of sport for them? If they wanted to play games, she was willing but not like this. ‘You dare disobey your prince?’ Loki asked with a raised brow. The commander shook his head with something akin to fear and signalled one of his men to come out.

Sigyn felt her heart swell with hate as she looked at the man. His name was Ormi and he was one of her most hated amongst the group. He treated her like dirt and always threw her out of his tent when he was done with her.
He handed her his spear and took off his armour with a smirk. ‘Alright, little one. Let’s see you fight.’ He said to her. There was a chorus of laughter from the men and Sigyn clenched the spear tighter. Ormi crouched down in front of her.

Come on, hit me.’ He taunted. Sigyn felt rage boil up in her. ‘Or are those arms only for-‘ His words cut off as Sigyn darted forward with the spear and skewered him. The commander turned in shock and Sigyn looked at her handiwork.

The spear had gone through his throat and he fell to the ground. Blood bubbled out of his mouth and throat and within moments, he was dead. Sigyn felt an odd sort of satisfaction as she looked at his dead body.

Something about knowing she had been the one to drain the life out of his eyes, made a shot of power surge through her. ‘I think you have earned yourself a new soldier.’ Thor said with surprised laugh. Sigyn turned to him in shock. Soldier? Her?

‘Give her to one of the palace maids and have them scrub her clean before sending her to my chambers.’ Loki said as he looked at her with a smile. Sigyn felt her heart sink. So that was all for show. She was still going to be his slave.

‘If I hear you’ve laid another finger on her, you will be sorry.’ Loki said to the commander before walking off, Thor following his trail. Sigyn sighed in despair as she watched them go. Nothing had changed.

Natasha and Darcy stared at her. ‘That’s not the end of the story.’ Sigyn said, noticing their faces. ‘I hope not.’ Natasha said. ‘And I hope he didn’t touch you cause if he did I will end him.’ Darcy added. Sigyn shook her head fondly.

Sigyn picked at her clothes. The hand maidens had dressed her in a blue toga. She didn’t see the point, it was going to come off anyway but they said it brought out her eyes. Sigyn scoffed. Like the prince would be interested in her eyes.

A handmaiden ushered her into Loki’s chambers. His room was as decadent as she expected and she took in a deep breath. Just get it over with, she thought to herself. Loki was lounging on his bed but he got up when he saw her.

‘Aren’t you a pretty thing after all.’ Loki murmured as he smiled at her. Sigyn felt her stomach turn. At least he was being nice. That was something. He turned to do something and Sigyn decided to stop beating around the bush. She stripped out of her toga and stood bare.

Loki turned around, a jug in his hands but it almost dropped when he saw her toga pooled around her feet. ‘Wha-What are you doing?’ Loki stammered. His eyes seemed to dart about everywhere and Sigyn frowned. ‘Is this not why you sent for me?’ She asked, wanting to get it over with.

‘Why would you think that?’ Loki asked in a shocked voice. ‘Why else would you want me here?’ Sigyn snapped, tired of his questions. ‘Just…’ Her voice trailed off. ‘Just please be gentle.’ She blurted out. He seemed nice, perhaps he would listen to her.

Loki gaped at her. ‘Put your dress back on.’ He said to her. Sigyn began to panic. Was he sending her back to the men? She couldn’t go through that again. ‘I do not please you?’ She asked. Loki’s face softened. ‘You’re a child. You cannot possibly please me.’ He said gently.
Sigyn pursed her lips. She was beginning to get confused now. If she wasn’t here for his pleasure then what was she here for? Perhaps he just needed a bit of prodding, she decided. ‘I could pleasure you with my mouth.’ She offered. She wasn’t very good at it but it was something.

‘Or if you wish I could go to Prince Thor.’ Sigyn offered. That seemed to be the tipping point for Loki. ‘You will not be going anywhere, nor will you be pleasuring anyone.’ He said in a sharp tone. ‘Put your dress back on!’ He said in a forceful voice. Sigyn felt a jolt of fear and she hurriedly pulled the dress back on.

With her dress back on, Loki dropped a jug of water on a table next to her before dropping a basket of bread, fruit and meat on the table. ‘Eat.’ He said. Sigyn eyed the bowl suspiciously. Was he trying to drug her then have his way with her? ‘Eat. It won’t hurt you.’ Loki said, as if reading her mind.

Sigyn looked at the basket. She was starving and to be honest, if he drugged her then raped her, she didn’t care. She flew at the basket and began to tear off pieces of bread and meat. She hardly tasted it, all that mattered was that she was eating something.

She was still shoving the food down her throat when she noticed Loki looking at her. It wasn’t the predatory look that she’d seen in the soldiers. It was gentle, soft. It reminded her of the way her father looked at her and Sigyn felt tears rush to her eyes.

‘Why am I here?’ She asked suddenly, brushing away her tears. ‘I want to help you but now I’m not so sure if I have.’ Loki replied. Sigyn frowned. ‘What do you mean?’ She asked. ‘It was my idea for you to fight.’ Loki said.

‘Why?’ Sigyn asked. Loki shrugged. ‘I wanted to see if you could. I know what those soldiers did to you and I wanted to help.’ He said. ‘Why do you care, they acted on your father’s orders.’ Sigyn spat out before realizing what she said.

Her eyes widened in fear and she waited for the beating that she was sure would come but Loki only sighed sadly. ‘I know it was my father’s actions and I cannot give you what was lost.’ Sigyn eyed him cautiously. She didn’t know what to expect from such a man.

‘You may not know this but news of what you did is circulating through Asgard.’ Loki said to her. Suddenly it dawned on Sigyn. She was going to be killed. Of course. It made sense. She had killed one of the AllFather’s men, of course she was going to die.

She found herself surprisingly calm. With everything that she had gone through, she was fine with death. She would see her family again and finally get to rest. She just hoped it was quick. ‘Will it be by beheading?’ Sigyn asked Loki. Loki frowned in confusion.

‘My death. For killing the soldier.’ Sigyn clarified. Loki laughed in amazement. ‘You ask the most amazing questions. You’re not going to be killed.’ He assured. ‘But I killed the soldier.’ Sigyn said, a bit lost. ‘I ordered it.’ Loki said.

‘My brother and I spent the day convincing the King not to kill you but to put you in the army.’ Loki said. Sigyn felt a flare of hope rekindle in her. ‘But—’ Loki continued and Sigyn felt the flare die. ‘With killing the soldier, you’ve made yourself a few enemies. If you go into the army now, you’ll be killed in weeks.’ Loki explained.

‘However if you go to the pleasure house, you will be safe. I cannot promise that no man will touch you but you will be taken care of, fed and clothed.’ Loki said. ‘Army.’ Sigyn said immediately, not even waiting for him to finish.
‘I do not care if I die, I wish to die on my own terms. If this is the only thing I ever choose, I shall go for the army.’ Sigyn said. Loki stared. ‘You are a brave girl. Alright. You’ll start training tomorrow. You can spend the night here.’ He said.

Sigyn sighed in relief. He was finally going to sleep with her and get it over with. Her hands went to the straps of her toga but Loki was quick to stop her. ‘I still do not wish to take you. Sleep on the bed. I won’t touch you.’

Sigyn frowned. ‘But…you don’t want anything in return?’ She asked slowly. Loki smiled at her. ‘If you want to pay me back, you can start by becoming a soldier and staying alive.’ Loki said. For the first time in what seemed like forever, Sigyn felt a wide smile stretch on her face and she nodded.

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‘That is sweet. That is the most beautiful thing I’ve heard.’ Darcy said with a sniff. Sigyn nodded. ‘He was literally my knight in shining armour.’ She said with a smile. ‘He was right though. Being in the army was like going through hell. Killing the soldier was a lucky shot. It took me years before I became who I am today.’

‘Nat?’ Darcy said, turning to the red head only to find her wiping a tear away. ‘The fuck? Are you okay?’ Darcy asked in concern. Natasha nodded. ‘Yeah, I’m fine. I’m just—it just reminded me of something but I’m okay.’ Natasha said in a not so reassuring tone. ‘Want to talk about it?’ Darcy asked and Natasha vehemently shook her head.

‘Your father-in-law’s an asshole by the way.’ Darcy said. Sigyn snorted. ‘I’ve never heard the AllFather referred to in that way.’ She said with a chuckle. ‘Well he is.’ Natasha agreed. Sigyn shrugged. ‘I suppose.’ She said with another laugh.

‘You married a good man.’ Natasha said. Sigyn nodded. ‘I know and it upsets me that no one ever sees that. They just see the ‘monster’ that attacked Migard.’

Darcy suddenly shot out of her seat and raced to the bathroom. There was the sound of retching and Sigyn and Natasha got up to help her. Natasha held back her hair while Sigyn fetched a bowl of water to wash her face with.

When Darcy was finally done, Natasha helped her up and Sigyn handed her the water. Sigyn scrutinized her before reaching out to touch her breasts. ‘That hurts!’ Darcy whined. Sigyn took no notice of that. ‘How long has this been going on?’ She asked.

‘A couple of weeks.’ Darcy replied. Sigyn frowned. ‘When’s the last time you bled, Darcy?’ She asked. ‘I know what you’re trying to get at and you’re right.’ Darcy said as she walked out of the bathroom. ‘What d’you mean?’ Natasha asked as she and Sigyn followed her out.

Darcy fiddled with her fingers and muttered something. ‘You’re gonna have to try harder than that.’ Natasha said. Darcy sighed. ‘I said, I’m pregnant.’ She said. Natasha’s eyes widened. ‘How far along are you?’ Sigyn asked as she led Darcy to sit down.

‘About seven weeks. I took a test and went to the hospital.’ Darcy murmured. ‘Congrats.’ Natasha said as she sat next to her. ‘How did Steve take it? Bet he was really excited.’ Darcy huffed out a little laugh.
‘I’m sure he will be.’ She mumbled. Sigyn frowned. ‘You did not tell Steve?’ She asked. Darcy shook her head. ‘Why not?’ Natasha asked. Darcy sighed. ‘The babe is his is it not?’ Sigyn asked. Darcy nodded. ‘Of course it is, I would never do something like that.’ She replied in an offended tone.

Sigyn put her hands up by way of apology. ‘I did not mean to offend you.’ She said apologetically. ‘It’s not like I don’t want to tell him, it’s just…’ Darcy’s voice trailed off and there was a pause. ‘He called me Peggy.’ She said softly.

‘Peggy?’ Sigyn said in confusion. ‘His first love. She founded S.H.E.I.L.D.’ Darcy explained. ‘I don’t think he even noticed. I woke up in the middle of the night to pee and I got back into bed and he just pulled me close and said her name.’

Darcy looked down at her fingers. ‘It sounds silly but sometimes I can’t help but think I’m just a replacement for her.’ Natasha shook her head. ‘You’re right. That does sound silly.’ She said to Darcy. ‘Steve loves you. You’re the most important thing to him.’

‘Natasha is right. Steve treasures you.’ Sigyn said. Darcy tucked a strand of hair behind her ear. ‘I know he loves me but…is he going to look at our baby and wish it was his and Peggy’s?’ She said. ‘Up until she died, he visited her every day and I don’t fault him for that. If I woke up in a world that was seventy years ahead from the one I knew, I would cling to any shred of my past but I just can’t help but feel secondary to her.’

‘Have you talked about it with him?’ Natasha asked. Darcy shook her head. ‘Darcy if you do not speak to him, how do you expect him to know?’ Sigyn said. ‘I know, I’m being silly.’ Darcy muttered as she put her face in her hands.

‘Talk to him.’ Natasha said. ‘The worst he can say is that you’re right to which Natasha and I shall murder him with his precious shield.’ Sigyn said with a smile. Darcy chuckled weakly. ‘I’m terrified. What if I’m a horrible mother or what if something happens to it?’ She said looking at the girl’s with wet eyes.

‘You’ll be fine.’ Natasha said as she rubbed Darcy’s back. ‘Natasha speaks the truth. Just love it the best you can and everything else will fall into place.’ Sigyn said. ‘Steve will be a wonderful father.’ Darcy wiped at the few tears that had escaped her eyes.

‘Thanks.’ She said with a watery smile. ‘No problem.’ Natasha said with a smile. Sigyn patted Darcy’s arm. ‘Besides, sex while pregnant is better than you’d expect and Steve shall wait on you hand and foot.’ She said with a quirky smile. Darcy snorted.

Loki took in a deep breath as he concentrated on his mixing bowl. His daughters had gotten the crazy idea that they should give gifts to everyone so they had employed his help on making cakes. Not that he minded, he would do anything for them.

What he didn’t understand was why they had to enlist the help of Tony and Steve. Steve he could understand, the man had a proclivity for doing good. *I’m sure if he could he’d deliver cakes to every home in New York.* What he didn’t understand was why Tony was here.

He wasn’t a do gooder in any sense of the word so why was he helping his daughter make cakes? *It had better not be a ploy to make me talk.* ‘Why are you doing this?’ He asked Tony. Steve raised a brow. ‘We’re making cakes because—’

‘I know why you’re doing this, I asked Tony.’ Loki said. Tony glared at Loki. ‘Why d’you think I’m
doing it?’ He shot back. ‘If I knew would I be asking?’ Loki shot back. ‘Okay, listen here you little-‘
Tony began and Steve decided to intervene.

‘Okay let’s all take a breath shall we?’ Steve said. Tony grumbled but said nothing. ‘Loki, we’re
doing this because your daughters asked and although Tony won’t admit it, we love them. They’re
good kids and we wanted to help.’ Steve said.

Loki didn’t know how to feel about that. He expected them to say they were doing this to get to him
but apparently they weren’t. Loki was used to anger and manipulation and hate. Those he could deal
with. He didn’t know how to handle their helpful actions.

‘And it has nothing to do with what happened on Friday?’ Loki asked slowly. ‘The entire world
doesn’t revolve around you.’ Tony mumbled. Loki snorted. ‘That’s funny coming from you.’ He
retorted. ‘Would you stop? You’re both self-obsessed.’ Steve said to them.

‘Who’s side are you on Rogers?’ Tony asked. ‘The cake’s side, turn off your mixing bowl, you’ll
ruin it.’ Steve said to the both of them. The boys turned off their mixing machines and Steve got out
cake tins. ‘Okay who’s next?’ Steve asked.

‘Bruce wants chocolate cake.’ Steve said, reading out the list. ‘Chocolate cake? The fuck does he
think this is, Cake Boss?’ Tony asked. Steve couldn’t help the chuckle that fell from his lips. ‘I didn’t
know you watched Cake Boss.’ Steve said slyly.

Tony glared at him and Steve couldn’t help the laughter that tore through his throat. ‘You’re a little
shit, Rogers. D’you know that?’ Tony asked which only served to increase his laughter.

‘Has Darcy ever told you? Because she should.’ Tony continued. Steve snorted and the scene
brought a little smile to Loki’s lips. ‘So you do smile.’ Tony said to Loki. Loki huffed. ‘I suppose I
owe you an apology.’ Loki mumbled.

‘About time.’ Steve said. ‘Not you.’ Loki corrected. ‘I’m still upset with every single one of you for
what happened on Friday but I shouldn’t have said what I said to you about the panic attacks. I know
how they feel like and I am sorry.’

The playful atmosphere diminished and at the mention of his attacks, Tony grew sober. ‘How did
you know…’ Tony’s voice trailed off and he made motions with his hands. ‘Sigyn. She hasn’t had
one in years but when she did, I was there.’

‘Don’t blame her. Fuck if I had the childhood she had, I’d be a fucking serial killer by now.’ Tony
said. Loki shrugged. ‘She’s a strong woman.’ He said. ‘What about you?’ Steve asked. ‘I’ve had so
many I can talk myself through them.’ Loki said with a rueful smile.

‘That’s not-I wouldn’t say that with a smile.’ Steve said carefully. Loki shrugged. ‘You play the
cards you are dealt. Nothing I can do about them.’ He replied. Steve and Tony exchanged a glance
but said nothing.

‘Look Loki, about the Thanos situation.’ Steve started and Loki tensed. He knew it. He fucking
knew it. Of course they were doing this to get more information. And to think that I almost fell for
their words. ‘I have said I do not wish to speak of it.’ Loki said through clenched teeth.

‘Yeah we got that.’ Steve continued. ‘We…may not have handled it in the best way.’ Loki scoffed.
‘Really now? What makes you say that?’ He said in a scornful tone. ‘Yeah, yeah. We get it, we
fucked up.’ Tony said.

‘Look we shouldn’t have handled it the way we did. Thor and Sigyn told us what they’d found out
about Thanos and we jumped to conclusions. You don’t exactly have a stellar record when it comes to being truthful so we…jumped the gun. If you don’t want to tell us about Thanos it’s fine. It wasn’t our place.’

Loki looked at the two men standing in front of him. ‘Why did you all attack me? If you believed I wanted to harm you, why not report me to Fury?’ He asked. ‘Cause it’s none of his business.’ Steve said. ‘So it’s none of his business but it’s yours?’ Loki asked.

Tony sighed. ‘Look it wasn’t just because we thought you were working with Thanos that we…confronted you.’ He said. ‘You’re part of the team, no matter how you got in. You’re a good team player, you don’t cause any trouble at all and you’re actually a nice guy when you put your mind to it. We wanted to help.’

Loki blinked. Such words had never been used to describe him. Team player? Nice guy? Even when he was in his youth in Asgard, no one saw him as part of a team. It was always Thor and his stupid Warrior’s Three along with Sif. The only thing he had ever been good at was being an advisor and even that wasn’t taken seriously by anyone.

‘Why would you want to help me?’ Loki asked slowly. Steve frowned. ‘We just said. You’re part of the team. That’s what you do when you’re in a team. You help each other out. Kinda the point.’ He said. ‘But-But I killed people and I turned Clint against you.’ Loki said, as if trying to convince them that he was a horrible person.

‘And we haven’t forgotten that but since you’ve been here, you’ve changed. You’re not the same person you were then.’ Tony said. ‘Odin sent me here, I didn’t come here of my free will.’ Loki reminded. ‘Yeah but you’ve not been the total asswipe you were then.’ Tony said.

‘Plus we’ve seen you with your family. No man who treasures his family that way can be so bad.’ Steve added. Loki didn’t know what to say. He had hurt these people, attacked their planet, he’d even thrown Tony off his tower and yet they wanted to believe the best in him. He couldn’t understand it.

Tony licked cake batter off his hand as he observed Loki. The trickster god was standing in front of them with a confused expression on his face. There was no doubt in Tony’s mind that whoever the Thanos person was, he had tortured Loki past his breaking point.

He related to that haunted, faraway Loki that Loki sometimes had. He had ignored it at first, what happened to Loki was none of anyone’s business and he still didn’t like the fact that the god had tried to attack his planet but after his display on Friday, Tony had changed his mind.

There wasn’t much difference between them. Both had done some pretty awful shit in the past, some newspapers still referred to Tony as the ‘Merchant of Death’ and if Tony was correct, Loki had some deep daddy issues. They were both trying to change and they’d made some mistakes but they were trying.

The only difference was Tony had the support of his team behind him and he knew it. Loki didn’t. ‘Jarvis where is my wife?’ Loki asked. ‘She appears to be with Natasha and Darcy.’ The AI replied. Loki hummed. Despite his annoyance with Sigyn, he was happy she’d found friends.

When they’d gotten married, they took up residence in a house on the outskirts of Asgard. Loki wanted his new wife as far away from the palace as possible and Sigyn agreed. Their neighbours were farmers and herders and it provided a simple life.

It was the cause of much gossip in Asgard, people said Loki was hiding his wife away because of
her childhood and that he was ashamed of her but Loki could care less. If she wasn’t at the palace she was away from harm and that’s all that mattered to him. Sigyn loved living there and they were comfortable. The only downside was that she had no friends. Sigyn was a fierce warrior and on the battlefield, she was a terror.

As a person, she was closeted and shy. She didn’t trust people and preferred to stay close to him. She was a good and kind woman but distant to people. Being in the tower, surrounded by so many people, he was happy to see that she had come out of her shell.

‘Be pissed at us all you want but don’t take it out on Sigyn.’ Steve said casually as he began to clean up. He’d noticed Loki and his wife had remained distant and he felt bad. It wasn’t her fault. Loki startled. ‘She only told us because we pushed. We saw the bruises and we jumped to the wrong conclusion. Tony, Bruce, Thor and I were ready to beat you up for touching her and then she told us what happened.’ Steve continued.

‘You were going to hurt me for hitting her?’ Loki asked in surprise. He didn’t expect that. On Asgard, a man who hit his wife was ignored. It was just assumed that his wife had done something wrong. ‘Uh…yeah.’ Tony said like it was the most obvious thing in the world. ‘You so much as lay a hurtful hand on her and we will make sure no one finds your body.’ He threatened.

‘I’d kill myself before that happens, don’t worry.’ Loki assured him. ‘Good.’ Tony said. ‘She came to us because she said you didn’t want to speak to her and maybe as your teammates, we could help. Although we totally fucked that up.’

Loki nodded in agreement. ‘She just wanted to help you.’ Steve said. ‘You’re fucking lucky too. Steve and Bruce tried to stage an intervention by flushing all my alcohol.’ Tony said, eyeing Steve. ‘Not that it worked.’ Steve mumbled.

‘Hey! I’m down to three shots every two days. That’s something.’ Tony protested. ‘How do you still have a liver?’ Steve asked with a hint of concern. ‘I’ll have you know I’m the picture of health.’ Tony shot back.

‘Bad health?’ Steve asked and Tony flipped the finger at him. Loki watched the two men with trepidation. He wanted to believe that what they said about him was true, he really did, but he’d been lied to and deceived too many times. He’d rather not trust them and protect him and his family from disappointment and pain.

*Best to enjoy it while it lasts.*

‘Smell good! Like food.’ Aric announced as he buried his nose in Loki’s neck. ‘I was making cake.’ Loki explained with a smile. ‘Cake?’ Aric said as he perked up and Loki laughed. ‘Later, don’t spoil your dinner.’ He replied.

‘How have you spent your weekend?’ He asked. Aric launched into a long tale about how he and his siblings had played various games and watched movies and Loki hummed in the appropriate places. They headed to the gym and Loki went in.

Einar and Brenna were sparring with long wooden sticks which served as makeshift swords. It was fascinating how in any other situation, Einar was a pudgy little boy who’s only fascination was with food and trying to use his seiðr but when he sparred, he was someone different.

Sigyn was watching the children spar but she looked up when he entered. Their eyes locked for a few seconds before Sigyn looked back to the children. ‘Okay that’s enough.’ She said to them.
Brenna looked up in surprise and Einar took that opportunity to tackle his sister.

She landed on the floor with an oof and Einar grinned in triumph. ‘It’s only been an hour.’ Brenna said in surprise. ‘Go on. Your father and I need to talk.’ Sigyn said as she ushered them along. Loki dropped Aric on the ground and motioned for him to follow his siblings.

Sigyn waited for the children to leave before walking up to Loki. ‘Not here, I wish to talk to you in private.’ Loki said. Sigyn nibbled on her bottom lip but said nothing. Loki walked out of the gym and Sigyn trailed after him.

The silence between them was stifling and Sigyn felt her heart sink. She’d never seen Loki act this way towards her. This distant, standoffish way he acted towards her confused her. He didn’t speak to her, didn’t touch her, her barely looked at her, she didn’t know what to think.

They arrived at their floor and Loki led them to their room. He shut the door behind them and Sigyn faced him. ‘If you’re going to tell me that you hate me for what I did then save your strength because I already know.’ Sigyn said defensively.

Loki gaped at her. ‘H-Hate you? Why?’ He asked in a confused voice. ‘You haven’t talked to me, you don’t even touch me, what was I supposed think?’ She shot back. Loki shook his head in amazement. ‘Three hundred years of marriage and you still say the most amazing things.’ He said softly.

Sigyn huffed and Loki pulled her to the bed. ‘There will never be a day in which I shall hate you.’ He said to her. ‘I spent the last two days away from you because I just needed the space and I needed to think, not because I hated you.’

Sigyn nodded. ‘And I understand that you told the others because I was being difficult and I suppose I was and I am sorry. If you really want to know then I will tell you.’ Loki said softly. Sigyn shook her head. ‘No. I should be the one apologizing to you.’ She said. Sigyn inched closer to him and cupped his face.

‘Loki I…I’m worried about you. I haven’t seen you like this in a long while and when you refused to tell me anything, I sought the help of others.’ She said to him. ‘Which I shouldn’t have done, I know that now. When I had my problems, you never forced me into telling you anything and I should do the same. Are you truly ready to tell me?’ She asked.

Loki nibbled his bottom lip and looked away and Sigyn sighed. ‘When you feel ready, I’ll be right here.’ She said. ‘What if that doesn’t happen for a long while?’ Loki said asked, his green eyes staring up at her.

‘Then I shall wait.’ Sigyn said with a small laugh. ‘I have nowhere else to go, I shall be right here.’ Loki leaned into her until their foreheads rested together. ‘Am I forgiven?’ Sigyn asked. Loki smiled. ‘Yes.’ He replied.

‘If you wish for me to not speak to them of anything I will.’ Sigyn asked. Loki shook his head. ‘I don’t—I’m not going to control you that way. I’m glad you found friends, you need them.’ He said. Sigyn pouted. ‘You make me sound like I had no friends.’ She said.

‘You didn’t.’ Loki replied with a small smile. ‘Well you need friends too.’ Sigyn shot back. ‘They are good people Loki. A bit…rough around the edges but far better than any I have met in Asgard.’ She said before giving him a kiss.

Sigyn pulled back and sniffed him. ‘You smell nice.’ She murmured. ‘Your daughters wanted cake.’
Loki explained. ‘You baked?’ Sigyn said in surprise. ‘Along with Steve and Tony.’ Loki said with a small sneer. Sigyn ignored that and pushed him back on the bed so she could snuggle up to him.

Loki stroked through her hair. ‘You’re a good wife, Sigyn.’ He murmured in her ear. ‘And you are a good husband.’ Sigyn replied with a smile.

‘Nat?’ Bruce asked as he hugged her to him. From the moment she entered the room, she’d been silent. That wasn’t so unusual. What worried him was the fact that she refused to talk to him or look at him and now she was sleeping with her back towards him.

‘Come on, sweetie. Talk to me.’ Bruce said again. Natasha finally turned to face him and Bruce was alarmed to find her in tears. ‘What’s wrong?’ He asked softly as he sat up and pulled her into his arms. Natasha kept quiet for a while, just basking in the warmth of her boyfriend before speaking.

‘Darcy’s pregnant.’ She mumbled into his shirt. Bruce felt his stomach sink. He already knew where this was going to and he hugged Natasha tighter. ‘I’m happy for her, I really am and Steve’s going to be so awesome as a father it’s just…’ Natasha choked back a sob and Bruce kissed the top of her head.

‘It’s okay, you’re going to be okay.’ Bruce said in a soothing voice. ‘It’s not like I’m the only woman who can’t have a child-’ Natasha said as she sat up and looked at Bruce. ‘-and to be honest not having one is the best thing because no one can hurt us through our child but I wanted it to be my choice. I wanted to have the choice of not having a child and I don’t.’

Bruce wiped away the tears coming down her cheeks and kissed her forehead. ‘And I feel guilty that I can’t give you a little boy or girl because if there’s anyone who deserves to be a father, it’s you.’ Natasha said in a broken whisper. Bruce felt a burn in his eyes at her confession and he struggled to hold his emotions back. This was her moment of weakness and he had to be strong for her. They could hash out his daddy issues at a later date.

‘Natalia Romanova, I’m going to tell you something and I want you to listen carefully.’ Bruce said softly. Natasha’s eyes widened at his use of her real name but nodded. ‘I grew up in a really shitty home, my father used to tell me that no one would ever love me or want me and after the Hulk incident, I believed him.’ Bruce said.

‘There was Betty but her father was a homicidal lunatic who thought he could use my blood to make super soldiers.’

‘He’s a fucking idiot.’ Natasha cut in and Bruce smiled. ‘Yes he is.’ He continued. ‘I became a hermit and hid in the deepest corners of the planet because I was convinced that I was a monster and I could only do harm to people and then you found me and dragged me into the cluster fuck that is S.H.I.E.L.D and ultimately Avengers and I thought it couldn’t get any better but then for reasons I still cannot comprehend, you fell for me and you loved me even though I tried to stop you.’

Bruce brushed back the few tears that were still making their way down her face. ‘Having you in my life…Natasha I am happier than I could’ve ever imagined and it’s because of you. You’re more than enough for me, always have been, always will be.’

Natasha gave a wobbly smile through her tears. ‘Besides even if you could, there’s still the issue of my radiation.’ Bruce reminded gently. ‘And if later on in life we want kids, we could always adopt. If you want.’ Bruce added quickly.

Natasha rested her head against his. ‘Thank you.’ She whispered. Bruce nuzzled her cheek. ‘My
pleasure and whenever you forget, I’ll be right here to remind you.’ He replied with a kiss to her cheek. The duo laid back in bed, wrapped up in each other’s arms and basked in each other’s presence.

In case some of you wanted to see Loki’s point of view on how he met Sigyn, here you go!

Thor and Loki watched as the soldiers trooped in. ‘Where are they coming from? There was no news of war.’ Thor said. ‘Father ordered a village in Vanaheim to be raided. They refused to pay tribute.’ Loki replied.

‘Why didn’t they?’ Thor asked. Loki shrugged. ‘Who knows? It matters not.’ He answered. Loki was about to turn away when his eyes caught a figure huddled at the back of the group. It was a small child, a girl, dressed in a simple tunic. Her hair was grey and under the smears of dirt on her body, Loki could see bruises on her body.

‘What do you intend to do with the girl?’ Loki asked the commander. His name was Nupr and although he was a competent man on the field, Loki had heard tales of his wickedness. ‘We intend to sell her to the pleasure houses, my prince.’ Nupr replied. ‘She would fetch a good price.’

‘And who gave her to you?’ Loki asked, distaste curling in his stomach. Nupr frowned. ‘She came from the village that the King ordered us to raid, she belongs to Asgard now.’ He replied. Loki fought the urge to roll his eyes. Belonged to Asgard, she was a person not cattle to be sold or bought.

‘Bring her to me.’ Loki ordered. Nupr signalled to his men and they brought the girl forward. Up close she looked more malnourished than he thought. Her face was cast down and Loki tilted her face upwards. He was met with the most striking pair of blue eyes he had ever seen.

‘What is your name, little one?’ Loki asked. The girl only glared at him. ‘Your prince asked for your name.’ Nupr said as he nudged her. The girl glared at him. ‘He is not my prince.’ The girl spat out and Loki found himself giving a little laugh at her fiery personality. ‘Brother what are you doing?’ Thor called as he strode over to meet his brother.

Nupr raised a hand to strike the girl but Loki stopped him. ‘Leave her.’ Loki said. Thor looked down at the girl. ‘Who is this?’ He asked. ‘Another tribute to Asgard’s pleasure house.’ Loki murmured as he turned Thor around to talk to him in private.

‘I want her to fight. I want to see her fight.’ Loki said. Thor quirked a brow. ‘Tis too early in the day to drink mead is it not?’ Thor asked. Loki gave his brother a look. ‘I’m being serious. No harm can come from her trying.’ Loki replied.

‘Just let her go to the pleasure house. She will be taken care of.’ Thor said. Loki scoffed. ‘As if she will. You and I both know what happens to the girls there. Besides can you imagine her as whore?’ Thor turned back to look at the girl before facing his brother. ‘She will grow.’ Thor said. Loki glared at him.

Thor groaned but turned around and faced the commander. ‘We would like to see her fight.’ Thor announced to the soldiers. Nupr and his men laughed but his smile dulled when he realized Thor was being serious. ‘She is a whore not a soldier.’ He said.

‘You dare disobey your prince?’ Loki asked with a raised brow. Nupr signalled to one of his men and he stepped forward. He handed the girl the spear before taking off his armour. ‘Alright little one. Let’s see you fight.’
There was a chorus of laughter from the men as the girl clenched the spear. The soldier crouched down in front of the girl. ‘Come on, hit me. Or are those arms only for-’ The girl darted forward and the soldier’s speech cut off and Nupr turned in astonishment.

The girl had driven the spear right through the soldier’s throat and she stepped away while he fell to the ground, blood bubbling out of his throat and mouth. He gave a few choking sounds and then he was dead.

Thor stared in amazement while Loki smirked. ‘I think you have earned yourself a new soldier.’ Thor said with a surprised laugh. ‘Give her to one of the palace maids and have them scrub her clean, then send her to my chambers. If I hear that you’ve laid another finger on her, you will be sorry.’ Loki said before turning around.

‘But-but-‘ Nupr stammered. ‘You heard him.’ Thor said, following his brother’s lead. ‘Brother, not that I am not on your side but how do we tell father?’ Thor asked as they walked away. ‘You talk to father and I shall talk to mother.’ Loki said. ‘Together we shall make them agree.’

‘Forever the cunning one.’ Thor said with a grin as he clapped his brother on the back.

β

Loki rubbed his temples. Odin had chewed him and Thor out for an hour before dismissing them. Now all he wanted to do was collapse into bed. There was a knock on the door and Loki turned to it. ‘Come in.’ He called. A handmaiden came in.

‘The girl you requested to be brought to you is here. Shall I send her in?’ The maiden asked. Loki groaned. He’d almost forgotten. ‘If my prince wishes I could send her away for the night and have her return tomorrow.’ The maiden said. Loki shook his head.

‘Send her in.’ Loki said and the handmaiden scurried away. Moments later, the door opened and in stepped the girl. She was washed now and wore a simple blue gown. He could now see her hair was silver not grey and he got up.

‘Aren’t you a pretty thing, after all.’ Loki murmured as he smiled at her. He turned around to get a jug of water and by the time he turned back, the gown was on the floor and the girl stood bare in front of him.

Loki almost dropped the jug.

‘Wha-What are you doing?’ He stammered, trying to look everywhere but at the girl. ‘Is this not why you sent for me?’ The girl asked. ‘Why would you think that?’ Loki asked in shock. ‘Why else would you want me here?’ The girl replied sharply. ‘Just…’ Her voice trailed off. ‘Just please be gentle.’

Loki gaped at her. ‘Put your dress back on.’ He said. A flash of panic passed through her face. ‘I do not please you?’ She asked in confusion. ‘You’re a child. You cannot possibly please me.’ Loki said gently. The girl pursed her lips. ‘I could pleasure you with my mouth or if you wish I could go to Prince Thor-‘

Loki decided he’d heard enough and cut her off right there. ‘You will not be going anywhere, nor will you be pleasing anyone.’ He said sharply. ‘Now put the dress back on!’ The girl jumped and tugged the dress back up.

Loki placed a bowl of bread and fruit on a table in front of her. ‘Eat.’ He said. The girl eyed the bowl suspiciously. ‘Eat. It won’t hurt you.’ Loki repeated. There was a pause before the girl dashed for the bowl and began to stuff her mouth.
Loki sat down opposite from her and watched her. If anyone had asked him what he was doing—and people had—he didn’t know what he’d tell them. Saving her was perhaps the stupidest thing he’d ever done but he didn’t care.

He was no fool to what the soldiers must have done to her. It was the way of war but she was just a child. It wasn’t fair to her to have her entire life snatched from her just because of his father’s orders. The girl caught him looking at her and Loki caught the gleam of unshed tears in her eyes. His heart ached all the more for her.

‘Why am I here?’ The girl demanded, quickly wiping away her tears. ‘I wanted to help you but now I am not so sure if I have.’ Loki said to her, remembering the look of the commander when his soldier was killed. The little girl frowned. ‘What do you mean?’ She asked.

‘It was my idea for you to fight.’ Loki explained. ‘Why?’ She asked. The question on everyone’s mind, Loki thought. He shrugged. ‘I wanted to see if you could.’ He replied honestly. ‘I know what those soldiers did to you and I wanted to help.’ The little girl’s mouth curled in a small sneer.

‘Why do you care, they acted on your father’s orders.’ She spat out. Loki felt anger flare up in him. How dare she talk to him like that, he was a prince and by birthright, the next in line to the throne. The girl’s eyes widened as she realized what she’d said and she instinctively shied away from his touch.

Loki’s anger died at her action and he sighed. She was just a child, she had every right to be angry. He could only hope he was doing the right thing. ‘I know that it was my father’s actions and I cannot give you what was lost. You may not know this but news of what you did is circulating through Asgard.’ Loki said.

‘Will it be by beheading?’ The girl asked and Loki cut off in surprise. Beheading? What was she talking about? Had she not been listening? ‘My death. For killing the soldier.’ The girl clarified. Loki laughed in amazement. She was full of surprises, this one. ‘You ask the most amazing questions. You’re not going to be killed.’ He said to her.

‘But I killed the soldier.’ The girl insisted. Loki shook his head with a smile. ‘I ordered it.’ He said to her. ‘My brother and I spent the day convincing the King not to kill you but put you in the army.’ Loki saw her eyes light up and he smiled. ‘But with killing the soldier, you’ve made yourself a few enemies. If you go into the army now, you’ll be killed in weeks.’ Loki explained to her.

‘However if you go to the pleasure house, you will be safe. I cannot promise that no man will touch you but you will be taken care of, clothed and fed.’ He had barely finished speaking when the girl replied. ‘Army.’ She blurted out eagerly.

‘I do not care if I die, I wish to die on my own terms.’ She said. ‘If this is the only thing I ever choose, I shall go for the army.’ Loki stared at her in amazement. He honestly didn’t think she would choose the army especially after all she had been through at their arms. There was no need for him to ask if she was sure, he could see the conviction in her eyes.

‘You are a brave girl.’ He said to her. ‘Alright. You’ll start training tomorrow. You can spend the night here.’ The girl sighed and her hands went back to the straps of her toga. Loki groaned inwardly. Not this again, he thought.

‘I still do not wish to take you.’ Loki said as he stopped her from undressing. ‘Sleep on the bed. I won’t touch you.’ The girl frowned. ‘But…you don’t want anything in return?’ She asked slowly. Loki smiled sadly. The fact that she couldn’t imagine a man doing something for her out of goodwill was unfortunate and Loki hoped she met someone in the future who could teach her different.
‘If you want to pay me back, you can start by becoming a soldier and staying alive.’ He said to her. For the first time since he’d met her, Loki saw a smile stretch on the girl’s face and she nodded. She went back to the basket of food and Loki watched her with a smile. It wasn’t much, norns knew she had a long and painful way to go if she truly wished to be a soldier, but at least he’d made some difference in her life.

Chapter End Notes

Another chapter down! This is my longest yet because of the flashbacks but I wanted an insight as to how our fav duo met. I only plan on that one but if more requests are made, I'm willing to dish out more. Loki isn't going to reveal what he went through with Thanos just yet but it shall come. He and Sigyn have reconciled but he's yet to make up with the rest of the Avengers and they're gonna have to prove to him that they are trustworthy.

Hope you enjoyed it and suggestions are always welcome!
Chapter 10

Steve slid a plate chock full of food in front of Loki. ‘Eat.’ He insisted. Loki blinked in surprise. ‘I’m not hungry.’ He said. Steve gave him a look. ‘You never eat with us and seeing as we’ve established that we’re a team, you’re eating with us.’ Steve said.

‘I don’t want to intru-‘ Loki began but Bruce cut him off. ‘You’re not intruding plus Steve makes pretty awesome pancakes so you’ve got nothing to lose.’ He added with a small smile. Loki was lost for another excuse and Natasha nudged the plate closer to him.

‘Bruce is right. At least it’s not like those two over there.’ She said, gesturing to Tony and Rhodey who were huddled in a corner. Rhodey had made a surprise visit just that morning and Tony had been excited to finally have a fun loving friend in the tower.

‘Hey, who made the cakes you all devoured last week?’ Tony shot back. ‘Didn’t hear you complaining when you were licking crumbs off your lips.’ Rhodey chuckled. ‘You baked something that wasn’t pot brownies, Tony?’ He said in surprise.

‘Hell yeah I did.’ Tony said proudly. ‘You only mixed the batter, Loki and I did the measuring.’ Steve said. Thor turned in surprise. ‘Brother I did not know you joined Steve and Tony in the art of this cake making.’ Thor boomed.

‘T’was simple measuring.’ Loki murmured to himself. ‘Well it must have been some measuring, they were delicious.’ Natasha said with a smile. ‘Yeah they weren’t half bad.’ Clint said. Now it was Loki’s turn to look surprised. The archer had never said a good word to him; why was he starting now?

Loki surveyed the group of people in front of him. What were they planning, was this some sort of ploy? Clint caught the suspicious look in Loki’s eyes and he rolled his eyes. ‘Relax. If we were planning something, we won’t go about it this way.’ He said.

‘Barton.’ Steve said in a warning tone. ‘What?’ Clint said in his defense. ‘He knows I’m right.’ Loki tentatively took a bite of the food. It was actually pretty good. He found himself taking larger bites of it and before he knew it, he’d cleared his plate.

‘More?’ Steve asked with a gentle smile. Loki gave a shy nod. ‘Could I-Can I have more of the sausages?’ He asked hesitantly. ‘If you could spare some.’ He added hurriedly. Steve beamed. ‘Sure.’ He said and refilled Loki’s plate.

The elevator pinged and out stepped Darcy and Sigyn. Sigyn was clad in one of their huge fluffy bathrobes and Darcy was in her usual joggers and shirt. ‘Go ahead. Show them.’ Darcy urged. Sigyn grumbled but took off her robe. Everyone’s mouth dropped open as they took in her outfit. Sigyn was clad in a two piece swimsuit. It was a simple black one with a Queen Anne neckline and a ruffle design.

Sigyn took in the stares of the team and turned to Darcy. ‘I told you. I look ridiculous.’ She whined. ‘I wouldn’t put it that way.’ Steve murmured. ‘You look good Sigyn.’ Natasha said as she swatted Steve on the arm.

‘Nat’s right. You look pretty good.’ Tony added. ‘Tis a bit…revealing for a lady is it not?’ Thor
questioned. ‘Oh trust me, that’s nothing.’ Clint said. ‘I’ve seen Nat wear way worse.’ Bruce shot a glare at the archer and Clint laughed.

‘What about you Loki? What do you think?’ Sigyn asked her husband. Loki took in her figure from head to toe before looking at her. ‘Well it certainly brings out your eyes.’ He offered and Sigyn raised a brow.

‘My eyes? Is that all you can say?’ She asked playfully. Loki smiled. ‘Of course not. You honour it by putting it on. Without you in, it is nothing but mere clothing, simple pieces of fabric sewn together.’ Sigyn rolled her eyes with a flush.

‘Forever the charmer.’ She said as she tugged the robe back on and gave him a kiss. ‘Damn he’s got game.’ Rhody said to Tony. ‘See?’ Darcy said. ‘You’ll look awesome on the beach.’ Loki frowned. ‘Beach?’ He questioned.

‘Darcy wants to take the children and I there sometime.’ Sigyn replied. ‘And you intend to go wearing that?’ He asked. ‘It’s beach wear.’ Darcy said. ‘So are shirts and trousers.’ Loki replied. Sigyn chuckled.

‘Afraid someone’s going to snatch me away?’ She asked. ‘I would love to meet the man who tries.’ Loki replied and she shook her head fondly. ‘How long have you two been together?’ Rhody asked. Sigyn started at the sound of the man. She had hardly taken notice of him when she came in.

‘Forgive my manners, I did not take notice of you.’ She said. Rhody waved her apology away. ‘We’ve been together for three centuries.’ She said, answering his question. Rhody’s eyes widened. ‘Holy-Three centuries? That’s three hundred years.’ He exclaimed.

She and Loki nodded. ‘Give or take a few years.’ Loki added. ‘Wow.’ Rhody murmured. ‘So wait, if you’ve been married for so long, how come you didn’t tag along when Loki came to ‘rule’ us?’ He asked. There was a tense moment where everyone looked at the duo.

Sigyn took a bite of Loki’s food. ‘I didn’t come along for two reasons.’ She started. ‘One was because Loki didn’t ask me and the second and probably the most important one is that it won’t have been much of a fair fight.’ She finished with a smile.

Loki placed a kiss on her temple with a smile. It was scary, how much he loved her. After their talk, the tension between them had dissipated and they were back to being their normal selves. Every new day made him appreciate her more and Loki couldn’t imagine how he survived years without her company.

‘Master Loki, you have a call from your daughter.’ Jarvis chimed in. Loki and Sigyn frowned in concern. This was the first time any of their children had attempted to contact them during school hours. Loki felt a small trickle of panic. What if they are hurt? What if someone has them?

Sigyn noticed the way her husband tensed and she briefly squeezed his arm in comfort. She knew the thoughts that were running through his mind and she couldn’t deny that she wasn’t equally worried. There was a moment of silence before they all heard a voice.

‘Father?’ Came the shaky voice of Ragna. ‘Ragna, what’s wrong?’ Sigyn asked. There was a pause before she spoke again. ‘We did something wrong.’ She said. Loki felt a small dose of relief. At least she and her siblings were not in any danger.

‘What happened?’ Loki asked. ‘Bodil and Brenna are on the team for gymnastics and they got into an altercation with a girl so we decided to get back at her by using a spell but I think we’ve really
hurt her and now she is at one of those healing facilities.’ Ragna said in a rush.

There was silence between everyone before Loki finally spoke up again. ‘Where are your sisters?’ He asked. ‘They are trying to find out where the girl was taken.’ Ragna replied. ‘With another spell?’ Sigyn asked and Ragna confirmed it.

Loki grit his teeth. This was what he was afraid of. Teaching his children about magic helped them but it also made them likely to abuse it. *If Odin catches wind of this there is no telling what he would do to them.* ‘Who’s idea was this?’ Loki asked. ‘Loki.’ Sigyn began softly but he ignored her.

‘Mine.’ Ragna replied in a small voice. Loki sighed. ‘I was hoping you would say your sisters because at least I understand how they can be persuaded to do something so idiotic but I didn’t expect it from you.’ Loki said with a bite in his voice. There was a whimper heard on the other end of the phone and Sigyn decided to step in.

‘What spell did you use?’ She asked her daughter. ‘It-It was a lust spell.’ Ragna sniffed. Loki’s head turned sharply and Sigyn’s eyes widened. ‘What is her name?’ Loki asked. ‘Um…Laura. Laura Anderson.’ Ragna replied.

‘Jarvis please locate this Anderson person and tell me where she is.’ Loki asked before focusing his attention back on his daughter. ‘Tell your sisters to stop trying. Jarvis will find this girl and you three have a lot of explaining to do when you return from school.’

With that, Loki cut the call and he turned to the rest of the team. ‘We need to find that girl or else she could die.’ He said. ‘Over a lust spell?’ Rhodey asked in amazement. Loki nodded. ‘I do not know what fantasies you have of it here on Migard but lust spells are dangerous. Use them wrongly and you could end up hurting the person far beyond when the spell wears off.’

‘Loki the worst that could happen is her humping the life out of some poor person’s hand or leg and while that’s embarrassing as fuck, it’s not life threatening.’ Tony said in a soothing voice. ‘You would know.’ Clint muttered and Tony stuck out his tongue at him. Loki fought the urge to growl.

‘Bruce you’re a doctor, you know what happens when one is sexually aroused do you not?’ Sigyn said, stepping in. Bruce coloured a little but he nodded. ‘Now imagine one’s body being stuck in that state for a prolonged amount of time.’ She said.

Bruce’s eyes widened. ‘It’ll send her blood pressure through the roof as well as several muscles pulls, Jesus he’s right, she could die.’ Bruce said to the others. ‘Jarvis, got a location on Laura?’ Steve asked as he stood up.

‘Yes.’ The A.I replied. ‘Sigyn and I can handle it.’ Loki said to them. ‘Nah we should all go. You never know what could happen.’ Natasha said.

‘I do not have the time to argue.’ Loki said impatiently before going towards the elevator. Natasha rolled her eyes but they all trooped into the elevator with him.

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As it turned out, Loki was correct about the lust potion being lethal. By the time they got to the hospital, Laura was strapped down to a hospital bed with doctors buzzing around her. They’d given her diuretics and started her on ACE inhibitors to lower her blood pressure but she was in the danger zone.

The Avengers quickly announced it as a S.H.E.I.L.D affair, allowing Loki and Sigyn to secretly access Laura without worrying about it showing up in the news. The poor girl was already in tears, her thighs slick with need and with large, dilated pupils by the time he got to her. Loki quickly said
the counter spell with an added sleeping spell. It drained most of his powers but it was the only way to solve matters.

With the spell removed, Loki and Sigyn could return as discreetly as they came. By the time they arrived back, the children were back from school. The rest of the team wandered off to their respective floors while Loki and Sigyn marched off to meet their children.

Darcy was talking to them but she quickly stood up and left when the two parents walked in. ‘Aric, Einar to your rooms.’ Loki ordered. The boys disappeared to their rooms and Bodil, Brenna and Ragna stood in front of him.

Ragna already had swollen eyes and a red nose. She was holding the spell book in her hands and Loki held out his hand for it. ‘Father please-’ Ragna started but Loki cut her off.

‘I trusted you with using that responsibly and you did not so hand it over.’ Loki demanded. Ragna slowly handed it over to her father before running off in tears. Sigyn felt the pull to follow her daughter but she stayed still and watched for what Loki would do next.

Loki glared at his daughters. ‘What in the Nine where you thinking?’ He asked. Bodil and Brenna clenched their jaws. ‘Delivering justice.’ Brenna shot back. ‘Oh is that so? Pray tell what brought about this need to deliver justice?’ He asked.

‘That girl named Laura accused me of having relations with her boyfriend simply because he helps me train during my gymnastic lessons and then like that wasn’t enough, she accused Brenna of joining in as well in what she called a threesome.’ Bodil raged.

‘So that gave you a reason to use a lust spell?’ Loki said incredulously. ‘Yes!’ Bodil yelled. ‘I figured she should know how it feels to be a whore before accusing others of such actions.’ Loki shook his head. ‘You had no right.’ He seethed.

‘We had every right. We are Brenna and Bodil Loki∂ottir, princesses of Asgard and granddaughters to the AllFather and we will not be bullied by some Migardian fool with a limited lifespan and an equally limited brain capacity.’ Brenna and Bodil spat out.

Loki shook his head but this time it was more in amazement and disappointment. They reminded him of himself and Loki felt sadness and self-loathing well up in him. Their words were echoes of his and Loki was suffering the consequences of them today. He’d be damned if he let his children follow in his footsteps.

‘If you think you are better than them because you grew in a different realm and can wield magic then you are not deserving of it.’ He said softly as he took a step towards them.

‘Loki?’ Sigyn said tentatively as Loki put a hand on Brenna’s head. Loki closed his eyes and muttered something under his breath. Brenna wavered on her feet and Loki removed his hand from her head before holding Bodil and repeating the same action.

When he was done, he stepped away from them, leaving the two girls looking dazed. Brenna stepped away from her father and tried to lift a chair off the ground. It shook slightly but did nothing. Bodil tried the same thing and got the same result.

The twins stared up at their father. ‘What did you do?’ Bodil said in a haunted voice. ‘I restricted your magic.’ Loki replied. ‘You’ll get everything back when you learn how to use it responsibly.’ Tears welled up in the girls’ eyes and their bottom lips quivered before they both ran off to their rooms.
Loki watched his daughters go with a heavy heart. What he’d done had practically drained him but that was nothing compared to the emotional pain he was feeling. The look of betrayal in his daughter’s eyes would haunt him forever and he wanted so badly to reverse it but it was for the best. *Maybe if I can curtail it now, they have a lesser chance of ending up like me.*

Sigyn squeezed her husband’s arm. She knew what he’d just done was one of the hardest things he’d ever had to do and she sympathized with him. Loki valued his offspring above anything else and while his punishment was a bit harsh, she agreed with it.

‘Come on. I think we still some cake leftover. We can drown our sorrows in it.’ She said in a light tone. Loki tugged his wife closer to him with a weak smile. ‘You always know the right things to say.’

Steve opened one eye. ‘Darcy? Wanna tell me what’s wrong?’ He mumbled as he took in his girlfriend. She was wrapped up in a blanket and sitting on the floor. Her hair was tied up in a bun and she had her laptop in front of her.

Normally when she took this position, her brows were furrowed in the cutest frown ever or she was nibbling on her bottom lip in a way that made him want to scoop her up and kiss the hell outta her but this time she looked nothing like that.

Her face was really pale and her eyes flickered over the screen. *Something’s wrong.* ‘Darcy? Baby what’s wrong?’ Steve asked, more alert now. Darcy’s head shot up. ‘It’s n-nothing. Go back to sleep.’ She stammered. Steve was fully awake now and he frowned at her.

‘It’s either you hop on here or I’m gonna come down there. What will it be?’ He asked. ‘What are you even doing?’ Darcy slammed her laptop shut and Steve really began to worry. He began to get off the bed and Darcy scrambled to her feet.

‘It’s okay, I’m hopping on.’ She said. She shuffled into bed and Steve looked at her. ‘So? Wanna tell me what’s wrong?’ He asked. Darcy nibbled on her bottom lip. ‘Promise not to get upset?’ She asked. Steve frowned.

‘Darcy, what’s going on?’ He asked. ‘Just promise.’ Darcy insisted. Steve rolled his eyes. ‘Alright I promise.’ He agreed. Darcy sat in a lotus position and rubbed her hands together. ‘Okay and you have to promise that you won’t try to apologize or get all emotional on me.’ She said.

Steve sighed. ‘Alright. I promise.’ He said. Darcy sighed. ‘Okay. We’re doing this.’ She whispered under her breath. Steve shook his head with a fond smile. She took in a deep breath before speaking. ‘AmlareplacementforPeggy?’ She blurted out.

‘What?’ Steve said. Darcy sighed. ‘I said am I a replacement for Peggy?’ She asked. Steve’s smile faded. ‘W-Why would you even think that?’ He asked his girlfriend. ‘You say her name in your sleep.’ Darcy mumbled.

‘There was this one time when you pulled me close and called me Peggy and you sounded so relieved and happy-‘

‘Darcy-‘

‘And I’m not saying it’s bad, I understand but I just want to know.’ Darcy finished. ‘I love you Steve. So much and I will be here for you for as long as you let me but I can’t-I don’t want to be a replacement.’ Darcy was looking up at him now and Steve could catch the sheen of tears in her eyes.
He pulled her close and rested his forehead against his. ‘Darcy Katherine Lewis, you are not and will never be a replacement for anyone. I love you for who you are not for anything else.’ He said to her. Darcy shuffled closer to him.

‘You say that but I hear the way you sound when you say her name and you sound so fucking happy.’ Darcy said, struggling to hold her tears back. ‘And why shouldn’t you, she was awesome. She’s in the army and she kicked ass and she founded S.H.E.I.L.D and I’m such a downgrade compared to her.’ Darcy’s voice dwindled out at the end and Steve reached out to hug her but she stopped him.

‘No I don’t want to just fall into your arms without knowing.’ Darcy said. Steve looked at his girlfriend, his heart heavy. Despite the fact that he’d promised not to feel guilty or apologize, he couldn’t help but do so.

His past was something he was sorting through, albeit with a bit more difficulty. He was having dreams and he thought he was handling it that way but apparently not. This time period was confusing and so much to take in and he thought he was going to lose his mind before Darcy came along.

She was like a lighthouse in a stormy sea of technology and new social cues and the fact that she thought she wasn’t enough for him was killing him. ‘Darcy, it’s true that Peggy was all those things and I will not lie to you when I say that I loved her but I’m not in love with her. I’m in love with you.’

‘You mean so much to me. You’ve been here for me through everything, through times when I didn’t know what the hell e-mail was and used to wait for the fucking post man, when I didn’t know how to manage an account talk less of cash in my pay checks, Darcy you are everything to me.’

Steve said sincerely.

‘And you may not have been in the army or founded some super-secret spy operation but you are smart. Maybe being Jane’s intern got you the job but you kept it because you’re smart enough to handle it. You’re so beautiful, sometimes I look at you and it amazes me that after everything I’ve been through, I could still have such a wonderful creature in my life.’

Steve reached out to wipe away the tears that were trickling down her face. ‘How can you think you’re anything less?’ He asked softly. ‘Be-Because you’re a-awesome and I’m just me, I’m just plain old Darcy with porn star tits and a taser, I-I’m not-I’m not-’ Darcy crumbled into tears and Steve pulled her towards him.

‘You’re everything I want.’ He whispered into her hair. Darcy let herself be blanketed by Steve’s warmth. She didn’t even know how badly she was affected by this. It had always nagged at her but she pushed it down, ignoring it and trying to live in the moment with him. But with this baby, I can’t do that anymore.

She clung on to him, letting his words soothe her and listening to him murmur more words into her ears. After what seemed like hours but was probably some minutes, she finally pulled back. ‘M’sorry.’ She mumbled. Steve shook his head.

‘Don’t. You should never have had to feel that way. I’m sorry.’ He said. Darcy gave him a light shove. ‘No apologies, you promised.’ She said with a pout. Steve kissed her forehead. ‘I know. And by the way, I kinda love your pornstar tits.’ He said with a smile.

Darcy smiled faintly before taking in a deep breath. Okay Darc. Here we go. Just spit it out. Just say it and it’ll be fine. ‘Uh…about my boobs…you’re gonna have to share them sometime in the future.’
Darcy muttered, her voice getting smaller. Steve raised a brow.

‘You mean like a…what is it called again…a threesome?’ Steve asked. ‘I don’t think I mind, can I pick out the person though?’ Steve asked with a hopeful grin. Darcy snorted. ‘No more Game of Thrones for you mister.’ She said with a small grin.

Steve chuckled. ‘Okay if it’s not a threesome, what is it?’ He asked. Darcy opened her mouth to talk but the words couldn’t make it out. Sighing, Darcy took Steve’s and placed it on her stomach. Steve’s smile faded and he looked down at her stomach before looking back at her.

‘Da-Darcy. Are you-are we-‘ Steve could barely find the words and Darcy nodded with a laugh. For as long as she lived, she would always remember the look on his face. The way his eyes lit up, the smile that stretched across his face, the adorable laugh of amazement that bubbled out of his mouth, just everything.

‘I’m about seven or eight weeks along,’ She said to him. ‘Seven or eight…’ Steve said in awe.

‘Yeah. I haven’t gone to a hospital yet but-‘ Darcy began but Steve shook his head.

‘No hospitals. I don’t want this on record. Anything medical would be handled by Bruce. I could- We could get you an apartment or we could stay here. Yeah we’ll stay here. Here is better right?’ Steve was speaking in a rush and Darcy cupped his face in her hands.

‘Steve, baby, we’re going to be fine. I don’t really know how but we’re going to be fine. The three of us.’ She said, placing his hand back on her stomach. Steve nodded shakily. ‘The three of us.’ Darcy nodded slowly.

‘You freaking out on me Rogers?’ She asked. ‘A little.’ Steve replied with a small laugh. ‘But I’m in. I’m so in if you want.’ Suddenly Steve’s smile disappeared. ‘Oh my god I didn’t even ask if you want this. Do you? I mean if you don’t then okay because it’s your body but I-‘

‘Holy cheese on a fucking cracker.’ Darcy said cutting into his sentence. ‘I want this.’ She said. ‘I want this baby so bad, I freaked out cause I thought you won’t.’ Steve frowned. ‘Why won’t I want our child?’ He asked a bit hurt.

‘Because you’re Captain America, the picture of fucking innocence and we’re not married or even engaged plus I’m now a liability because if someone gets to me, you’re gonna cave in like a wet roof and there was the whole Peggy thing so..’

Darcy’s voice trailed off and she bit down on her bottom lip. ‘Well we’ve sorted the Peggy thing, at least I hope we have and if you want to get married, then I can do so right now. As for being a liability, I can’t help that I love you.’ Steve replied truthfully.

Darcy smiled. ‘Yeah I know.’ She said as she leaned in and kissed his forehead. ‘Don’t worry baby. I’m all in.’

Loki slowly opened the door to his daughter’s room. Bodil, Brenna and Ragna were curled up in foetal positions and he could hear sniffles coming from them. Ragna looked up when she heard the door open and her eyes connected with his before she let out a sob.

‘Oh girls.’ Loki said softly as he came up to them. Bodil inched away from him and Loki’s face fell. ‘Can I talk to you?’ He asked gently. ‘Why not, there’s nothing else for you take.’ Brenna murmured. Loki felt his heart clench at her words.

‘I didn’t take it away, I would never do that to you.’ Loki said to them. ‘Then what did you do?’
They asked. ‘I just restrained it.’ Loki replied. ‘You took the book away.’ Ragna said in a small voice. ‘I took it away because I was upset. I’m not going to be upset forever.’ Loki said in a small voice as he scooped his daughter up in his arms. The girls kept quiet for a moment and Loki decided to continue.

‘Do you know why I did what I did?’ He asked. ‘Because we hurt her?’ Bodil asked. ‘It’s a bit more than that.’ Loki replied. ‘You shouldn’t use your magic in that way but I’m more concerned with your reasons behind using it.’

The girls frowned. ‘But you’ve always told us to hold our heads high and never let anyone step over us.’ They said. Loki nodded. ‘Yes but when you start hurting other people because of that, it makes you a bully.’ He said.

‘But-but-she said horrible things about us, she tarnished our name.’ Bodil argued. ‘I know and I know how painful it is to have people say things that aren’t true about you.’ Loki said, thinking back to the times when Thor and his friends had let Odin put the blame on him for their accidents.

‘But sometimes, the best response is to let it go.’ Loki said. Bodil frowned. ‘Why? It makes you look weak.’ She said. Loki couldn’t help but smile at that. They’re most definitely Sigyn’s daughters. ‘No it doesn’t.’ He replied. ‘Sometimes not letting it bother you is the best way to show the person that you are better.’

The girls furrowed their brows in confusion and Loki decided to explain in another way. ‘Alright, let’s say someone came into the tower and killed your mother and I and you hunted the person down and killed him or her. That would be fair right?’ He asked. The girls nodded fiercely.

‘Now assuming I put the four of you against each other. Which one of you is a murderer?’ Loki asked. ‘The person who killed you and mother.’ Brenna replied immediately and her sister nodded in agreement. Loki shook his head. ‘No. You’re both murderers.’ He said.

‘But whoever it is deserves it!’ Bodil protested. ‘I know but by killing said person, you’ve essentially stooped to their level. You’ve become that person.’ Loki explained. He watched as understanding began to dawn on them.

‘So by using the spell on Laura we did the same thing she did to us.’ Ragna said slowly and Loki nodded. There was a moment of silence before Bodil spoke up again. ‘We’re sorry. We didn’t mean to be irresponsible.’

‘We know how important magic is to you and we’re sorry for disappointing you.’ Brenna continued. Loki held an arm against Ragna and wriggled in between the twins before hugging them to him. ‘You haven’t disappointed me at all.’ He said with a kiss to all three. ‘Sometimes we make mistakes and it’s okay. All that matters is what you do afterwards. Okay?’ Loki said as he looked down at his daughters.

They nodded and Loki placed kisses on the tops of their heads. ‘Now tell me about these classmates of yours.’ Loki said to his children. Bodil, Brenna and Ragna smiled in excitement and excitedly began to talk about their school.

Loki turned as Steve joined him at the bar. The talk with his children had rattled him. He felt like he was talking to himself. It was a bit hypocritical to give his children advice that he hadn’t bothered to take himself but he knew what could happen if they went on unchecked. He hated for it to happen to them.
Loki looked at the glass of whiskey in his hand. *Perhaps Tony has won me over with these drinks of his.* They never got him intoxicated but he liked the slow burn it made when it went down his throat.

Loki offered the bottle to Steve but he declined it. ‘It doesn’t work on me.’ Steve explained. ‘Doesn’t work on me either but the taste is agreeable.’ Loki said. Steve still declined and Loki shrugged. The two men stood there in silence until Loki decided to speak up.

‘Something on your mind, captain?’ He asked. Steve head shot up. ‘I-Well-It’s not-It’s not a problem. It’s just-It’s kinda-’ Steve tripped over his words and Loki sighed. ‘Is it about Darcy?’ He asked, cutting Steve short. Steve nodded.

‘She’s…we’re having a baby.’ He blurted out. Loki found himself giving a small smile. ‘So she finally told you then. Congratulations.’ He said. Steve’s eyebrows shot up. ‘She told you?’ He asked in something resembling hurt. Loki rolled his eyes.


Loki winced. He didn’t mean to say that, it just slipped out. He never talked about his other children to anyone for their own safety. He never knew what one slip up could do and he’ll be damned if his carelessness put them in danger.

Steve noticed Loki’s tensed behaviour and cursed inwardly. ‘You don’t have to reply if you don’t want to. I shouldn’t have pried. Sorry.’ Steve said, quickly backtracking. Loki eyed the blond haired man warily. He still felt the urge to hide all knowledge of his family away but the captain had opened up about his family.

Plus it’s Steve. He’d rather step over an ant than crush it.

Making the decision to do something he’d never thought he’d do, Loki opened his mouth to reply. ‘I have four others apart from those other five animals.’ He said fondly. ‘Where are they?’ Steve asked carefully. ‘Three of them are on Earth. The last is a Queen.’ Loki replied.

Steve’s eyes widened. ‘Impressive. How come the ones on Earth don’t talk to you?’ Steve asked. Loki smiled sadly. ‘I cannot find them. I made a bargain with Odin that he would spare them on the grounds that I would never contact them.’ Loki said sadly.

‘What was Odin going to do to them?’ Steve asked. Loki shrugged. ‘Most likely kill or enslave them. There was a prediction that they as well as I would bring about Ragnarök, the end of worlds, so Odin thought it best to curb it ahead of time.’ Loki’s eyes suddenly narrowed and his jaw clenched.

‘As though I would drag my children into it, if I wanted to ruin worlds I would do it on my own.’ He spat out. ‘So you brought them here to save them?’ Steve asked, wanting to steer the conversation away from the ruining of worlds. Loki shook his head.

‘Odin banished them. I barely had time to kiss them goodbye before they were gone.’ He said. ‘Why didn’t you try and stop Odin? I mean I’ve seen you with your magic, if you want something, you get it.’ Steve asked.

‘Because I would be putting their lives in danger.’ Loki replied. ‘I would put my life on the line in a heartbeat if it meant keeping them safe.’ He said simply. Steve stared at him. Up until today he’d never really thought about what it meant to be a father.

Yeah sure he knew being a parent meant taking care of your child and loving him or her and providing but hearing Loki talk made the concept hit him all the more. He was Captain America, not
only did he have the expectations and eyes of the world around him but in roughly eight months, he
was going to have a tiny human added to that list.

*Only difference being I can’t ever let him or her down.* The realization hit him hard and Steve
gripped the counter so hard he was sure he’d left handprints in it. Loki who was still wallowing in
thoughts of how much he hated his father, frowned in concern at Steve’s expression.

The man looked scared to death.

‘Steve?’ Loki asked cautiously. Steve took in a heaving breath and Loki poured a shot of whiskey
for him. He handed it over to Steve and the soldier downed it in one go. ‘Sorry, I just…it’s
overwhelming.’ Steve said with a forced smile.

‘You’ll get used to it.’ Loki said reassuringly. ‘Easy for you to say, you’re perfect at it. Your children
love you, they look up to you.’ Steve said. ‘And you would do anything for them. I don’t know
how—What if I can’t do that?’

Loki raised a brow in surprise. If he didn’t know any better, he’d say the soldier sounded envious of
him which was insane because what had he ever done to deserve envy?

‘Tis not a competition, Steve.’ Loki said gently. ‘There is no prize for being the best father, no set
qualifications.’

‘Then how do you become a good father?’ Steve asked. Loki shrugged. ‘I’d love to say that it’s
instincts but I know it’s not. Be there for them, love them no matter what they do, discipline them if
you must but love them. That’s literally all they need, love. Food too but mostly love.’

Steve chuckled softly at the ‘food’ part and Loki smiled. ‘You’ll do fine. I’m sure of it.’ He said with
a slightly awkward pat to his teammate’s arm. Loki finished his drink and rinsed the cup before
walking off to his room.

Steve stared at Loki’s disappearing figure. He never thought he’d say so but the trickster god had
given him hope. Besides if Loki could do it while trying to take over Earth and ruling Asgard then
how hard could it be?

‘Am I turning into Odin?’ Loki asked out of the blue. Sigyn tore her eyes away from the television
and stared at her husband. ‘What did you just say?’ She asked in shock. ‘Am I turning into Odin?’
Loki repeated.

Sigyn paused what she was watching and focused her full attention on him. ‘Where is that coming
from?’ She asked. ‘Today with the girls. I did exactly what he did to me.’ Loki said. Sigyn shook her
head. ‘You restricted their magic. Odin sealed yours away.’ Sigyn said.

‘Is there much of a difference?’ Loki asked. His wife nodded. ‘The difference is that you did it out of
love and concern. I know the spell you put on them, they could be free of it if they put their minds to
it. Odin did not give you that choice.’

Loki worried his bottom lip between his teeth. Sigyn was right, as usual. The twins could be free of
the spell he put on them if they tried hard enough. He knew that wasn’t the real reason he felt upset
with himself.

‘They’re so much like me.’ Loki said in a small voice. Sigyn frowned. ‘I would hope so, you are
their father.’ She said. Loki shook his head. ‘Not like that.’ He said. ‘The things they said. That’s me.
That’s the part of me in them and I hate it. I don’t want them to end up like me Sigyn, I can’t bear it.’
He said, blinking at the sudden moisture in his eyes.

Sigyn rubbed his arm. ‘You’re right.’ She said agreeing with him. ‘They do have part of you in them. They are smart, strong willed, dedicated, loving, loyal and passionate about the things they stand for.’ Loki turned to look at her in surprise.

‘Granted maybe you used some of those attributes wrongly but they are not bad attributes, Loki.’ Sigyn said, lacing her fingers with his. ‘You’ve always been all those things, you’re just channelling them differently now.’

‘If they end up being exactly like you then I believe I will be the proudest mother the nine realms have ever seen.’ Sigyn said. Loki’s eyes welled up with tears and Sigyn squeezed his hand tighter. ‘How you do not see yourself the way I see you is a mystery to me but I swear I will not stop telling you until you believe it.’

Loki managed a small smile through his tears and Sigyn cuddled up to him. She turned her attention back to the television and Loki held her closer. He still couldn’t believe he was all that she and others were leading him to believe but maybe just maybe if he tried enough, then he could be something close to it.

‘What’s wrong?’ Jane asked as she peered through her laptop screen. She’d had a lecture at MIT as well as several other conferences and she and Thor had decided to keep in contact via Skype. There were phones but Thor hadn’t quite grasped the concept of making phone calls.

Plus he’d smashed the last five iPhones Tony had given him and the billionaire had sworn not to hand out anymore until he could control himself. Skype was way easier because Jarvis could just patch them through and Jane had to worry about nothing.

Thor sighed at the image of his girlfriend. ‘Tis my brother.’ He replied. Jane sighed. ‘What happened this time?’ She asked. Thor shook his head. ‘He has not done anything untoward. I miss him greatly, is all.’ He said. Jane frowned.

‘Miss him? He went back to Asgard?’ She asked in confusion. Thor had said Odin banished him from Asgard until his sentence was over but one never knew with Loki. Thor shook his head. ‘He remains here at the tower. His body is here but the boy I grew up with is not.’

Jane smiled sadly. She was an only child so she knew how it felt to want another sibling to talk to or to just have around. She couldn’t imagine how it felt for Thor who’d grown up with all of that and then lost it in the blink of an eye.

‘Have you tried talking to him?’ She asked gently. Her boyfriend had quite the way with words. She could get most of what her way saying ninety percent of the time but he often muddled up his words twisting the interpretation of what he really meant.

‘I have but he does not wish to hear what I have to say. He threatened to throw me from the tower if I uttered the word ‘brother’ again.’ Thor said in despair. Jane hummed thoughtfully. ‘Have you tried talking to Sigyn? She’s been married to him for years surely she knows how to talk to him.’ She suggested.

‘Sigyn guards Loki like she birthed him herself.’ Thor replied. ‘I do not fault her for it, she shielded him when I didn’t and I am forever grateful. I just do not wish to have her annoyed with me.’ Jane could definitely relate to that. The silver haired woman still scared her a bit and the thought of her being pissed at anyone made her fear for the person’s safety.
‘I know I cannot undo everything done to him but he is my brother. My older brother. He has protected me from birth even when he could have choose not to.’ Thor said. ‘I have hardly been deserving of it but I want to try.’

Jane smiled softly. This right here was why she loved him so much. He could be clueless at times but he had this almost childlike yearning to try and fix things and that made him all the more loveable. ‘Well then you’re just going to have to try harder.’ Jane said. ‘Just let him know you’re there. He’ll push you away as hard as he can but just let him know you’re there.’

Thor nodded. ‘Oh and…try not to talk so much about your dad. Loki hates him, you’re not going to get any further that way.’ Jane added. Thor nodded again and she smiled.

‘Now that that’s done, want to do something naughty?’ Jane said with an all too familiar smirk. Thor frowned. ‘But you are not here.’ He replied. ‘Oh trust me, that’s not a problem.’ She said with a giggle. She went out of focus for a few seconds before holding up what Thor recognized as her underwear in her hands.

His eyes widened and he could feel himself begin to harden. Perhaps this ‘science’ the Migardians are so fond of has some uses.

Chapter End Notes

Oh my god this took me so long! I traveled and I’ve been busy with my family plus it was my birthday the other day so I’ve been a very busy bee. I wanted to show the similarities between Loki and his children so I hope I did a good job. Steve now knows about the baby an sure he's a little freaked out but he's fine. Loki's also getting closer to everyone so yaaay!!! Thanks for reading and suggestions are always welcome.
‘Alright so I need you to squeeze the trigger not pull it and then-’

Natasha’s words cut off as Sigyn aimed at the target and shot. They weren’t perfect shots but for someone who had never used a gun in her life, they were pretty damn good. Sigyn frowned at her work. ‘I’m getting sloppy.’ She muttered underneath her breath.

‘How on earth did you just do that?’ Natasha asked in amazement. ‘The same principles apply with crossbows. This is just easier.’ Sigyn replied. Sigyn loaded in another round of bullets. ‘Shall we continue?’ She asked the red haired spy.

Natasha could only nod in agreement.

Loki turned the page of his book. He had been reading the ‘A Song of Ice and Fire’ series and he was in love. He knew there was a TV series, Sigyn had become hooked on them, but he preferred the written word. Besides, he’d come to realize that the television series did not always follow the books and he much preferred to have the full picture rather than scenes picked out by the directors.

He was on ‘A Feast of Crows’ and was already fully immersed in it when Pepper caught his attention. He was in the lounge with Darcy. She was propped up with one hand perched on her stomach and the book ‘What to Expect When You’re Expecting’ in her other hand.

She and Steve had announced her pregnancy a month ago and the entire team was overjoyed. Tony was pumped that the Avenger family was expanding and Thor had made some noise about Steve taking away Darcy’s honour but Darcy had quickly shut him down by reminding him that he was screwing Jane and they weren’t exactly married.

She and Sigyn had become fast friends with Darcy looking to her for advice. Steve had also become more involved in his children’s lives and although it amused Loki to no end, he let it happen. ‘You would not believe what I just heard from the company’s sales department.’ Pepper said in excitement as she plopped down next to him.

‘Okay so you know we talked about releasing a Loki line.’ Pepper started. Tony had come up with the crazy idea to start clothing lines based on each member of the Avengers. It had started out with colour based shirts with different slogans or emblems on them but had soon exploded into backpacks; toys and even a sleep wear collection for men and women.

The fans were eating it up like crazy and although the team hadn’t been very enthusiastic about it in the beginning, they’d come to accept it as one of the perks of living with an eccentric billionaire. Pepper had of course overseen the entire thing and it was going well.

A week ago, Tony and Pepper had come to him to ask if they could start a line based on him. He’d agreed because hey, what was the worst that could happen and Tony had made him sit down and come up with his own slogans.

Loki had grumbled but he’d felt a strange bubbly feeling at being included. Sigyn had identified the feeling as ‘joy’ and Loki had had a small moment of panic because he was serving time on Migard and making friends wasn’t part of the plan but the feeling had disappeared when he caught Tony
wearing one his shirts with the slogan ‘Mischief Matters’ while he was working.

It was strange but Loki was slowly coming to accept that the Avengers were friends. He wasn’t comfortable with all them yet but he was slowly lowering his guard. ‘Anyway, the company just called me and we’ve sold out.’ Pepper continued.

Loki frowned. ‘Is that a bad thing?’ He asked in confusion. Pepper laughed. ‘No. Not all. Loki we don’t have any more of your stuff because people bought them all.’ Loki’s eyes widened. *People bought them? But-but-why?*

‘And you’ll never guess what our biggest seller was.’ Pepper continued. ‘The one that said ‘Kneel’.’ Loki frowned. ‘I didn’t come up with that. Tony said but I didn’t want any references to my ‘taking over the planet’ moment.’

Pepper groaned. ‘I’m going to have a very stern talk with Tony about boundaries and respecting other’s wishes.’ She said to Loki. ‘I don’t think it will have effect but thank you.’ Loki replied. Pepper stood up and patted Loki on the arm.

‘Well I thought I should let you know.’ She said with a smile. Loki watched as Pepper walked off. He didn’t know what confused him more. The fact that people had actually bought merchandise related to him or that they bought the ones with the phrase ‘kneel’ on it.

‘Penny for your thoughts?’ Darcy asked as she put her book down and sipped on her cup of ginger ale. The morning sickness was killing her and she’d taken to downing cans of ginger ale and eating mountains of crackers in an attempt to stave off the nausea. It had put more pressure on her bladder but Darcy decided it was a small price to pay for nausea free days.

‘Nothing too serious, I am just surprised is all.’ Loki answered. ‘Cause you sold out?’ Darcy questioned. ‘I’m not. You should see the way women freak out over you. And some men too.’

Loki’s eyebrows shot up in shock. ‘Wo-Women?’ He stammered. Darcy nodded. ‘You’ve got this ‘Christian Grey’ aura around you and the BDSM community is eating you up like a double chocolate chip cookie.’

Loki stared at Darcy. He was well aware she was saying words but they weren’t making any sense to him. ‘Fifty Shades of Grey, Anastasia Steele? None of this ringing any bells?’ Darcy asked. Loki shook his head. Darcy made a sound of disbelief.

‘Can’t believe you haven’t heard of it, it’s like a fucking craze.’ She murmured. ‘Jarvis can you play the Fifty Shades of Grey trailer?’ She asked. A screen came up and Loki sat through four minutes of what appeared to be a high maintenance business mogul sexually manipulating an innocent looking college girl.

Loki winced at the sight of a whip. He could understand the use of bondage in sex but striking your partner during sex showed signs of some serious issues. ‘And people identify me with this…Grey person?’ He asked.

Darcy nodded. ‘You can’t exactly blame people; you took over an art exhibition and told people to bow to you.’ She said. Loki winced again. He hated remembering those moments. ‘Well I’m not like that. I don’t think I could ever hit a woman in bed. Even with her consent.’ He said.

‘It’s not like he’s beating her up.’ Darcy said. ‘It’s a really complex thing. There’s like rules between the subs and their doms. They have safe words and everything. It’s perfectly okay when done right.’

‘How do you know so much about this BDSM lifestyle?’ Loki asked with a small smirk. ‘Has our
Dear captain been tying you down to his bed?” Darcy threw her book at him. ‘You’re an ass.’ She said with a small laugh.

‘It’s not as uncommon as you think. ‘ Darcy said. ‘I personally don’t mind some of it. I can be naughty sometimes.’ She said with a conspiratory whisper. Loki shook his head with a smile. ‘I see why you and my wife get along.’ He said.

Darcy laughed. ‘She’s amazing. I’m surprised you kept her hidden for so long.’ She said. ‘Well the rarest of gems are always hidden out of sight.’ Loki replied easily. ‘Plus I didn’t want her dragged down in all of this but she’s proven she can handle it.’

‘Yeah she’s a tough cookie.’ Darcy said. ‘Master Loki, there seems to be a problem at your sons’ school.’ Jarvis chipped in. Loki immediately went on high alert and stood up. ‘What happened?’ He asked. ‘It seems Aric lost control of his powers and managed to blow up a wall as well as hurt two boys.’

‘Where are they?’ Loki asked. ‘I’ve sent for a car to pick them. They’re on their way.’ Jarvis replied. ‘Did they cause much damage to the school?’ Loki asked. Jarvis replied in the negative and Loki sighed in relief. At least that’s one thing we don’t have to worry about.

‘Could you please inform Sigyn about this as well as Steve?’ Loki said to Jarvis before plopping back on the seat and running his hands across his face. ‘Hey don’t stress over it. I’m sure it wasn’t on purpose.’ Darcy said, noticing Loki’s tense behaviour.

‘I hope not.’ Loki replied softly. The elevator doors opened and Sigyn as well as Natasha walked out. ‘Are they okay?’ Sigyn asked as she came towards her husband. ‘They’re fine, they’re on their way back to the tower.’ Loki replied as he drew her into his arms.

‘Jarvis d’you think you could get footage of what happened?’ Natasha asked. ‘Well I could try obtaining the video from the school’s camera feeds.’ The AI replied. ‘Yes please.’ Natasha replied. The AI set to work on it and Natasha turned to Loki and Sigyn.

‘What exactly can Aric do with his…seiðr?’ She asked, taking a swig of Darcy’s ginger ale and looking to Loki and Sigyn to see if she’d gotten the word right.

‘That’s the thing, we’re not exactly sure.’ Sigyn replied. ‘It’s not so much the things he can do than the force behind his magic.’ Loki added. ‘If Bodil or Brenna were to attempt to break through a wall, they would be able to but after continuous tries. From what I’m understanding, Aric got through in one try.’

‘Oh so it’s his power that’s the problem.’ Darcy said as she snatched her ginger ale back from the spy. Loki and Sigyn nodded.

‘I have managed to get some footage of Aric blowing through the wall but could not get the footage of the full events.’ Jarvis reported. ‘We’ll watch that, thank you.’ Natasha said.

A screen came up which showed Aric and Einar standing in front of two boys in what looked to be an empty hallway. They looked to be much older and one of them stepped towards them and Aric held out his hands in front of them. Immediately, the two boys were pushed away from Aric and Einar, as if hit by some kind of force field.

Einar, who had somehow known what was going to happen, pushed Aric in an attempt to stop him. What happened next was a bit of a mystery. When Einar pushed his brother, the lockers on each side of the hallway started to vibrate before swinging open. What was more shocking was the fact that the
way next to them suddenly crumbled like it was made out of dust.

The footage cut short at that moment. There was a moment of silence in which everyone pondered on what they’d just seen.

‘What the hell did I just watch?’

The group turned in surprise at the sound of Steve’s voice. He and Thor had slipped in unnoticed and both were in awe of what Aric had done.

‘Aric did all that?’ He asked and Loki nodded. ‘How came he the use of such powers?’ Thor asked. ‘I cannot recall you performing such till you were many name days older than him.’

‘That’s because it’s not Æseir magic or magic of the Jötnar.’ Sigyn said quietly. ‘It’s Vanir. He gets it from me.’ Loki’s eyes widened in surprise and he lightly squeezed her arm for support. ‘You have magic? Why didn’t you say so?’ Darcy asked in excitement.

‘I had magic.’ Sigyn corrected. ‘It was taken away from me when I entered the army. It won’t have been fair to have an advantage over the men.’

‘T’was for your own good.’ Thor said and Sigyn narrowed her eyes. ‘My own good, is that what your dearest father told you?’ She spat out and Loki put a restraining hand on her. ‘How are you sure it’s this Vanir magic?’ Steve asked, not wanting to start a fight.

‘Vanir seiðr is linked to the people of Vanaheim. It’s like... I don’t know how to explain it but it’s an extension of us. It responds to our emotions.’ Sigyn said. ‘Whatever happened, Aric didn’t mean to do it. It was a reaction.’

‘Like a defense mechanism.’ Natasha said and Sigyn nodded. ‘It’s like that for the Jötnar as well.’ She said. ‘Only the Æsir have to learn their magic.’ Sigyn spat out, glaring at Thor. ‘Okay... well, what about the two boys?’ Steve asked slowly.

‘They seemed to be only momentarily stunned.’ Jarvis responded. ‘Well I’m sure Tony can do something about the school so that’s fine. It can be contained.’ Natasha said. ‘Perhaps Loki could also constrain Aric’s seiðr as he did to Bodil and Brenna.’ Thor suggested.

‘He wouldn’t dare.’ Sigyn muttered darkly as she glared at her husband. Loki put his hands up in surrender. ‘Let’s not make any hasty decisions.’ He said, hoping to calm his wife down. ‘Wait how don’t you have your magic anymore?’ Darcy asked Sigyn.

‘You can ask Thor, I’m sure he knows all about it.’ Sigyn muttered. ‘My mother took it away.’ Loki said, hoping to cut the conversation short. ‘What in the hell? And you let it happen?’ Darcy asked.

‘I didn’t let it happen, I had no say. No one did. Odin thought it best.’ Loki said. ‘Do not make so much of it. It didn’t help my parents from being killed and it certainly did not help me.’ Sigyn said to Darcy. ‘You did not need it, you were a fine warrior without it.’ Thor said. Steve groaned inwardly.

He knew Thor was only trying to help but he was just making things worse. Sigyn’s eyes flashed. ‘The only reason your father took it away from me was because he was afraid, I would use it to take my revenge and kill him. He was right.’ Sigyn said with a sneer.

Thor’s eyes narrowed in anger. ‘How dare you? You may be on another realm but he is still your King.’ Thor spat out to her. Everyone else watched the two, waiting to see what would happen next. Loki had inched closer to his wife, ready to lash out if his brother did anything untoward.
‘I am on Migard not Asgard and he was never my King.’ Sigyn said to her brother-in-law. 
‘Everything I did, I did for Loki. Does not take much to kill the AllFather but it would’ve been 
wrong for me to kill the father of the man who essentially saved my life. Although it turned out to be 
a waste seeing as he’s done nothing to deserve it.’

‘Okay guys. That’s enough.’ Steve said but it was doing nothing to diffuse the tension. ‘He saved 
your life.’ Thor said. ‘No Loki saved me. If it had been left to you or Odin, I’d be nothing more than 
another painted whore in a brothel.’ Sigyn said.

‘Tis what people already say about you in court.’ Thor shot back and that was when shit hit the roof. 
Sigyn’s mouth dropped open in shock at what he’d said while Loki attempted to attack his brother. 
Steve and Natasha were left with trying to keep the two brothers apart while Darcy stared in 
amazement.

‘Okay that’s enough! Back off. Now!’ Steve ordered the two and Loki pushed Natasha off him 
before storming off. ‘Loki.’ Natasha said in an attempt to call him back but he was already gone. ‘I’ll 
get him.’ Sigyn said as she stalked off towards the elevator.

‘That was uncalled for.’ Steve said to Thor. ‘She attacked me first. Tis not like all I said was a lie.’ 
Thor argued. ‘Yeah that’s not the point. You shouldn’t have.’ Steve snapped back. Thor only 
growled under his breath and stalked off somewhere.

‘That could’ve gone better.’ Natasha said with a sigh.

Sigyn walked into their bedroom. As expected, Loki was pacing, his features darkened with fury. 
She cleared her throat and he looked up at her. ‘He had no right, no right, to speak to you the way he 
did.’ Loki said sharply.

Sigyn smiled softly before walking up to him and cupping his face in her hands. ‘You must think me 
a fool if you think I do not know what people say about me.’ She said to him. ‘That doesn’t make it 
okay.’ Loki argued.

‘Maybe. It matters not. All that matters is that you don’t think I’m one.’ She replied. ‘Of course not. I 
would never.’ Loki said vehemently. ‘I know.’ Sigyn replied. ‘Now then, let’s forget that and focus 
on more important things.’

Loki’s brows furrowed in confusion. ‘Like what?’ He asked. ‘Aric’s power. He could be the key to 
removing the limits on your magic.’ Sigyn said. ‘Oh no. We’re not doing that.’ Loki said moving 
away from his wife.

‘What other option do we have? I would let you use me but I can barely conjure anything.’ She 
argued back. ‘Sigyn, you’re asking me to use my son.’ Loki said. ‘Our son, I had a hand in creating 
him too.’ She shot back.

‘What if it hurts him?’ Loki asked. Sigyn snorted. ‘Are you being serious? You know the power my 
people possess.’ She said. ‘If he cannot break the seal completely, he can at least allow you much 
more of your magic.’

Loki fell into silence and Sigyn came up to him. ‘I can try and connect to his seiðr if it’ll help. It’s 
been years but I still remember the ways of my people.’ She said as he sat down. ‘What if Odin finds 
out?’ He asked. ‘He won’t. Not if we cast a masking spell.’ She counteracted.

‘What are you afraid of?’ She asked as she sat next to him. Loki said nothing and Sigyn decided to
guess. ‘You think if you have your full powers you would misuse them?’ She asked. Loki’s looked at her and Sigyn knew she’d hit the nail on the head.

Her heart clenched at the fact that Loki considered himself still a danger to the general public. ‘Loki, the fact that you worry about misusing your magic tells me that you won’t.’ She said softly. ‘How are you so sure?’ He asked, his green eyes staring up at her.

‘Because you’ve never been this hesitant to use your seiðr before.’ Sigyn said to him with a rueful smile. That was true. As long as she’d know him, Loki had always been confident of his magic, sometimes pushing arrogance. To see him realize that he could potentially hurt people with it and be cautious about it only drew her attention to how much he’d grown.

‘Okay.’ Loki said softly. ‘But if it does not work this one time, then we try again.’ Sigyn nodded in agreement. The last thing she wanted was to overstrain her son.

‘Einar and Aric have arrived at the tower. They’ll be on your floor in a moment.’ Jarvis informed them and Loki and Sigyn got to their feet and went to their living room. Loki nibbled on his bottom lip in worry. He sincerely hoped what had happened was only an accident.

He hated to have to restrain Aric’s magic but it won’t be fair if he’d done that to Bodil and Brenna and not to their brother. The elevator doors slid open and out walked their two sons. Loki was about to speak when Einar suddenly stood in front of his brother and glared his father.

‘You’re not taking his magic away!’

Loki stared in amazement as Einar pulled Aric behind him and stood in front of him. ‘I’m not letting you do to him what you did to Bodil and Brenna.’ Einar declared. ‘It was not his fault, he was trying to protect me.’

Loki frowned. ‘Protect? Protect you from whom? What happened?’ He asked. ‘Nothing.’ Einar muttered, unwilling to say but he didn’t count on Aric bursting from behind him and spilling the story. ‘They wanted to beat Einar and I just wanted-I wanted them to stop. I didn’t mean to destroy the school or them, I’m sowie!!’ Aric wailed as he burst into fresh tears.

‘Okay why don’t you just tell me what happened, Einar.’ Sigyn said as she scooped her now sobbing son in her arms. ‘It’s stupid. There are these two boys who like picking on this other boy in school so today I spilled my lunch on them so they would know how it feels and after school they came looking for revenge.’ Einar said.

‘Aric just happened to be there and when one of them picked me up, he got scared and used his seiðr.’ He finished. Loki turned to his second son who was tightly clutching onto his mother’s shirt. ‘Come on.’ He said with a small smile as he stretched his arms out for Aric.

Aric hesitantly climbed into his father’s arms and Loki gave him a kiss on the head. ‘You too Einar.’ Loki said as he gently took his first son’s hand and led the two away to their room. The two boys were silent as Loki sat down on Einar’s bed and patted the bed for a sign for him to hop on.

Aric sniffled in his father’s arms and Loki looked down at him. ‘Why are you crying?’ He asked gently. ‘Cause I thought you were gonna take my magic away.’ Aric mumbled. Loki frowned. ‘Why would I do that?’ He asked.

‘Because you did it to Bodil and Brenna.’ Einar replied. ‘Firstly, I never took your sister’s magic away.’ Loki said as he reached out to take his son’s hand. ‘I suppressed it because they misused it, they hurt someone.’
'But I huwt someone too!' Aric cried, tears welling up in his eyes again. ‘No, no. It was a mistake. Your sisters purposely hurt someone. It’s different.’ Loki corrected. ‘Oh.’ Einar said softly. ‘I would never take your magic. Ever. It’s a part of you. Doing that would be cruel.’ Loki said to the both of them.

They nodded and Loki drew them closer. ‘What about the boys? Are they…’ Einar’s voice trailed off and he looked at his father. ‘Dead?’ Loki said completing his sentence. ‘No they’re not. They’ll be fine.’ He assured them.

‘What about school?’ Aric asked. ‘Don’t worry about that, we’ll think of something. Maybe you’ll join your sisters at their school.’ Loki said to them. He and Sigyn had decided to separate their children because she thought Einar and Aric needed to start learning how to live on their own without their sisters hovering over them and he’d agreed because that was the best option for everyone.

‘Is the first time your magic has destroyed something?’ Loki asked his son. Aric nodded. ‘I just wanted to help Einar. Family pwotects family.’ He said, looking up at his father with large blue eyes. Loki smiled down at his son.

‘Yes we do.’ He said with a firm kiss to his head. The door slid open and Sigyn’s head popped in. ‘Are we okay?’ She asked, looking at her sons. They nodded and Sigyn came in and sat on the bed. Aric crawled over to his mother while Einar stayed in his father’s arms.

Sigyn nuzzled her nose against Aric’s. ‘Hungry?’ She asked and the two boys nodded. ‘Of course you are.’ She said with a small smile and the four of them stood up. ‘Tonight.’ Sigyn mouthed to Loki and he nodded in agreement.

‘Taste this for me?’ Bodil asked as she spooned some sauce on a plate and handed it to her sister. Ragna tasted it and pulled a face. ‘More salt?’ Bodil asked and Ragna nodded. ‘Much more. Pepper too but not in Einar’s portion.’ She reminded. Bodil rolled her eyes.

‘I used to make this for all of us you know.’ She said with a smile. ‘Can you two stop arguing?’ Brenna shot in as she kneaded dough. ‘Yeah stop arguing, my arms are killing me here.’ Einar added as he sprinkled flour on the table and wiped his brow with his sleeve.

‘Just for that, you’re not eating any of this.’ Bodil said to her brother. ‘How about I spit in that so no one eats it?’ Einar shot back and Ragna rolled her eyes. ‘You do this every time, why can’t we just do this once without arguing?’ She asked.

‘Tatoes? Can we have ‘tatoes?’ Aric asked from the floor as he peeled carrots. ‘Yes we can have potatoes but you have to peel them.’ Brenna said with a smile to her brother. Einar had told them what happened at school and the girls had spent the afternoon pampering their brothers. ‘Kay!’ Aric said enthusiastically as he continued to peel.

‘Why don’t you just order from Olive Garden? I’m sure they’ve got bread.’ Clint said as he watched the children. ‘Tis not for everyone, tis for our parents.’ Bodil said in a very ‘matter of fact’ voice. ‘Aww that’s sweet. Is it their anniversary or something?’ He asked.

Brenna frowned. ‘Anniversary?’ She asked confused. ‘Of their marriage.’ Clint clarified. ‘Why would they need to celebrate their marriage, they had a ceremony when they were bonded.’ Ragna said. ‘Cause they’ve been married for three hundred years and that’s kinda a huge deal.’ Clint elaborated.
‘Ah I see the confusion now; you think we should celebrate their marriage because it lasts so long.’ Bodil said, clueing on. ‘You humans are fickle. Hardly staying in one place. One would think because of your short life spans, you would think carefully before making choices but you do not.’ Ragna murmured.

‘Hey not our faults,’ Clint said with a shrug. The girls chuckled. ‘Maybe not.’ Bodil replied. Einar put a roll of bread in a tin and covered it with a wet cloth. ‘That should be the last batch, should it not?’ He asked his sister and Brenna nodded.

‘Come on Aric, let’s get out some potatoes. About eleven right?’ He asked. ‘Yeah because we’re mashing them.’ Bodil replied. ‘Butter’s in the fridge?’ Ragna asked. Bodil nodded. ‘Don’t bring it out yet because it will melt and then we shall only have oil.’ She said.

Her siblings nodded and Aric and Einar walked into the pantry. ‘How are you all so good at this?’ Clint asked. ‘At cooking?’ Bodil said with surprise. ‘We are women, it is our duty. Men have no clue on how to work a kitchen.’ She said with a laugh.

‘Steve cooks.’ Clint pointed out. ‘He does doesn’t he.’ Bodil murmured with a slight blush. The girls all exchanged glances before exploding into giggles and Clint raised a brow. _Looks like someone has a crush_. He took a swig of his beer. _I’ll just keep that to myself. Last thing we need is Loki trying to smother Steve in his sleep._

‘Yeah but how do you know how to measure and everything?’ He asked, getting back to the topic. The girls exchanged glances before looking at Clint. ‘When-’ Brenna’s voice cracked and she swallowed before starting again. ‘When father died, mother…mother crashed. She didn’t eat, didn’t sleep, she could barely function. Einar and Aric were only children, we had to do something.’ The playful mood had long disappeared and Clint sobered up. ‘I didn’t know that.’ He said softly. ‘No one does.’ Bodil said. ‘Then we heard father was here on Migard and it was like she was alive again. When Uncle Thor brought father back, mother did not let us see him but at least he was alive and okay and then he helped Uncle Thor with the convergence and then… he died again and it was just worse.’

‘Mother almost went crazy.’ Ragna added. ‘We were there when the messenger came and I just remember her screaming and crying and the guards tried to hold her down, she almost choked one of them to death.’ She said quietly.

‘I’m-I’m so sorry.’ Clint said, his eyes almost welling up. He understood that kind of grief, he related to it. That was him throughout the entire time he thought Phil was dead. He handled it marginally well he supposed but then again, there was no one to witness his breakdown. The fact that they had to go through all of that broke his heart.

‘After a while, she got better.’ Brenna said. ‘She started playing with us again, training with us, sometimes she would read to us at night, it was okay. Then again, sometimes, she’d crawl into bed with us and we’d just all cry.’

‘Does your father know all this?’ Clint asked. The children shrugged. ‘I think he figured it out when we found out he was pretending to be Odin. We had moved to the palace by then. They say when she found out; Uncle Thor had to pull her off him for fear of her actually killing him.’

Clint could believe that. He’d never seen the former soldier fight but he was damn sure she wasn’t someone to be messed with. He couldn’t even imagine what how she’d have felt. It was one thing to lose a loved one twice but to get over it and then find out that said person was only pretending….that was cruel.
And then for his children to have to witness their mother’s breakdown and them having to step up and take her place, Clint was surprised they weren’t jaded by now.

Loki had better have a hell of a reason to put them through this. Einar and Aric came back with the potatoes and dumped them on the table. ‘Okay peel them and then we’ll boil it okay?’ Bodil said to her brothers, dropping the topic of her father’s death just as easily as it was brought up. Einar nodded and she ran her hands through her brother’s hair with a smile.

The boys set to their given tasks and the children went back to making dinner. Clint watched them with sad smile. It was funny how five children were more emotionally stable than six superheroes but he was happy for it. In the shit storm that was their lives, it was nice to know someone had a handle on themselves.

Loki flexed his fingers. The feeling of power coursing through his veins was indescribable. How I have lived without this for months escapes me but I plan to make up for lost time. She, Aric and him had performed a breaking ritual after dinner. Sigyn had linked her mind to Aric’s so she could help him when he used his seiðr but it had turned out that there was no need for that. Aric was more powerful than any of them realized.

He’d broken through Odin’s seal like it was nothing. The force of it had almost made Sigyn collapse and she’s gone straight to sleep afterwards. Aric had also been weak after the ritual and Loki tucked him in.

He looked over to his side. Sigyn was curled up on her side of the bed, fast asleep.

She would wake up if he was gone for too long but what he intended to do would only take a few minutes. Luckily for him, everyone was present in the tower unless his plan would be futile.

Stealthily slipping from bed, Loki cast an invisibility spell on himself. If he was going to do this, the last thing he needed was Jarvis waking up the entire tower. Taking in a deep breath, Loki closed his eyes and called for his seiðr before transporting himself to Tony and Pepper’s room.

The billionaire and the CEO were in each other’s arms with Tony snoring softly. Loki shook his head fondly before saying the lines of a spell. It was a very old one, he’d had to scour through Odin’s personal library before finding it and he wasn’t even sure if it would work but so far it had done its job.

Satisfied it had worked, he decided to head towards Steve and Darcy’s room. The two were curled in each other’s arms with Steve’s right hand gently resting on his shield next to the bed. Loki repeated the spell again and waited for it to take before moving on to Natasha and Bruce’s room.

He did the same thing with them as well as with Clint and Phil before finally getting to Thor and Jane’s room. Loki watched his brother as he lay on his bed. He knew he should just cast the spell and go but he hesitated.

Loki was well aware that Thor had saved him from Odin’s wrath. He knew Odin’s every intention was to kill him for treason and at the time he was fine with it but now that he was surrounded by his family, had gotten to see his children safe and happy, he was glad Thor had saved him from the chopping block.

But that one act could not possibly cover for decades of selfishness on Thor’s part. He had done everything a brother should for Thor and when he’d attacked Jotunheim and in turn almost started a war, Loki had tried to help.
Granted his ways were misguided but his intentions were in the right place. At the Bifrost, when he’d tried to explain that he’d done everything he did for Asgard and Odin had replied ‘No, Loki’ whilst holding on to Thor, he’d let go out of sadness and fury.

Years later, he realized that it wasn’t his anger at Odin but his anger at Thor that had made him let go.

Why?

Because he’d said nothing.

He said nothing throughout their childhood, he’d said nothing at his coronation when he knew that as firstborn, the throne belonged to Loki and at that crucial moment when he should’ve said something, anything, he didn’t.

Loki blinked at the tears that had begun to form at the remembrance of that moment and he took in a deep breath. He didn’t want to, norns knew Thor did not deserve it from him especially not after what he’d said to Sigyn but for Frigga’s sake he would.

Loki murmured the lines of the spell and waited till he was sure it had taken before vanishing out of their room and returning to his. He undid the invisibility spell and slipped back into bed.

Sigyn woke up with a start at his movement and Loki drew her into his arms. ‘What were you doing?’ She murmured sleepily. ‘Just tying up loose ends.’ Loki replied with a kiss to her head. ‘Go back to sleep.’ He said to her but she had already slipped back into slumber.

Loki smiled down at his wife and hugged her tighter to him. He wasn’t sure if what he’d just done was the smartest thing but it was better to be safe than sorry.

Chapter End Notes

So there we go. Yet another chapter. Sorry for the time lag between chapters. I just recently found out that my dad has a cancerous tumor so I’ve been going through the stress of all that. If this chapter seems a bit off, then that's why. Updates are definitely gonna be slower but I've got great things in store for this story so don't worry. Thank you for reading and comments are always welcome!!
Bodil dropped her bag on the table and looked at her sisters. ‘Something happened in school today.’ She said. ‘There was talk of some New York appreciation nonsense in my class today and they brought up father. They said father destroyed New York and that there was a one year anniversary to celebrate his capture by the Avengers.’

Brenna and Ragna frowned. ‘But that is impossible, why would they say that?’ Brenna asked. ‘That’s what I intend to find out.’ Bodil said. ‘Perhaps mother would know.’ Brenna added but Ragna scoffed. ‘If mother didn’t tell us, it was because she didn’t want us to know.’ She said.

‘How do you suggest we find out then? Grandfather?’ Bodil asked. Ragna chewed her bottom lip. ‘I don’t think so. Father said the AllFather is not our grandfather.’ She said. Brenna spluttered. ‘Why would he say that and why didn’t you tell us?’ She asked.

Ragna shrugged. ‘I did not think much of it, father was teaching me the spells you all enjoy.’ She said. ‘But I did wonder. Remember when we were at the palace and we overheard some people saying something about father being an imposter and then we asked mother and she said to ignore it?’

The twins nodded. ‘Well this is a wrong that needs to be corrected. We don’t keep secrets in this family.’ Bodil said and the two nodded. ‘How d’you suppose we find out?’ Brenna asked. ‘How everyone on this planet discovers things.’ Ragna said with a simple smile. ‘The internet.’

The Avengers stared down at the two boys in front of them. They both had pieces of cardboard paper clutched in their hands and Einar scuffed the floor with his toe while Aric played with his fingers. ‘Alright, what’s this about?’ Loki asked, eager to get it over with.

‘Uh…well…Aric has a project in school, something about family, and…well…’ Einar’s voice trailed off and he looked down at his brother.

‘I wanted to do a paintin’ pwoject with everyone cause everyone is family.’ Aric mumbled, looking at the team shyly. For a moment, everyone was silent as they tried to wrap their minds around the concept of family.

‘I told him no because you’re all busy but-‘

‘What kind of project?’ Sigyn asked, cutting Einar short. ‘Finger paintin’,’ Aric said, showing his mother the pieces of cardboard. ‘Jawvis told me all your favworite colors so we got them.’ He said with a toothy grin.

Aric looked to the rest of team who had remained silent throughout and his face fell. ‘S’okay if you don’t wanna. Einar was wight, you’re busy.’ He mumbled, a small waver in his voice. Immediately, Natasha crouched down to Aric’s height and tilted his chin up.

‘We’d love to help, you just…surprised us. That’s all.’ She said with a small smile. ‘Really?’ Aric said as he perked up and Natasha nodded. ‘Won’t we?’ She said in a pointed voice, glaring back at them.
There was a chorus of affirmations from the rest and Natasha smiled at the two boys. ‘Kay! I’ve got all the colors in my room and we can do them here!’ Aric announced before running off to his room.

Bodil, Brenna and Ragna stared at the videos that were streaming in front of them. There were different clips of Loki ordering people to kneel to him and destroying property. Another video was showing him throwing Tony out of his building and Bodil drew in a sharp breath at the video of him piercing Phil with his sceptre.

‘J-Jarvis, is this all you can recover on my father’s actions?’ Ragna stuttered. ‘There are some classified files belonging to S.H.I.E.L.D.’ The AI replied. ‘I cannot show them to you but I can give you a brief on what they contain.’

‘Yes.’ Bodil replied. ‘Well they document Agent Clint Barton’s recovery after being controlled by your father.’ Jarvis replied. Ragna frowned. ‘Mind control?’ She repeated.

‘Why did my father control Uncle Clint’s mind?’ Brenna asked. ‘To gain access to the Tesseract.’ The AI replied. ‘To what gain?’ Bodil asked. ‘To open the portal for an alien species known as the Chitauri.’ Jarvis replied.

‘The ones we saw destroying New York?’ Ragna asked and Jarvis replied in the affirmative. Bodil swallowed. ‘I’ve seen enough.’ She murmured. The videos all closed and the girls all looked at themselves.

‘Why would he do this?’ Brenna whispered. ‘I don’t know but I intend to find out.’ Bodil said. ‘How?’ Ragna asked. ‘If they didn’t tell us then, what makes you think they would say so now?’

‘They will because they have no other choice.’ Bodil replied. ‘We deserve to know why, father restricted Brenna and I’s magic and took your book because we were abusing power yet he shows up on Migard and does a hundred times worse.’

‘There’s surely an explanation for this.’ Brenna said. ‘Oh there is and I intend to find out.’ Bodil said, looking at her sisters. ‘Are you coming with me or not?’ She demanded. ‘We will but we do this my way. Let me ask the questions.’ Ragna said.

‘Why?’ Bodil asked. ‘Because things like these need caution not you rushing into it.’ Ragna replied. ‘If you’re going to meet your enemy on the battlefield, you don’t run head first.’

‘Is father now our enemy?’ Brenna asked with accusing eyes. ‘Of course not but the fact remains that he has hidden things from us.’ Bodil said to her twin. ‘Things we needed to know and who’s to say he won’t try again?’

Brenna sighed tiredly. ‘Alright but how do we tell the boys? We can’t hide the truth from them, it’ll be the same thing he did.’ She said. Ragna and Bodil exchanged a glance. ‘We can tell them a watered down version of it. They do not need to know the details.’ Ragna said and Bodil nodded.

‘Alright. So we’ve agreed then?’ Bodil asked and the two girls nodded. ‘Good. After you.’ She said to Ragna and her sister rolled her eyes before standing up and following her.

Loki covered his hand in light blue paint before walking towards the card board paper on the floor. ‘Somewhere specific or anywhere?’ He asked Aric. ‘Anywhere.’ Aric said with a smile and Loki crouched down before firmly placing his right hand on the cardboard and leaving behind his hand print.
‘Not just one. Everywhere.’ Einar insisted and Loki frowned. ‘What for?’ He complained. ‘Oh shut up and get your ass back here. It’s a fucking group activity.’ Clint said as he covered his hand in black paint. The entire team was on their knees pasting their hands on a much larger piece of cardboard paper. ‘Why in the fuck is your favourite color black?’ Tony asked the archer.

‘It’s better than hot red, you look like a show pony in your suit.’

‘A show pony Pepper loves to ride.’

There was a snort from Natasha.

‘Can we not use that type of language in front of them?’ Steve asked in an exasperated voice. ‘They go to school in New York. They’ve heard worse.’ Clint replied. ‘Need help painting the American flag on that hand, Captain?’ Tony snarked and Steve flipped the finger at him.

‘Careful there, Steve. There’s children here.’ Clint said and Steve flicked paint at him. Sigyn carefully painted her hand in emerald paint and was about to place her on the cardboard when Tony stopped her. ‘What are you doing? Green’s Brucey’s color not yours.’ Tony said.

‘Shut up Tony.’ Bruce said to his best friend before turning to Sigyn. ‘Use it if you want to. I’m using a different color anyway.’ He said with a smile. ‘What color?’ Tony asked. ‘If you must know, it’s an orange red.’ Bruce replied.

‘Bruce! Red’s my color.’ Tony whined. ‘It’s a different shade, Tony. Get over it.’ Natasha said as she dipped her hands in lime green paint. Bruce smiled at the color Natasha was using and she kissed him on the cheek.

Tony rolled his eyes.

‘Besides, it’s much better than Thor.’ Clint pointed out. The god of thunder was making gold coloured handprints before sprinkling silver glitter on them. ‘Thor what in the hell are you doing?’

‘The gold symbolizes my status as prince and the silver is for lightening which symbolizes my power.’ Thor explained. ‘You do not approve?’


‘Whoa there, Incredible Feminist.’ Clint said. ‘No one said anything about it being for girls. It’s just a lot of glitter for one man to handle and I’m gay.’

‘Are you and Phil into that cause I sort of pegged you two as the rough BDSM kind of couple.’ Tony said.

‘Tony you don’t ask about other people’s sex lives, it’s rude.’ Steve interjected.

‘He didn’t say no!’ Tony pointed out. ‘Come on Clint. Spill. I bet Phil puts his ‘I’m in charge cause I’m S.H.I.E.L.D’ voice to good use doesn’t he?’ Tony asked with a sly grin.

‘Keep talking and I might strangle you in your sleep.’ Clint said.

‘Ooh, kinky. You might have to ask Pepper first though, she likes being in on these things.’ Tony replied.
Loki shook his head fondly at his team mates. In all his travels, they most definitely were the weirdest people he’d ever come against. ‘Where are your sisters?’ Loki asked. ‘In Bodil’s room talking about girl stuff.’ Einar said with a pout. ‘Girl stuff?’ Sigyn echoed and the boys nodded.

The door to the elevator opened and Bodil, Brenna and Ragna stepped out. ‘Oh we were just talking about you three.’ Loki said with a smile but it disappeared when he saw the looks on their faces.

‘What’s wrong?’ Sigyn asked but the girls said nothing. Brenna came over to where the Avengers were finger painting and she looked at it. ‘It looks perfect.’ She said with a small smile to her brothers. ‘Could you two do us a favour?’ She asked.

Einar and Aric looked up at her. ‘Could you give us a moment? There’s something we need to talk to everyone about.’

The Avengers all exchanged confused glances. What on earth would they need to talk to them about? ‘Why can’t we stay?’ Einar asked. ‘You just can’t. We’ll tell you everything later.’ Brenna said.

‘Pwomise?’ Aric asked. ‘Would we lie to you?’ Brenna asked and the boys shook their heads before standing up. ‘Go wash your hands, we won’t be long.’ She said with kisses to their heads.

Loki and Sigyn watched as their sons disappeared in the elevator and Bodil dragged the large piece of cardboard to a corner of the room. ‘What’s going on?’ Loki asked his daughters. Bodil and Brenna looked at Ragna and she sighed.

‘Today in Bodil’s class, there was some talk of an anniversary to commemorate the destruction of New York and fallen lives and father’s name came up.’ Ragna said. ‘They said you were the cause of it and that the Avengers captured you.’

Loki had gone as white as a sheet now and the entire room was quiet. ‘You can imagine our confusion because if that was truly the case, you would’ve told us but we were shocked when we found out that it was the truth.’ Ragna continued.

‘Kids-’ Tony began but Brenna cut him off. ‘Don’t bother lying we know everything. How you bent the mind of Uncle Clint in order to get to the Tesseract, how you brought an alien army to Earth, how you attacked Uncle Phil, we’ve seen it all.’ Brenna muttered.

‘We just want to know why.’ Ragna said. There was a moment of silence in which the Avengers looked to Sigyn and Loki, waiting for them to say something.

Sigyn looked at her children. ‘You are too young to know-‘ She began to say but Bodil cut her off with a harsh glare. ‘You did not think us too young when you left us to defend for ourselves after father died.’ Bodil said.

Sigyn went pale.

‘Who do you think kept food on the table or took care of Aric and Einar?’ Bodil continued. ‘T’was not by any magic, I can assure you.’

‘Bodil.’ Ragna hissed and the silver haired girl fell silent. Sigyn blinked. It was almost like she was seeing her daughters for the first time. The boldness they exhibited, the way they seemed to communicate without speaking, when had this happened?

‘Look guys, things happen and while your dad did some really horrible things, that’s in the past. We’ve worked through it.’ Natasha said. ‘You’ve worked through it.’ Brenna murmured.
‘If we’re going to be the children of someone known as a murderer, we should at least know why.’ Ragna said gently, looking at her father. Loki still stood, in shock, not knowing what to say. He’d always known he’d have to tell his children what he’d done some day but he never intended for them to find out like this.

He’d wanted to have to break it to them gently, not have them find out through the eyes of others. ‘If you won’t tell us yourself, we’ll seek answers elsewhere.’ Ragna said gently. Loki’s eyes darted to Sigyn and that was when Bodil decided she’d had enough.

‘Heimdall!’ She called out and Loki’s attention snapped back to his daughter. ‘No don’t.’ He said and Bodil paused.

‘What d’you want to know?’ He asked. ‘Everything. Why you came to earth, why you faked your death, everything.’ Ragna replied.

Loki swallowed.

He hated to have to tell the story but they were right. If anyone deserved to know, they did. Memories of his time with Thanos crowded his mind but he forced them away. He could deal with re-living a bit of pain if it meant telling his children the truth. ‘D’you… want us to give you guys a moment?’ Steve asked. Loki looked back at the team. Weeks ago, he would’ve said yes because he didn’t trust them.

He was their prisoner on earth and he would’ve been happy to serve his hundred years but now, he considered them as friends. They’d accepted him and his family into their home without much judgement and had treated them like they would treat anyone else.

He felt accepted with them and although it would forever baffle him, he trusted them. *I hope I’m not making a mistake.*

‘No you should all hear this too.’ He said to Steve before turning back to his daughters. ‘When I fell off the Bifrost, I landed in another dimension.’ He started. ‘It was a wondrous place, full of technology I had never seen. It was in this same dimension that I met Thanos.’

‘The Mad Titan?’ Ragna questioned and Loki stared at her. ‘H-How do you know that?’ He asked. ‘Because I actually listen during my lessons and read unlike these two.’ Ragna said gesturing to her sisters. ‘Why do it when we have you?’ Bodil muttered good naturedly and Ragna rolled her eyes.

‘Well, I did meet him and at first he presented himself as a friend but soon I learnt he wasn’t. He wanted control of Asgard and Migard and he requested my help to get it.’ Loki continued. ‘I told him no, I had no interest in either realm but he didn’t take no for an answer.’

‘He tortured you.’ Sigyn said in an absent minded whisper.

Loki nodded. ‘He reached into my mind and I don’t know how he did it but somehow he managed to learn about you.’

‘Us?’ Brenna questioned softly. Loki nodded. ‘You, the boys, your mother. He threatened to harm you and I couldn’t let that happen so I agreed. He gave me the Chitauri as a means to win Earth but I still had no wish to rule so I made sure I lost and I was taken back to Asgard where he couldn’t get to me.’

‘Pretending to be Odin was not the original plan but I saw an opportunity and I took it. With me as Odin, I could protect all of you easily.’
‘That’s why you made us move to the palace.’ Bodil said and Loki nodded. ‘I could keep an eye on you there.’

‘And Thanos?’ Ragna asked. ‘He can’t find you. He can’t find anyone of us, there’s a spell on all of you.’ Loki explained. The girls nodded.

‘What about grandfather?’ Brenna asked. ‘Ragna said you said he’s not our grandfather.’ Loki nibbled on his bottom lip. He was hoping he won’t have to tell them about his true ancestry but the same blood that flowed in his veins flowed in theirs. They deserved to know.

‘Odin’s not my father.’ Loki clarified. The girls’ eyes widened. ‘Bu-But then who is?’ Bodil asked. ‘Laufey of Jötunheim.’ Loki answered. ‘You’re Jötnar?’ Ragna asked in shock and Loki nodded. He waited for the look of disgust to appear on their faces but it never did.

‘If you’re Jötnar then how did you come to live in Asgard?’ Ragna asked. ‘Odin took me when I was a baby.’ Loki explained. ‘To use as a bargaining chip.’ Brenna said cluing on. ‘And that’s why the throne went to Uncle Thor because you’re not Æsir.’ Bodil finished.

Loki nodded and the girls kept quiet for a moment, mulling over what they’ve just heard. Loki waited in tense silence both dreading and expecting their reply. If they hated him, he wouldn’t fault them. Even without Thanos’ influence, he’d done a lot of unworthy things.

Although it would tear him apart, he would understand if they condemned him for his actions. ‘Well you were right.’ Bodil said finally. ‘Odin is not our grandfather. Anyone who treats you in that way does not deserve to be called family.’

Loki couldn’t help the ray of hope that went through his heart but he squashed it down all the same. There was still the issue of his invasion of Earth to be considered. ‘What of the rest?’ He asked.

Ragna shrugged. ‘It’s okay. You did the best you could and while it wasn’t ideal I get the feeling handing Migard over to Thanos would’ve been worse.’

‘So that’s all you’re going to say?’ Loki asked slowly. Brenna shrugged. ‘What more can we say? Some things definitely make more sense now.’

‘Like what?’ Loki prodded. ‘Just…’ Brenna sighed. ‘Lord Arvid’s son asked for my hand in marriage and when I declined he said he didn’t want to be married to a murderer’s daughter anyway.’ Brenna murmured. ‘I thought he meant mother because she was a soldier but obviously not.’

Loki’s eyes narrowed. He knew Lord Arvid. He was a member of the council and one of the most annoying to ever live. Bodil caught the murderous expression on her father’s face and she smiled. ‘It’s alright father. Unless he planned on bedding both Brenna and I, he wasn’t going to get far with us.’ She said.

I’m sure he won’t have minded.’ Ragna mumbled and Brenna shoved her playfully. ‘And you don’t mind being called a murderer’s daughter?’ Loki asked.

The girls frowned. ‘You’re not a murderer. Not to us. You did what you did to save us. I would do the same if I were in your shoes.’ Bodil said. ‘Hopefully that never happens.’ Loki replied in a serious voice.

The girls nodded. ‘D’you mind giving us a moment to talk to your father?’ Steve asked gently and the girls nodded their assent. Bodil, Brenna and Ragna all rushed into their father’s arms and gave him a tight hug.
‘We love you and thank you for telling us.’ Bodil said with a squeeze to his midsection. For a split second, Loki’s vision momentarily went blurry with tears before he blinked them away. ‘Thank you.’ He whispered to them before kissing the tops of their heads.

Brenna gave him one last squeeze before the girls let him go. ‘We’ll explain to the boys, they don’t need to know all the details.’ Ragna said and Loki nodded. They gave one last smile before leaving the room. Loki felt his heart swell with love.

He suddenly felt very silly for hiding the truth from them. They were his children and he and Sigyn had raised them to be girls of fair judgement. He should have never doubted them. His mind went to Sigyn and he sighed inwardly. He’ll deal with her later. For now, he had to face the rest of his team.

Loki turned to look at the group of people in front of him. Their faces were indiscernible and Loki felt like crawling back into his shell but he stopped himself. If they were going to judge him for this then he would take it without cowering away.

He waited for them to say something and when they didn’t, he began to get impatient. ‘Well? If you’re going to say something, now is the time.’ He said. ‘I did not go through being harassed by you all to finally spill my secrets to you and have you say nothing.’

‘We’re just…it’s a lot to take in. It’s not what we expected.’ Bruce said slowly. Loki frowned. ‘What did you think?’ He asked.

‘Thor told us about you wanting to seize power for the throne.’ Steve said, assuming the role of leader. ‘We thought you attacked Earth because you wanted to prove to your fath-Odin that you could.’

Loki glared at Thor and his brother had the decency to blush in shame.

‘Why did you keep this from me Loki?’ Thor asked, trying to make head or tails of the story his brother had just spun.

‘I didn’t want to.’ Loki retorted. ‘Thanos had gotten into my mind, I barely had control over myself. He sent the Chitauri also as a cautionary measure, in order to keep eyes on me. When the Hulk threw me on the ground, it broke my link to Thanos.’

‘I wanted to tell you.’ Loki continued, his tone getting harsher. ‘Wanted to warn you of what was coming but you all had your weapons pointed at me and then you muzzled me like a common dog and then I decided that perhaps it was best if Asgard burned to the ground.’

‘You could’ve said something when you came here. Anything.’ Tony said. Loki scoffed. ‘As if you would’ve believed me. You were all ready to kill me when I came.’

Silence settled over the group as they absorbed his words. The worst part about it was that he was absolutely right. When Thor had brought Loki back, Clint was the first one to swing a punch at him while Natasha had pointed a gun right at his head, Steve had his shield up in seconds and Tony was already calling for Jarvis to lock down the building.

Bruce had said nothing but it was easy to see the underlying rage he had behind his calm demeanour. They’d handed him off to Fury while they came to terms with the All Father’s decision.

Even if he had tried to speak them, who would listen to him?

‘Why did you not come to me?’ Sigyn asked quietly. It was the first time she was speaking up since
he’d said everything and Loki knew it was tearing her up inside. ‘Because I didn’t want you to feel guilty which I can see is already happening. Me meeting him was entirely of my own doing.’

‘You could’ve said something.’ She insisted. ‘You weren’t talking to me at the time and besides, I wasn’t ready to talk about anything.’ Loki replied. When Sigyn had found out Loki was pretending to be Odin, all hell broke loose.

She’d punched him right out before literally attacking him. It took Thor to pull her off him and even then she was still swearing at him and trying to get to him. He’d never seen her so livid. He’d tried to talk to her before his trial with Odin but she’d said she could not lose him a third time.

She’d come to see him just before he was sent to Earth. It was an awkward conversation, one in which she narrated just how much he’d put her and the children through in his absence. She made him swear to contact her when he was on Earth by any means and before he’d left, she finished by saying that if he planned on dying again, he should do them both a favour and not return.

It was a strain in their marriage, the first they’d had in a long while. For a moment, he was afraid he’d lost her but slowly they’d started communicating via letters and with the use of a scrying bowl. In time she’d come to forgive him and things went back to normal.

If you could call their situation normal.

Sigyn winced at the memory and Loki sighed. ‘Look it’s alright. What happened, happened. There’s no way to turn back the hands of the clock.’ He said.

‘You should’ve trusted us as your shield brothers.’ Thor said. ‘Shi-Shield brothers?’ Loki said with an unbelieving laugh. ‘You of all people should not speak of trust, Odinson, when you did all you could to lose mine.’

‘Lose yours? How? How?! Explain to me how I did so because all you’ve done since the beginning is blame father and I for this.’ Thor exclaimed.

‘Who else was there to blame?’ Loki shot back. ‘How about yourself? Everything happened because you let it.’ Thor shot back.

Steve opened his mouth to intervene but Sigyn stopped him. ‘Let them have this, it is long overdue.’ She said to them.

Loki stopped short at his Thor’s words. ‘I’m not going to bother exchanging words with you.’ He said as he made to turn around. ‘Why? Because all my words are true?’ Thor dared. That was the breaking point for Loki and he spun around.

‘Maybe you’re right Thor. Maybe everything I did was by my own hand but I’m only what you and father created.’ Loki shot back. ‘You say Odin did everything he did because he cared but he did not. I learnt at a very early age that Odin did not care what happened to me.’

‘When?’ Thor yelled. ‘When I went to Nidavellir to get gold to replace Sif’s hair and the dwarves sewed my lips shut and held me hostage for three days while Odin delegated.’ Loki replied.

‘Fucking hell.’ Clint muttered.

‘Had it been you, the golden boy of Asgard, he would’ve declared war in an instant.’ Loki continued. ‘Father did not-‘ Thor began but Loki cut him off.

‘What? He didn’t know? Surely even you are not that stupid. Heimdall knew my every move, he
would’ve told Odin.’ Loki snarled. ‘Yet he did nothing and neither did you.’

‘You dared the dwarves! I could not start a war on your behalf.’ Thor said back.

‘I would’ve!’ Loki yelled back.

‘I would’ve gone back for you, no matter the cost! When you attacked Jötunheim like the fool that you are, who do you think went back and tried to reconcile?!’ Loki yelled. ‘You think father cared, he left my people to waste away, he didn’t care about them. I went back and tried to fix things.’

‘You invited them into the palace and killed Laufey, your own father.’ Thor shot back and Loki scoffed. ‘Oh so now he’s my father? I killed Laufey for Asgard. Because it was the best thing to avoid a war. I did it for Odin. I did it for you.’ Loki said.

‘Even after your precious Odin told me my birthright was to die not to rule.’ Loki continued. ‘And when he stood on the Bifrost, clutching onto your arm while telling me ‘No’ that I had, as usual, done wrong, you said nothing. As you’ve always done.’

‘That’s not true.’ Thor replied. ‘Is it?’ Loki questioned. ‘When have you stood up for me Thor? When?’ Loki asked.

‘When father was going to kill you and I stepped in.’ Thor retorted. ‘Once out of how many?’ Loki shot back. ‘You said nothing when he took my children away. Hela, Sleipnir, Fenrir, Jormungand, you said nothing when he exiled them.’

‘They were a danger, I could not step in.’ Thor replied. ‘Odin’s hands were tied, do you truly believe that had he not acted, someone else won’t have? Be it dwarves or elves, someone would have taken them.’

‘It doesn’t matter!’ Loki yelled. ‘They were my children Thor! Hela was a child when he sent her to the land of the dead. A child! Sleipnir had to become Odin’s royal steed and the other two were sent to norns knows where.’

‘Do you have any idea how it feels to not be able to protect your own blood?’ Loki said, his voice strained with anguish. ‘Words cannot describe it. And you just stood by and let it happen just like how you let mother die.’

Thor’s face flushed with anger. ‘Odin and his thousand guards and you with your power of the skies and you could not stop one measly dark elf. Your only concern was the life of your pathetic human-’

‘Do not say one more word about Jane.’ Thor said darkly.

‘Why not? Do you really believe Odin would let her sit on Frigga’s throne?’ Loki said with a scornful laugh. ‘He only waits for her life to fade away-’

Thor threw a punch at Loki that broke his nose and that was when Steve decided to intervene. He held Thor back while Loki tried to staunch the flow of blood dripping from his nose. ‘Odin was right not to give you the throne at first, you are blind!’ Loki said venomously.

‘Alright that’s enough.’ Steve ordered as he struggled to keep the two brothers apart. Thor lunged at Loki again and Steve shot him a glare. ‘Do that again and so help me I will sic Bruce on the both of you. Shield brothers or not.’

Thor growled and he shook himself free of Steve’s grasp before stomping off towards the balcony. Loki watched him go with distaste. All this proof and he still chooses to remain a fool. Loki turned to
the rest of the team who were awkwardly standing around.

He opened his mouth to talk to them but Clint beat him to it. ‘As exciting as this was, we’ve had a pretty rough night and I think it’s safe to say we’re not gonna do much else tonight. Can we postpone till tomorrow?’ He asked, looking around the room.

There were murmurs of agreement from everyone and Loki flashed him an appreciative smile. Clint returned it with a subtle nod and Loki looked to Sigyn. She suddenly looked older than her years and he could see the plea in her eyes from them to be somewhere calmer.

He took her hand and together they made their way to the elevator and to their floor. The rest of the Avengers were left in the room.

‘So much for team bonding time.’ Tony muttered and Steve shot him a glare.

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_I’m waking up_

_I feel it in my bones enough to make my system blow_

_Welcome to the new age, to the new age, welcome to the new age, to new age_

_Ooooh Ooooh_

_Radioactive, radioactive_

Tony, Ragna and Bruce bopped their heads to the last beats of the song as it faded away. Ragna was working on piecing together a car engine. She’d shown interest in mechanics as she did with everything else and Tony had let her try her hand at the engine.

She’d been at it for two days now. ‘Uncle Tony?’ Ragna said and Tony turned to her. ‘Why didn’t you kill us when we came?’ She asked.

Tony dropped the spanner he was holding and Bruce choked on air.

‘Wh-Why would you ask that?’ Bruce asked. Ragna frowned. ‘Well our father destroyed your realm and threatened to kill you. The proper thing to do would be to kill us lest we finish what he started.’ Ragna explained.

‘Okay three things.’ Tony started. ‘One, we would never hurt you or anyone else for something their parents did. We might be wary of them but we would never kill them. This isn’t Game of Thrones. We’re not the fucking Lannisters.’

Ragna gave a soft laugh. ‘Secondly, I thought we’d already come to the conclusion that your dad did what he did to help you guys and thirdly, we love you guys too much. Understood?’ He asked and Ragna nodded.

Tony made to turn back to his work when Ragna spoke up again. ‘Would you hurt my father?’ She asked in a small voice. ‘No. He’s part of the team and we don’t hurt members of the team.’ Bruce replied. ‘Even with what he did?’ She asked and two scientists nodded.

Ragna was quite for a few seconds and the guys let her come to their own conclusions. ‘Thank you.’ She said finally and Tony and Bruce mentally winced at the amount of gratitude that were in those two words. They’d been through the wringer themselves but for someone so young to have seen so much…it wasn’t fair.
‘It’s our pleasure.’ Bruce replied. The doors to the lab slid open and the twins walked in. ‘Are they asleep yet?’ Ragna asked her sisters. Bodil nodded. ‘Aric has made us swear to add our handprints to his project by tonight.’ Brenna announced.

‘What of everyone else?’ Ragna asked. ‘They can do theirs tomorrow. He insists we do it now because we shall forget.’ Bodil said, rolling her eyes.

Ragna nodded. ‘I’ll do it before I sleep.’ She said. The two said their hellos to Bruce and Tony before sitting down. ‘What is the point of such projects?’ Bodil asked. Ragna shrugged. ‘I suppose it’s just an activity to keep the children occupied.’ She replied.

Brenna picked up some of the engine parts and began to fiddle with them. ‘Humans occupy themselves with too many pointless things. Half of what they learn is completely useless to them afterwards.’ Bodil murmured.

‘Well it’s basic knowledge but you’re right, most of it is crap.’ Tony said. ‘With some of the girls I’ve met, I think it would benefit them better if they were taught how to pleasure a man.’ Brenna muttered and her sisters snorted.

‘Whoa. Burn.’ Tony said. ‘What were you all talking about before we arrived?’ Bodil asked. ‘Your sister just wanted to make sure we weren’t going to harm your father.’ Bruce replied. ‘Are you?’ Brenna asked, looking up at the two.

‘No we won’t.’ Bruce said. ‘Good because we know some very nasty spells.’ Bodil replied. ‘God, you’re as scary as your mother.’ Tony said and Bodil smiled.

‘Speaking of mother, you should not have said what you said.’ Ragna admonished. ‘She shouldn’t have called us children.’ Bodil replied. ‘You do not remember much but I do. I remember Brenna and I going on hunts, I remember teaching Einar on the right way to hold a sword, you do not.’

‘And I remember teaching you the difference between poisonous plants and edible ones, I remember being the one rocking Aric to sleep and I remember being the one who patched up your clothes when you ripped them.’ Ragna shot back.

‘Look there’s no need for tempers. Bodil, apologize to mother when you get the chance and Ragna stop acting like we didn’t have to fend for ourselves. Simple.’ Brenna said as she presented a fully pieced together engine to Tony.

Everyone gaped at her and Brenna blushed. ‘You like machines Brenna?’ Tony asked gently. ‘I like knowing how things work but it’s not a woman’s job.’ She said shyly. ‘Nonsense, it can be anyone’s job.’ Bruce assured.

‘Good job.’ Ragna said with a playful punch to her sister and Bodil gave her a high five. Brenna looked at the clock. ‘It’s late and I’m sleepy but I would very much like to work more on your machines.’ She said looking at the scientists. ‘If you’ll let me.’ She quickly added.

Bruce and Tony smiled. ‘Mi lab su lab.’ Tony said to her. ‘He means yes.’ Bruce clarified, noting the confused expressions on the girl’s faces. ‘

Thank you.’ Brenna said with a smile and the three got up.

‘Come on let’s go paint. I hope he got orange.’ Bodil said as they headed towards the door. Bruce and Tony watched the three girls walk away with a smile.
Loki watched as Sigyn settled in bed. After his fight with Thor, the two had just retired to bed, both emotionally and physically drained.

She had been quiet throughout and had said nothing to him. He didn’t know what to think. He knew the issues around what he’d done was very sensitive for the both of them and he knew it was something that still bothered her but her silence was unsettling.

‘Sigyn? Say something.’ Loki pleaded. For a moment, he felt like she did not hear him but then she spoke. ‘I feel…guilty.’ She murmured. ‘This is what I didn’t want.’ Loki started but she stopped him. ‘It’s not just you. The children too. Bodil was right, I abandoned them when you died.’

Loki didn’t know what to say to that. He wanted to tell her that wasn’t true but knowing the kind of person she was, it probably was. ‘You were grieving.’ He said. ‘They were grieving too and I should’ve been there for them, I should’ve-‘

Sigyn’s voice cut off into a small sigh and Loki held her hand. ‘Are you upset with me?’ He asked slowly. Sigyn frowned. ‘No. Of course not. Why should I, you saved our lives.’ She said. ‘You forget I caused the death of countless others.’ Loki added.

Sigyn gave him a look. ‘Loki, you saved Migard and Asgard. Had it been me, I would’ve handed the nine realms over to him on a platter.’ Sigyn said. ‘The only thing I’m upset with you for is not letting me know sooner so I could have his head.’

Loki gave a small laugh. ‘Hopefully you never meet him.’ He said with a small kiss to the side of her head. Sigyn settled with Loki in her arms. ‘Don’t you ever hide something like this from me again.’ She whispered to him. ‘We’re a team. We handle each other’s weaknesses. If something’s wrong, I need to know so I can help you. Okay?’ She asked.

‘Okay.’ Loki whispered back and Sigyn smiled. ‘Do you…do you want to know what…’ Loki’s voice trailed off as he tried to find a way to place his question. Seeing as she’d said he shouldn’t hide anything, he was wondering how to tell her the amount of torture he’d seen at Thanos’ hands because it was only fair right?

‘No. You don’t need to tell me things.’ Sigyn said as she looked up at him. ‘If you want to then okay but if you don’t, then you never have to tell me a thing. It’s my turn to take care of you.’ Loki looked down at Sigyn and she looked back up at him with seriousness in her eyes.

She meant what she said. They were the words he’d said to her years ago when she was still learning how to love him, when she thought he shouldn’t be with her and still didn’t understand why he choose to be and she thought to tell him everything that had happened to her because she thought he deserved to know for being so good to her.

He’d never understood why she would ever think like that until now.

‘Thank you.’ He whispered to her, trying to put as much gratitude as he could into the two words. Sigyn squeezed his hand in assurance.

‘Thank you for trusting me.’ Sigyn replied simply and she lay down to sleep. It took him longer but Loki finally settled down to what was the most peaceful sleep he’d had in a long while.

Natasha shivered slightly as she stepped out onto the balcony. It was an unusually cold night and she couldn’t tell if it was just global warming or Thor’s foul mood. He’d been up on the balcony ever since his fight with Loki.
A couple of months ago, she would’ve left it alone but he and Loki were family whether they liked it or not and after having found a family in the Avengers, she wasn’t about to let this one thing break it up. Thor turned at her approach and he gave her a small smile.

‘Hey buddy. You’ve been up here for a while. Wanna talk?’ She asked. She and Thor snagged a seat on a couple of chairs.

‘What’s wrong?’ She asked. Thor sighed. ‘Where to begin? Loki and I…we’ve always been close. We are the sons of Odin, princes of Asgard and that bond made us seek shelter in each other. Now...we can barely say two words before descending into a fight.’ He said.

‘Well…Loki seemed to explain himself quite clearly back there.’ She said carefully. Thor nodded. ‘I am to blame. When father sent his children away, I thought it best for Asgard. As King you cannot make easy choices. Sometimes one must sacrifice for the greater good.’ He explained.

Natasha nodded. She understood that perfectly. ‘However, now I cannot help but doubt it. I have always trusted Odin’s words as truths but what if I did Loki a disservice by doing so?’ Thor asked.

‘Well, if I were you, I’d ask Odin,’ Natasha offered. ‘I mean look at it this way, if Loki’s lying then you’ve got nothing to lose but if he’s not then there’s a lot of things your father has misinformed you about.’

Thor nodded. ‘I know. Although I know, deep down in my heart that Loki speaks the truth. It pains me to think that my father would lie to me but I will benefit from asking him.’ He said as he stood up. ‘You are a good and wise friend, Lady Natasha.’

‘I know.’ Natasha replied with a smile. ‘Please inform Jane of my whereabouts.’ He added and Natasha nodded. Thor raised his hammer to the sky and in a flash of light, he was gone.

Natasha smiled sadly to herself. She knew the pain and anger Thor was about to find with Odin because Loki was obviously telling the truth but she was happy Thor was finally going to know everything and that the healing process between him and his brother could finally begin.

*If only Tony and Clint were this easy to talk to.*

Chapter End Notes

Another chapter down! I just want to thank you guys for being such comfort. A lot of you have sent so many comforting messages and I'm awed at the response from you guys. Thanks so much!!

Okay so down to this chapter. The secret's finally unveiled! I thought seeing as I'm following the theme of Loki being a die hard family man, the reason why he'd do what he did would be cause of his family. Let's face it, the Loki in 'Thor' and the Loki in 'Avengers' were two different people. I feel like the Loki in 'Thor' might have graduated to be the one in the 'Avengers' but not without something pushing him to the edge.

I first wrote his whole confrontation with his children a bit angrier and with a lot more accusations thrown around but then I decided against it cause I think Sigyn would've raised them to be more sensible than that. Thor's finally gonna confront Odin and learn the damn truth so look forward to that. Also more explanations about Loki's time with
Thanos may be given in the next chapter.

Thanks for reading and thanks for the love!!
Thor weighed Mjollnir in his hands as he walked towards the throne room. He was dreading talking to his father but this was one conversation that had been put off for far too long. The guards at the entrance to the throne room bowed to him and he walked in.

Sitting on the throne was Odin. As Thor drew closer, he discovered that Odin was not alone. Tyr, his cousin was conversing with the AllFather. Their conversation stopped as they noticed Thor and they descended into a suspicious silence.

‘Tyr.’ Thor said by way of greeting and his cousin gave a small bow in return.

‘We shall finish this later.’ Odin said to Tyr and the man bowed before turning away. Thor waited till his cousin had left the throne before turning back to his father.

‘How fares Loki?’ Odin asked, focusing his attention on his firstborn. To him, Thor looked like he’d aged a decade at least. Odin could only guess that protecting a realm as troublesome and young as Migard was stressful but the look on Thor’s face suggested that he was weighed down by much more.


‘I will not deny, I am glad to be rid of Sigyn. She is a fine warrior but much too headstrong.’ He replied. Thor’s lips twitches in a small smile. He could guess what Sigyn would have to say to that. ‘And you? I will not presume that you came home for a mere visit.’ Odin continued.

Again Thor was reminded of his real reason for coming and he swallowed. Best to do it now and get it over with. ‘I…Loki and I recently fought.’ He started with.

Odin gave a small huff of laughter. ‘Tis hardly surprising. Over what?’ He asked.

‘Over many things but the cornerstone of which was your role in his life as a father.’ Thor continued. There was no sign of emotion on his father’s face so he decided to move on. ‘Father why did you take Loki from Jötenheim?’ Thor asked, deciding to start from there.

Odin sighed. ‘Tis a question I often asked myself over the years. We had just conquered Jötenheim when I saw him. He was wrapped up in a piece of cloth and left at a temple to die. From first glance, it was obvious that he was a runt.’

‘Runts rarely survive in the harsh winters of Jötenheim so it was no surprise that he was left there. Till date, I cannot place the exact reason why I took him in my arms. Perhaps because your mother and I were yet to have a child and we yearned for one badly.’

Thor felt a wave of relief wash over him. Loki was wrong. Father does love him. Perhaps now we can put this foolishness behind us.

‘Then we discovered that he was Laufey’s son.’ Odin continued. ‘There was debate of sending him back to Jötenheim but the advisor’s and I also agreed that he was of greater use here in Asgard.’

Thor frowned. ‘Greater use?’ He questioned, dreading the reply.
‘Lest the Frost Giants chose to attack again.’ Odin clarified, like it was the simplest thing in the nine realms.

‘And if they were to attack?’ Thor asked. ‘What would be your use of Loki then?’

Odin said nothing except to raise his brow as if to say ‘Do you really need to ask?’ and Thor’s stomach dropped. ‘He’s your son.’ Thor said, trying to make Odin realise what he was saying.

‘You are my son.’ Odin replied. ‘Loki is Jötnar, a race of uncultured, savages who only seek war. Yes he grew up as an Asgardian but the blood of the Jötnar flows in his veins. That is all he will ever be.’

It was as if the light in the great hall had dimmed. Thor’s thoughts swirled in his head. He couldn’t believe what Odin was saying.

Surely he had to be joking.

Surely he did not mean everything he said.

But as Thor looked into his father’s eyes, he knew that was not so. Suddenly, he felt like a fool. Was this the man whom Sigyn and Loki saw? Was this the man who represented a realm as great as Asgard? Had Odin only showed him his ‘softer’ side to fool him?

Loki was right. He was right and I-I-

Thor felt bile rise in his throat. It was no wonder his brother despised Asgard so much, he was never welcome here. All he was was just some other tool in Odin’s arsenal in an attempt to control another realm.

‘Do not look so shocked, Thor.’ Odin said in an offhandish tone. ‘When you come to bear the weight of the throne, you too will come to understand the necessity of such actions.’

Thor stared at his father. He spoke without a care in the world. As if his recent revelation had not destabilised his entire world. ‘He-He loved you.’ Thor said in a half whisper.

‘Did he?’ Odin retorted. ‘Is his evidence of his love the chaos he brought to Migard or to Asgard?’ Thor frowned.

‘Chaos to Asgard? What chaos did he bring here?’ He asked.

‘He returned the Casket of Winter to the Jötnar, the one thing we had against them.’ Odin replied. ‘With that the Jötnar are free to attack at free will.’

‘I have been to Jötunheim, father.’ Thor shot back. ‘They are dying out, I hardly think their first thought would be to attack. Helblindi is not a fool.’

‘They were dying out because they did not have the Casket of Winter. It was a means of control.’ Odin replied. ‘Now with it, there is no telling what they could do.’

Thor stared at his father. It sounded like his father was saying that he purposely took the Casket of Winter to starve the Jötnar but that couldn’t-wasn’t possible. He may be cruel and harsh but surely-surely he would not stoop so low.

‘Do not look so shocked, you knew what was going on.’ Odin said to his son, noticing his shocked expression.

‘Knew-I had no knowledge that taking the Casket of Winter would kill the Jötnar.’ Thor replied.
Odin scoffed. ‘The time has come for you to drop your childlike innocence, Thor. You may not have been fully aware of the events in Jötunheim but you were well aware that the Jötnar were dying out.’ He said.

‘I did not know it was by our hand.’ Thor replied. ‘They may not be Æsir but they do not deserve to waste away.’

‘Perhaps.’ Odin murmured. ‘Still they have the Casket back so I assume they will begin to flourish once more.’ He said with a bite.

‘As is their right!’ Thor exclaimed. ‘You act as though they are not people with thoughts and hopes and dreams. They might have risen against us once and committed atrocities but is that any different from us?’ He questioned.

‘We are the superior realm, Thor. What we do matters not.’ Odin replied. Thor physically recoiled. It felt like a harsh slap. How could the one man he’d loved and respected more than anyone turn out to be such a sham?

‘Loki was right. I was blind.’ Thor said in a haunted voice. ‘A King who sees fit to enslave and rule over others simply because he can or deems it his right is no King.’ With that, Thor turned around and walked out of the great hall, leaving Odin in his wake.

‘Darc, should you be doing that?’

Darcy scowled at Steve while dipping her hands in purple paint. ‘Steve, sweetie. We talked about this.’ Darcy said as she pasted her hands all over the cardboard. ‘Just because I’m carrying baby Rogers doesn’t make me an invalid. Okay?’

‘Speaking of baby Rogers, when are we getting visuals?’ Jane asked as she painted her hands with silver coloured paint.

‘I have my first ultrasound in two days.’ Darcy said with excitement.

‘Oh that’s awesome. Thought of names?’ Pepper asked as she tried on a magenta coloured paint.

‘Names, I haven’t even gotten clothes. Like I went online to check out baby things, I almost suffocated with panic. There is so much shit to get.’

‘You know you could just get Jarvis to sort everything out for you if you’d like.’ Pepper chipped in as she tried a lemon colour next.

‘Nah Steve’s old school. He wants to hand pick everything and I kinda agree with him.’ Darcy said with a slight flush. Steve wrapped an arm around her waist and planted a kiss on her cheek. Pepper and Jane rolled their eyes.

‘What’s going on here?’ Natasha asked as she walked into the living room and flopped on the couch. Tony trailed after her, drenched in sweat and looking like he’d just been through the wringer. He went straight to the fridge and opened it before downing an entire bottle of Gatorade.

‘We’re trying to finish Aric’s project.’ Jane replied as she tried to wash her hands off with rubbing alcohol.

‘I take it training’s not going as easy as you want?’ Pepper asked with a giggle as Tony flopped on the couch opposite Natasha. Natasha had taken it upon herself to teach him basic self defense
because in her words ‘take away the suit and you’re a genius, billionaire, playboy and philanthropist who’s gonna get his ass handed to him in a fight’. Steve and Pepper had agreed and before Tony knew it, he was working out with the Black Widow, thrice a week. He glared at Pepper and she chuckled.

‘It’s actually not that bad.’ Natasha replied. ‘Tony’s got a surprising level of upper body strength.’

‘I could’ve told you that without you putting me through hell.’ Tony muttered. Steve tossed him a bag of ice and Tony pressed it to his neck with a grateful sigh.

‘So…what happened last night? I heard things got really…intense. How’s Loki?’ Darcy asked as she washed off her paint coloured hands.

‘I don’t think anyone’s talked to him.’ Natasha replied. ‘I don’t even think anyone’s seen him.’

‘Why the hell not?’ Darcy asked in surprise.

‘It’s kinda hard to talk to someone after they reveal that the reason they attempted to destroy your planet and killed people was to inevitably save it.’ Steve said.

‘And then you realize you’ve been an asshole to said person for reasons that had no grounds.’ Tony finished.

‘As far as I’m concerned, there’s no problem here.’ Pepper said as she turned on the coffee machine. ‘Call a team meeting and hash it out. Or better yet, swallow your damn pride and apologize.’

‘Easier said than done.’ Natasha muttered. ‘I mean…the more I think about it, the more…ashamed I am of the way I treated him. I mean if it were me in his position and Bruce was on the line…I would’ve killed everyone without a second thought.’

‘Well that’s done wonders for my trust issues so thanks Nat.’ Tony snarked from his position on the couch.

‘She’s right.’ Steve pointed out. ‘We all know if it were one of us in his place…’ Steve’s voice trailed off and his eyes darted to Darcy. Darcy shot him a small smile and reached out to squeeze his hand.

‘Well I still think you should talk to him.’ Pepper said as she sat down next to Tony. ‘If there’s one thing I’ve learnt from years of cleaning up after you, it’s that you deal with your issues as quick as they come if you want to provide a strong front.’ Tony laid his head on her shoulder and let out a huff.

‘I hate it when you’re right.’ He muttered.

‘Someone’s got to keep you guys in check.’ She said with a kiss to his forehead before getting up. ‘Speaking of which S.H.I.E.L.D sent in its contract for its partnership with Stark Industries this morning.’ She said to Tony.

‘I’ll read it over tonight.’ Tony replied and Pepper nodded.

‘Good luck with Loki.’ She called out as she walked out. Tony watched his girlfriend as she walked out. She’d made a very strong point and they all knew it.

‘Team meeting?’ Natasha suggested as she looked at her two group members. Tony and Steve nodded.
Loki looked down at his two boys. He’d woken up to find them on his bed expectantly waiting for him to wake up. Sigyn was somewhere with the girls, no doubt sorting out the previous night’s events and he hadn’t stepped out of the room because…well because he didn’t really want to.

A large part of him wanted to forget that last night’s events had ever occurred. His fight with Thor, re-living the entire experience with him and Thanos, the look of betrayal on his children’s faces…well maybe not that.

In all the scenarios where he’d imagined telling them the complete details about his true birth and the crimes he’d committed against earth, their acceptance and love had never been a factor. He’d always imagined them hating or despising him for what he’d done and he had fully prepared himself for that inevitability but their acceptance and love had shocked him.

Now as his two boys sat in front of him, he could only hope their reaction would be the same as their siblings.

‘Father?’ Einar said in a small voice and Loki snapped to attention.

‘Yes?’ He replied.

Einar toyed with the bed sheet and Loki carefully took one of his hands in his own. ‘What is it?’ He asked gently. Einar took in a sigh before looking up at his father.

‘Well…Brenna and Bodil told us about what happened yesterday and…we just wanted to know if you were okay.’

Loki blinked.

They…They want to know if I’m okay. ‘What exactly did your sisters tell you?’ Loki asked slowly.

‘Bwenna said that you came to Migawd and destowyed things and hurt people-‘ Aric said. ‘-but she said you only did it because a vewy bad man made you do it so we wanted to see if you okay.’ He completed with a smile on his face.

‘That’s all your sisters said?’ Loki asked.

‘They also said you’re Jӧtnar which is okay. They told me Grandfather and Uncle Thor weren’t very nice to you and that made me sad.’ Einar replied and Aric nodded in agreement.

‘Yes but…what about me hurting people? What do you think about that?’ Loki asked persistently. Aric shrugged. ‘Everyone huwts people. Like when we said Wagna’s not good with magic and she cwied but the impowtant thing is that you say sowie and pwomise never to do it again.’ He said.

A moment passed and Aric squinted at his father. ‘Did you say sowie?’ He asked in a serious voice. Loki gave a small laugh before nodding and Aric smiled.

‘Why didn’t you tell us?’ Einar asked as he cuddled up to his father. Loki ran his hand through his son’s hair.

‘I don’t know. I hurt a lot of people, you and your mother included. I didn’t want to involve my family in the things I had done.’ He replied, trying to put his reasons in terms his sons would understand.

Einar looked up at his father with a frown. ‘Family protects family.’ He said in a serious tone and
Loki bent down to give him a kiss on the head.

‘I know.’ He said with a soft smile. The fact that his family still loved and supported him despite knowing everything he’d done still amazed him and he didn’t think he’d ever understand why but he was finally accepting it.

If they could forgive him and still love him then maybe he could find it in himself to do the same.

Sigyn fiddled with her hair. She’d dealt with soldiers, kings and even Odin without batting an eyelid but now, as she sat in front of her daughters, she couldn’t help but be nervous. All through the day, she’d thought about what Bodil said and it had been eating her up inside.

She’d let years pass by without even being there for her children. It felt like she just drifted past, trapped in her own grief, never thinking of her own children and the fact that it had made them grow up faster than they should’ve made her feel sick.

‘I’m sorry.’ Bodil said quietly. ‘I should have never said what I said. It was rude and unbecoming of me.’ Sigyn gave a disbelieving laugh.

‘Tis not why I asked to speak to you.’ She said to her daughters.

‘You were right for what you said. I had no right to call you children, you certainly are not.’ She said. ‘I-I should’ve never left you to defend for yourselves.’

‘You were grieving.’ Ragna said quietly.

‘We were grieving.’ Sigyn corrected. ‘He was your father, you lost him too.’

‘He was your husband. He meant more to you.’ Brenna explained. Sigyn frowned. There was something in the way that sentence was said that felt wrong.

‘Do you…Do you think I love your father more than I love you?’ She asked carefully, dreading the reply. The girls all exchanged glances. There it is again. That silent communication. How did I miss that? Sigyn felt her heart throb with pain and she swallowed.

‘You married father. It is normal for you to mourn him in whatever way you wish.’ Ragna said to her mother.

‘That doesn’t answer my question.’ Sigyn replied. The girls all looked at each other and a beat passed before they nodded. Sigyn felt a shard of pain tear through her and her eyes almost welled up. She drew in a deep breath. ‘That is not, nor will that ever be true.’ She said in a choked voice.

‘Mother its fine. We’re tough girls. We learned how to fight, how to hunt. We became warriors, just like you wanted.’ Bodil said.

Sigyn snorted. ‘That is not what I wanted. That is never what I wanted.’ She said, a few tears escaping her eyes. Sigyn drew in a deep breath.

‘Did-Do you know why I joined the army?’ She asked shakily. The girls shook their heads and Sigyn swallowed. She hated to have to tell this particular story to her children but it was best they learnt from her. ‘I’m not Asgardian. I’m from Vanir.’

Ragna frowned. ‘Vanir, that’s impossible. You don’t have any magic.’ She said. Sigyn shook her head.
‘I did. Once. Odin took it from me.’ She explained. ‘I was taken as a hostage back to Asgard, intended for a pleasure house but then your father picked me out and he told me to kill a soldier.’

‘Did you?’ Bodil asked quietly. Sigyn nodded.

‘I took the soldier’s spear and rammed it straight through his throat. Watched the life drain from his eyes, best feeling I’d had in a long while.’ Sigyn said. ‘You father saw that and he gave me the option of going to a brothel where I’d be safe but used or joining the army where I’d have to watch my back every moment but be my own person.’

‘I…I never got the chance to be a girl. To play, to laugh, I never had that. I was this hardened, impenetrable woman because I needed to be. I couldn’t ever be weak. Then I married your father and he made me feel safe. He watched me, made sure I didn’t want for anything, no one’s ever done that for me.’ Sigyn said, more tears gathering in her eyes.

‘When I found out I was pregnant, I cried for days.’ She said to her children. ‘Not because I didn’t want you. I wanted you so much, so badly. I was just terrified that something would happen, that something would make you become tough and hardened like me and I wanted to protect you from that and I-‘ Sigyn pursed her lips to keep from crying.

‘When he died, it felt like the ground underneath me gave way and I gave in to my feelings and I didn’t-‘ Sigyn took in a deep breath. ‘I wasn’t there for you when you needed me the most and because of that, you had to grow up faster than you deserved and I am so sorry for that.’

‘It’s okay mother. We do not fault you for it.’ Brenna said. ‘Yes you did leave us to ourselves but you also protected us.’

‘When Odin-well father- requested us to go to the palace, you refused. I will never forget the words you said.’ Bodil continued. ‘You told him that there was no way in the nine realms that you were going to take us to the palace where we could be poisoned with his lies.’

Sigyn gave a weak laugh at that. She definitely remembered that. She’d outright called Odin a tyrant and told him that his pathetic excuse of wanting to ‘keep his grandchildren safe’ was laughable. She may or may not have also told him that the least he could do was pick up the skill of lying from his son.

She’d always wondered why ‘Odin’ let her say such but now it made perfect sense. *I can only imagine the sense of pride Loki felt at hearing me say such words.*

‘Mother tis fine. We do not fault you for it.’ Ragna added and she shuffled closer to her mother. Sigyn looked at her three daughters with a small sad smile. It was amazing how much they’d grown and she felt like kicking herself for not noticing sooner.

‘I know.’ She said softly. ‘You’re growing up so fast and it scares me sometimes. I want to shield you from the horrors of the world but that would be doing an injustice to you.’

‘No matter what happens, we’ll still be your daughters.’ Brenna said and her sisters nodded along with her. Sigyn opened her arms for a hug and all three girls swarmed into their mother’s arms. Sigyn squeezed her daughters tight before planting kisses on their foreheads.

No matter what happened, being a mother to the three strong girls in her arms was always going to be a top priority for her and she was damn sure going to make sure they knew it. ‘I will always be here for you. Always,’ Sigyn whispered to them.

The hug lasted for a few more seconds before the girls pulled back. ‘Thank you for talking to us.’
Brenna said and Sigyn waved her comment away.

‘I may be one of Asgard’s finest warrior’s but I know when to admit that I was wrong.’ She replied with a smile. ‘Now then, how exactly did Lord Arvid’s son come to ask for your hand?’

Brenna coloured slightly while her sisters laughed. ‘Why did I think you’d forget about that?’ Brenna murmured with a small smile to herself. Sigyn stuck her tongue out at her daughter before lying back and listening to her daughter’s tale.

**Do you mind coming to the game room? – Tony**

**Bring Sigyn. – Tony**

Loki and Sigyn read the text before looking at each other. ‘Do you know anything about this?’ He asked her and she shook her head.

‘I spent the day with the girls.’ Sigyn replied. Loki looked back down at the text. He obviously knew what the team wanted to talk to him about. They had said nothing about his recent revelations and he’d assumed that was because of his fight with Thor but now that he was nowhere to be found, Tony’s text filled him with apprehension.

‘I do not believe they wish to hurt you or rebuke you but if they do then I will be by your side the entire time.’ Sigyn said as she placed a reassuring hand on his shoulder. Loki kissed her hand before interlocking her fingers with his.

Sigyn flashed him a smile and together they made their way towards the game room.

Sigyn watched the Avengers with slightly suspicious eyes. They’d arrived in the game room to meet everyone waiting for them which had done nothing for Loki’s apprehension about their imminent talk. She honestly didn’t think they would turn against Loki but then again people had that annoying habit of letting you down when you trusted them the most.

_This is what happens when you get too comfortable with people._ ‘Why are we here?’ Sigyn blurted out, getting tired of the awkward silence.

The team members all exchanged glances before Steve finally spoke up. ‘Well before you two got here, we spent a while amongst ourselves talking about what happened last night and how we wanted to handle it.’ He started off.

Sigyn felt Loki tense and she squeezed his hand. ‘And what was your decision?’ She asked, speaking for the both of them.

‘We’re letting you go.’ Tony stated. Sigyn blinked in surprise. Letting them go? What in the nine did that mean?

‘Letting us go…where?’ Loki asked, finally speaking up. ‘Anywhere you want to.’ Natasha cut in. ‘As of today, your hundred year contract is terminated. You’re free to do whatever you want.’

Loki blinked. ‘I…My punishment was with Odin. I cannot go back on his decree.’ He said.

‘With all due respect, fuck Odin.’ Clint said. ‘You’re on our planet and we say you can go.’

‘Do you want us to leave?’ Sigyn asked in confusion. Was this just a polite way of them saying they
wanted nothing to do with her family?

Bruce shook his head. ‘Not at all. We…we were assholes to you guys, most especially Loki. We judged you unfairly and didn’t give you a chance to explain yourself. In light of recent events, we came to the conclusion that we have no rights to keep you here against your will if you don’t want to be here.’

‘Fuck we have no rights to keep you here as a prisoner.’ Tony added.

There was a moment of silence as Loki fully absorbed what his team mates were offering to him. ‘Where would we go if not here?’ Sigyn asked softly.

‘Anywhere you want.’ Tony piped up. ‘There are a number of safe houses we all know. You and your family could live there safely, free of charge and without detection for as long as you like.’

‘What of Fury?’ Loki asked.

‘This is team business; Fury has no say in it.’ Clint said.

‘He might have brought us together but he has no say in what we do as a team.’ Steve clarified.

Loki and Sigyn exchanged glances. ‘What of Thor?’ Loki asked.

‘Well majority kinda carries the vote here.’ Natasha said. ‘Plus something tells me he’s going to want to agree with us.’

Loki took in a deep breath. It appeared that today had been the day of surprises for him. This was the very last thing he’d ever expected from any of them and he honestly didn’t know what to do with what they’d told him.

For the first time in…his life, someone was giving him a choice to do what he wanted and he didn’t know what to do with it.

‘If you do want to stay then that’s completely fine too but we want you to know that if you do, you’ll be staying as our equal not as our prisoner.’ Tony stated. ‘If you choose to stay, do it because you want to. Not because of anything else.’

Sigyn watched her husband. She could see the conflict on his face and she so badly wanted to help him out but this was completely his decision to make. She would follow him to the ends of the realm if he wished but this was something he had to decide on his own.

‘Do I have to tell you what I wish this very moment?’ Loki asked hesitantly.

‘Nope.’ Steve said. ‘Take all the time you need.’ The rest of the team nodded in agreement and Loki and Sigyn stood up to leave.

‘Thank you. For this.’ Loki said softly. Bruce shook his head. ‘Nah buddy, you don’t need to thank us for anything. We owe you one.’ He said and the rest of the team agreed along with him. Loki felt a small smile form on his face. Sigyn was right. They were good people. A little rough around the edges but far better than any he’d come across in Asgard.

Nick Fury watched the video footage with a frown. Things were proving to be more difficult than he originally thought. He assumed that with the arrival of Loki’s children it was make things relatively calmer but as he looked at the footage of what looked like a three year old basically tearing a hole in
a wall without even touching it, he knew he’d just succeeded in making his job a whole lot tougher.

‘Sir? What would you have us do?’ One of his agents asked. Fury went through several possibilities in his head. There was the option to monitor Loki’s children from afar and interfere when deemed necessary but that had pretty much gone to hell after one of his kids destroyed a school.

When the Avengers and Sigyn brought up the topic of bringing the children of an egocentric killer to earth, they’d managed to leave out the fact that said children had ‘magic’ of their own, an action Fury found both equally offensive and annoying.

How in the hell could he protect Earth if they kept stuff like this away from him?

*If they want to hide stuff behind my back then I have no choice but to retaliate.*

‘Bring them in. The children only.’ Fury replied to the agent. ‘No heavy weapons, I want a clean extraction.’

‘And the Avengers sir?’ The agent asked.

Fury waved the question away. ‘I’ll handle the Avengers. You just handle the children.’

_________________________

Jane handed Thor a mug of hot chocolate which he accepted gratefully. She’d woken up to a raging storm and the Asgardian price outside the door. It was four in the morning and she, Tony and Bruce were scheduled to work on a chemical that could safely clear up toxic waste from oceans without poisoning sea life.

Bruce had asked her help to design said chemical and she’d accepted. However, upon opening the door and seeing her boyfriend, drenched and with the most mournful expression she could ever conjure on his face, she’d cancelled all plans of working and set to making him said hot chocolate and listening to what happened on his trip to Asgard.

‘I am a fool for not seeing Odin as the tyrant he truly was.’ Thor said softly. ‘He has killed and bullied the other realms for eons without much cause or reason. Loki was right to mistrust him and I…I have pushed away my brother for years thinking he was in the wrong when he truly knew better than I did.’

Jane gently took his hand and squeezed it comfortingly. ‘I’m so sorry. I can’t imagine what you’re going through. What do you want to do about it?’ She asked.

Thor shrugged. ‘What do I do? He is King as of now. And I refuse to rule in his footsteps.’ He said. Jane nibbled on her bottom lip.

‘What about Loki?’ She asked. Thor snorted.

‘You speak as though he would ever listen to anything I had to say. He would sooner join forces to be against me as is his right. I do not deserve his help nor do I deserve the right to call him my brother.’

‘Give him more credit than that.’ Jane said gently. ‘Loki cares about you. I’ve seen it with my own eyes. You just need to show him that you’re sorry. Really sorry, not just by saying it.’

‘I doubt it would matter to him.’ Thor said sadly.

‘That’s not the point. The point is you showing him that you’re sorry for the years when you were
being a jackass. It might not matter to him but it will show that you’re ready to build a stronger relationship with him.’ Jane said.

Thor’s eyebrows furrowed. ‘Perhaps. But how would I go about showing such remorse?’ He asked, looking up at Jane with questioning eyes. Jane shrugged.

‘You know him better than anyone. There must be something you can do.’ She replied. A few minutes passed in silence as Thor pondered upon what he could do in exchange for his brother’s forgiveness. Jane was just about to call it a night and suggest that he continued thinking up a solution in the morning when Thor’s eyes lit up.

‘I think I know what to do.’ He said slowly. ‘Are you sure?’ Jane asked cautiously and Thor nodded. ‘It will require much work but Loki deserves nothing less.’ He said.

Jane smiled. ‘I’m always here if you need my help.’ She reminded. Thor smiled softly. ‘You have been of more help than I could imagine. Thank you Jane.’ He said. Jane beamed back at him. ‘No problem.’ She said as she leaned forward and kissed him.

She stood up and Thor stood along with her. He slid his arm around her and the duo both walked to their bedroom.

Chapter End Notes

Another chapter down!!! I'm soooo sorry for the lack of updates. I just resumed my second year of Uni (go SMU!) and it has been hectic as hell. Plus I've kinda been going through issues such as sorting out my sexuality and my dad's health (he's doing much better by the way).

Sorry if this chapter seems a bit off. Thor is of course going to try and apologize to Loki in the next chapter but as expected, it's not going to go down so easily. I wanted to show each parent interacting with their children on different bases and I think I did that here. The next chapter is also going to include Fury doing something not so smart and look forward to a huge reveal.

Suggestions and comments are always welcome and a huge THANK YOU to everyone who has been following this story. Thanks for your patience and I promise to make an effort to update quicker. Enjoy!
'Rise and shine, assholes. We’re needed in Germany.’ Clint said as he slapped the folder on the breakfast table. Steve groaned. ‘Why today? Darcy’s ultrasound is today.’ He whined.

‘Oh damn.’ Clint said with a frown. ‘We could cover for you.’ Natasha offered.

‘What, no.’ Darcy spat out. ‘I’ll be fine, go do what you need to do.’ She insisted. Steve opened his mouth to argue but she beat him to it. ‘It’s fine babe. We can look at the baby when you get back.’ She said with a small smile. ‘It’s not like this little munchkin’s going anywhere.’ She added with a little laugh as she patted her tummy.

‘You sure?’ Steve asked carefully.

Darcy rolled her eyes. ‘Yes I am. I’ll be fine.’ She replied fondly.

‘You tagging along Loki?’ Tony asked. Loki paused, his spoon halfway to his mouth. It had been two days since he’d been released from their charge and to be honest, he had no clue what to do. He’d never been given that much freedom in his life and he was still trying to decide on what to do.

He looked to Sigyn but her attention was conveniently focused on her food. ‘You don’t have to if you don’t want to.’ Bruce spoke up. ‘And if you do, it doesn’t change what we discussed.’ Steve assured. Loki mulled it over.

He knew them enough to know that they wouldn’t go back on their word. Maybe everyone else but not Steve. The man’s morals could withstand the fiery depths of Hel. ‘I…do not see the harm in it.’ Loki blurted out before he could change his mind.

‘Atta boy. Go suit up.’ Tony said with a slap to his arm. The rest of the team rolled their eyes at the billionaire’s action but Loki couldn’t help but feel a warm sensation fill his body. Perhaps this...’team’ idea isn’t so bad after all.

Loki waited expectantly for Thor to speak. Over the past two days the two brothers hadn’t spoken a word to each other. Loki had nothing more to say to his younger brother and to be frank; he’d reached the point where he just didn’t care anymore. The rest of the team had accepted his story as truth and that was enough for him.

_Hopefully what he has to say is worth my time._ ‘Yes?’ Loki asked impatiently. He needed to suit up and he wanted to be able to kiss the children goodbye before he left.

‘I…I spoke to fa-Odin.’ Thor said hesitantly.

‘If you wish to tell me of Odin’s good tidings, forgive me if I find the urge to throw you off the building.’ Loki spat out.

‘No, I don’t-Loki he…You were right.’ Thor said struggling to get the words out. Loki blinked in surprise. ‘You were right and I was wrong and I am a fool for taking Odin’s word over your own.’ Thor finished.
Loki made a surprised noise. ‘I must say, this is new. What lead to this revelation?’ Loki said with scorn.

‘I confronted fa-Odin on the atrocities committed on Jötvunheim. He told me everything. Why he took you in and why you took the casket back to Jötvunheim.’ Thor replied.

Loki made a humming noise. ‘And what did our dear father have to say about this?’ Loki said in a mocking tone. Thor fell silent and Loki gave a sardonic laugh.

‘Well I can’t say I’m not glad that you’ve finally found the truth.’ Loki said to Thor. ‘It took you eons but I am glad there are no more illusions on your end.’ Loki made to move away but was held back by Thor.

‘Tis not all.’ Thor said. Loki raised a brow in question but stayed still. Thor took in a deep breath. ‘I…I know am I am not deserving of your forgiveness but I-‘

‘No you’re not.’ Loki said, cutting straight through Thor’s speech. ‘My forgiveness-Do you suppose to just walk up to me and earn my forgiveness in a matter of words?’ Loki sneered. ‘T’will take more than that Odinson.’

And with that, Loki whirled away, seething with annoyance and leaving Thor in his wake. Thor sighed in defeat as his brother stormed off. He wasn’t expecting anything less but to hear the words from his mouth made his heart ache. He had a long way to go in mending his relationship with Loki and from the look of it; he wasn’t going to make it any easier.

‘Should they be allowed to watch this?’ Ragna gestured to her brothers as she sat on her sister’s bed. Brenna and Bodil had become hooked on ‘Game of Thrones’ with their mother and had taken every opportunity to watch it when they could.

‘Tis nothing they won’t find in Asgard.’ Bodil shot back. The scene flashed back to a scene of Deanerys Targeryn and Brenna unconsciously leaned forward in excitement and Ragna rolled her eyes. She was just about to go back to her spell book when the lights went out.

The children groaned in disappointment. ‘Jarvis! What happened?’ Bodil called out.

No reply.

‘Jarvis?’ Ragna called out a bit louder.

Still silence.

Bodil muttered a spell and the room lit up with dim light. ‘Bwenna? What’s happening?’ Aric asked in small voice as he clutched on to Einar’s hand. Bodil was about to reply when they heard the distant sound of glass breaking.

Bodil’s eyes widened and she turned to her siblings. ‘The vents. NOW.’ Brenna tugged a bewildered Ragna and a scared Aric to their feet before grabbing a chair and placing it under a vent. Bodil cast a locking charm on the door before rushing to her sibling’s side.

With the help of some magic and a good amount of strength on their side, the twins were able to hoist Einar and Aric up the vents. They were just about to lift Ragna up when they heard footsteps outside their door.

The girls shot a panicked look at each other before pushing Ragna up the vent. In their hurry, one of
the twins kicked the chair down. The chair made a thudding sound and Bodil hoisted her little sister fully up the vent.

There was a pounding noise at the door but the twins ignored it. ‘You next.’ Bodil said to her twin. Brenna made to disagree but Bodil cut her short. ‘No time for arguments. Now.’ She hissed. Brenna nodded and Bodil crouched down for her sister to climb up.

Brenna gripped the edge of the vent and pulled herself up with the help of her siblings before reaching down for her sister’s hand. The pounding on the door had increased and Bodil knew the locking charm wouldn’t hold out for much longer. She grabbed her sister’s hand and pulled herself up into the vent.

Brenna squeezed her sister’s hand tightly and Bodil gave her a reassuring smile before the twins began to lead their siblings through the confusing maze of air vents. Back in their room, the door gave a creaking noise before crashing to the floor and a swarm of agents clothed in black rushed into the room.

They fanned out, combing through the room in search of the children until one of them motioned towards the ceiling.

The agents all looked up at the open air vent before one of them got out his gun. ‘Fire on sight.’ He said to the men and they all nodded in agreement.

‘Something’s wrong.’ Pepper said as she got up. ‘Jarvis won’t just shut down, not without Tony here.’

‘Tried calling him?’ Jane asked. Pepper nodded. ‘I can’t get a signal. It’s like everything in here’s been fried.’

There was a crash heard and the women froze. ‘There’s someone in the tower.’ Sigyn said in a low voice as she stood up. Darcy’s eyes widened and her hand automatically went to her stomach. ‘Come on, get up.’ Sigyn said as she went over to the kitchen counter. She pulled out four knives and tucked them into the back of her jeans and into her boots.

‘What-What are you doing?’ Jane asked, her voice wavering. Sigyn pulled Darcy up. ‘Protecting you.’ She said in a soft voice. ‘Where’s the nearest room?’ She asked Pepper.

‘Um-There-There’s a nearby wardrobe. It’s big enough for all of us.’ She replied. Sigyn nodded. ‘That’ll do.’ She replied.

The group of women darted across the room as quickly as they could. Pepper led while Sigyn trailed behind them, her eyes flitting across the room, her body alert. They got to the wardrobe and Sigyn pushed everyone inside.

‘Where are you going?’ Darcy stammered, her eyes glistening with tears. ‘I’m going to get my children.’ Sigyn replied. ‘Do not, under any circumstances, open this door for anyone else.’ She said to the women.

Pepper nodded solemnly and Sigyn shut the door. Squelching down the sinking feeling in the pit of her stomach, she began heading towards the stairs. She had no clue what she was up against or what she was walking into but she was getting her children safe or she was going to die trying.

‘Sir, I appear to have lost connection to the tower.’
Tony frowned. ‘What d’you mean you’ve lost connection to the tower?’ He asked. ‘I mean I can no longer view the activities taking place in the tower nor its inhabitants.’ Jarvis shot back.

‘Alright, smart ass. Can you attempt to reconnect to the tower?’ Tony asked. There was a slight pause.

‘There appears to be some sort of barrier around the tower. It’s blocking access to the tower.’ Jarvis replied.

‘A barrier?’ Steve echoed as he stood next to Tony. ‘Jarvis before you lost connection to the tower, was everyone in there?’ Natasha asked.

‘If by everyone you mean, Ms. Lewis, Ms. Potts, Ms. Foster, the Lady Sigyn and the children, then yes everyone was still in the building. Jarvis replied.

‘Turn the jet around.’ Bruce said to the AI. ‘What for?’ Clint asked. ‘I’ve worked on Jarvis’ hardware myself. He won’t just lose connection on a whim.’ Bruce said.

‘Jarvis call Pepper.’ Tony instructed. There was another pause before the AI replied.

‘Her line is unreachable.’ Jarvis replied. A streak of fear shot through Tony.

‘Try Darcy.’ Steve said, anxiety seeping into his bones.

‘And Jane.’ Thor added.

There was another pause from Jarvis before he replied. ‘They’re both unreachable.’ He replied.

‘Jarvis plot a course back home.’ Steve ordered, a tremor in his voice. If anyone noticed it, they kept it to themselves.

‘Already done.’ Jarvis replied. Tony opened a compartment and got out his trust bottle of whiskey. He hated to think of it but if Pepper was-If the tower had been breached then he was gonna need the alcohol.

The rumble of thunder was heard and the jet rocked slightly. ‘Easy there buddy. We can’t get to the tower if we get struck by lightning.’ Clint said, gently placing a hand on Thor’s shoulder. The god’s grip on Mjollnir loosened and he gave the archer a curt nod.

Steve sat down, his fingers tightly around his shield. Thoughts of guilt swirled in his head. If he’d just stayed behind and not listened to anyone but his instincts maybe just maybe he’d be there to protect his family. His heart clenched at the idea of something happening to Darcy or the baby and Steve felt a bubble of panic he hadn’t felt before his transformation.

‘They’ll be fine.’

Everyone turned at the sound of Loki’s voice. He was sitting in a corner, his hands twiddling with a stray piece of his armour.

‘You don’t know that.’ Tony said softly. Loki shook his head. ‘I do.’ He replied simply.

‘Oh do you now?’ Steve said harshly. ‘Care to let us in on how exactly you know this cause in case you haven’t noticed, Jarvis can’t get in contact with anyone and he practically has no clue what’s going on in the tower so how exactly do you know that it’s going to be okay?!’ Steve’s voice had gotten louder with every word and by the end of his sentence, he was yelling.
Natasha’s eyes darted between the two men. She knew the situation at hand and Steve had every right to be angry but they were thousands of feet above ground in a compact piece of metal. Tension wasn’t what they needed.

‘I know because Sigyn’s there.’ Loki replied. ‘I may not know the situation at hand but I do know one thing. As long as there’s breath in her body, she won’t let a thing come near her family.’

‘Well she didn’t exactly give birth to or marry any of us so that’s not particularly encouraging.’ Clint muttered. Natasha shot him a look.

‘I didn’t mean our children.’ Loki shot back. The implications of that sunk into everyone’s mind and there was a sober silence.

‘Aren’t you scared of something happening to her?’ Bruce asked gently. ‘I’m terrified of it.’ Loki said with a weak laugh. ‘But I did mean what I said. They’re in good hands with Sigyn.’

The team fell silent, Loki’s words resonating with them.

Sigyn took in a deep breath as she quietly tiptoed across the room. She’d headed back to her floor, determined to find her children. She could hear the far away voices of men and her heart thudded painfully in her chest. It had been years since she’d been anywhere near a battlefield, her marriage to Loki disqualifying her status as a shield maiden and banning her from fighting.

Of course she’d trained through the years but that was always in the safety of her own home, free of threats. She could feel panic welling up in her and she forced it down. *Enough of that. You are a warrior and right now, your home and family is under attack. You can fall apart later but as of now, your only job is to fight.*

Steeling herself with those words, she moved closer to the voices. As suspected, they were men and they were all dressed in black, holding what Sigyn identified as guns.

She paused and decided to assess the situation. One of the men removed his mask and Sigyn caught a view of his face. He looked to be a middle aged man with stern features and short hair.

‘Turn on your heat sensors and spread out. Our orders were to extract the children before the Avengers return. We were given an hour to do so and I intend to complete the job.’

Sigyn’s blood ran cold. They were talking about her children, her babies. Her heart thumped painfully in her chest. She could feel her panic rushing back to consume her when a thought came to mind. If they are still looking for the children then that means, they managed to escape somehow.

Right there and then, she made a decision. She didn’t care who these men were or who they were working for but there was no way they were laying a finger on her children.

The men had dispersed to different areas of the floor and Sigyn could hear footsteps nearing her location. Taking in a deep breath and tightening her grip around her knife, she jumped out from her hiding place and stabbed the knife right into his chest.

His mouth opened to speak but Sigyn quickly placed her hands on his jaw and head and snapped his neck in an instant. He dropped to the ground and she moved off to her next target, her old nervousness forgotten and adrenaline was pumping through her veins.
She moved silently through the room, creeping up on another soldier. Gripping another knife, she slashed his carotid artery. He dropped to the floor, blood pooling around his figure. The next guy went down just as easily and Sigyn felt her confidence grow.

Unfortunately, the next guy saw her coming and he raised his gun towards her. Remembering her training with Natasha, Sigyn snatched the gun out of his hands and fired five times. She barely had time to wonder what the darts coming out of the gun were before she was discovered.

Thinking on her feet, she hurled her knives at two soldiers. The last thing she felt was being hit with the same strange darts and a hope that her children had managed to escape whoever these strange men were.

Bodil opened the vent and carefully poked her head. They’d arrived in the main living room and there was no one in sight. She pulled her head back in and nodded to her siblings. Bodil first dropped out of the vent, followed by Brenna, Ragna, Einar and finally Aric.

‘Where’s mother?’ Einar said and Bodil shushed him. ‘I don’t know but let’s try to find her.’ She whispered to him. He nodded and Brenna gave him an encouraging shoulder squeeze. They’d barely taken a step forward when they heard a whizzing sound and Aric suddenly collapsed on the floor.

‘Aric!’ Ragna screamed as she rushed towards her brother. Bodil and Brenna immediately went on high alert and stood in front of their siblings. Ragna rolled Aric over to his side and that’s when she discovered the dart stuck in his skin.

Another whizzing sound was heard and Einar collapsed next to his brother. By now, Bodil had located the source of the sound and using her powers; she lifted a glass table and threw it in the direction of the sound.

There was the sound of glass shattering before they heard a faint groan and the sound of a body falling to the floor.

Using her powers, Brenna levitated two glass shards to her side, waiting for the next attack. She heard the sound of whizzing first before she felt anything and she let go of the glass shards before blacking out.

Ragna stared in horror as her siblings lay around her. ‘Run. Ragna, ru-’ Bodil’s words cut off as she fell forward into her sister’s arms. Ragna’s eyes welled up with tears.

‘Move an inch and I will shoot.’ A voice said. A figure dressed in black emerged from the shadows with what looked like a cocked gun.

‘You-you killed my siblings.’ Ragna said, her tears spilling over her cheeks. ‘Don’t move.’ The figure repeated. Ragna looked at the still figures of her brothers and sisters, rage beginning to boil up in her. Whoever this person was had just fired at her siblings in cold blood and had probably done the same to her mother and now he was ordering her to not move while pointing a gun at her?

She could hear the thundering footsteps of what she assumed to be other soldiers and she could hear their voices. The S.H.E.I.L.D agent, kept his gun cocked on the small girl as she looked at her siblings. They hadn’t received any warnings about the girl and while he was still on his guard, he preferred not to fire if he could avoid it.

Ragna felt the anger bubble up in her until she felt it in every fibre of her being and she was seeing red. ‘No.’ She spat out, turning back to the agent. He barely had time to register her blood red eyes and blue fingers before he was impaled on a large shard of ice.
Ragna could hear yelling from the other spies and she felt something hit her arm. Looking down, she saw the same dart she’d seen impaled in her brother and her anger grew. Marching towards the men, she pushed out her anger and saw a wave of ice impale the men.

At the same time, she felt several darts hit her. The corners of her vision began to fade and she felt the floor rushing towards her. The last thing she saw were the black boots of a figure coming towards her and then…

Nothing.

The jet touched down at the Stark Tower and the Avengers all scrambled out. The living room was a mess. There was glass strewn across the floor and what looked to be the bodies of several dead men, laying in a puddle of water.

‘I’ll get Jarvis back up.’ Bruce said heading towards Tony’s basement. Loki raced towards the stairs, his mind on finding his family. Tony, Steve and Thor rushed through the rooms, frantically searching for their respective partners.

‘Pepper!’

‘Darcy!’

‘Jane!’

There was a muffled yelling coming from a wardrobe and Steve practically tore it open. Pepper tumbled out of the closet and Tony caught her in his arms. He hugged her to him and Pepper clutched him tightly. Jane came out next and Thor lifted her in his arms, relief surging through his body. Darcy was huddled in the back of the closet and Steve practically scooped her up in his arms.

‘Steve.’ Darcy said in a broken voice as she sobbed in his arms. ‘Are you okay?’ Steve asked frantically and she nodded. ‘The children. The children.’ Darcy gasped and Steve whirled around.

Where were Bodil and Brenna with their arrows? Where was Ragna with her book of spells? Or Einar prancing about as a horse? And-God no- where the hell was Aric? Steve’s eyes widened as he realized what had happened.

He and Tony locked eyes and the same thought ran through their minds.

‘Suit up.’

The first thing Sigyn became aware of was a voice. It was muffled and distorted, like it came from a far place. As she came back to herself, she could finally distinguish the voice as Loki’s and he was saying her name.

Loki carried Sigyn in his arms. ‘Sigyn. Sigyn. Sigyn.’ Loki said again and again, panic rushing through his veins.

Her eyes opened slowly and she was greeted by her husband’s panic stricken face. Immediately the events that had transpired just before she’d blacked out came to her and she sat forward with a jolt. ‘The children. Loki the children.’ Sigyn said in a slightly hoarse voice as she attempted to get on her feet.

However her body was still feeling the effects of the dart and she swayed. Loki put his arms around
her before she could fall and pulled her closer to him. ‘Children? What do you mean?’ Loki asked her, fear slowly creeping into his mind.

His eyes darted around and that was when he realized that his children were nowhere to be found.

His blood ran cold.

*No, no, no, no.* It felt like the area around his chest was tightening and he couldn’t breathe. *Not again. Norns not again.* Loki felt his head spin. He couldn’t even begin to think of what to do. Sigyn saw the look in her husband’s eyes and felt tears well up in hers.

She was supposed to protect their children, supposed to shelter them from harm and she’d let them be taken. She couldn’t even imagine how he felt at the moment.

‘I don’t-I don’t know where they took them. I’m so—I’m sorry.’ Sigyn said, a tear tailing down her face.

‘We do.’ Natasha said with a dark look on her face as she and Clint walked into the living room. Natasha’s holding a mask and Loki takes it from her. ‘It’s a standard issue S.H.E.I.L.D black ops mask.’ Clint said as Loki inspected it.

There was a split second where Clint’s words soaked into Loki’s mind before the ice in his veins turned to fire. How dare they? How dare they touch his family? Loki’s hands shook with anger.

‘I don’t care what your affiliation is with this S.H.E.I.L.D but I shall tear them apart.’ Sigyn said in a dangerously quite voice.

‘What about S.H.E.I.L.D?’ Tony said as he walked into the living room, Pepper in his arms and Steve and Thor with their respective partners in tow.

‘We found S.H.E.I.L.D gear on the bodies of the men.’ Natasha clarified. ‘They must have found out about the kids’ abilities and taken them in somehow.’ Clint added. Thor’s eyes narrowed.

‘Are you sure?’ Steve asked, setting Darcy gently on the sofa, his hand still securely on her shoulder. ‘I wouldn’t say it if I wasn’t.’ Natasha murmured.

‘Look I understand that S.H.E.I.L.D is your sponsor and while I do respect that, that is not going to stop me from tearing them to shreds for doing so much as touching my children.’ Loki said, speaking up for the first time. His fist was tightly curled in the S.H.E.I.L.D mask and his skin was beginning to take on a blue tinge.

‘We are not asking for your support nor your approval.’ Sigyn added.

‘Well you’re just going to have to get there before us then.’ Steve said in a stern voice. ‘We may work with them but they cannot come into our home and take the people that mean the most to us.’

Loki raised a brow in surprise but decided to save his comments for later. ‘Bruce? How’s my baby doing?’ Tony asked into his ear piece.

There was a split second of silence before Bruce’s voice filtered through the room. ‘I’ll have Jarvis up in three minutes. What’s our game plan?’

‘Bruce you’re staying here. I don’t think they’ll be coming back but if they do, show no mercy.’ Steve said. ‘Nat, Clint load up. Thor, get your hammer. Tony, suit. I hope for their sake they haven’t harmed a hair on those kids.’
Natasha and Clint nodded and Thor had Mjollnir in one hand and Jane in the other and Tony was already assembling his suit. Steve picked his shield from the ground and looked at Sigyn and Loki.

‘Ready?’

Sigyn and Loki nodded and Steve gave a short nod.

‘Let’s move out!’

‘Care to let us in agents?’ Steve asked the men at the door.

‘Sorry sir but we’re not authorized to give you access to the facilities at this time.’ One of the agents said.

‘Authorized, I made half of the shit in there.’ Tony spouted.

‘Let us in. We won’t ask again.’ Steve said.

‘We’re going to have to tell you to step away from the-’

There were two gunshots and both agents dropped dead. Everyone turned back to see Natasha holding a gun.

‘Did you really think they were gonna let us in if we asked nicely?’ She said in a mocking tone as she pushed past the team. She reached down to one of the bodies and pulled out a key card. She passed it across the lock and the doors opened.

Immediately, an alarm rang out and red lights began to flash across the base. The team could hear orders being yelled and Tony gave a long suffering sigh. ‘Here we go.’ He muttered under his breath. Clint readied his bow and arrow, Tony fired up his suit, Thor swung his hammer, Natasha cocked her gun and Loki tossed a knife to Sigyn, who caught it with a cold smile.

The team was already surrounded by a group of agents, each with their guns aimed at the Avengers. ‘Before we begin, does anyone want to tell us where the kids are?’ Steve asked, staring them down.

‘Steve Rogers, you and your team need to stand down!’ One of the agents yelled. Clint aimed at the agent that spoke, ready to fire when a voice came over on the speakers.

‘Agents, stand down.’

It was Nick Fury.

‘Captain, perhaps you’d like to bring you and your team to my office.’

Steve clenched his jaw at the sound of Fury’s poorly veiled order. The Avengers looked to Steve waiting for his next move. Steve gritted his teeth. There was nothing he wanted more than to shoot through the barricade of armoured spies in front of him but the rational side of him knew that it wouldn’t help things.

He let out a small puff of air before lowering his shield. Clint slowly lowered his bow and Thor let Mjollnir hang by his side. ‘Nat?’ Tony said, turning to the spy. She still had her gun firmly in her hand and looked extremely pissed.

‘I’ll lower my gun when I see the kids.’ She said in a final tone. The corners of Loki’s mouth twitched in a small smile at Natasha’s words. The soldiers parted for the team to pass through and
Steve let his shield hang by his side. He honestly hoped for Fury’s sake that he had a really good reason for taking the kids.

Fury’s office had four people. Nick Fury, Phil Coulson and two male agents. As soon as Sigyn caught sight of the two men, her face hardened and her hand subtly went to the knife by her side.

Fury opened his mouth to speak but Steve beat him to it. ‘Where are they?’ Steve asked, marching over to Fury’s desk. Fury raised a brow.

‘You are in no position to ask questions, Captain. Considering the fact that you housed five dangerous killers and felt no need to tell me about it.’ Fury replied.

‘Killers? They are children, they know not of killing.’ Thor shot back.

‘Not according to the report of Agent McCall and Agent Harris.’ Fury said, gesturing to the two men.

‘Who the fuck are you?’ Natasha asked the two men.

‘We were tasked with extracting the children from the tower. I left with twenty one men and came back with nine.’ Agent Harris said.

There was a second of stunned silence. ‘They killed twelve men?’ Tony asked slowly.

‘No they killed six of our men.’ Agent McCall replied. ‘That silver haired bitch though...’ He began referring to Sigyn but he didn’t get to finish his sentence because there was a knife lodged in his neck. Blood gurgled out of his mouth and he let off a few chocked noises before kneeling over. Immediately, Agent Harris had his gun out, pointed at the person who threw the knife.

‘I killed six of his men. Well...seven.’ Sigyn replied simply, glaring at Agent Harris. He cocked his gun and prepared to fire. Before anyone could make a move, the gun was pulled out of his hand by some unseen force and was aimed at him.

‘Okay let’s just all calm down here.’ Phil said slowly, looking at everyone. ‘Loki, you pull that trigger and that’s a one way ticket back to Asgard.’ Fury said to the dark haired god but Loki didn’t even bat an eyelid.

Agent Harris had backed against the wall now and the barrel of the gun was right against his forehead. Everyone waited to see what Loki would do. Every person in the team knew they should step in and say something but after what S.H.E.I.L.D had done to his family, no one was willing to side with them just yet.

‘Loki.’ Sigyn said softly, with a hand to his shoulder. Loki looked at her and an understanding passed between the two of them. The gun flew across the room and into Sigyn’s hands. Agent Harris barely had a moment to take in a breath of relief before Sigyn aimed at him and pulled the trigger.

He slumped down the wall, blood trailing after his body. In a split second, Fury had his gun trained on her, the same time as the Avengers had their weapons trained on him.

‘Guys, come on. Let’s not rush into things.’ Phil said in what he hoped was a calming tone but it was like he wasn’t even there.

‘You underestimate how far I’m willing to go for my children.’ Sigyn said in a dangerously quiet voice. ‘I will kill everyone on this base before hunting down whoever means anything to you and
killing them in front of your very eyes if it means getting them back. And do not say you care for no one, we all have someone we treasure.’

‘Any one care to explain why you’re all pointing your guns at me and not her?’ Fury asked the Avengers, his eyes not leaving Sigyn for one moment.

‘You wanted a team, Fury. You got one.’ Clint said in a dead pan tone. ‘And this team happens to back its fucking team mates up when their family gets kidnapped.’ Tony added.

‘Your choice, Fury. Tell us where the kids are.’ Steve said to the director. Phil watched the scene in front of him, helpless to do anything to stop it. Thankfully the intercom on Fury’s desk buzzed before things could blow out of proportion.

‘Sir, there’s an emergency in the labs. The detainees are proving difficult.’ A voice said. ‘What lab are the kids in?’ Steve said to Phil.

‘Coulson don’t you dare answer that.’ Fury said, his gaze still focused on Sigyn.

‘Lab C.’ Phil replied.

‘Let’s go.’ Natasha said as she pocketed her gun and stormed out of Fury’s office. Steve hoisted up his shield and looked to Loki and Sigyn. Sigyn had dropped the gun in her hands and stormed out of the office, following Natasha’s lead.

Loki glared at Fury for a few more seconds before walking out. Fury put his gun back in its holster and shot Clint a look before following in the Avenger’s footsteps.

Natasha stormed through the twisting pathways of S.H.I.E.L.D, her mind only on one thing. Knowing what it felt like to be taken from a place of safety and subjected to terrors, she was not going to let the same thing happen to the children.

*If I had my way, they’d never have to see a fucking inch of this place.* Her plan was to go in, kill whoever she had to kill and get the kids out. What she did not plan for was the absolute mayhem she was greeted with the team got to the lab.

The lab was a mess. Chairs, medical equipment and pieces of paper were flying around the room like a raging inferno and in the midst of said inferno, was Aric. The three year old was yelling at the doctors in the room, his normal bright blue eyes, a jet black.

‘Let my sister go!!’ The boy screamed. Bodil and Brenna were standing next to him, their faces devoid of emotion. Einar was cowering behind his sisters, a terrified expression on their faces. Ragna was slumped on the floor of what looked to be a large glass container and Aric was smashing several objects against it in an attempt to break it.

The doctors in the lab were back up against the wall, syringes poised against their necks. Sigyn rushed into the room, heading for Aric.

‘Mother!’ Bodil and Brenna exclaimed and the syringes dropped. Aric’s eyes suddenly reverted back to their normal color and he slumped forward. The moment he did, the pieces of equipment and everything else came crashing down. Sigyn caught him in her arms and held him to her. Thor marched towards the glass container and smashed it with his hammer, causing glass to fly everywhere.

Loki was kneeling in front of his children, his hands flying across their bodies. ‘Are you okay?! Are
you hurt?!’ He asked, his panic showing for the first time that night. They shook their head, tears spilling over their cheeks as they clung to their father.

Sigyn placed her ear against Aric’s neck, searching for a heartbeat. It took a second and Sigyn was preparing to go hysterical when she heard the familiar thumping sound of her son’s heart. Sighing with relief, she hoisted the toddler up in her arms and stood up but she rejoiced too soon.

Thor stepped out of the glass chamber with a limp Ragna in his arms and Sigyn felt the panic well up in her again. ‘She still lives but does not wake.’ Thor said as he cradled Ragna in his arms. ‘What did you do to her?’ Steve said stepping closer to the scientists.

‘S-She was deemed dangerous so we put her under anaesthesia.’ One of them stammered. ‘T-That’s all.’

‘And the others?’ Natasha demanded.

‘J-Just blood samples.’ Another one said.

‘Tony?’ Steve said.

‘Already wiping anything S.H.E.I.L.D.’s got on them.’ Tony replied. Sigyn placed a hand on Ragna’s forehead. She felt unnaturally warm and Sigyn felt anger well in her.

‘Thor, take Aric and Ragna to the tower.’ Sigyn said to her brother-in-law as she handed Aric over to him. Thor nodded and balanced the two children in his arms before leaving the lab. ‘I’ll help.’ Tony offered. Sigyn crouched down to her children’s height.

‘You’re going to go with Uncle Tony now.’ Sigyn began.

‘No, don’t leave us.’ Bodil sobbed.

‘Shh, it’s okay. We’ll be with you very soon.’ Loki said in what he hoped was a soothing tone. ‘I don’t wanna go.’ Einar said through tears as his grip on his father tightened. Sigyn felt her heart rip in two. She’d never seen her children this scared since the day she’d birthed them.

Loki clenched his jaw. All through this ordeal, he’d held back. Not because he wanted to but because Sigyn had convinced him that fighting back would be of no use to them and would only ensure Odin’s wrath. As much as he didn’t care about Odin, he couldn’t stand if his actions caused him to be separated from his family again.

So he’d chosen to hold back.

Until now.

Turning back to Fury, Loki used his magic to slam him against the wall and choke him. ‘Loki, no.’ Sigyn said in a distressed voice. Phil whipped out his gun and aimed it at Loki. ‘I really don’t want to use this but I will.’ Phil said in a controlled tone.

‘Loki…’ Steve said, cautiously approaching the raven haired god. ‘I know how you feel, I feel the same way, but killing Fury is only going to make things worse.’ He said.

‘Hate to say it but Cap’s right.’ Tony seconded. Loki watched as Fury choked in front of him. Every fibre of his being was begging to end the man’s life and he had the resources at hand. He deserves it.

‘Loki.’
The sound of Sigyn’s voice snapped him out of his thoughts. He turned back to look at her. She was holding on to Bodil, Brenna and Einar, her blue eyes piercing through him and a pleading look on her face.

He wanted nothing more than to kill the man in front of him but he knew as soon as that happened, he’d be hauled back to Asgard. He could take whatever punishment the Allfather doled out to him but he could not put Sigyn and the children through the pain of missing him.

Not again.

Loki released his grip on Fury and the director fell to the ground. Steve sighed in relief and Phil placed his gun away. Loki glared down at Fury as he coughed and struggled to catch his breath before turning back to the others.

‘Let’s go.’

Loki soothingly rubbed Einar back as he carried him on his hip. It had been a very quiet drive back to the tower. The children had clung to him and Sigyn and he couldn’t blame them. He’d come so close to losing them and it terrified him.

Now he was back at the tower and looking forward to getting into bed with his wife and children. ‘You guys need to get to the workshop.’ Bruce’s voice filtered through the speakers in the elevator. ‘It’s Ragna.’

Sigyn inhaled sharply and Loki heart beat picked up. The elevator arrived at Tony and Bruce’s workshop and everyone rushed out. Ragna was lying on a makeshift gurney with Bruce and Thor watching over her. There was an IV inserted into her vein and several ice packs surrounding her. Aric was sleeping on a pull-out couch and Sigyn checked in on him.

‘He’s sleeping. It’s Ragna you should be worried about.’ Bruce said to her.

‘What’s going on?’ Loki asked as placed Einar on the ground and rushed to his daughter’s side.

‘She’s running a fever, her body temperature is 106 °F and I can’t seem to bring it down.’ Bruce said to the worried parents.

‘I’ve put her on acetaminophen but it’s not doing a thing.’ Bruce stated worriedly as Loki placed his hand against Ragna’s forehead. She was burning up.

‘It doesn’t look like sepsis and I ran the dart solution by Jarvis. It’s the standard formula and she’s not allergic to any of the substances in it.’ He added.

‘Where’s everyone else?’ Clint asked.

‘Lady Darcy and Lady Jane slumber away.’ Thor answered. ‘Lady Pepper is conducting a process known as ‘suing’.’

‘That’s my girl.’ Tony mumbled under his breath.

‘Darcy?’ Steve asked Bruce.

‘She’s perfectly fine.’ He replied and Steve felt a wave of relief hit him.

Natasha placed another ice pack on Ragna’s side and she seemed to inch closer to it. Loki stared worriedly at his daughter. She’d never been this sick before. Sigyn stood next to her husband, white
as a sheet. A thought occurred to Loki and he pushed it out of his mind.

*Tis impossible. Still…* Loki looked down at his daughter. If she stayed at that temperature for much longer she would die. *I’d rather try than let her die.*

Making up his mind, Loki placed his hand against her forehead, letting his true skin come through. A few seconds went by before his tan coloured skin began to change to a cerulean blue. Immediately, Ragna leaned towards his hand and his eyes widened.

‘Get ice. Lots of it. Now.’ He said urgently to Bruce. ‘Jarvis?’ Steve called.

‘Already placing an order for ice, sir.’ Jarvis replied.

‘We’ve got enough in the tower to fill a tub.’ Clint said.

‘And Bruce and I can devise some way to make sure the ice doesn’t melt.’ Tony added. ‘I’ll have Jarvis draw up plans.’ Bruce said. ‘We’d get the ice down.’ Steve said as he, Clint and Thor walked towards the elevator.

‘What’s happening to her?’ Bodil and Brenna asked in a soft tone as they came next to their sister.

‘Is she going to die?’ Einar whispered, tears welling up in his eyes.

‘No. I’d never let that happen.’ Loki said back to his children as he used one arm to pull Einar close to him.

‘Your sister’s going to be fine. We’ll make sure of it.’ Tony said to the children. Silence settled over the group as Bruce and Tony worked on a solution.

‘You should sleep; it’s been a long day.’ Sigyn said to the children. ‘We want to stay with her.’ Brenna said, looking back at her mother. Sigyn shot Loki a pleading look and he gave a subtle nod. ‘Come on, your mother is right.’ He said as he gently pulled the children away.

‘But father-’ Bodil began but Loki began to mutter a strange jumble of words under his breath. Slowly, the children began to blink heavily and within seconds, they were fast asleep.

‘What did you do to them?’ Natasha asked as Loki hoisted Brenna up in his arms and placed her on the pull out couch. ‘It’s a dreamless sleeping spell. They won’t wake up for the next ten hours.’ Loki replied as he carried Bodil up. Sigyn picked up Einar and tucked him in next to his siblings.

‘With the night they had, they need some rest.’ Sigyn said quietly. ‘They’ll be having nightmares for months.’ She gently stroked her son’s face. ‘They were so brave. I wish they’d never gone through this but I’m so proud of them.’ She said, her voice cracking on her last words.

Loki reached out to squeeze her hand and she managed a small smile. ‘I’m sorry any of you had to go through this.’ Natasha said. ‘S.H.I.E.L.D-Fury had no right to do what he did and I’ll make sure he knows that.’

‘Thank you.’ Sigyn replied. ‘I need some water. Do you wish for anything?’ She asked the others. They shook their head in reply and Sigyn walked out of the living room. Loki watched her go with a heavy heart. Today had been hard on everyone but especially her. This was the first time their children had ever been threatened and he couldn’t imagine what was going through her mind.

From the day she’d found out she was with child, the notion that her children could be taken away from her was always at the back of her mind and now that it had actually happened, he couldn’t
fathom what her next move would be. Loki looked down at his sleeping children.

At least they’re safe. Right now, that’s all that matters.

Sigyn poured herself a glass of water and placed the cool glass against her temple. The events that had just taken place were rushing through her mind and she felt like the stitches that were holding her together were pulling at the seams.

All she wanted to do was scream, cry, destroy something, anything that would help release the kaleidoscope of emotions within.

‘I’m sorry. For all this.’

Sigyn snapped out of her reprieve and blinked in surprise at Tony. He was standing in front of her with the most contrite expression she’d ever seen. ‘Sorry for what?’ She asked, confused.

‘Everything.’ Tony replied. ‘I promised a safe place for everyone and I failed. I totally understand if you want to move out.’

Sigyn dropped her glass of water on the counter and stepped closer to Tony. ‘You have nothing to apologize for. How was anyone to know we’d be attacked?’ She said. ‘Jarvis is a wonderful creation but he is still part of machinery and from what I’m led to understand, such things can always be manipulated. I do not blame you.’

‘But I-’ Tony began and Sigyn cut him off.

‘Tony you didn’t just provide a safe place for everyone, you provided a home.’ She said. ‘Tony, you took Loki and I in along with five magic wielding children without hesitation. The decision to stay is not up to me but if it were, I wouldn’t dream of moving.’ As the words left her mouth, she realized they were the truth. He had provided for her family like they were his. She’d never been met with hospitality of that kind in forever and she surely wasn’t going to let it go.

Tony swallowed past a lump that hadn’t been in his throat a few seconds ago. To say that that wasn’t the reaction he was expecting for her was putting it lightly. Everyone knew how protective Sigyn was and he was sure she was prepared to move her family away from the tower and never return and he didn’t blame her.

Hell, he felt the same. Strangers had invaded his home and forced his life partner into hiding; all he wanted to do was bundle Pepper up and hide her from the world.

And bomb S.H.I.E.L.D.

Definitely bomb S.H.I.E.L.D.

But the fact that Sigyn was deciding to place her family and her trust in him again…he wasn’t ready for that.

Sigyn saw the look on Tony’s face and she immediately wrapped him up in a hug. That was the look of someone who expected abandonment when he’d done wrong and it broke her heart.

‘I do not turn my back on family.’ She murmured into his ear. Tony nodded into her neck and she let go of him. She peered at him for a few more seconds before pulling back.

‘We should return to the others.’ She stated and Tony nodded. Giving him one last pat on the back,
Sigyn made her way back to the rest of the team.

Loki watched as Ragna’s chest rose and fell. The ice had cooled her down significantly and her body temperature was beginning to stabilize. Tony and Bruce had managed to come up with a tub that could maintain a certain temperature, ensuring that the ice would melt at a much slower rate. ‘Her fingers are blue.’ Bruce said in alarm, taking one of her hands in his.

‘It’s just her true skin coming out.’ Sigyn said softly. Loki felt a sudden wave of exhaustion crash over him. He felt like he hadn’t slept in ages. He looked around. The rest of the team looked the same. If he didn’t know any better, he’d have said they just came from a major battle.

‘You don’t need to stay up with us, you’ve done so much already.’ Sigyn said, noticing the same thing her husband did.

‘Trust me, I don’t think any of us could sleep even if we tried.’ Natasha said with a small smile. ‘Thank you.’ Sigyn replied.

‘We should be thanking you.’ Steve said. ‘If not for you…I can’t even think of the alternative.’

‘Family protects family.’ Sigyn said simply. ‘I know you would’ve done the same in my position.’ Her words struck a chord in Loki. Those three words, ‘family protects family’, had become a sort of motto for him.

All his life, he’d felt like he never belonged in the royal family and after marrying Sigyn, he’d sworn that he would do whatever he could do protect her. After the birth of the twins she’d become fraught with worry, afraid that someone would do to them what had been done to her. She almost became obsessive, never letting them out of her sight.

He wasn’t any better, he’d lost all of his children to Odin’s stupid rules and he understood her fear and worry. He’d told her that as long as he drew breath, he would protect her and his family.

No matter what.

She swore the same.

And now it was happening again but with a different set of people and he found himself agreeing with his wife. They were family. They’d protected him, looked out for him and despite their mistakes, they’d been far more honest and welcoming than any he’d found in Asgard.

*Perhaps it’s time I began to give some of that trust back.* ‘I’d like to stay.’ Loki blurted out. He waited for the swell of panic to come at saying those words but nothing came.

Tony raised a brow in surprise. ‘Really?’ He asked. Of all the things he’d been expecting the god to say, that wasn’t it. Loki nodded. ‘Unless…is the offer still open?’ He asked tentatively. He felt the panic seep into him and he mentally kicked himself. He should’ve thought it through or at least talked to Steve in private instead of blurting it out like a fool.

Seeing the panic flash across his face, Steve decided to step in. ‘What Tony meant to say-’ He said, throwing a dirty look to the eccentric billionaire. ‘-is that we’d be honoured to fight alongside you.’

‘Steve’s right.’ Clint said, surprising everyone. ‘I…I’d be proud to call you a team mate.’ Clint said. Loki blinked in surprise. He waited for the archer to say something derogatory or to take his words back but a few seconds had passed and nothing of the sort had happened.
‘I…Thank you.’ Loki stammered. ‘I cannot say that I am deserving of such words but I do promise to live up to them.’

‘That’s all we can ask for buddy.’ Natasha said with a clap to his back. Loki smiled warmly at her. His eyes caught Sigyn who had been watching the entire exchange with a smile on her face. She beamed at him and Loki could almost feel the pride radiating off her.

‘Welcome to the team.’ Bruce said to him with a soft smile.

‘Nice to have you around, reindeer tricks.’ Tony said in a good natured tone.

‘Be nice.’ Steve chided and Tony rolled his eyes.

Loki couldn’t keep the grin off his face. For the first time in perhaps forever, he felt like he truly belonged somewhere and it was an indescribable feeling.

A feeling I intend on keeping for as long as I can.

Loki stood by the balcony. To say that today had been an emotional rollercoaster was putting it lightly. In a single day, he’d lost and gained a family and he was grateful for it. It was amazing how he’d found home on this faraway realm. And to think that it would never have happened had he not attacked Migard on Thanos’ orders.

Ironic really. The man who broke me and threatened to destroy my very being turned out to be the one to lead me to the ones who would accept and build me.

He’d thank the mad Titan if he didn’t forever want to kill the man who’d caused him so much pain. Speaking of family… Loki’s mind went back to his daughter. Ragna was Jӧtnar, something he’d thought impossible.

The possibility of any of his children turning out like him had been slim at best and he’d never worried about it. But now that it had happened, it was raising a lot of other problems. For a moment Loki considered not doing what he was about to. After all, no one would have to know what Ragna was. It could be hidden.

The thought was tempting.

He sighed. He knew he couldn’t. He couldn’t be that man anymore. People thought he was better and he wanted to prove them right. He sighed again. I hope I’m doing the right thing.

Closing his eyes, he waved his hand in a twisting motion and muttered a few words. An average sized blue symbol appeared in the air. A line with three branches at its head wavered in the air for some seconds before fading away.

Loki swallowed. There was no going back after that. I really hope calling him was the right choice.

Another realm away, in the court of the icy palace of Jӧtunheim, the same blue symbol wavered in the air before disappearing.

‘Your Highness?’ A Jӧtnar guard said, looking up at Helblindi, the current King of Jӧtunheim. The King’s eyes darted to Nænnir, his mate, sitting by his side and received a subtle nod before turning to the guard.
‘Ready three of your best warriors.’ He said and the guard nodded before leaving.

‘Take Býleistr with you,’ Nāennir murmured. Helblindi made to complain but he was cut off. ‘Býleistr may not be a skilled warrior but he is proficient in the magical arts and that may benefit you better in Migard.’ He insisted.

‘Besides, a family reunion will do both of you good.’ Nāennir said. Helblindi rolled his eyes but nodded in agreement.

Chapter End Notes

Hey! Finally a new chapter! This is the longest one I've ever written. There was so much to cover and I spent quite some time on it. This chapter mainly focuses on Loki and Sigyn's reaction to the children being taken but the next chapter will go back to including everyone else's point of view. Also, Ragna's Jotnar! Props to anyone who figured it out before hand. The next chapter will come with a bit of a plot twist but we'll also see Loki interacting with his 'true' brothers and that's bound to be some fun.

Thanks so much to everyone who sent me well wishes. My dad is currently in remission which is a huge relief so yaay for that. Thank for reading and I hope you enjoyed this chapter. Suggestions are always welcome! Oh and if this chapter is a bit off, I apologize. I've been under some major stress.

P.S I know it's three months late but Happy New Year!
‘There are its toes and we can see it’s fingers.’ Bruce said as he moved the ultrasound wand over Darcy’s bump. She squeezed Steve’s hand and the duo had tears in their eyes. ‘Can’t really tell what the sex is yet but so far no side effects from the serum.’ Bruce continued.

‘That’s-That’s good to hear.’ Steve said shakily as he discreetly wiped tears from the corner of his eye. Darcy smiled at him and Bruce gave him a reassuring pat on the shoulder.

‘Your next checkup should be in another month.’ Bruce said to the couple. He handed Darcy a wet cloth to wipe off the ultrasound gel from her belly. ‘I’ll print off some copies. I’m sure Tony’s dying to see his new godchild.’

Darcy snorted. ‘I don’t know how he came to that conclusion cause Steve and I sure as hell haven’t said anything about it to him.’ She said.

Steve smiled. ‘Like that’s going to stop him.’ He lowered his head to Darcy and captured her lips in a short but sweet kiss. Bruce turned away to get the copies and to give the couple some privacy. His mind went to Natasha and a flash of pain went through his chest. He knew seeing the ultrasound pictures would only hurt his girlfriend further but at the same time, he knew she wouldn’t want to rain on Steve and Darcy’s parade.

She’s forever putting people first. Bruce thought with a sad smile.

Natasha, Sigyn, Loki, Clint and Tony watched the video in front of them. Jarvis had gotten access to the backup cameras and they were watching the footage of the fight between the children and the S.H.E.I.L.D operatives.

‘Their defence was weak.’ Sigyn murmured to no one. ‘They did not even give pause to check if they were in a safe area.’

‘The twin’s instincts kicked in as soon as the darts came though.’ Natasha noted. ‘They’re just children and you taught them well enough.’ She said in a soothing tone to the warrior. Sigyn nodded.

‘I suppose. I just…I blame myself.’ She said sadly.

‘Hey.’ Clint said cutting into their conversation. ‘If there’s anyone to blame here it’s Fury and we’ll be making damn sure he knows it.’

‘He’s such a one-eyed jackass.’ Tony spouted as he sat down on the couch. ‘Pepper is suing his ass to the moon and back.’

‘No surprise there.’ Clint said. Sigyn looked to her husband. The footage was at the part where Ragna lashed out against the guards and Sigyn placed a comforting hand on his shoulder. ‘I had no idea that she was…’ His voice trailed off and he took in a deep breath.
‘Tis not your fault, Loki.’ She murmured. ‘We should have expected this.’ Loki sighed.

‘I know. I just wish it weren’t so.’ He said. ‘I did not wish this for them.’ He said mournfully. Sigyn opened her mouth to speak but was cut off the entrance of Darcy and Steve into the room.

‘We have pictures!’ Darcy announced with glee as she came into the room.

‘Nice!’ Tony said as he crowed the couple. ‘Lemme see my godchild.’

Steve rolled his eyes as Darcy shared the photos with the inventor. ‘What’s this?’ He said as he noticed the footage being played.

‘The kids. Jarvis accessed backup cameras.’ Clint said. Steve watched the footage of Ragna killing the agents. He gave a low whistle of admiration.

‘I still find it so hard to believe that they killed so many with such little tools.’ He said to Sigyn. ‘I hate to say this but you trained them well Sigyn.’

‘Not nearly well enough.’ Sigyn muttered under her breath. Natasha gave her a shoulder a reassuring squeeze.

‘Nat, Bruce said to tell you he’s in the lab if you need him.’ Darcy said as she came with the pictures. Natasha turned her attention from Sigyn and faced the ecstatic woman.

‘I’m guessing those are the pictures?’ She said with a slightly forced smile. Darcy nodded in excitment and drew in closer to Natasha to show her the pictures. Natasha looked at them with the same forced smile.

‘Do you…know what it is yet or is that going to be a surprise?’ Natasha asked with a slight quiver in her voice.

‘Oh god, no.’ Darcy replied. ‘I’m surprised enough as is.’ Natasha handed the pictures back to Darcy.

‘Congrats Darcy. I’m so happy for you.’ She said, giving the woman a hug. Sigyn gave Natasha a curious look as she hugged Darcy. She could tell that there was something wrong with the former spy. Natasha pulled back from Darcy and gave another tight smile.

'I'm just going to check in with Bruce but congrats Darcy.' Natasha said. 'I'm really happy for you.' She said again before walking off. Sigyn frowned. There was definitely something going on with Natasha and she was going to find out what exactly it was.

Brenna woke up with a start. Events of the night before came to her and her first thought went to her siblings. Her heart began to pump wildly and she almost began to panic before realizing that her siblings were laying right next her.

Her hands went to her twin sister's body and she frantically shook her. Bodil woke up with a start, her hand immediately going to her sister's throat and attempting to choke her.

'Bodil it's me.' Brenna said as she pushed her sister's hand away. The sleep cleared from Bodil's eyes and she threw her hands around her sister in a hug.

'I thought-I thought-' Bodil stuttered and her sister squeezed her tighter.

'I thought the same.' Brenna said tears leaking from her eyes. Bodil suddenly pulled back.
'Ragna. Is she-' Her voice cut off and Brenna shook her head.

'She's right here.' Brenna said as she pointed to their youngest sister. Bodil breathed a sigh of relief.

'I’m so sorry. I should have- ‘Bodil started but her sister cut her off with a look.

‘Stop that. You could not have seen what was going to happen.’ She said softly. ‘No one could.’ A silence settled over the two before Bodil spoke up.

‘I wish I could have.’ She said, her voice suddenly dripping with venom. ‘I would have gladly killed them all.’ Brenna paled. With all that had happened the night before, she’d forgotten about what she done and the memories rushed back to her.

She’d killed people. Humans with lives and probably families all gone at her hands. She felt sick. Bodil caught the look on her sister’s face and frowned.

‘Brenna?’ She asked, wondering what was going on in her sister's mind.

‘I…I killed people.’ Brenna murmured numbly. ‘We killed people Bodil. There are families out there who are never going to see their loved ones again because of us.’

Bodil shrugged. ‘They should’ve thought about that.’ Brenna remained quiet and Bodil rolled her eyes. ‘We had no choice Brenna. It was either us or them and I refuse to feel guilty for choosing us.’

‘It’s not just us anymore.’ Brenna said quietly. ‘I know it was hard when father was gone but we’re not alone. Not anymore.’

Bodil opened her mouth to reply but at that moment, the door swung open and their parents rushed in. The twins ran into their parent’s arms, their conversation forgotten for the meantime. Loki and Sigyn hugged their daughters to them, relief coursing through their veins.

‘Brenna? Bodil?’

The four of them turned to the sound of Ragna’s voice. She was sitting up in bed, her eyes glassy with tears. ‘I thought you were dead.’ She said in a chocked voice and Sigyn rushed forward to scoop her daughter up in a hug.

Her movement jostled the boys on the bed and Aric and Einar awoke with a start. Sigyn gathered them up in her arms hugged them to her while Loki and the twins joined them. Loki wrapped his arms around his family, finally feeling content and safe for the first time in 24 hours.

‘Ragna? Aric?’ Einar questioned as he pulled back from his mother and held on to his siblings.

‘I’m okay.’ Ragna said in a chocked voice hugging her siblings to her. ‘I was so scared, I thought- ‘Her voice cut off and tears came down her face faster. Loki and Sigyn held their children tighter and they spent the next couple of moments just holding each other and reassuring themselves that they were safe.

‘What happened to me?’ Ragna asked after a few moments. They were all piled on the bed and although they were not holding each other as tightly as before, neither of them was too far away from the other. ‘All I remember is the darts hitting me and then…ice?’ She continued looking up at her parents.

Sigyn and Loki exchanged a look. They both knew what she was. Her true nature had no effect on their love for her but they worried how she and her siblings would take it. ‘Well…’ began Sigyn,
deciding to spare Loki the pain of having to explain to their daughter. She knew how he felt about his heritage and she wanted to spare him of as much hurt as possible. ‘You know your father is Jötnar. We had no cause to believe any of you might be as well but last night, the attack must have triggered something in you Ragna.’

Ragna’s eyes went wide at the hidden meaning in her mother’s words. ‘You-You mean…I’m Jötnar?’ She stuttered. Sigyn nodded. Ragna remained stunned at the news she’d just received. Her mind tried to recall instances were there could have been signs of her heritage but nothing was coming to mind. In all her life, she had never thought she could be one of the frost giants.

Even after her father’s revelation, the thought had not crossed her mind in the slightest. ‘And we love you regardless of what you are.’ Loki hurried to add in. ‘This doesn’t change anything.’ Loki had never gotten the reassurance and love he’d needed from his parents even before he’d found out what he was and he’d be damned if he repeated his parent's mistakes.

Ragna looked at her siblings. Everyone knew how the Jötnar were treated back on Asgard. They were seen as cultureless savages and while she supposed there had to have been a degree of untruths to this, she couldn't help but worry that her siblings saw her as the same. They were her family, the only ones she had and she couldn’t bear the thought of them hating her for something she had no control over.

‘Do you...Do you hate me for being Jötnar?’ Ragna asked hesitantly. Loki held his breath as the question hung in the silence. He knew they had reacted well to him being from Jötunheim but it was a different case with his daughter.

‘Of course not.’

‘No!’

‘Why would we?’

Loki felt relief course through him and Sigyn gave his arms a small squeeze in response. ‘Father’s a frost giant and we don't hate him.’ Einar said as he held on to his sister. Loki teared up at his son’s words and Ragna smiled.

‘Thank you.’ Ragna said softly to her siblings. A comfortable silence settled over the group. Sigyn looked at her children as they lay on the bed. She was so lucky to have them. They were everything she ever wanted and then some. *I would do anything for them. They mean so much to me.* She knew the past couple of years, she had been a poor representation of a mother but she swore she would be better. *They deserve that.*

A sudden alarm shook Sigyn from her thoughts and she and Loki locked eyes. The alarm meant two things. Either the Avengers were needed somewhere or someone was attacking the tower.

‘Stay here.’ Sigyn ordered to the children as she and Loki scrambled off the bed. Her heart was pounding harder and she and Loki shared another glance. They both knew what the other was thinking. Come hell or high water, no one was taking their children from them again.

Loki and Sigyn arrived on the top floor of the tower with the rest of the team. Standing in front of them were five individuals. They were seven-foot giants with navy coloured rune etched skin, horned heads, raven coloured hair and red eyes. They were wrapped in furs and three of them were holding spears and shields.

‘Helblindi?’ Thor said in surprise. Midgard was the last place he'd have thought the Frost Giant
would show up in.

‘You know who this is?’ Steve asked, his shield still up in defence.

‘I would say he more than knows me.’ One of the Jötunn said. ‘I am Helblindi of Jötunheim.’ His voice was deep and gravelly, with a faint Norwegian lilt.

‘Is that supposed to mean something to us?’ Tony asked, still in his suit.

‘It’s okay. He’s my brother.’ Loki said as he stepped forward. All eyes turned towards Loki and betrayal flashed through Thor’s eyes. ‘Býleistr.’ Loki said by way of greeting to his second brother. The Jötunn regarded him with a curt nod. ‘I did not expect you so soon. You were not watched?’

‘You are not the only one with knowledge of secret passages.’ Helblindi said with a small smile. He regarded Loki’s appearance and his smile turned to a frown. He could never understand why his brother felt more comfortable as an Asgardian. He took a step towards Loki and placed his hand on his forehead. ‘I will not speak to you while you wear this…Æseir skin.’

‘No. Helblindi don’t- ‘Loki began but it was too late. He felt the effects of the Jötunn’s magic and he groaned internally. His body began to turn the same shade of blue as his brothers and he heard Sigyn gasp behind him. Shame flashed through him but he shrugged it off.

She was going to have to see me like this sooner or later. Might as well be sooner.

Helblindi stepped back in satisfaction. ‘There. You look fitting of a royal of Jötunheim.’ He said, stepping back. ‘Now, why did you summon me? Your call was so sudden, I had no time to prepare an army.’ His gaze flitted from Loki to the rest of the team.

‘These are the ones undertaking the AllFather’s punishment are they not?’ He asked, his gaze still fixed on the team. Loki gave an exasperated nod.

‘Yes, but that is not why you’re here.’ Loki said impatiently. ‘I called to honour our bargain.’ There was a pause while everyone looked between Loki and the Jötunns. Helblindi raised an eyebrow.

‘Which one of them?’ He asked.

‘Ragna.’

Helblindi’s eyes widened in surprise. ‘I would have thought it be one of the twins.’ He murmured. ‘Still…tis a satisfactory choice.’

‘Loki what is he speaking of?’ Sigyn said as she came forward. The talk of her children between her husband and the King of Jötunheim had set her on edge and her gaze flitted between Loki and Helblindi.

Loki and Helblindi exchanged a look before the trickster god turned to his wife. ‘Sigyn, could you bring the children out here please?’ Sigyn shot Helblindi an untrusting look. ‘Please.’ Loki repeated. She hesitated before nodding and turning around to get the children. His heart sank as Loki watched her leave. She is never going to forgive me for this.

The team watched as the Jötunns stood in front of them. ‘Could the AllFather not have banished you to a cooler realm?’ Helblindi complained as he shrugged off his fur coat. Loki turned his attention from his wife to his brother.

‘Norns forbid Odin takes people’s needs in consideration.’ He replied. Helblindi hummed in
agreement and stepped closer to his brother. The Avengers relaxed slightly, noticing the friendly nature of Loki and Helblindi’s conversation but Býleistr and the Jötunns stood in the background still suspicious.

‘Why now?’ Helblindi asked. ‘I admit, this was not what I was expecting when I received your call. To tell the truth, I did not expect any of your kin to show as Jötnar. Not this late.’

Loki nodded in agreement. ‘Neither did I. We were…attacked last night.’ The fear and panic he’d felt at discovering his children had vanished welled up again and Loki forced them down. ‘They were after the children and that must have triggered something within her.’

‘Any kills?’ Helblindi asked.

Loki nodded and Helblindi looked impressed.

‘Better than we had hoped.’ He said looking to Býleistr. Loki frowned.

‘What do you mean?’ He asked suspiciously. Helblindi opened his mouth to answer but Sigyn returned to the room with the children and that conversation was filed till later. Sigyn stood in front of her children, pushing them behind her.

Her motherly instincts were still raging from the night before and she did not trust the Jötunns in front of her. The children peeked around their mother, trying to see what was going on. ‘He looks like the Night King.’ Einar said in a not so small whisper and despite the tense atmosphere, the comment brought smiles from the members of the team.

‘Ragna.’ Loki said softly and the children turned to the sound of his voice. The sight of the father as one of the blue giants was a shock and the boys stepped back in surprise. Ragna stared at her father with wide eyes and Loki felt shame swell up in him. He’d tried to push it down ever since his discovery of his true nature but now it was all out in the open. What did I expect? I am a monster; their stares are not unwarranted.

Helblindi gazed down at Ragna. Sigyn put her hands on her daughter’s shoulders and stared back at the King of Jötunheim. ‘She is small for the task at hand but she will do.’ He said with a small smile. Sigyn’s stomach turned.

‘The task at hand? What do you plan on doing with my daughter?’ She asked in a braver voice than she felt. Helblindi turned to Loki in surprise.

‘Did you not tell her of our bargain?’ He asked. Loki opened his mouth to reply but Helblindi had refocused on Sigyn. ‘We mean to take her. She belongs with Jötunheim now.’ He said in a simple tone.

What happened next could only be described as a flurry of motions. Sigyn pushed Ragna behind her while the rest of the team automatically moved in front of Sigyn and the children. Helblindi’s guards gripped their spears tighter and moved in front of their King while Helblindi observed the group with a mix of surprise and amusement.

‘I don’t know what you think is going to happen here buddy but those kids aren’t going anywhere.’ Clint said, his bow focused on Helblindi.

‘And if you think I am going to stand by and let you use my daughter as some sort of breeding mare then you are sorely mistaken.’ Sigyn said hotly.

At Sigyn’s words, Helblindi and Býleistr frowned. ‘Breeding mare? You mistake our words. We
mean for her to rule.’ Býleistr said.

There was a pause at that.

‘But I thought you were King.’ Steve said as he tried to make meaning of everything. Helblindi shook his head.

‘I only act as a stand in. In all fairness, the throne belongs to Loki.’ He said. Everyone turned in surprise to Loki who was wishing he was invisible at the moment.

‘Loki? What is the meaning of this?’ Sigyn demanded. Loki internally winced at her question. He was hoping this could go over smoothly and without his role in this being brought up but he knew that was only wishful thinking. *She is not going to take this well.*

‘Put away your weapons. I can explain.’ He said to both sides. The Avengers cautiously lowered their weapons and Helblindi signalled for his guards to lower theirs. Loki sighed. ‘As Sigyn and Thor know, while I was posing as Odin, I returned the Casket of Winters to Jötunheim. Helblindi and members of Jötunn court came to Asgard to collect it.’ Loki said. ‘It was in that moment that Helblindi realized that I was not the AllFather and threatened to expose me.’

‘You knew?’ Thor said in surprise. Helblindi regarded Thor with a sneer.

‘I know my kin, Odinson. A fact that cannot be said of you.’ Helblindi said in a cold voice. Thor’s face flushed and he looked away in shame.

‘I still do not see what that has to do with my daughter.’ Sigyn said harshly. Helblindi chuckled.

‘Tales of your ferocity pale in comparison to the real thing, warrior Sigyn.’ The Jötunn said. ‘Loki killed Laufey, our father.’

Loki cringed at the mention of his father’s name but Helblindi payed him no mind.

‘By tradition, Loki became King of Jötunheim. When I discovered his deceit, we struck a bargain. I relieved him of the throne in exchange that if one of his children should show to be Jötnar, the throne would pass down and the child shall take its rightful place as ruler.’

‘That’s why Býleistr came to visit us isn’t it?’ Ragna spoke up from behind her mother. Loki’s gaze flitted to Helblindi.

‘You sent Býleistr to my home?’ He asked in surprise.

‘He sent me because I did not trust you.’ Býleistr spoke up, his red eyes blazing as he regarded Loki. ‘Tales of your trickery have spread far and wide. I do not trust one who has grown in the court of the AllFather to be truthful when it comes to affairs of Jötunheim.’

Loki clenched his jaw but said nothing. ‘I cannot rule.’ Ragna said as she pushed past her mother. Sigyn reached out to snatch Ragna back she had already darted in front of the group. As she stood in front of the towering Jötunn, Ragna reconsidered her decision to step forward but it was already too late.

‘I do not know much of Jötunheim but I know no Jötnar would stand by and let an outsider take the throne.’ Ragna said in a shaky voice.

‘An outsider no, but one who had lived with us, learned our ways and our customs would be welcomed with open arms.’ Helblindi said. He placed his hand on Ragna’s forehead and her entire
body began to turn blue. Her eyes turned the same blood red and Ragna looked down at her body with wide eyes.

‘The blood of a King flows through your veins child.’ Helblindi said softly as he removed his hand from Ragna’s forehead. ‘To decline your birthright, your people, would be nothing short of madness.’

Ragna took in a deep breath. ‘I…I do not know what to say. A crown is a heavy burden. I do not know if I am…what Jötunheim needs.’ She said slowly.

Helblindi smiled softly. ‘You are wise beyond your years. Certainly, wiser than your father.’ He said with a small chuckle.

‘She cannot go to Jötunheim, I will not allow it.’ Sigyn said, desperately trying to gain control of the situation.

‘With all due respect, the choice is not up to you.’ Býleistr said as he stepped forward. ‘My brother speaks the truth. If she could live amongst us, if she could truly become Jötnar, she could be the greatest King Jötunheim has seen yet. I have seen this.’

‘Býleistr does not speak lightly of his visions.’ Helblindi added. ‘Jötunheim is in need of guidance. Guidance that perhaps I cannot provide but- ‘He crouched down to Ragna’s level. ‘-perhaps you can. There is much we could learn from each other.’ He stretched out his hand and in it was a crown made of ice.

Ragna looked down at it in a mix of awe and surprise. She looked at Helblindi and the Jötunns in front of her before turning back to look at her family. Her mother was looking back at her, panic evident in her eyes. The rest of the team was standing around, still poised for a fight should the moment arise. She felt trapped.

‘Perhaps we could have a moment to consider our decision.’

Ragna turned around as Bodil came forward to stand next to her sister. ‘Do not take this as intent to go back on the bargain made, Your Highness.’ Bodil continued. ‘We only need time to…get things in order. Three days is all we ask.’

Ragna shot her sister an appreciative look and Bodil gave her a small smile. Helblindi turned to Býleistr with a raised brow. ‘Three days will change nothing.’ Býleistr confirmed. Helblindi turned back to Bodil.

‘Very well. I will return in three days time.’ Helblindi said to her. He turned his attention to Loki. ‘I look forward to seeing you again brother. There is much we need to discuss.’ Loki frowned at his brother words but nodded in agreement.

Helblindi turned back to the rest of the team. ‘I leave my brother and his family in your hands.’ He said, his gaze travelling across every individual. ‘They are…precious to me. If they come to harm of your doing, I will find out and know this- ‘Helblindi’s voice took on a darker more dangerous tone and the temperature in the room dropped by a few degrees. ‘-I will hunt every one of you down. You will never know warmth or peace. I will show you why the Æseir fear the Jötnar.’

A chilling silence settled on the room after Helblindi’s words. The King of Jötunheim turned to Loki. ‘I take my leave now.’ Loki nodded.

‘Thank you again for coming with such short notice. Both of you.’ He said. Býleistr gave him a short nod in response but Helblindi smiled.
‘Of course, brother. You need but ask.’ He replied. Helblindi turned to Býleistr and signalled to him with a small nod. Býleistr cast open a portal and the guards stepped through. Býleistr followed and Helblindi gave one last smile to Ragna before vanishing into the portal as well.

The team stood in tense silence. Sigyn and Loki were engaged in a stare down and everyone else was standing around awkwardly. ‘Children, go back to your rooms.’ Sigyn said quietly.

‘Mother I- ‘Bodil began but Sign cut her off with a harsh glare.

‘Come on. Let’s go.’ Brenna said, quickly ushering her siblings away. Sigyn waited till they were well out of reach before turning her attention back to Loki. A few more seconds of silence passed before Loki decided to break the ice.

‘Sigyn I- ‘He began but she held up her hand and stopped him.

‘Did you know?’ She asked.

‘Perhaps we should talk about this in private.’ Loki said in what he hoped was a soothing tone but Sigyn wasn’t having any of it.

‘Did. You. Know?’ She asked again, each word said firmly. ‘Did you know that one of them was Jötnar before you bartered them away like cattle?’

Loki gave a curt nod and a tear slipped down Sigyn’s cheek. ‘They are children. Your children, Loki and you traded them to save yourself. How could you?’ She asked in a broken whisper.

‘It is her birthright. I could not deny her of that. I could not hope to bring any peace to Jötunheim but maybe she can.’ Loki said in a firm tone and Sigyn’s jaw clenched in anger.

‘Do not spin me one of your lies, Loki.’ She spat out harshly. ‘Birthright, you loathe Jötunn and all that dwells in it. Do not try to convince me that you were saving Ragna a birthright you rejected.’

‘Come on guys. It’s been a long day. We’re all tired.’ Steve said in what he hoped was an appeasing tone.

It didn’t work.

‘What would you have had me do Sigyn?’ Loki asked. ‘Let him tell everyone? Let what I sacrificed go to waste? I could not risk that, you know that!’

‘Do I?’ Sigyn yelled back. ‘I knew nothing Loki. You kept me in the dark for years. You know what Odin is going to do to her when he finds out. I can’t- ‘Sigyn’s voice cut off in a choked sob.

The team all exchanged glances before Natasha decided to step in. ‘It’s been a rough couple of days. Nothing’s going to get solved this way. ‘She put a gentle hand on Sigyn’s shoulder and lead her out of the room.

‘Nat’s right. Come on.’ Tony said as he pulled Loki to his side. Loki said nothing and let himself be dragged away by the rest of his team mates.

‘You are going to say, yes aren’t you?’ Bodil asked as they came back to their room.

‘Am I?’ Ragna replied. ‘Yesterday morning, I woke up the daughter of a treacherous yet honorable man and this morning, I figure out I’m the heir to a throne.’ She said down on the bed and her
siblings crowded around her.

‘Well you have to,’ Bodil said. ‘I bought you time but he’s going to come back and you have to say yes.’ She said earnestly to her sister.

‘She doesn’t have to do anything.’ Brenna said quietly. She was sitting in a corner of the room, away from her siblings. ‘Father made his own bargain with Helblindi. You don’t have to do anything you don’t want to.’

‘Who said she doesn’t want to?’ Bodil shot back and Brenna involuntarily clenched her jaw.

‘I don’t know if you have no memory of the past day but we were kidnapped. Aric was-’ Brenna’s voice cut off and she swallowed thickly. ‘They could have killed us. And now you’re saying she should take the offer of Jötunns to go to another realm. Without mother or father or us. Anything could happen to her.’

Bodil scoffed. ‘They’re not going to kill her. You heard what Helblindi said. They need her. She’s important to them.’

Brenna stood up in annoyance. ‘You’ve always been so controlling Bodil! This isn’t like before. You’re not in charge. Not anymore.’ Brenna said as she stood up to her sister.

Bodil’s eyes narrowed. ‘Like before? You mean like when mother could not even get out of bed on her own and we hunted and took care of Ragna, Aric and Einar? Do you think for one second that Helblindi is going to take no as an answer?’

Ragna watched as her sisters argued amongst themselves.

‘Are you going to leave Ragna?’

Ragna looked down. Einar was staring back at her with Aric in her lap. They both looked very worried and Ragna immediately gathered them in her arms. ‘I…I don’t know.’ She replied.

‘Bwenna said-Bwenna said they could kill you.’ Aric said, his voice wobbling and his eyes filling up with tears. ‘I don’t want you to die!’ He erupted into noisy tears and the twins stopped their arguing. Ragna hugged Aric to her tightly and tried to calm him down.

‘No one is going to kill anyone.’ Brenna said as she sat down on the bed with the rest of her siblings.

‘You don’t know that.’ Einar murmured.

‘Yes, we do.’ Bodil said as she scooted closer to her brother. ‘I do not know what Ragna’s going to say but I can assure you, no one’s going to hurt her.’ Bodil wrapped her arms around her brother and kissed the top of his head. ‘I’d kill before I let that happen.’ She said quietly.

Ragna looked over her brother's head at Bodil. She could see the conviction in her sister's eyes and she knew Bodil had meant everyone word. Her attention turned back to her brothers. 'Bodil's right.' She said in a soothing tone. 'I'll be fine.'

While she said that to convince her brothers, Ragna could not tell herself the same. They had reason to fear. Helblindi might accept her as ruler but he did not speak for the rest of Jötunheim. She had no idea what she would be walking into when she got there. *If. If I go.*

Ragna tried to remind herself that she had a choice. She could choose to say no. Somehow, that didn't make her feel any better.
‘I do not want you sleeping here tonight.’

Loki started at the sound of his wife’s voice. He had stepped into his room to be away from the rest of the team and was surprised to find Sigyn there. She was sitting on the bed, her knees drawn up to her chest and her eyes swollen and red.

Her words registered to him and he swore he could feel his heart break.

‘Sigyn–’

‘I mean it.’ Sigyn said softly. ‘I cannot sleep next to you knowing that in three days my child is going to be taken to another realm for norn knows how long because of a bargain you made.’

Loki took in a deep breath. ‘Do you want to leave?’ He asked.

Sigyn frowned. ‘What do you mean?’

‘Do you want to leave?’ Loki repeated. ‘Do you want to leave…our marriage?’ He knew it was a silly question to ask over such an issue but the look on her face when she realized the truth would forever be etched into his mind. He had to know.

Sigyn glared at him. ‘Tis not fair to ask me that, Loki.’ She said. ‘I love you but the children come first. That has always been a given in our relationship, right from the start.’

A wave of guilt washed over Loki. She was right. Before they’d had the children, before they’d even gotten married, Sigyn had made it abundantly clear that any children that came from their union would take priority in their lives. Her scarred childhood had made her apprehensive of motherhood but she was determined to care for any children they had in ways she had never been cared for.

‘I know that.’ Loki replied softly. He sat at the edge of the bed, keeping his distance from his wife. Loki sighed tiredly. He might as well tell her the full story. ‘When Helblindi found me out...I was desperate. I was still recovering from Thanos’ rule and I feared Helblindi would seek revenge from his—our father’s death.’

‘That is no excuse.’ Sigyn shot back and Loki winced.

‘I know. Býleistr had a vision that one of our children would be a Jötunn who would be a successful leader for Jötunheim beyond anyone’s expectations.’ Loki continued. ‘I wanted nothing to do with the throne or any throne for that matter and Helblindi offered a deal.’

‘One of our children would take your place.’ Sigyn finished and again, Loki nodded.

‘With or without Býleistr’s vision, the throne would have still passed down to one of our children.’ Loki explained. ‘The Jötmar cherish tradition above anything else. Tradition demands that if I do not take the throne, it falls to one of my children.’

Sigyn took in a deep breath. ‘To tell you the truth, tis not what upsets me the most.’

Loki’s brow furrowed at her words and Sigyn turned to face him. ‘Ever since you fell from Asgard, it has been one lie to another.’ She said to him, tears welling up in her eyes again. ‘If you had been honest to me, I would have been angry but my anger would have faded.’

‘I find it hard to trust you Loki.’ Sigyn whispered, a tear slipping down her cheek and Loki felt tears prick at the corners of his eyes.
'Alright.' He said in a hoarse voice. 'I understand. I...' An empty silence hung between the two as they struggled with their emotions. Loki took in a deep breath. 'I'm sorry. I did not think that any of them would...' Loki's voice trailed off again and he swallowed.

'I'm sorry.' He repeated. 'Your trust means everything to me, Sigyn. Please know that.' Sigyn remained silent and Loki swallowed.

'I'll sleep with the children tonight.' Loki said softly. Sigyn nodded and Loki turned to leave the room. His vision was blurry with tears and his heart felt heavy. He had hoped he would never come to this and he had neglected to tell Sigyn the truth because he thought it would never happen.

*She is right. I should’ve said something. Anything.* Sigyn could and had forgiven him for a great deal of things but he feared this time he’d pushed her to her limit.
Hey guys! So yeah I've finally updated!! Sorry if this chapter is off and weird. It's taking me a while to submerge myself back into the fandom so that's why. We've finally met Helblindi and Byleistr! The next chapter would contain some flashbacks detailing the meeting between Loki and his brothers and how they've grown from that. The next chapter would also have a viewing point from the rest of the team's eyes.

They didn't really feature much in this chapter because I wanted to keep the focus on Loki and his family right now but we'll definitely be hearing more from everyone else. That's all for now and I hope to get the next chapter up sooner than this one. Let me know what you think and thanks for reading!!
Sigyn scrambled to get away from the soldiers but it was no use. 'Come now, you should've known better than to try to run.' One of them said as he dragged her by hair. The other soldiers jeered and laughed and Sigyn felt her tears spill over.

'Please don't.' Sigyn pleaded as she felt her legs being yanked apart. 'I swear I won't run again just please don't.' She could feel the soldier positioning himself between her legs and she tried to fight him. Hands came from above her to hold her down and-

Sigyn jolted awake, tears streaming down her face. Her breath was coming in pants and she frantically looked around the room before placing where she was. You are on Midgard. You are in Tony Stark's tower. You are married to Loki and you are safe. Sigyn repeated the mantra to herself until she felt her heart beat slow down. She looked to her side expecting to see Loki lying next to her and she blinked in confusion where she was met with an empty space.

Details of the past days rushed to her and she sighed tiredly. She hadn't had a nightmare like that in years and she could guess what the cause was. It had been three days since the attack on the tower and two since Helblindi had arrived to give her the shocking news. She couldn't remember the last time she'd been attacked in her own home and being knocked out had thrown her off. Also with the news about Ragna, it was no surprise she was having nightmares.

Pain shot through her as she thought of her daughter leaving. How could he do that? How could he just...trade her like that? Sigyn threw the covers off her and got up. Her nightmares had left her riled up and she knew she had to find something else to do rather than dwell on them.

What if that happens to Ragna? What if she goes and- Sigyn's body trembled with fear at the thought and she tried to push it away. That wasn't going to happen. No matter what it took, she was going to protect her daughter. She's not going and that's final. Sigyn had made up her mind. Ragna wasn't going anywhere and no one could tell her otherwise.

Loki rubbed his eyes as he put down his cup of coffee. Sleep had been elusive for him and the children. Nightmares had become the new norm between them and he found himself having to use the dreamless sleep spell before they could have a peaceful night's rest.

I really regret not killing Fury. Loki looked up as Steve and Tony trudged into the kitchen. 'Well at least I'm not the only one who got no sleep.' Loki commented noting the bags under the team's eyes.

'How're the kids?' Steve asked as he poured himself a cup of coffee. Tony grabbed the coffee pot when Steve was done and poured himself a cup as well.

'Nightmares.' Loki replied, and Steve nodded understandingly.
'Sigyn?'

Loki sighed. 'Not willing to share a bed with me at the moment.' He said bitterly.

'Fair enough.' Tony mumbled as he downed his first cup of coffee and poured himself another cup. 'Anyway, to get Ragna out of this or...' His voice trailed off and Loki shook his head.

'Believe me I thought it over but unless she declines, I cannot do anything about it.' Loki replied.

'Tony asked as he joined them.

Loki sighed. 'It'll be better if I just showed you.' He said. Everyone looked at him with confusion and Loki rolled his eyes. 'It won't hurt you, you'll just be seeing things as they happened.' He said exasperatedly.

'Sure, why not.' Tony said with a shrug. 'Wouldn't be the weirdest thing to happen since you came here.' Loki looked at the other members of the group for their consent and Steve and Clint nodded.

Loki summoned his sei r and cast his mind back to his meeting with Helblindi.

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Loki tried to avoid fidgeting as he stood in the King of Jotunheim's presence. Helblindi had sent him a letter simply stating two words.

'I know.'

Those two words had filled him with fear and dread and he had frantically tried to think of what to do. He didn't think the Frost Giant would unveil his secret to Asgard but if he did, Loki did not know what he would do. Sigyn and the children would be sent away of course but he had no other place to hide.

If Thanos found out...Loki shuddered at the thought. He could not let that happen.

'I will not speak to you while you wear his face.' Helblindi said spitefully as he glared at Loki. 'I deserve that much.' There was a pause between the two until Loki let the image of Odin fall away.

Helblindi's gaze pierced through him and for some reason he felt bare.

Helblindi's face softened as he looked at Loki. 'You look like him. Even in this skin.' He said softly. Loki felt guilt well up in him as he thought of Laufey. He barely even knew his birth father, but he had no right to kill him. Not for Thor or Odin anyway.

'What do you want Helblindi? A bribe?' Loki asked, willing thoughts of his past sins away. Helblindi made a small humming noise.

'In a manner of speaking.' He replied. Loki's nerves settled. This, he could handle. He understood the dynamics of manipulation and bribery. This was something he could navigate with ease.

'Name your price.' He said to the Frost Giant.

'Jötunheim.' Helblindi replied. Loki blinked in surprise. This he did not see coming.

'I do not understand.' He said slowly. 'I gave back the Casket, I assumed my business with Jötunheim was finished.'

'No, it is not.' Helblindi said firmly. 'When you killed Laufey, the throne went to you which you would have known had you not disappeared. Tradition demands you claim it.'
Loki didn't know what to make of this. He had no intention of taking any throne. He was just moonlighting as Odin until he figured out what to do next and then he was gone. 'Well...thank you for bringing this to my attention but I want no part of it. I have no interest in ruling.'

Helblindi glared at him. 'Tis just like Asgardians to invade a realm and disrupt its affairs only to leave without thought to the consequences.'

'What would you have me do, Helblindi?' Loki snapped. 'I will not sit on that throne, I have no interest in it.'

'I am not asking you to.' Helblindi stated. Loki frowned in confusion.

'What do you mean?' He asked.

'My advisors have foretold that one of your kin will grow to be a King who will raise Jötunheim from the shadows Odin cast it into.' Helblindi said. 'My bargain is this, when one of your kin shows to be Jötnar, you send the child to me to take its rightful place. Do so and your secret remains safe with me.' He finished simply.

Loki stared at the Frost Giant, waiting for him to admit that this was some sort of joke but Helblindi's face remained serious. 'You cannot possibly think I will give you one of my children based on a prophecy!' Loki said with disbelief.

'You will.' Helblindi replied. The Frost Giant stepped closer to Loki. 'I do not wish to use your kin against you. It is an act reserved for the likes of Odin, but my priority will always be the welfare of Jötunheim.'

Loki made a noise of disbelief. It seemed no matter what he did, he could not win. Helblindi softened as he noted Loki's discomfort. He truly did not want to do this. When he had realized who Loki was posing as, he was content with letting it be. Loki had returned the Casket to him and he ruled better than Odin ever would but then Býleistr had revealed his prophecy to him and Helblindi had to act.

'I have no intention of tearing a child away from its home.' Helblindi relented. 'If indeed your child turns to be Jötnar, the decision will lay with them. I only ask that you notify me.' Loki mulled it over. He could easily just agree and never say anything. The Frost Giant would be none the wiser and he could continue to live in secret.

'Very well.' Loki agreed, having no intention of contacting Helblindi if that ever happened.

Helblindi's eyes narrowed. 'Do not take me for a fool, Loki.' He said calmly. 'Swear it to me on Vár's name.' Loki paled. Vár was the goddess of oaths. She held oaths taken in her name accountable and punished those who would dare go back on their word. If he took out an oath on her name, he would have no escape. Helblindi waited expectantly and Loki knew he was trapped.

'Very well.' He said, sighing in defeat. 'I swear to you on Vár's name that should any of my kin show to be Jötnar, I will contact you.' Helblindi held out his hand and Loki hesitated again before gripping the Jötunn's hand in a pact.

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The team blinked as the illusion faded from their minds. ‘Well he seems like a hard ass.’ Tony said as he blinked away the image of Helblindi and Loki negotiating. Loki shrugged.

‘My brother can be…intense but he means well.’ Loki said with a small smile. ‘His loyalty to
Jötunheim is only matched by his loyalty to family.’ Despite their rough beginning, the two brothers had grown to be friends in the time they had known each other.

Helblindi did not care for Loki’s crimes on Earth and was only concerned about the type of man Loki was. The two had grown closer through the use of letters and portals between the two worlds and Loki had come to rely on him as the older brother that he was.

Loki was brought out of his musing by Sigyn’s appearance in the room. Her hair was tied up in a bun and she was in her training clothes. She walked past the men in the kitchen and headed straight for the fridge. She pulled out a bottle of water and chugged it before turning her attention to the men.

The tension between Sigyn and Loki could be cut through a knife and the boys stood around awkwardly, not really knowing what to say to either of them.

‘I’m gonna go.’ Clint spoke up suddenly being the first to tap out.

‘Yeah…I’m heading down to the company.’ Tony said, eager to escape with the archer. ‘Gonna check out how Pepper is holding up.’

The two left and it was just Loki, Sigyn and Steve left in the kitchen. Sigyn stepped up to the counter top, her gaze leaving Loki to focus on Steve. ‘Good morning, Steve.’ She said, offering the soldier a warm smile.

‘How fares Darcy and the baby?’ She asked. Steve grinned at the mention of his family.

‘They’re doing pretty good.’ He replied. ‘We’re both pretty excited.’

Sigyn gave him a small squeeze on his shoulder. ‘Tis good to hear. You would both make amazing parents.’ Her last words were said with a look in Loki’s direction and he bristled at the suggestion Sigyn was making.

Loki’s hands clenched on the countertop, but he refused to rise to her bait. This was Sigyn before they had fallen in love; brash, eager to lash out and looking for a fight. He didn’t want to give her that. Steve looked between the two of them before deciding to speak up.

‘Has Ragna made a decision yet?’ He asked deciding to confront the elephant in the room.

‘She’s not going.’ Sigyn spoke up before Loki could reply. Loki gave a tired sigh.

‘Helblindi’s not going to listen to you.’ Loki spoke up and Sigyn glared at him.

‘I’ll make him listen.’

‘What if she actually wants to go?’ Steve asked carefully.

‘She’s not.’ Sigyn replied in a tone that was final before storming out of the room. Loki and Steve exchanged a look. If Ragna agreed to go, there was no telling what Sigyn would do.

Ragna looked down at the book in her hands. It was the book of spells that she’d gotten from Odin’s library. It was turned open to a section on Jötunheim spells. Most of them were on guarding one’s self when in Jötunheim but a few were on actual spells that the Jötnar themselves used.

The only problem was that in was in Jötunn. She wanted to ask her father to translate but she wasn’t sure how that would go with him. It was no secret that Loki was uncomfortable with his heritage and
she didn’t want to bring up any bad memories for him.

*Although I’m sure having a Jötunn daughter is enough of a reminder.* Seeing herself with the navy-blue skin of the Jötnar had been breathtaking. Loki had replaced the glamour on her skin and she looked like she did before, but she could still catch glimpse of blue underneath her skin. She had been spending some time thinking about it but the more she thought of it, the more she wanted to accept Helblindi’s offer. It surprised her, but she was really interested in seeing what Jötunheim had to offer.

‘I made something for you.’

Ragna looked up at the sound of her brother’s voice. Einar and Aric were standing in the doorway with something in Einar’s hands. Ragna put down her book and gestured for her brothers to come closer. ‘What is that?’ She asked, motioning to the object in Einar’s hands.

He opened his hands and Ragna gasped in surprise. In his hands, was what looked to be a small stone. In reality, it was a way of communication. They’d used it to keep in touch with each other during the months when their father was ‘dead’, and the twins had to hunt while Ragna stayed home with the boys. If they were in trouble, all they need to do was rub the stone twice to activate it and Ragna would be notified back home.

‘There’s a transportation spell on it too.’ Einar spoke up as Ragna took the stone. 'If...' Einar's voice trailed off and he swallowed. 'If you need it, you can use it and you'll come back to us.'

Ragna picked Aric up and placed him in her lap. 'I haven't said I'm going yet.' She said noticing how tense her brothers were.

‘But you want to.’ Aric piped up. Ragna bit the inside of her mouth guiltily. She didn’t know she’d been that obvious.

‘It's ok to want to.' Einar said noticing his sister's guilty face. 'I think you'd be a pretty awesome King.'

‘And you get to be blue!’ Aric piped up. Ragna chuckled at his excitement.

‘Helblindi seems nice but...just to be safe.’ Einar said referring to the stone Ragna had in her hands. Ragna smiled at him.

‘Thank you.’ She said as she gave her brothers a hug. Einar and Aric squeezed their sister tightly in return and Ragna felt her chest grow warm with love. No matter what she choose in the end, she’d make sure that her family was included in it.

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Pepper looked up in surprise as Tony walked into her office. The superhero rarely ever came to the office since she’d become CEO.

‘What are you doing in my office, Tony?’ Pepper asked as he came around her side of the desk.

‘Uh…your office, my building.’ Tony reminded in a snarky tone back as he sat on the edge of Pepper’s desk. Pepper pushed away her paperwork with a sigh, knowing she wasn’t going to get any work while Tony was around.

‘What’s going on Tony?’ She asked, looking up at him. His hair was rough, and he was dressed in
jeans and a simple shirt. There were grease smears on his arms and he had this wide-eyed look that
told her he hadn’t slept all night.

‘Can’t I just come in to check on my girlfriend?’ Tony shot back, and Pepper’s brow furrowed in
concern.

‘Is this about Fury breaking into our home the other night?’ She asked gently. Tony did
not reply, and Pepper felt a small wave of sadness wash over her. ‘Oh sweetheart.’ She murmured as
she took his hand in hers.

‘I’m alright Tony. I’m right here.’ She stated. Tony stared down at he and Pepper’s hands and she
 tilted his face up to meet hers. ‘I’m safe.’ She whispered to him.

‘I know. I mean, you’re a tough woman Pep.’ Tony said in a gruff voice. ‘We’ve handled bigger
stuff than the other day. I just…when Jarvis told me he couldn’t connect to the tower or get to you, I
was so scared.’ Tony continued, looking at the woman sitting in front of him. ‘You’re the most
important thing to me. I don’t want to lose you.’

Pepper stood up to envelope her boyfriend in a hug. Fuck, she loved this man. She loved him so
much that it hurt sometimes. He put up a cold, uncaring front for the rest of the world, but she was
one of the few people who knew who he really was on the inside.

‘You’re not going to.’ Pepper whispered in his ear. ‘I’m right here.’ The duo held each other tightly
and a comfortable silence settled over them.

‘Marry me, Pep.’

Pepper pulled back from Tony with a tired sigh.

‘Tony…’

‘Wait, just hear me out.’ Tony said, cutting Pepper off. Pepper sat back in her chair, folded her arms
across her chest and waited for him to continue. ‘I know you don’t really see the point of
getting married, but I do. I want to build a life with you. I want a future with you, Pep. And kids.
Maybe. We can discuss that.’

Despite herself, Pepper felt herself smile at Tony’s last statement. ‘Tony, we can have all those things
without getting married.’ She explained. Tony nodded.

‘True but I still want the actual marriage.’ He argued. ‘You know, the whole white wedding, the
vows, maybe even become Mr. Potts someday.’

‘You’d really take my last name?’ Pepper asked in surprise. Tony shrugged.

'Didn't really think you'd be taking my last name.' He replied. Pepper looked at Tony. She'd be lying
if she said she'd never thought of getting married to him. It wasn't that she didn't want to, the idea of
it was appealing but there wasn't much point in it. They shared things equally and Tony had even put
her name on his will (he'd done it after New York and Pepper had cried her eyes out when she'd
found out).

This wasn't the first time he was proposing but he always did it after something dangerous happened
to the two of them and she always said no because if he was just proposing because he was afraid of
losing her then she wasn't interested.

But now...
Now he seemed serious.

'You're sure?' Pepper asked as she looked at her boyfriend. 'Because if I say yes and you tell me you were just kidding, I swear-

'I won't Pep.' Tony said in a serious tone. 'I've wanted this for a while now.' Pepper stared at Tony. He really wasn't kidding about this. *Oh what the hell.* 'Yes.' Pepper replied. Tony blinked.

'Wait are you being serious?' He asked. Pepper nodded with a small laugh. 'Really?!' Tony asked again in an excited tone and Pepper smiled.

'Yes.' Pepper said, a huge grin spread on her face. 'I mean, I still want the whole...kneeling down and asking me, preferably when we're not under some sort of threat but...yes.'

'Oh, I'll kneel alright.' Tony said with a mischievous grin as he lowered himself in front of Pepper's chair until he was eye level with her crotch.

Pepper felt desire rush through her and her thighs involuntarily clenched. 'Tony, no. I-I have meetings.' Pepper stuttered half-heartedly.

'They can wait.' Tony growled as he pushed her legs apart. Pepper opened her mouth to scold him again but all that escaped her lips was a moan when she felt Tony's lips on her inner thigh. Her gaze flitted down to the man in between her thighs. Tony looked up at his girlfriend *fiancée* and made a show of licking his lips.

Pepper felt herself get wetter between her legs and decided to throw all caution to the wind. Reaching over to the phone on her desk, she picked it up and managed to call her assistant to cancel all her appointments for the next hour without letting on to what was going on beneath her desk.

As soon as the phone was down, Tony's hands were sliding up her thighs and Pepper let herself enjoy one of the many perks of dating Tony Stark.

Clint sat up in bed as his bedroom door opened. He'd been waiting for his partner to come back for the better part of the night. He'd half expected the agent to not show up, but he'd hoped all the same. Phil trudged into the room, his steps heavy. He stopped with a start when he realized his husband was still awake.

'I didn't think you'd still be up.' Phil said with a small smile as he crawled on to the bed.

'I figured you'd want some company after your day.' Clint replied with a kiss to the agent's temple. Phil groaned.

'It's a nightmare at S.H.I.E.L.D. Tony's threatening to pull funding, Fury is demanding Loki's ass on a platter and don't even get me started on the filling process.' He replied. Clint snorted.

'Well...Fury kinda pulled a dick move so I'm not feeling too sorry for him at the moment.' Clint said. Phil shrugged.

'I don't agree with Fury's method’s, but I can understand why he wanted them brought in.'
Clint stiffened at his husband’s words. He’d never considered the thought that his husband might have had anything to do with the kidnapping, but Phil’s words made him think otherwise.

‘Did you know?’

‘Know what?’ Phil mumbled as he snuggled deeper into his husband’s embrace.

‘That Fury was going to take the kids.’ Clint replied, hoping what he thought wasn’t true. A few seconds passed without Phil responding and Clint felt his stomach turn. ‘For fuck’s sake Phil! They’re kids!’ He exclaimed angrily, moving away from his husband.

‘Look, Fury told me when he’d already sent the team in.’ Phil said, pushing himself off the bed and sitting up to look at his husband.

‘You could’ve called me.’ Clint replied hotly. ‘Jesus, Phil. Loki and Sigyn almost went crazy thinking they’re kids were dead.’

‘Fury thought the kids were a threat.’ Phil said. ‘And to be honest, I can understand why he thought so.’

Clint took in a deep breath and tried to calm himself. ‘What was he going to do with them?’ He asked. ‘Was he going to test them? Turn them into some sort of weapon?’ Phil sighed.

‘What the kids did to the school could’ve gotten out.’ Phil started. ‘Fury just wanted to know what their powers were. What they’re limits were. If…’ The agent took a pause before speaking his next words. ‘If they could be harnessed.’

‘And you were okay with that?’ Clint asked in a level voice, his arms folded across his chest and his face emotionless.

‘No but I understood.’ Phil said lowly. ‘S.H.I.E.L.D’s just trying to avoid another Loki.’ Clint glared at his husband.

‘Another Loki?’ Clint spat out. ‘I know he did some shitty things but S.H.I.E.L.D has no fucking idea the kind of person he is.’

‘Some shitty things?’ Phil said in shock. ‘He killed me! He took over your mind, Clint.’

‘He’s done more for us than you can ever imagine.’ Clint shot back. Phil mirrored his husband position on the bed and folded his own arms. The two stared each other down until Phil spoke up.

‘Something you’re not telling me Barton?’ Phil asked his husband. Clint blinked. Sometimes, he forgot his husband was a spy who interrogated people for a living. He and the team had not talked about letting S.H.I.E.L.D know about Loki’s true intentions when he took over Earth and he didn’t think they ever would. Steve was right when he said it was team business.

‘Maybe.’ Clint replied. ‘I can’t say much but Loki has done more for this planet than you will ever know.’ He said. Phil took in his husband’s words. If Clint of all people could say that then that mean it was true. It made him wonder what Loki could have possibly done to warrant that sort of respect from the archer.

‘You still hate him for killing me?’

‘Always.’
Phil smiled. ‘Alright. I’m sorry for not telling you what Fury was up to. Am I forgiven?’ He asked. Clint nodded.

‘Just…don’t fuck with the kids okay?’ He said imploring to his husband. ‘They’ve been through hell and back. I won’t see anything happen to them and neither would the rest of the team.’ Phil nodded in return.

‘I’ll pass the word across to Fury.’ He said as he returned to his former position on Clint’s chest.

Chapter End Notes

So there we go! We get to see how Helblindi and Loki came about their pact in the first place. We also get to see more of Sigyn and her fears about Ragna’s leaving. Also, Tony and Pepper are finally engaged! It’s not official, I’m hoping to do something theatrical and typically Tony but Pepper has finally agreed to it. If there’s anything anyone wants to see, just let me know!
Chapter 17

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

The third day had arrived and everyone in the tower was gathered in the living room, awaiting Helblindi’s return. Sigyn was standing in front of the children, her heart thumping in her chest. She did not know what was going to happen, but she knew one thing. Ragna was going nowhere.

The rest of the team stood around, uneasily waiting for the ruler of Jötunheim’s return. Sigyn had made her position on the topic very clear and none of them were looking forward to fighting against Helblindi should he insist on taking Ragna or the inter-realm war that would occur if they fought him.

Jötunheim might have been behind Asgard in terms of weaponry but there was little doubt that they could give Earth a run for its money if pushed. None of them were eager to find out if it was true. Loki glanced at Sigyn. Her jaw was set firmly, and she had what he called her ‘warrior’ face on. His stomach dropped.

An oath on Vár’s name could not be taken back. Like it or not, the decision belonged to Ragna. And if she decided to go…. Sigyn was not going to take it well. There was a slight shimmer in the air and a portal began to open. Loki pushed his thoughts out of his mind and prepared to face his brother.

Helblindi stepped out with the rest of his guards and Býleistr in tow. Helblindi gave a small nod in Loki’s direction before facing the group. ‘Where is the little one?’ Helblindi asked, his brow furrowing as he looked for Ragna. Sigyn opened her mouth to reply but was beat by the voice of her daughter.

‘I accept your offer!’ Ragna yelled as she dashed in front of her mother and stood in front of Helblindi. Sigyn's head spun in shock and Helblindi's raised a brow in surprise. The rest of the team stood in shock at Ragna’s reveal.

‘You are willing to come to Jötunheim with me and live amongst us for the rest of your days?’ He asked. ‘Think carefully, little one. Once you agree, there is no turning back.'

‘S- She does not know what she says.’ Sigyn stuttered in a plea but Helblindi ignored her. Ragna swallowed. She had spent the past three days turning it over in her head, listening to everyone's opinions on the matter and thinking through it. She was sure. This was what she wanted.

'I am.' Ragna confirmed. 'But I have conditions.' Helblindi still wore the look of surprise on his face but he motioned for her to go ahead. 'I will see my family once a month, every month for the first year.'

Helblindi mused on this for a few seconds before speaking. 'Very well.' Now it was Ragna's turn to look surprised. She'd expected the Frost Giant to put up more a fight on that front and was prepared to argue on it. His easy approval had thrown her off and she hurried to say the rest of her demands before she got too shy.

'I expect to be included in everything.' Ragna continued. 'If I'm going to be this great ruler you all wish me to be, I want to know everything that happens.' Helblindi looked impressed and he nodded his assent. 'And most importantly, I am not going to be used as some sort of revenge against the AllFather.' Ragna said in a serious tone. She hadn't voiced her fears to anyone, but the thought had
crept into her mind. What if she was just being used as leverage against Odin? What if it was all some sort of ploy to seek vengeance against the AllFather?

'Odin kept my father as a bargaining tool against Jotunheim. I will not be the same.' Ragna said in a firm voice that left no room for discussion. Helblindi smiled as he looked down at his niece. To say he was impressed would be an understatement. When Loki had told him, it was Ragna he couldn't help but feel a bit disappointed. True he was glad that the prophecy had been fulfilled but he was worried Ragna would be much too mousy to handle the weight of the throne.

How glad he was to discover that he was wrong.

'The thought never crossed my mind.' Helblindi said in reply to Ragna's last request. Ragna sighed in relief. This had gone much better than she had ever hoped. Hopefully, the relationship between Helblindi and I continue to be this smooth. 'Well met young one.' Helblindi said with a smile.

Sigyn was at a loss on what to do. She was prepared to fight Helblindi to her end to ensure that her daughter stayed with her but Ragna had chosen to go herself. What did she do now?

'Do you leave now?' Loki asked as he stood next to his daughter. Helblindi nodded. Ragna looked at her father and he gave her a faint smile. 'Go on, go pack.' He said, urging her to leave. Ragna left the room with Sigyn hurrying after her.

Loki watched her go with a sad smile. He wasn't surprised at her choice. His daughter had been enamoured at the thought of being a ruler from the moment Helblindi had placed that ice crown on her temple. He would miss her but from what she'd said, he had no doubt she would be amazing.

'There are things we must discuss.' Helblindi said, dragging Loki out of his thoughts. 'There is talk of war between Jötunheim and Asgard.'

Loki started in surprise. 'Over the Casket?' He asked. Helblindi nodded. 'Jötunheim is recovering but we are still weak.' Helblindi said gravely. 'If Odin were to advance on us, I fear we would not be able to survive a second time.' Loki growled. He forever regretted letting Odin survive. How could one man be so greedy and war hungry?

'If my father were to attack, you would not be alone.' Thor spoke up. The two Jötunns turned in surprise at the sound of the god’s voice. 'I came upon Tyr and Odin speaking in the throne room when last I visited Asgard.' Thor continued. 'I do not know what they spoke of, but I know no good can come from it. If Odin plans to attack, you have my hammer.'

Loki looked at Thor with new eyes. Never would he have expected the golden boy of Asgard to speak against his father. Perhaps he truly has changed.

'You’ve also got my gun.' Natasha said as she stepped next to the group. She’d been listening in on the conversation and had decided to step in. ‘No offence Thor but from what I’ve heard of Odin, he’s an asshole. I’ve got a bullet who really want to be friends with him.’

Loki smiled at Natasha. He and the redhead hadn’t gotten along at first, but they were slowly warming up to each other. She was a good friend and he was glad she was on his side now and not against him.

Helblindi regarded the red-headed woman in front of him. Her words had no meaning to him but from what he could tell, she was against the AllFather and anyone against Odin was his friend.

‘It’s not just Nat.’ Steve said stepping closer to the group. ‘I don’t really know much about Odin, but
he doesn’t sound like the best man. If it comes to it, you have our help.’

’You’ve got my suit too seeing as we’re deciding to re-enact The Lord of the Rings.’ Tony spoke up from his seat in the room. ’I call dibs on Aragon though.’

’Shut up Tony.’ Steve shot back at the inventor. Helblindi looked at the group of people in front of him. How ironic that the AllFather choose this to be his punishment when it has turned out to be his salvation.

’I am glad to know my brother has found allies in this realm.’ Helblindi said gratefully. ’If it comes to it, I relish the thought that Odin will have a number of adversaries against him.’

Ragna watched in silence as her mother threw her clothes into a bag. Brenna and Bodil watched awkwardly as their mother threw things in a bag. ’Your father put a spell on us all, but we can still be seen by Heimdall.’ Sigyn said, struggling to keep her voice monotone. ’If Helblindi or anyone else does so much as lay a finger on you, call for Heimdall.’

’Mother.’ Ragna said softly but Sigyn continued to speak.

’I know you have only just discovered your sei r but there are spells-’

’Mother.’ Bodil said but again, Sigyn took no notice.

’-and you can come straight back here if you need to. I do not care what Helblindi or anyone else says, if you do not want to be there, you do not have to be.’

’Mother.’ Brenna said firmly and Sigyn stopped. Ragna was staring up at her looking very much like the nine-year-old she was and Sigyn felt her eyes well up.

’I'm scared.’ Ragna said with a small whimper and Sigyn felt her stomach twist. She'd spent all this time thinking about how her daughter's loss was going to affect her, but she had not spared a thought to how Ragna must be feeling. Having to make such a decision on her own, knowing what it would mean was not easy and Sigyn had not even been interested in being a source of comfort to her.

’You're going to be fine.’ Brenna said as she stepped closer to her sister. ’You have the stone?’ She asked referring to the stone that Einar and Aric had given her.

Ragna nodded tearfully and Brenna gave her a reassuring squeeze on the shoulder.

’Brenna’s right.’ Bodil said as she stood next to her sisters. ’And we can use the scrying bowl. It will be no different from when we were on Asgard.’ She said.

Sigyn watched the interaction between her daughters with a lump in her throat. If there was one thing she would never forgive herself for, it was for being so out of touch in the years of Loki’s ‘death’. Her children had had to grow up without her and it was heartbreaking to see.

Ragna held her sister’s tight in a hug. They had truly become closer during the years and she wasn’t looking forward to being part of a realm they weren’t in.

’Your sisters are right.’ Sigyn said swallowing the lump in her throat. ’You will be just fine, and you can always talk to us.’ Ragna looked up at her mother with a teary smile and gave a small nod.

’Alright.’ Sigyn said with a small smile. ’Let’s see if we can find you some furs to take with you. I do not know how the snow affects you in your Jötunn skin, but I shall not have you catching your
Ragna stood in front of the group with her bags packed. Her siblings surrounded her in a hug and Ragna held on to them tightly. Aric had already dissolved into tears and Einar was struggling to hold back his. ‘Oh, Aric.’ Ragna breathed out as she crouched down to hug her little brother. ‘I shall be back in a month, I promise. It shall fly by in seconds.’ She said, kissing him on the top of his head.

Aric nodded with a sob and Ragna gave him a huge hug. Einar was next, and she gave him a kiss on the forehead. ‘You work on those spells okay?’ She said looking him in the eye. Einar nodded, too emotional to say anything and Ragna gave his shoulder a squeeze.

Her two sisters were next and by this time Ragna was beginning to tear up. ‘Try to stop fighting okay?’ She said with a forced smile as she hugged them both. ‘I’m not going to be around to separate you.’ The twins rolled their eyes.

‘We won’t be around to stop you from boring everyone with your science talk, so I think it’s fair,’ Bodil said with a smile. Ragna gave a choked laugh and Brenna gave her a kiss on the head.

Sigyn and Loki were next and Ragna could not contain her tears. ‘Oh, my little girl.’ Sigyn whispered as she grabbed her daughter in a hug. ‘I’m so proud of you. You went for what you wanted and that’s okay. Do not be guilty of that.’ She said, wiping away her daughter’s tears. Ragna nodded, a lump in her throat.

‘Your mother is right.’ Loki said, placing a kiss on her head. ‘We will never be upset with you for following your heart. Ever.’ Loki said firmly. Ragna nodded again and Sigyn placed another kiss on her head.

‘Alright. You have all you need, and you can contact us if need be.’ Sigyn said softly. ‘Tis only one month and then you shall be back in my arms.’ Ragna sniffed and the entire family surrounded her in a hug. The hug lasted for a few seconds, each family member murmuring reassuring words to the black-haired girl in the middle.

Everyone pulled back and Ragna looked to the Avengers team before rushing in to give them a hug. Natasha’s eyes widened in surprise as Ragna hit her first, the rest of the team closing in to give her a hug. ‘I’m going to miss you all.’ She murmured into Natasha’s shirt. ‘Keep an eye on them for me.’

Natasha gave the girl a squeeze back. ‘Of course, we will. Keep yourself safe ok?’ She replied, the rest of the team echoing her words. Ragna nodded and she stood in their embrace for a few more seconds before finally pulling away and walking to Helblindi’s side.

The Jötunns had watched the entire exchange with curiosity. They were not a very emotional kind. Life was hard, and winters were harder in Jötunheim. Only the strong survived. Seeing the emotional outbursts from their future ruler was...interesting to say the least. She will learn and so shall we. Helblindi thought.

He leaned over to Ragna and placed his hand on her forehead. Her skin rippled with his touch and her pale complexion gave way to the navy-blue colour of the Jötnar. Æyleistr opened the portal and Ragna turned around to give one last look at her family. They were all watching her go with encouraging smiles. Her siblings were teary, but their faces held no expressions of malice and that gave her the strength to move ahead.

Ragna looked forward and with a huge breath, took a step into the portal and into her future.
Sigyn watched as her daughter stepped through the portal and it flickered shut. A tear trailed her cheek but a look at her children stopped her from breaking down. They had never been separated from the moment she had borne them, and the reality of the situation was hitting them hard.

Aric was full on sobbing at this point and Einar had given up on holding back his tears. Sigyn felt her heart breaking at the sight of her children but she knew she had to pull herself together. They had mourned without her for far too long.

‘Come on.’ Sigyn said scooping Aric into her arms and ushering her children out of the room. Loki made to follow and Sigyn stopped him with a steely glare.

‘Don’t you dare.’ Sigyn whispered hotly as she held her son in her arms. ‘You did this. Not me.’ Without another world, Sigyn whirled away, ushering the children out of the living room.

Natasha put down her S.H.I.E.L.D officiated gun on Fury’s desk. It had been a really long day with Ragna leaving and she had left the tower to speak to Fury. ‘What’s this? Are you resigning on me Romanov?’ Nick asked as Natasha stepped away from his desk.

‘I can’t stay here knowing you sanctioned a hit on the kids, sir.’ Natasha said. ‘I’ll topple governments, kill…whoever I need to but hurting children has never and will never be part of my contract. You’ve always known that. Sir.’ Fury looked at the red-haired spy for a few seconds before speaking again.

‘Well, I can respect when an agent has limits.’ He said, lazily tapping on the desk with his pen. Natasha’s brows furrowed at his actions but her face smoothened over almost as immediately. ‘I expect your position with the Avengers won’t change.’ He stated.

Natasha smiled and shook her head softly. Fury made a small humming noise, still tapping on his desk.

‘Well, I won’t say I’m not sad to see you go.’ Fury said. ‘Your contract is done by the end of the year but there’s always a place here for you at S.H.I.E.L.D.’ Natasha nodded.

‘I’m fully aware, Sir.’ She replied. Fury gave her a curt nod and turned back to his work which signalled as a dismissal for her. Natasha whirled around and marched out of his office. Her resignation was a bittersweet one but to her surprise, she didn’t feel as torn up about them as she would have thought.

She’d always seen herself as dying a S.H.I.E.L.D agent. S.H.I.E.L.D was her home. They had found her and given her more direction than the Red Room ever had. The Avengers, on the other hand, they had given her a home. They’d given her a place to live and call home and that beat anything that anyone could ever give her. It might sting for a while, but she knew she’d made the right choice.

Natasha waited until she was out of S.H.I.E.L.D and in her room in the tower before attempting to decode the message Fury was tapping out to her in his office. His office was one of the most secure places that she knew so Fury sending her a message through morse code was puzzling.

She had memorized the sequence he’d tapped in and quickly figured it out. Her eyes widened in
surprise as she figured out what Fury had been trying to tell her. CAESER. Caesar was a code that meant there was some sort of infiltration in S.H.I.E.L.D. Natasha’s head spun. She was aware that the organization had enemies but an infiltration?

Natasha quickly took a lighter to the piece of paper she’d worked the code on before sitting back and trying to absorb the situation. If there was an enemy in their ranks, it won’t be long until they showed themselves. *The question is, what happens when they do?*

Natasha left her room and made her way to the kitchen, trying to stay silent. Her meeting with Fury had been emotionally draining and she was hoping something in Tony’s stash would help relax her. She switched on the kitchen lights and was greeted by Sigyn sitting by the counter.

She looked up at the sound of Natasha’s entrance but said nothing. There was a bottle of scotch in front of her and a glass but Sigyn hadn’t touched any of it. Natasha stood at the door, wondering if she should come in or not. The past few days had been tough on the warrior and Natasha wasn’t at all surprised to find her with a bottle.

‘You may join me if you wish.’ Sigyn said softly. Natasha stepped into the room carefully and grabbed a bottle of vodka from the shelf. She sat opposite Sigyn and took a swing of it straight from the bottle.

An awkward silence settled between the two before Sigyn spoke up. ‘I should not even be doing this.’ She muttered slowly as she pushed the bottle of whiskey away from herself.

‘Doing what?’ Natasha asked as she took another sip of vodka. Sigyn gestured towards the alcohol.

‘The last time I drank was when I was told Loki was dead.’ She said. ‘Before that, I had not touched alcohol in three hundred and ten years.’

Natasha’s eyes widened. ‘That’s pretty impressive.’ She stated. Something about Sigyn’s words registered to her and she frowned. ‘Sigyn. Are you…’ Her voice trailed off and she looked for the best way to frame her question. ‘Were you an alcoholic?’ Natasha asked.

Sigyn looked up at her. ‘You mean a drunk? I still am.’ She admitted with a rueful smile. ‘I have not in a while but…’ Her voice trailed off and her eyes went back to the bottle of whiskey in front of her. Natasha guiltily hid her bottle out of sight.

‘Do you want to talk about it?’ Natasha asked, worried at Sigyn’s hungry gaze at the bottle of whiskey. Knowing Sigyn was an alcoholic…again, not much of a surprise but it just made her more in awe of the woman standing in front of her. She had been through enough pain and trials to last multiple lifetimes and the fact that she was still here functioning only boosted Natasha’s respect for her.

‘There is not much to talk about.’ Sigyn murmured, tearing her eyes away from the alcohol in front of her and trying to think of other things. ‘Ragna’s gone and there is nothing I can do about it.’ Tears pricked at the corners of her eyes and Sigyn attempted to blink them away. Her daughter’s loss was still very raw. If she’d known Ragna was going to accept Helblindi’s offer, she would have attempted to spend more time with her or advise her. *I would have tried to stop her.*

‘Well yeah but you still have everyone else.’ Natasha said, reaching out to take Sigyn’s hand. ‘You’re not alone Sigyn.’ Sigyn looked down at Natasha’s hand in hers, her eyes blurring with tears. For the first time since she could remember, someone other than Loki was offering friendship and company even with knowing her history and she felt her tears trail down her face.
'Oh god, don’t cry.’ Natasha said in a horrified voice as she saw Sigyn burst into tears. Sigyn gave out a choked laugh.

'I apologize. You’ve just been a really good friend and it has been so hard with Loki and the children- ‘Sigyn’s voice cut off in a sob and before Natasha knew what she was doing, she had walked around the counter and was wrapping Sigyn up in a hug.

Sigyn leaned into Natasha's touch, letting the anxiety and sadness that had been plaguing her wash away through her tears. She didn't know how much she needed to cry until she was doing so. The warrior cried until all her tears were dried out before she pulled away from Natasha.

'Sorry.' Sigyn mumbled in a stuffy voice but Natasha only waved her apologies away.

'You needed that.' Natasha said as she sat next to Sigyn. 'It's been a rough couple of days for everyone but especially you.' She said reaching out to squeeze the warrior's hand.

Sigyn nodded. 'I do not know what to with the children. I do not know what they need.' She said softly. 'Brenna is a wreck over killing people and Bodil wants to train harder than before. I do not even know what is going on with the boys.'

Sigyn brushed away another stray tear and Natasha felt pity wash over.

At least you have children. Sigyn looked at Natasha in surprise and that was when Natasha realized she'd said her words out loud. She froze as Sigyn's gaze pierced her and she knew that the warrior knew.

It all made sense to Sigyn now. Natasha's behaviour towards Darcy's pregnancy, her fierceness towards her children. It all made perfect sense.

'You cannot have children.' Sigyn stated and Natasha felt shame well up in her. Why couldn't she just get over this? Why did she have to blurt it out to anyone who'd managed to find out? Natasha stood up, determined to walk away and not discuss any more of this.

'Do you want children?'

Natasha froze. She looked down at Sigyn and the warrior stared back at her. 'I can...There are spells.' Sigyn said slowly. 'You could have a child. If you wished.' Sigyn's words echoed in Natasha's mind and the former spy felt her knees go weak.

She had never thought of that. Wanting children. She knew ever since she'd left the Red Room that she could never have a child. She couldn't want something she couldn't have. Could she?

Sigyn watched as various emotions flitted over the former spy's face. She knew what she was offering was huge and she was wary of the former spy's reaction. 'H-How?' Natasha heard herself say.

'Like I said, there are spells.' Sigyn said lightly. Natasha's heart hammered in her chest. It all felt too much all of a sudden. For so long, she'd denied ever thinking about the possibility of children but now she had choices and it was overwhelming.

'You do not need to say now.' Sigyn said as she touched Natasha's hand gently. 'The offer is always open.' Natasha looked down at Sigyn's hand.

She was afraid. Afraid of what saying yes could mean. Afraid of being disappointed. Afraid that this was too good to be true. So, she did what she always did when she was afraid.
Shove all that fear underneath a wall of indifference.

‘No. Thanks but I don’t want any children.’ Natasha said, her voice wavering. Sigyn stared at Natasha. They both knew she was lying but Natasha’s expression said she did not want to talk about it so Sigyn relented.

‘Of course.’ She said lightly, pulling away from Natasha. Natasha nodded curtly before spinning around on her heel, eager to get away from the uncomfortable discussion.

Tony looked up as Thor walked into his lab. The god of thunder had been keeping out of everyone’s way after Helblindi’s arrival and Tony was surprised to see him.

‘What brings you here thunderbolts?’ Tony asked, putting aside what he was working on for the moment.

‘I require your help, Tony.’ Thor said standing in front of him. ‘Ever since Loki revealed to me the true reason behind his attack, I have sought ways in which to make amends. I think I finally know how to, but I shall need your help.’

Tony frowned. It wasn’t often that a god asked for his help and he was curious to find out what he could assist Thor with. ‘What could I help you with?’ He asked.

‘Your machine, the one you call Jarvis, it can find people yes?’ Thor asked. Tony nodded, and a look of relief came over Thor’s face. ‘Good because who I need to find is near impossible to be found.’

‘What of your gatekeeper? Heimdall is it?’ Tony asked remembering the gatekeeper the Asgardians called on as a means of transportation.

Thor shook his head. ‘Tis not a task I can trust to the gatekeeper.’ He replied.

Now Tony’s interest was piqued. Tracking people down wasn’t Jarvis’ main design but he was curious to see who Thor was on the hunt for. ‘Jarvis wasn’t built for tracking, but I’ll see what I can do.’ He said. Thor beamed.

‘Thank you, Tony.’ He said. ‘I know I have put my faith in the right hands.’ Tony flushed. This whole ‘you’re a good guy’ routine was still very new to him and he didn’t think he’d ever get used to it but the one thing he did know was that he would try his hardest not to give anyone a reason to regret putting their faith in him.

‘I want to learn how to use a gun.’

Natasha stared at Bodil’s words. It was the day after Ragna’s departure and she had not expected to see any of the children so soon. The white-haired girl was standing in front of her, her hair tied in a bun with a very determined look on her face. Ever since the attack, Bodil had taken to training at every spare moment, unwilling to let her guard down.

The rest of the children had been keeping to themselves. School wasn’t really an option at this point, Sigyn wasn’t willing to let them out of her sight just yet.

‘Bodil, guns are pretty dangerous.’ Bruce said in a gentle tone.
'Why?' Natasha asked the little girl, wanting to hear her reasoning behind her request.

'Nat.' Bruce said in a warning tone but she ignored him.

'I want to learn how to defend myself.' Bodil said, her arms folded across her chest. 'I could not protect myself or my siblings when we were attacked, and I never want to be unprepared again.' Natasha could understand that. The spy knew how it felt to want to protect yourself after being attacked.

_The poor thing already has trust issues._ 'Okay.' Natasha replied.

'Natasha.' Bruce said again but she ignored him.

'I'll have to talk to your parents about it but if they're fine with it then so am I.' Natasha said. Bodil gave a sharp nod before walking away. Natasha watched the little girl walk away with a sad smile. She was going to have to talk to Sigyn about more than just training issues. Bodil was a strong child but she was still a child.

Her attention turned from Bodil to Bruce who was looking at her with disapproval. She gave an internal sigh. 'She has a point.' Natasha said in self-defence. 'She should know how to protect herself if S.H.I.E.L.D is going to be sending more agents after them.'

'With a gun?' Bruce shot back. 'You don't need a gun to defend yourself from S.H.I.E.L.D.' Natasha rolled her eyes.

'I'm me, Bruce.' She replied. 'Look if Sigyn or Loki says no then it won't happen but if they're ok with it then ok.'

Bruce still looked displeased, but he said nothing more on the topic. 'She'll use blanks if that'll make you feel better.' Natasha conceded with a fond sigh. Bruce sighed.

'I guess. I just...kids shouldn't have to learn that you know.' Bruce said with a sad smile. _He'll be such a great father._ Natasha recoiled from the thought that jumped in her head. Ever since Sigyn's revelation that there was a chance she could bear children, she had been trying to push it out of her mind, but she couldn't.

_He should at least get a chance, shouldn't he? Or should at least know._ Natasha struggled with the thoughts in her head. She didn't want to do that to him. To give him hope that her body could bear a child when it was a very shaky chance. She couldn't do that to him.

'Nat? You ok?' Bruce asked, his brows furrowed in concern. The spy had gone pale and her eyes were far away, like she was somewhere else. 'Natasha.' Bruce said again, and she snapped out of it.

'Sorry I..' Natasha's voice trailed off and Bruce tentatively put a hand on her arm.

'Flashback?' He murmured in question to her zoning out. Natasha bit her bottom lip. She wanted to tell him, god, she wanted to, but she couldn't. She couldn't raise his hopes like that only to have them crash. She nodded in response to his question and Bruce's face took on one of sympathy.

'Need to be alone for a little bit?'

Natasha shook her head. 'It's fine. I'm okay.' Bruce raised a brow. She was keeping something from him, he knew that much but he also knew that his partner would talk when she was ready and only then.
Natasha settled back in Bruce's arms and tried not to think of black haired children with grey coloured eyes.

‘Did Natasha talk to you about Bodil?’

Sigyn looked up as Loki walked into their bedroom. He was dressed in his battle gear and Sigyn guessed he was just about to leave for a battle. It had been three days since her daughter left and Sigyn and Loki had barely spoken two words to each other. It was not for lack of trying. Loki had attempted to start a conversation with Sigyn but she had turned him away at every point. She knew he was feeling upset about the way things were too but she couldn’t let him in.

Not yet.

‘Where are you going? I did not hear the alarm.’ She asked instead.

‘I’m just getting back.’ Loki replied, his heart sinking at the notion that his wife didn’t even notice his disappearance. ‘It was a…spy thing. Steve thought Nat and I were best suited for it.’ Sigyn raised a brow but said nothing more on the topic.

‘Yes, she spoke to me.’ Sigyn said, replying to his original question. ‘I think the children might as well learn if they are to live in this realm. Or did you have other plans for them that I know not about as you did with Ragna?’

A tense silence settled between the two and Loki finally reached the end of his tether. ‘I had no other choice!’ He yelled. ‘It was either agree to Helblindi’s deal or risk exposure. At least we know where she is, and she’ll be coming back. What more do you want from me?’ He asked running out of steam.

‘I want you to include me in your plans, Loki!’ Sigyn yelled back. ‘I understand what you had to do, and it pains me dearly, but I understand.’ She said as she stood up facing him. ‘What I cannot stand is the deceit. Do you not trust me? Was the time I spent…pining and mourning over you not enough proof of my loyalty?’ Sigyn’s eyes shone with tears and she angrily brushed them away.

‘You know that’s not it.’ Loki shot back. ‘I…I just…I had no other options Sigyn.’ Loki said in a tired tone, the hot air suddenly leaving him. ‘We were being watched by Heimdall, I could not risk being discovered. I could not risk Thanos…’ His voice trailed off and he looked at Sigyn, his eyes swimming with emotion.

‘I was drawing on Odin’s power to shield us. To shield you and the children. Helblindi risked that and I panicked.’ He said softly. ‘I should’ve told you and I was so wrong to keep that from you and it will forever be one of my greatest regrets.’

Sigyn looked at her husband, her throat clogged with emotion. On a logical level, she could understand his deceit. He did what he had to, and she shuddered at the idea of the Mad Titan finding them. On an emotional level though, his deceit still hurt. It hurt more than anything.

‘I understand why Loki.’ She said softly, drawing closer to him. ‘I do. But please think of it from my view. I lost you twice and there were so many lies.’ Tears trailed down Sigyn’s face at the memory of losing her husband and she swallowed thickly. ‘I trusted you with everything. You have all of me and every time I keep thinking you’ve let me in, every time I think we’re finally on the same page, I discover something else.’
Loki looked down in shame. There was no shying from the truth. Sigyn was right. He had hidden multiple things from her and she had bared her soul to him on more than one occasion. She deserved better. ‘Will you ever forgive?’ He asked, his voice cracking with emotion.

‘On one condition.’ Sigyn replied.

‘Anything.’ Loki said, ready to bring her the world if it meant that she would welcome him back into her arms.

‘No more lies, Loki.’ Sigyn said. ‘We’ve been through too much. No more.’ She said. Loki nodded sharply.

‘You have my word.’ Loki swore. Sigyn could see the honesty in his eyes and she gave a small smile.

‘That’s all I want.’ She replied. Loki sat down next to her and Sigyn took his hand. ‘I love you Loki Laufeyson.’ Loki choked back a sob at the mention of his true name and Sigyn gave his hand a squeeze. ‘I always will.’ She raised his hand to her lips and gave it a gentle kiss. ‘I just need more time.’

Loki nodded. They weren’t where they used to be, but they were moving forward and that was a start.

Sif, Fandral, Volstagg and Hogun stood before Heimdall. The four warriors had been tasked by Odin to deliver a message to Loki. As soon as Odin Loki had removed the block on his power, Odin had felt it. The AllFather had waited for news of Loki’s destruction to reach Asgard but nothing had come.

Then Heimdall had told him of the disappearance of Helblindi from Jötunheim and he had grown weary of Loki’s actions. He did not expect Loki to stop whatever he was doing but he did want to make him aware that he was still under Odin’s watch. He was hoping the warriors could put an end to whatever foolishness Loki was brewing.

‘Where to?’ Heimdall asked as the four stood in front of him. Sif stepped forward with a smirk. She was looking forward to seeing Thor again. They had been engaged from birth but ever since Odin had banished him to Midgard, the god of thunder had become almost obsessed with the realm. She was hoping her presence would remind him of his duty.

‘Migard.’

Chapter End Notes

There we go! It's been a long time coming but I'm glad I finally got this up. Thanks so much to everyone who's still reading and waiting patiently. This chapter opens up to other plot lines that I may/may not pursue in the future so there's that. Sigyn and Loki have not made up just yet but it's a step forward in the right direction. Loki is going to have a lot to make up for with her and we'll be looking at that in future chapters. The warriors three and Sif also make an appearance in the next chapter which is bound to be
interesting and full of drama. Kudos to anyone who can guess what Thor's plan to make up to Loki is and thanks to everyone for reading. I hope you enjoy this chapter and I look forward to hearing your thoughts on it.
Chapter 18

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Natasha tells me you would like to use a gun.”

Bodil’s head shot up at the sound of her mother’s voice. Einar and Aric had been put to bed and Brenna had taken solace in Tony’s lab. After her talk with Loki, Sigyn had gone searching for her children, Bodil in particular. It was obvious to anyone that Bodil was shook up over the attack and Sigyn wanted to talk to her before things got out of hand.

“Yes mother. If you and father agree.” Bodil replied. She was eager to get on with her training but was apprehensive when it came to her parents. Her father wasn’t one for fighting, he preferred to rely on his magic. Her mother excelled more when it came to fighting but had long since retired from the battlefield.

“Why?” Sigyn asked. “Why a gun? You have knowledge of our weapons and magic. Why this sudden interest in guns?”

“I just want to be able to protect myself.” Bodil shot back. “I thought you would be proud of me for thinking this far ahead.”

“And this has nothing to do with the attack on the tower and Ragna leaving?” Sigyn probed. Bodil fell silent and Sigyn sighed. “I know you think training harder and learning the use of Midgardian weapons will make you feel better or safer, but it will not.” She said softly.

“When I first joined the army, I trained from first light till the sunset.” She said. “I was determined to learn everything I could in the hope that I could protect myself and become the perfect soldier. I rose through Odin’s army and quickly became a skilled killer and strategic leader. It seemed I had achieved everything I wanted to achieve.”

“But…” Bodil asked, sensing there was a catch to her mother’s story.

“But I never found peace.” Sigyn said with a sad smile. “I never felt safe. I kept waiting for things to go wrong and as my fear grew, so did my ruthlessness. I look back at some of the things I did, and I feel ashamed. I thought that if people feared me, no one would move to hurt me and that I could finally feel safe. I was wrong. All I felt was emptiness.”

Bodil’s face revealed nothing but Sigyn knew her words had gone through to her daughter. “If you insist, I will not stop you. I am also interested in learning of this realm’s weaponry. I only ask you to think of your reasons for doing so.” Sigyn reached out to give her daughter’s hand a reassuring squeeze. “I love you dearly Bodil. I do not want you going down the same path I did.”

Sigyn leaned over to give Bodil a kiss on the head before leaving her daughter to deal with her thoughts.

Natasha pushed a cup of tea towards Sigyn and Sigyn gave her a grateful smile. After the talk between the two, Sigyn had grown worried that their friendship had been ruined but it seemed that things were still the same between the two and she was grateful for that.
“How’re the kids doing?” Tony asked as he sat next to her.

“Aric cried himself to sleep last night but I think they will be okay.” Sigyn said softly.

“And…are you and Loki still not…talking?” Tony asked.

“Tony.” Clint said in a warning tone, but Tony barrelled on.

“I know it’s none of my business but you’ve both been miserable and let me tell you, it’s such a mood killer.” Tony continued.

“Tony.” Natasha said with a glare before turning to Sigyn. “What Tony means to say is that you’ve both been…in a bad place and we’re concerned.”

Sigyn smiled at Natasha’s words. The concern of the Midgardians was always something that surprised her. Back on Asgard, she avoided most people but even then, no one thought to seek her out or ask if she was doing well. When Loki had died, people had paid their respects, but it had all been falsities. Other than Loki’s magical talents, no one thought of much use to Asgard and to be honest, she didn’t think anyone but her and Thor had missed him. It was a startling difference from being on Earth.

“Thank you.” She said gratefully. “We talked last night, and we are making headway.”

“Well that’s great.” Clint said. “Being married takes a lot of patience and emotional work. Which explains why there’s no Mrs Stark yet.” He said pointedly at Tony.

“Oh, I wouldn’t be too sure about that.” Tony said with a smug smile. Natasha’s eyes widened.

“She said yes?!” Natasha said in what was most definitely not a squeal. “And you didn’t fucking tell me?!”

“Well it kind of resulted in office sex and I wasn’t going to tap out to tell you she’d said yes.” Tony shot back.

“Where’s the ring?” Clint asked.

“Yeah…well…she’s agreed to marry me if I propose but I kind of have to propose first.” Tony said sheepishly.

“Okay, I don’t care what crappy plans you had before.” Natasha stated. “We’re scrapping all of them and starting a new plan.”

“I love how you’re assuming that all my plans were crap.” Tony said dryly.

“That’s because they are.” Natasha replied.

Tony and Natasha began to bicker and Sigyn smiled softly. It was a weird family, but it was hers and she grateful for each one of them. The air in front of them began to shimmer and Sigyn’s heart rate picked up. What if it was Ragna returning?

A bright light suddenly filled the room and Sigyn shied her eyes away. Tony called for his suit and she could hear the Avengers alarm blaring. The lights dimmed and Sigyn squinted. There were four figures standing in front of her which was a good thing because it meant it couldn’t be Ragna. Unfortunately, Sigyn did know who they were, and she felt a wave of annoyance wash over her.

“What enemies threaten us?” Thor bellowed as he burst into the room with Loki hot on his tail. They
both stopped short at the sight of the visitors in the room and Loki took an apprehensive step back.

“Hello Thor.” Sif said with a small smile.

Sigyn’s eyes narrowed as she looked at the four figures in front of her. Being away from Asgard for so long had made her forget how distasteful Asgardians could be and seeing Sif and the Warrior's Three in front of her was bringing back unpleasant memories.

Loki stood next to her, his posture rigid. If they were here it could only mean that Odin had realized what he’d done. A few months ago, he would have given anything to be sent back to Asgard and imprisoned there but after finding a family in the Avengers, he never wanted to go back to being alone.

“Fandral. Volstagg. Hogun.” Sigyn said with mock politeness as she greeted the warriors. Her eyes landed on Sif who was looking at her like she was dirt. Sigyn fought back the urge to snap at her and settled for a tactic she knew would always rile the woman up.

“My lady.” Sigyn said in the same tone and Sif’s disdainful look turned into a glare.

“Sigyn.” Sif said with a sneer. “I see you brought your whore to share amongst your friends.” She said to Loki. He flushed with anger and opened his mouth to retort but Sigyn beat him to it.

“Would the lady like me to teach her how to please a man so that she too might keep her bed warm?” Sigyn replied in a mock polite tone. Clint chocked back a laugh and Natasha snorted. Sif glared at the woman in front of her and opened her mouth to retort but was shut down by Tony.

“Yeah, there’s no coming back from that.” Tony. Sif ignored Tony and focused on Sigyn.

“Better a maid than a used- “Sif began but she was stopped short by the sound of a gun cocking. Everyone turned to see Natasha idly holding her gun in her hand.

“Oh, don't let me stop you.” She said, noticing Sif redirecting her attention towards her. “Go ahead and finish your sentence. Please.”

“You think your paltry weapons will have any effect on us?” Volstagg said with a hint of amusement.

“Only one way to find out.” Natasha replied, her tone still laced with mock cheerfulness.

“As eager as I am to test that theory- “Sigyn said with a faint smile at Natasha's words. “-what message does the AllFather wish to pass across to us?”

Sif glared at Natasha for a few more moments before turning away. “The AllFather is aware of the break on his seal.” She said, turning to Loki who was looking pale.

“He also knows you have been cavorting with your kind.” Hogun added. Sigyn felt a bolt of fear pass through her. If he knew about Helblindi then surely, he knew of Ragna. Her mind raced with the possible moves Odin would make towards her daughter and Sigyn fought the urge to ask what Odin’s plans were.

“Look I don't know much about Odin but surely he doesn't mind Loki seeing his family.” Tony said nonchalantly. “You know, seeing as he stole Loki from Jötunheim.”
“Do not speak of matters you know nothing of.” Sif snapped at Tony. “Matters of Asgard are beyond you, mortal. Do not think because Thor wastes his time on this realm you have the right to- “

“Enough!” Thor yelled, silencing Sif. The Warriors Three looked to Thor in shock. “I will not have you come to my home and terrorize my brother or insult my shield brothers.” Loki looked at Thor in surprise. Of all the things he was expecting Thor to say, that wasn’t it.

From the faces of everyone in the room, they weren’t expecting that either. “Tell my father that I was here when Helblindi came to Midgard and I can vouch that there were no talks of him being usurped from his throne, so he can rest for a while longer.” Thor said hotly.

“What have you said to him?” Fandral said, moving towards Loki. Immediately, the team assumed defensive positions around him and Loki’s eyes widened. Of all the ways he saw this going, this wasn’t one of them.

“Take another step and I’m blasting your candy ass back to Asgard.” Tony said, his suit’s gauntlet pointed at the group.

“Thor.” Sif said in surprise at his refusal to come to their defence.

“The Man of Iron speaks for us all.” Thor said, his voice taking on a more serious tone. “I do not wish to fight you dear friends, but I will if pushed to do so.”

“Even against your betrothed?” Sif asked lightly, her voice taking on a slightly insecure tone.

“I’m sorry, your what?!”

Everyone turned at the sound of Jane’s voice and Thor’s eyes widened at the appearance of his girlfriend. “You have arrived early.” Thor said in surprise and Jane glared at him.

“My flight got pushed up which you would’ve known if you saw my texts.” Jane said in response to him before turning to Sif. “Betrothed? You two are engaged?” She asked, her tone getting angrier with each word. The rest of the team watched the trio, no one wanting to say a word.

“No, we are not.” Thor cut in frantically.

Sif rolled her eyes. “You would lie to her even now?” She asked to him before turning to Jane. “Yes, we are. I assumed he would have told you.”

“I did not because there was nothing to tell.” Thor said to both Sif and Jane. “Our betrothal was annulled. I assumed you had been told.”

Sif’s face fell and Sigyn couldn’t hold back a snort at the disappointment and betrayal on the warrior’s face.

“You would leave me for this…human plaything?” Sif said, gesturing towards Jane.

“Plaything?!” Jane exclaimed but Sif ignored her.

“Think carefully, Odinson.” Sif said in a warning tone. “Once I return to Asgard, you cannot take back your words.”

“I have thought carefully.” Thor replied. “There is only one woman I will take as my Queen and it is not you.” He said firmly. Sif’s eyes welled up at his words, but Thor wasn’t done. “You have come here arrogantly and insulted my team members as well as Loki and Sigyn, you have embarrassed me,
and I do not wish to endure a future with a Queen who would give that as a first impression to other realms.”

Sigyn had been holding in her amusement all through Thor’s monologue but couldn’t help bursting out laughing at his last words. Sif had been heartbrokenly listening to Thor’s words but at Sigyn’s outburst, she lost her temper. Before anyone could react, she reached by her side and pulled out a pocket knife, throwing it in Sigyn’s direction.

Sigyn barely had time to dodge but as it turned out, she didn’t need to. The knife shattered before making an impact and a faint green shield shone around Sigyn before vanishing. Sigyn turned to look at Loki who was glaring at Sif. All traces of fear were wiped from his face and his body was shaking with anger. The rest of the team had their weapons at the ready and Loki was inches away from pulling out his own knives.

“I will stand for no more of this.” Thor bellowed. “Return to Asgard or I will return you myself.” He said in a low threatening tone. There was a quiet moment where Sif and Thor stared at each other and everyone waited apprehensively for one of them to make a move.

“Very well.” Sif said, her expression falling into one of detached fury. “The AllFather will have a lot to think about from this display.” She turned her attention back to Loki. “Remember the mercy the AllFather showed you, Loki. It is not infinite.”

“You can tell Odin we’ll be waiting right here when he’s ready to make his big appearance.” Tony said to her. Sif eyed Tony but didn’t reply.

“Heimdall.” She called, and the same blinding light reappeared. Everyone shielded their eyes from it and when it had dimmed, the warrior’s disappeared.

An awkward silence hung between the group until Jane broke it. “Well I’m going to be in my room.” She said slowly, clearly wanting to avoid talking about the situation.

“Jane…”

“Fuck off Thor!” Jane spat out before turning around and pulling her suitcase behind her. Another awkward silence settled over the group and this time, Tony was the one to break it. He walked over to Thor and gave him a soft hit on the shoulder.

“Good thing I made the couch in your apartment comfy huh?” Tony said to Thor. “Cause you’re going to be living on it for a while.”

“Tony.” Natasha scolded, and Tony put his hands up in surrender.

“Hey someone had to tell him.”

“There are still blacksmiths in this realm yes?”

Tony turned his head at Loki’s arrival. He’d returned to the lab once the assholes from Asgard were gone and he wasn’t expecting anyone to follow him. Bruce was at some science conference and Steve had gone baby shopping with Darcy. “Yeah, there are. I mean…some would call me the greatest blacksmith ever lived but yeah.” Tony replied with a smirk. Loki rolled his eyes at the inventor’s words and carried on to his purpose of coming to the lab.
“I’m asking because I’m thinking of making something for Sigyn.” Loki said. “Something that would make up for everything that’s gone on lately.” Tony made a humming noise.

“You’ve got a design in mind?” He asked. Loki nodded.

“I was thinking of a weapon for her. Being back here has given her a chance to fight again, something Odin stole from her.” He said. “I’ve actually gotten something drawn up if you’re interested in seeing it.”

“Please.” Tony said, giving Loki full reign to work on something with Jarvis. Loki explained the design and before long, he and Tony were looking at the first draft of his gift to Sigyn.

“Vibranium would work perfectly for what you’ve got in mind.” Tony murmured. “It’s a shame all we have of it is in Steve’s shield.” Loki shrugged.

“I’m planning on placing a few spells on it anyway so that should cover things.” He replied. “I just need help with making it.” Tony made another humming noise. What Loki had in mind wasn’t impossible and he didn’t mind working with the god if it meant making Sigyn happy.

“Well I have scraps we can melt down.” Tony said. “Plus, I like Sigyn so I’m down for anything that makes her happy.” Loki smiled at that. Sigyn had had such a tough time in her youth, he was glad there were people who loved her as much as he did.

“Thank you, Tony.” Loki said softly, and the billionaire shrugged.

“It’s fine. Besides, I’m excited to see what Asgardian weapons look like.”

Loki raised a brow at his brother’s crestfallen look. After Jane had stormed out, Thor had followed to placate her. From how he looked, he wasn’t successful. “I take it Jane was not impressed by Sif’s appearance.” Loki said dryly. Thor sighed dejectedly.

“She refuses to speak to me.” He said. “She seems to be offended that I did not inform her of Sif and I’s engagement.”

“Yes, women tend to be upset when you hide things from them.” Loki murmured, thinking back to the past few days with Sigyn. “Where did all that come from anyway? Since when did you defend Frost Giants?”

Thor had the decency to look ashamed and Loki felt a small twinge of satisfaction.

“You and Sigyn were right.” Thor said slowly. “He is not who I thought he was.” He said regretfully, referring to his father.

“Yeah well join the club.” Loki muttered under his breath. “I am glad you have discovered Odin’s treachery, but it cannot undo the years between us.”

“I know.” Thor replied with the same sad disappointed tone. Loki would have been content to leave it at that, but Thor was making his sad puppy dog face and he knew all too well how it felt to have sudden revelations thrown at you. He sighed tiredly.

*I’m going to regret this.* “But, it’s a start.” Loki said. Thor’s face lit up and Loki scowled. “I’m only saying so because Sigyn wants me to.” His words didn’t stop Thor from grabbing him in a huge hug.
and squeezing him. Loki rolled his eyes but couldn’t stop from feeling a small twinge of happiness. Despite their differences, he’d grown up with Thor. He’d be truly lying if he said he didn’t miss having his brother to count on especially now when Thor seemed to be sincere about his decision to be better.

Still…he couldn’t let Thor know that. “Alright, unhand me before I stab you.” He said, pushing away from Thor. Thor released his brother but kept the huge grin on his face.

“I am glad to be in your good graces once more brother.” Thor said. Loki started to say not to call him brother but then stopped because why bother?

“Yes, brother.” Loki replied, a small smile on his face. Thor’s grin only grew.

“Are you going to beg the Lady Jane for forgiveness?” Loki asked, not eager to delve further into the ‘I’m sorry I betrayed you and trusted my father’ hole that was his relationship with Thor.

“I already have.” Thor said mournfully. “She has informed me that I would be better off placing my excuses in my rear end.” Loki chuckled. Jane hated him, but he had to give it to her, she had spunk.

“Perhaps offer her a token to appease her?” Loki suggested, thinking of his plans for Sigyn. Thor frowned.

“But what would she accept?” He asked.

Loki internally groaned. He couldn’t believe he was doing this but apparently, he was. “I…might have some ideas.” He said reluctantly, ignoring the hopeful look on Thor’s face. A few months ago, he would have scoffed at the thought of helping his brother, but he was trying out this trust thing and hoping it didn’t come back to bite him in the ass like before.

“I’m thinking of going with a theme for the nursery.” Darcy said as she and Natasha sat in the living room. “Cause that way I don’t have to pick colours; the colours are already pre-set with the theme.” Natasha hummed absent mindedly and Darcy frowned. The redhead had checked out ever since she’d come down to Darcy’s apartment and she was beginning to worry.

“Nat? Everything ok?” She asked, and Natasha snapped to attention.

“Sorry, sorry. You were talking about a theme?” Natasha said, and Darcy dropped her colour cards on the coffee table.

“What’s going on?” She asked, and Natasha fell silent. How did she reply to that? How did she say that all she could think of was Sigyn’s proposal and whether she wanted a child? Or that seeing Darcy picking out nursery colours was only making things harder for her. Darcy took note of Natasha’s silence and decided to speak.

“Is this…because of me?” Darcy asked carefully.

Natasha’s head shot up in surprise. “Darcy I- “She began but Darcy was quick to cut her off.

“It’s okay.” She said reassuringly. “If you didn’t like kids, you just had to say so you know. I won’t have been offended.” Natasha sighed. I might as well just tell her.

“It’s not…” Natasha’s voice trailed off as she tried to find the words to explain her situation. “I can’t have children.” She started, deciding to go ahead and spit it out. Darcy’s face fell, and Natasha rushed through the rest of her sentence, not eager to endure the pitying looks Darcy was sure to give
her. “It happened a long time ago, don’t feel bad. It’s not a huge deal it’s just…” Natasha’s voice trailed off again and Darcy reached out to give her hand a soft squeeze.

“You don’t have to explain yourself to me, I get it.” She said gently. “I should’ve guessed as much. I’m so sorry Nat. I’ve been waving my pregnancy in your face like a dick. I should’ve known there was something wrong.” Natasha squirmed at the notes of pity in Darcy’s tone. This is exactly what she wanted to avoid, this awkward emotional moment with the other woman treating her like she was made of porcelain.

“It’s not that big of a deal.” Natasha muttered, pulling her hand away from Darcy’s. “Sigyn offered to reverse the whole thing.”

Darcy raised a brow. “With magic?” She asked, and Natasha nodded. “And that’s…good?” She asked, her voice taking on a more hopeful tone. Natasha shrugged.

“Maybe? I don’t know.” She said. “I mean I’ve never even thought of having kids but then she offered, and I can’t fucking stop thinking about it.”

Darcy frowned at the self-deprecation in Natasha’s voice. “Hey, don’t beat yourself up for wanting this. You had a big choice taken away from you and now you have an option and it’s scary. It’s normal to freak out about it.” Natasha remained silent and Darcy took that as a sign to keep talking. “What does Bruce think of it?”

Natasha put her face in her hands. “I’m sure he’ll have a lot to say when I tell him.” She mumbled. Darcy raised a brow.

“You didn’t tell him because…?” Her voice trailed off in a question and Natasha sighed.

“I don’t know, how do I tell him that I may be able to give him kids depending on what spell Sigyn and Loki can conjure up but now that I have a chance, I’m not sure I want to actually have kids.” Natasha replied in an exasperated tone.

“Tell him exactly like that.” Darcy replied. “Just say the same thing to him.” Natasha shook her head.

“I can’t do that to him Darcy.” She said softly. “I can’t dangle that in front of him and then snatch it away. I won’t.”

“Does he even want kids?” Darcy asked, and Natasha blinked in surprise.

“I…Yes. I mean…doesn’t every man want children?” She replied hesitantly. Darcy shrugged.

“Not every man literally turns into a giant green thing when angry. Not every man had the fucked-up childhood Bruce did.” She replied. “Has he ever explicitly said he’d like kids?”

Natasha opened her mouth to reply before thinking carefully. Yes, there were many instances in which Bruce comforted her about her infertility, but he’d never really expressed regret over not having children. Come to think of it, he’d never said he wanted to have children. *He’s barely gotten used to having the kids in the lab, he’s still a nervous wreck around Aric even.*

“Yeah maybe you should talk to him about it first?” Darcy commented, watching realization dawn on Natasha’s face. Natasha gave her a sheepish smile.

“Thank you.” She said softly. “And…I’m sorry. You didn’t deserve me putting my crap on you.” Darcy waved her apology away.
“It’s really okay.” Darcy replied. “You’re here now and we can decide on colours or themes!” Natasha rolled her eyes playfully and grabbed some of the colour swatches that were lying on the table.

“Fine but I put my foot down on Cap’s colours. I’m not having a star-spangled godchild.”

Bruce walked into his apartment and dropped his coat without looking. “I’m in the mood for curry tonight, that okay with you Nat?” He called, absentmindedly undressing and picking up a pile of letters sitting on the counter. There were a couple from varying Universities inviting him to conferences. He was considering going to a couple but the thought of social interactions with people he didn’t know made him feel nauseous.

“Nat?” Bruce called again, frowning at her lack of reply. He knew she was in the apartment because the small marker in the door that signified when the door had been opened was green instead of red and no one was stupid enough to break into an apartment that housed both the Hulk and a Black Widow.

“In the bedroom.” He heard her call and he moved towards the bedroom.

“I asked if you were okay with curry for tonight.” Bruce’s voice slowly trailed off as he took in Natasha’s appearance. She was dressed in a matching green bra and panty set. It was lime coloured and had lace trimmings. It was held together with black thigh highs and a garter belt. Seeing his girlfriend in states of undress like this wasn’t unusual, her job as a Black Widow sometimes required it. What was unusual was the colour.

Natasha only wore green for one person and that person was him.

Still…he had to ask. “You going out on a job?” He asked slowly. Natasha raised a brow.

“You know I only wear green for you.” She replied in a low seductive voice. She took slow sultry steps towards him and Bruce frowned. This…This wasn’t how they did things. Sex between them was infrequent. Not because they didn’t enjoy it but between Bruce’s hang-ups with the Hulk and Natasha’s experience with the Red Room, sex was something reserved for special moments.

Natasha draped her arms around Bruce’s neck and leaned up to give him a kiss and that was when Bruce decided he’d had enough. “Nat don’t take this the wrong way, but can I talk to you without the Black Widow?” He asked. Natasha froze, and he knew he’d gotten to her.

“I’m sorry.” Natasha whispered, pulling away from him. “I’m just…nervous and old habits die hard I guess.”

“Nervous about?” Bruce prompted, and Natasha nibbled on her bottom lip. She walked over to the bed and sat down. She patted the space next to her and Bruce followed in her lead.

“I’m sorry.” Natasha whispered, pulling away from him. “I’m just…nervous and old habits die hard I guess.”

“No. No, I’m okay.” She said softly, smiling at the concern in Bruce’s voice. “I’m just…the other night, Sigyn figured out about…my problem.” Bruce’s forehead crinkled in confusion before realization dawned on him.

“Was she an asshole about it?” Bruce asked. “Because I love her, but I have no problems with talking to her if I need to. I’m not above letting the big guy slam Loki into the ground again.”
Natasha chuckled. “Oh wow. You say that to all the girls or just me?” Natasha teased weakly, and Bruce gave her hand a squeeze. “No. She…Actually she offered to make it right. If we want.” She said slowly, her voice taking on more of a serious tone. Bruce’s brows furrowed. “I don’t understand. I thought your procedure was permanent.” Bruce said. Natasha exhaled slowly. “It was. Apparently, spells don’t really care about reality.” She said lightly. Bruce blinked. This was…not what he was expecting. This was what Natasha had wanted for years.

A child.

A chance to take back what the Red Room took from her and suddenly, here it was, being handed to her on a platter. “Okay. What’s the catch?” He asked. Natasha shrugged. “Didn’t ask. She offered, and I high tailed it out of there before we could get any further.” She replied. “I’ve been freaking out about this for days and then I realized, I hadn’t even asked what you wanted.”

“And you were going to use sex to make me more agreeable?” Bruce asked, and Natasha looked away in shame. “Okay. We’ll get back to that.” Bruce said, deciding to put that subject off until a later time.

“Nat it’s your body. Your choice. I just want you happy.” Bruce replied honestly. Natasha groaned. “Yeah I know that but I’m asking what you want.” She said with frustration. “Because…because…I don’t know if a child is what I want, and I love you and I don’t want to take this away from you.”

“What are you saying?” Bruce asked. Natasha swallowed. “I’m saying that if a baby is what you want, we can go get Sigyn right now and I’ll do whatever she wants me to do.” Natasha clarified. “Nat-“

“I don’t want you to give this up if you don’t want to. Bruce you’ve given me so much. I just want to give you something too.”

“Okay I’m going to fucking stop you right there.” Bruce said holding up a hand. “I know the Red Room fucked you up and I know they made you expect to give something in exchange for what you get but baby, that’s not me. That’s not us.”

Natasha felt her throat constrict with emotion and she swallowed. “I don’t want to ruin this.” She whispered. “I don’t want you to one day think back to this and resent me.”

“That’ll never happen.” Bruce replied, putting his hand under her chin and tilting it towards him. “And to answer your question, to be honest, I don’t know about kids. My father was a monster and with the Hulk, I’m so scared that I’ll be just like him.”

“That’s not true.” Natasha protested, and Bruce sighed. “Maybe. Maybe not.” He replied. “I didn’t particularly want to find out. I’m a hazard Nat. Children
and I do not mix but if you want this if you think…if you think I can handle it, then I will stay up and change diapers, I’ll sing lullabies, I’ll…I don’t know, take baths? Do they still do that with babies?”

Natasha had started crying at this point and she let out a choked laugh. “Yeah, I think so.” She said with a sob. “God, I love you so much. I don’t know what I did to deserve you but I’m so fucking happy I did it.”

Bruce pulled in his girlfriend for a hug and kissed the top of her head. “You deserve everything Nat.” He whispered to her. Nat choked back a sob and Bruce gave her a gentle squeeze. “I love you and that’s not going to change whether we have children or not.” Natasha nodded.

“I’m sorry about going all Black Widow on you.” Natasha mumbled. “I know you hate it when I’m like that.” Bruce gave her another kiss on the head.

“It’s alright love.” He said gently. “Just…talk to me ok? This can’t work if we don’t talk to each other.”

“I know. I’m sorry.” Natasha said, wiping her tears away. “Would you have wanted to? This was supposed to be a surprise.” She said gesturing to her outfit.

“I’m open to making out.” Bruce suggested, and Natasha’s face brightened.

“I’m down for that.” Natasha replied with a smile. “Wanna make curry and watch something afterwards? We could Netflix and chill.” Bruce snorted.

“I’m going to pretend I didn’t hear that.”

The team looked anxiously at the small stone on the table. Ragna was supposed to call once she was settled and Sigyn was beginning to grow desperate. “She should have called by now.” Sign said, wringing her hands. “What if something has happened?”

“She would have used the stone, Sigyn.” Loki said in what he hoped was a soothing tone.

“You cannot be sure of that.” Sigyn snapped. Her eyes suddenly widened. “Norns what if Odin-What if he knows?”

“Sigyn, I’m sure she’s just…delayed or something.” Tony said slowly. Sigyn opened her mouth to retort but a sudden shimmer in the air stopped her. The air reverberated and wobbled before an image of Ragna appeared.

She was clothed in the furs of Jötunheim and was in her Jötunn skin. Her face lit up at the presence of her family and she squealed. “It worked!” She said excitedly.

“Helblindi taught me how to project between worlds. Time passes differently here.” Ragna said excitedly. “I have been here for two days and I’ve been trying to cast the spell.”

“Two days? Tis been four days here. Are you alright?” Sigyn asked worriedly.

“Yes mother.” Ragna said in a placating tone. “Surprisingly, all the Jötunns are fine with having me here.”
“And they have no problems with the fact that I killed Laufey?” Loki asked cautiously. He hated to admit it but that had been his main worry with sending Ragna to Jötunheim. He did not know the relationship Laufey had with his people but in his experience, people tended to be unhappy when someone murdered their king.

“No.” Ragna replied. “To be honest, they kind of like you. You gave back the Casket, you tried to overthrow Odin, they respect that.”

“Huh.” Loki muttered to himself. “At least someone appreciated me.” Sigyn rolled her eyes.

“Uncle Tony, Uncle Bruce, did you know Jötunns can control the weather?” She said excitedly. “Also, we’re actually several feet tall in Jötunheim, apparently the heat of other realms makes us shrink.”

“Oh, that’s pretty cool.” Bruce said.

“Nice.” Tony said. “I kind of wondered about their anatomy, you look humanoid when you’re blue is the internal structure the same? Loki do you want to– “

“If you attempt to touch me in Jötunn form, you shall freeze, and I shall kill you.” Loki said, cutting Tony off.

“Drama Queen.” Tony muttered under his breath.

“Are they at least teaching you to fight?” Bodil piped up playfully. “I imagine a ruler who can’t fight isn’t of much use.”

“I’ll have you know, I have been learning spells.” Ragna shot back. “Besides, not that you would know, but there’s more to ruling than fighting.”

“Sounds terrible.” Bodil said with a smile and Ragna rolled her eyes.

“You are doing well right?” Sigyn asked, needing to hear the words from her daughter’s mouth.

“Yes mother. I am doing well.” Ragna said with a small smile. “I promise. I miss you all dearly but I’m fine.”

Sigyn swallowed. Part of her wanted to demand that Ragna transport her to Jötunheim right then so she could make sure her daughter was truly okay, but she knew she had to learn to let go at some point. I suppose now is as good of a time as any to do so. “Okay.” She said softly.

Loki reached over and took his wife’s hand. He didn’t know what was running through her mind, but he knew she had difficulty with letting any of them go. Sigyn looked back at Loki and managed a small smile. Her fear wasn’t gone and Sigyn was sure she was going to fret till she saw her daughter with her own eyes, but it was a start.

Chapter End Notes

Another chapter down! We're slowly drawing to the end of this story. I hope you enjoyed this one and thank you for waiting so long.
Chapter 19

It had been a month since Ragna had left and things were slowly going back to normal. The children's nightmares had decreased significantly, and it looked as though the dust had finally settled. Jane and Thor had finally made up. Loki had suggested that Thor gift Jane something of great value to her.

So, Thor had gone along and given her a star.

An actual star.

Needless to say, Jane had forgiven him quite enthusiastically if the noises from their floor were anything to go by. Loki and Sigyn had waited uneasily for Odin to react to what they'd told Sif but so far, nothing had happened. Thor had reassured them that Odin would never hurt them again and while that was comforting to hear, it didn't exactly allay their fears.

Ragna was going to be back in the next two weeks and everyone was eager for her arrival. She'd continued to 'call' them and it was obvious that she was taking her role as new ruler very seriously. They'd still not brought it to Asgard's attention but Ragna was gearing up on doing that sooner than later.

Sigyn and Loki still didn't know how to feel about her telling Odin but they all agreed that it was better if he knew than finding out so at least Jötunheim could claim transparency.

‘My love?’

Sigyn looked up at the sound of her husband’s voice. Things between her and Loki were finally beginning to smoothen out and they had gone back to conversing like usual. She could see him holding something behind him and she frowned. He and Tony had been working on something in their lab for a while and she was guessing this was it.

“Are you ready to tell me what you and Tony have been doing in your free time?” She asked in a knowing tone. Loki smiled.

“I see there is nothing that can be hidden from you.” He said softly as he sat next to her on their bed. He brought the object he was hiding from behind his back and placed it next to her. It was a sword.

Sigyn swallowed thickly at the sight of the weapon in front of her. “What is this?” She asked in a whisper.

“A gift.” Loki said as he carefully sat next to her. “It will change to whatever you wish it to. You need but think and it will respond to your wishes.” Sigyn looked up at him and Loki gave an encouraging nod. Looking back down at the sword in her hands, Sigyn willed the sword to turn to a spear and before her eyes, the metal shifted and stretched till she was holding a spear in her hands.

“It will respond to no other. Not even me.” Loki said softly, watching his wife’s expression. Sigyn stared at the spear for a few more seconds before carefully dropping it on the floor. Loki’s heart sank at her actions and he made to stand up and leave before Sigyn pulled him back.
“Thank you.” She said, her voice quivering. It was only then that Loki realized the tears in her eyes.

“Sigyn?” He asked, automatically moving closer to her. A few tears escaped and Sigyn hastily wiped them away.

“They are not tears of sadness.” Sigyn said with a small laugh. “I am merely happy. This is a wonderful gift. Thank you so much.” Sigyn leaned in to hug him and Loki took her in his arms. Loki breathed in the scent of his wife with a content smile. He’d missed having her by his side. Things between them had gotten better but it wasn’t the same.

Sigyn pulled away from the hug and so did Loki at the same time. Sigyn found herself inches apart from her husband and blood rushed to her face. It had been a while since she and Loki had been together in that way and with all the events that had taken place, sex had taken a backseat in their marriage. As Sigyn stared at Loki’s mouth, she was reminded of all the things he could do with it and she felt heat spread through her.

“Sigyn?” Loki asked hesitantly. He knew that look in her eyes, it had lead to the birth of each of their children, he just didn’t know where it was coming from. They had started sharing a bed two weeks ago, but they had barely even kissed in the past month. He could tell she wasn’t ready, she’d woken up from one of her nightmares the night before almost screaming and had spent the rest of the night unable to go back to bed. Norns knew he wanted her but not if she wasn’t ready.

“I know.” Sigyn said, reading Loki’s mind. “I just…I miss you.” She murmured, pulling closer to him. “Is this okay?” She asked, inches away from his lips. Loki answered by pulling her in for a kiss. It was soft and gentle and Sigyn felt herself melting into it. The couple pulled apart after a few seconds and Sigyn rested her forehead against his.

“Is-Can we…is this okay?” Loki asked, his hands brushing through her silver hair. Sigyn nodded with a smile.

“Just…be gentle.” She said softly, recalling the words she’d said to him in their first meeting.

“Always.” Loki replied, his hand caressing her cheek.

"Do you regret killing people?"

Tony froze at the question that came out of Brenna's lips. Ever since the attack, she'd taken to spending more time in Tony's lab, not that he minded. She was a bright girl and eager to learn. She seemed to have a natural way with machines that surpassed anyone's expectations and Tony was finding her childlike innocence and curiosity soothing.

However, it seemed like she was having a bad day. She'd been quiet and sullen all day and now he knew why. "Is this about the agents that came in the other day?" Tony asked gently as he sat next to her. Brenna nodded.

"I know tis stupid. They would have hurt us and I know I should not regret it but I find myself wondering if they had families. I know what it feels like to lose a loved one." Brenna said softly, her eyes gleaming with unshed tears. "To think I might have caused that..." Her voice trailed off and Tony found himself floundering for words.

Talking about emotions wasn’t really his forte and seeing the near weeping girl in front of him was making him panic. Why couldn’t she ask Steve about this? Swallowing, Tony took in a deep breath and decided to try. “I…don’t know if you know this, god knows what you guys search on the internet, but uh…I wasn’t always the best person.” Tony started.
“You mean when you sold weapons?” Brenna asked in an innocent tone and Tony swallowed again.

“Yes that. I didn’t…I wasn’t always aware of who I sold my weapons to and people who didn’t deserve to be hurt got hurt and that will always stay with me.” Tony explained. “On the other hand, I’ve used my suit to kill a lot of people who were trying to kill me. Some of them had families and dependants and in cases where I could help, I did.”

"The point I'm trying to make is that there is a difference between killing someone for your own gain and killing someone in self defense." Tony continued. "I'm not going to tell you to not feel bad but don't ever regret trying to save yourself from someone who would cause you harm."

Brenna nodded and Tony gave her a quick hug. "Now then, do you want to look at the coding for Jarvis?” He asked and Brenna's face lit up. As Jarvis walked her through it, a longing flare lit up in Tony. Having a family was beginning to sound less and less like a bad idea.

"How are you so good at this?"

Loki chuckled as he rubbed Darcy's feet. Things between him and Sigyn had heated up pretty quickly but they weren't ready and that was okay. He'd left to keep Darcy company but only after reassuring his wife was okay. "Sigyn had swollen feet early on as well." He replied, thinking back to when Sigyn was pregnant. Darcy was in her fourth month now and the baby was beginning to take its toll on her. She and Steve had a small scare a couple of weeks earlier when she suddenly started spotting but things still seemed to be okay.

The whole team had become exceedingly overprotective and there were few moments when Darcy was left alone. To be honest, the entire thing was beginning to piss her off and Loki was the only one who didn’t treat her like she was made out of porcelain.

"Did you have swollen feet when you had yours?" Darcy asked, referring to Loki’s other children. Loki swallowed thickly at the mention of his lost children. Their existence wasn't something he ever brought up but this was Darcy. She'd accepted him before anyone else did and he'd never been given a reason to doubt her loyalty.

"A little." He replied. "Would...Would you like to see them?" He asked hesitantly. Darcy nodded excitedly and Loki made a flurry of motions with his hands. A small locket appeared out of thin air and Loki took it before opening it. A holographic image came up from the inside of the locket and Darcy leaned in to see.

On it were two boys and a girl. The two boys were play fighting and one of them turned into a medium-sized serpent and the other turned into a wolf cub. The little girl ignored the two and continued to play with her toys. "The cub is Fenrir and the snake is Jormugandr." Loki said softly as he watched the hologram. "The girl is Hela."

"Oh, she's the Queen." Darcy stated and Loki nodded. "Sigyn said you had four other kids?" She asked softly, not wanting to push things. Loki nodded and the hologram switched to the picture of an eight-legged horse.

"This is Sleipnir." Loki said with a sad smile.

"He kinda looks like Einar." Darcy commented and Loki nodded. "You must really miss them."

Loki nodded again, his eyes suddenly filling up with tears. "They mean everything to me. I am away from them for their own safety but it still hurts." He said softly. Darcy's hands went to her belly and she felt her eyes prickle with tears. She'd never even met her child but thought of losing him or her
before they even met made her panic.

"I'm sure you'll find some way to see them again." Darcy said in a sympathetic tone as she reassuringly patted his arm. Loki laughed weakly.

"I am a powerful Sorcerer but even I cannot undo the AllFather's magic." He replied. Darcy shrugged.

"I dunno. You managed to find us despite Thanos' control over you. Never say never." She said. Loki took Darcy's foot and continued his massage. Darcy's words rang in his mind and Loki tried to push them out of his mind.

"I quit S.H.I.E.L.D."

Steve almost choked in surprise. He and Natasha were watching Sigyn train with the kids. She'd revealed her new weapon to the team and everyone had wanted a chance to see it in action.

"How...Why?" Steve asked once he'd caught a moment to breathe. Natasha gestured towards the kids.

"I'm not willing to stay with an organization that's going to target children." She said softly.

"You tell Clint?" Steve asked and Natasha shook her head. Steve frowned. "You know he's going to take that badly."

"I know." Natasha said with a sigh. "The only one who knows as of now is Fury."

"Bruce doesn't know?" Steve asked in surprise. The relationship between the two had surprised everyone on the team and although they kept to their relationship under wraps, it wasn't hard to see how much they loved each other. Natasha shook her head.

"No. I'm out but there's a few things I need to do first." Natasha said, remembering Fury's message.

"You okay? I know S.H.I.E.L.D was like a family to you." Steve said and Natasha shrugged.

"Yeah, they gave me a better life but I think I've found an even better one right here." She said with a small smile and Steve returned it.

“Sir? I believe I’ve found something relating to Mr. Odinson’s request.”

Tony started at the sound of Jarvis’s voice. “Pull it up and call Thor down here.” He said, putting down his tools. Jarvis pulled up the information and Tony found himself frowning at what he was reading. This Isn't right. "J, are the dates on this accurate?" He asked.

"From what I can tell, yes Sir." The AI replied and Tony's frown deepened. The lab doors slid open and Tony turned to see Thor striding in.

"I was told you have news?" Thor said, walking up to Tony. Tony gestured to the documents and pictures Jarvis had pulled up and Thor took them in. "This is the most recent news of them?" He asked and Tony nodded. Thor sighed. "Very well. You have been of much help, Anthony. I shall take it from here."
"You sure about that, Point Break?" Tony asked nonchalantly. "The last sighting is almost a century ago. We can help-" He began but Thor shut him down with a shake of his head.

"I am grateful for your assistance, Anthony but I fear this may be beyond even your knowledge." Thor said morosely.

"Magic?" Tony asked and Thor nodded.

"It will not surprise me to find out that they are masking themselves." Thor replied. "I am not proficient in the mystic arts but I fare much better at it than the rest of you." Thor took in a deep breath. "I shall be absent for a while, Anthony. I regret any battles I shall miss with the team."

"O-kay. Should we be telling Loki about this?" Tony asked. "I feel like this is one of those things he should know about." Thor shook his head.

"No. I intend for this to be a surprise." Thor replied. "Besides, he would be unable to help." Thor stared at the information for a few more moments before turning away. "I am grateful for your help, Anthony but the rest falls to me now."

Thor clapped his hand on Tony's shoulder by way of a greeting and left the lap. Tony stared at the information, his mind running in different directions. "Jarvis? Let's keep an eye on Thor okay?" He said and the AI replied in the affirmative.

Tony didn't know exactly what was going on but he had the feeling they were going to need reinforcements.

---------------------------------------------------------

2 weeks later

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Thor trudged through grass, his guard up. Mjolnir had traced strong magic to Valdó, a small Finnish town. It ticked all the boxes for what he was looking for and he hoped he didn't have to keep on looking. Mjolnir buzzed in his hands and Thor paused.

"The barrier you just crossed is impenetrable to Midgardians. Give me a reason to spare your life."

Thor turned at the sound of the voice. Standing in front of him was a tall blonde man. He was dressed in modern clothing but even Thor could see the magic reverberating off him. The man's eyes widened in surprise as soon as he set eyes on Thor.

"Uncle?"

 Chapter End Notes

I'm sorry this is so short. As you can tell, this is a filler chapter. The next one will show Loki meeting with his children for the first time so that's bound to be angsty but also
very teary. I think we have about two more chapters to go but I just wanted to get this one out of the way. Thanks and sorry again for it being so short and weird.
Chapter 20

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Ragna stepped through the portal and flew straight into her family’s arms. She was in her Jötunn skin and was dressed in their traditional furs. Helblindi watched them with a smile. He couldn't deny the light Ragna had brought to Jötunheim since she'd been there. From the instant she'd arrived, she'd set her mind to researching and reaching out to people. Helblindi hadn't handed over the reins to her yet but he had no doubt in his mind that she would be great.

"We've missed you so much!" Steve said as the group gathered around her.

“As have I.” Ragna replied as she pulled back. “There is so much I need to tell you about Jötunheim.” The group began to move back into the building when Ragna paused. Turning back, she ran back to Helblindi to give him a hug. Helblindi’s eyes widened in surprise but he returned her hug with a smile.

“I shall miss you. Send my love to Nánnir and I shall look over the trading agreement tonight.” She said, sounding very much like the ruler she was growing up to be.

“Very well, little one. I shall see you in a week’s time.” Helblindi said with a small smile before disappearing back into the portal. Ragna turned back to everyone with a smile.

“So, would you like to see what else I can conjure?”

Sigyn watched as everyone swarmed around Ragna. She had shifted back into her human skin and was speaking to everyone about her experiences in Jötunheim. She seemed well and healthy and Sigyn was beginning to feel foolish for making such a big deal of it. *I should have trusted Loki’s faith in Helblindi. He has already lost four of his kin, he would not have handed Ragna over if she was in danger.*

Loki caught her eye and he gave her a soft smile. He arched a brow at her solitary position and she shook her head. They could hash out her issues later.

“She seems really happy.”

Sigyn turned at the sound of Jane’s voice. The scientist had heard of Ragna’s return and had managed to leave her work to come up. She and Tony were working on replacing the metal in the armor with nanites. So far, it wasn’t working out the way they were hoping and Jane was nearing her wit’s end.

Pepper had jumped in to use that as an opportunity to remind Tony that he could just scale back on his ‘Iron Man’ adventures but Tony had quickly shut that down. Jane was smiling at the view in the living room and Sigyn couldn’t help but mirror her expression.

“It’s good to know if Thor and I ever have children, they’ll have a huge family to dote on them.” Jane said softly. Sigyn raised a brow in surprise. Although Thor had practically proclaimed Jane as his bride, she never thought Jane would agree to it. She seemed too caught up in her profession and didn’t seem the type to want to be a Queen.

“I know, being Queen doesn’t seem like me.” Jane continued, catching Sigyn’s surprised look.
“Thor and I have been talking about it and it doesn’t all seem like ceremonial roles. Plus, as Queen I’d have access to Asgardian technology which is amazing.” Sigyn made a surprised noise. The lives of Asgard’s royalty was of little interest to her as she didn’t live like one but she was glad Thor and Jane were able to see eye to eye on it. Speaking of Thor...

“Where is Thor? He has been missing for a while. Back to Asgard?”

“No. He’s gone...searching for something.” Jane replied. “It’s supposed to be a gift for Loki.” Sigyn frowned at that. That was unusual. She couldn’t think of anything Loki would want on Midgard. A small cheer came from the group and Sigyn turned to see Ragna making ice sculptures. She and Jane moved forward to look closer and the topic of Thor was forgotten.

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5:00 pm Vald Ø, Finland

Thor stood in front of his nephews. He had not seen them in centuries but there was no doubt that they were Loki’s kin. Fenrir was pale and muscular with long jet-black hair and the same gleaming green eyes his father bore. Jormugandr was tall and slender with slightly tanned skin and eerie golden eyes. His hair was a dark brown and cut shorter.

Sleipnir was the last of them and he was taller and lankier than his brothers. His hair was of average length and chestnut colored. He was younger than his brothers and looked to them for support. Thor was aware that they had no reason to trust him, he had stood by and watched as they were taken from their father.

When he revealed his plan to them, they had been rightly suspicious. It had taken quite a bit of coaxing to convince them that his intentions were honest and even then, Fenrir and Jormugandr had promised to make his death extremely painful should he be lying to them.

He planned on taking them back to New York through Mjolnir but his nephews had all vehemently refused to fly with him. He couldn’t really blame them, but it did mean that their journey would be delayed. He’d called Anthony who had promised to send a jet their way so they could return to New York.

That meant more time spent with his brother’s kin. Which was...a trial in and out of itself.

“The journey would be much quicker if you were to go with me.” Thor tried again and he was met by Fenrir’s steely glare.

“I do not trust you as far as I can throw you Odinson. We will travel by plane. Besides, I am wary of any device Odin can control.” Fenrir said flatly. Thor sighed tiredly. This was going to be a long trip.

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10:00 am, NY, U.S.A

Bruce started in surprise as he came across Pepper in the communal kitchen. She had her hair up in a messy bun and was dressed in what he came to see as ‘Iron Man’ pajamas. She was mixing up what seemed to be waffle batter going by the waffle irons on the table.

“Good morning Bruce. You mind giving me a hand?” Pepper said with a smile as she noticed him in the hallway. Noticing Bruce’s amused look, she frowned before looking down at her clothing and rolling her eyes.

“Don’t mock me, it was the first thing I grabbed before I passed out last night.” She said. Bruce put up his hands in surrender.
“You won’t hear a word from me. I can’t speak for everyone else though.” He said as he started the coffee machine. One by one, the members of the team trickled in and pitched in for breakfast. Along with waffles, Steve fried up some sausages and bacon and Clint made some tea for the kids. The kitchen was big enough to handle them maneuvering with a dining table large enough to seat all of them.

Tony and Natasha joined them and began to set the table. Darcy came in moments later and snagged a couple pieces of bacon. The last to come in were Loki, Sigyn, and the kids and they looked surprised at the spread laid out for them. “We thought we’d have breakfast together to celebrate Ragna’s arrival.” Pepper said to the family.

“Thank you so much.” Sigyn said with a smile as they all sat down.

“This is going to sound odd but do we have any salted fish?” Ragna said in a hesitant voice. “Not to say I do not appreciate this.” She said hurriedly when she realized how her sentence came off as.

“Oh yeah, we have a bunch of anchovies. I’ve been craving them lately.” Darcy said as she tried to stand up. Steve strode over to a cabinet and got out a few cans of anchovies. He handed a couple to Ragna and she opened them with glee. Her skin wavered back to blue and Loki flinched at the look of it.

“How does that work, if you don’t mind me asking?” Bruce asked her as food was passed around the table.

“It is just my true skin.” Ragna replied. “Jötnar skin burns anyone we consider enemies. I’m still figuring things out but from what I can tell, it is a defense mechanism responsive to our emotions.”

“Would you want to...?” Tony started but Ragna was already way ahead of him.

“You want to do a bit of testing? Sure.” She said as she opened another can of anchovies. “I have the trade agreement as well as various books to read. The more I know about how Jötnar work, the better.”

“Would you want help with that?” Pepper asked as she drizzled maple syrup over her waffles. “I’ve read enough agreements to last a lifetime.”

“I would be so grateful.” Ragna mumbled as she stuffed a waffle in her mouth.

“Where’s Thor? And Jane for that matter?” Clint asked.

“Jane’s currently passed out. She spent all of last night trying to figure out the nanites but I don’t think it worked out.” Bruce replied. “She’s probably going to try again today but I’m letting her sleep in.”

“That woman is a rock star.” Tony commented. “Thor’s...busy. He’ll be back soon though. Hopefully.” Tony muttered. Sigyn shot him a suspicious look but he said nothing.

“You sleep okay Ragna?” Steve asked. She’d had to sleep in the walk-in freezer because everywhere else was just too hot for her. Tony had suggested increasing the cool air to her room but she’d preferred staying in the freezer.

“Yeah, I did.” She replied. “It still felt warmer than Jötunheim but it was adequate.”

“Adequate?” Tony said in surprise. “How cold is Jötunheim?”
“During storms, it can be as cold as –100 °C.” Ragna said as she slathered on maple syrup on her waffles.

There was a moment of silence while the team tried to comprehend what –100 °C felt like.

“How do you even survive under those kinds of temperatures?” Clint asked in amazement.

“Are there animals who can survive there?” Bruce asked.

Ragna nodded. “Jötunheim is very much a fishing realm. That’s actually part of the trade agreement. Some Jötunn fish have magical properties and there are certain plants that can only be found there. The Jötnar aren’t keen on sharing with anyone else and I don’t blame them. None of the other realms were there when Jötunheim fell.”

Ragna’s eyes glowed red for a brief moment and people could have sworn that the temperature in the room dropped slightly. Ragna shook her head from side to side to displace her anger and her skin reverted back to its human tone. “Sorry, I’m just so used to being in my other skin.” She apologized.

“It’s ok. You can appear however you want to here.” Steve said reassuringly. Ragna shot a glance towards her father. She’d seen how he flinched whenever she showed her true skin and how uncomfortable he was whenever he was around Helblindi and Bӱleistr. She knew he had his own demons to deal with and she didn’t want to make it worse.

“I think I’ll try to stay in this skin for a while.” Ragna replied with a small smile.

“Sir, Thor and his guests will be arriving in under an hour.”

Tony stiffened at the sound of JARVIS’s voice. After breakfast, he’d returned back to his lab to do a bit more work. Pepper was helping Ragna with her trade agreement and everyone else had separated to do their own thing. Clint was training with Brenna and Bodil and Steve and Darcy were still looking at nursery designs.

Natasha and Steve had come to him to discuss their growing concerns with S.H.I.E.L.D. He’d been discussing what measures they could take when Jarvis’s announcement came through. The duo gave him a look at his AI’s message and Tony knew he had to come clean.

“Okay look, this was Thor’s idea and he wanted to do this huge thing for Loki and he roped me into it.” He said in a defensive tone.

“What thing? What’s going on?” Steve asked in a no-nonsense tone.

Tony decided he might as well just tell them everything. “Thor asked me to look up some individuals the other day. He said he couldn’t trust Heimdall to do it so I went ahead and turns out they were actually Loki’s long-lost kids.” Tony explained. “The last sighting was almost a century ago. I gave Lightning McQueen the coordinates and he went searching. I’m guessing he found them and they’re currently on their way.”

There were a few moments of stunned silence.

“Are we talking about the same kids that are supposed to bring about the apocalypse?” Steve asked and Tony spluttered.

“Okay, he did not tell me that.”
“So, Loki hasn’t seen his kids, who may or may not bring about some kind of apocalypse, since his asshole of a father sent them to Earth and now they’re going to be here in just under an hour and he has no clue?” Natasha asked skeptically.

“Well, when you put it that way...” Tony started and Steve groaned. “Blame Thor, he’s the one who made me keep my mouth shut.” Tony said defensively.

“Alright well, what do we do? Do we tell Loki?” Natasha asked impatiently.

“I don’t know, Thor said not to.” Tony replied.

“Oh, so now is the time you choose to follow orders?” Steve snapped and Tony glared at him.

“Are they dangerous? We’ve got children and Darcy to think of.” Natasha said, her mind already thinking up strategies.

“Thor’s got Jane here, he’s not gonna risk her for shit.” Tony shot back.

“Okay well, what do we do then?” Steve asked.

“We’re telling Loki is what we’re doing.” Natasha replied. “I know Thor wanted it to be a surprise but they were taken from him without his consent, the least we can do is let him know he’ll be seeing them soon.”

“Okay. Okay.” Tony said in agreement. “They’re going to be here in about forty minutes so that’s enough time to prepare. You want to put the Tower on alert?”

“No, but we should all have our weapons at the ready.” Steve said. “And maybe...maybe we should tell Sigyn.”

“I call not it!” Tony called.

Thor had decided to sleep off his exhaustion while they were on the plane. Fenrir, Jormugandr and Sleipnir were huddled in a corner with Sleipnir in the middle of them both.

“Heimdall must know of this by now and if he does, so will Odin.” Jormugandr said in a low tone. The mention of the AllFather’s name was enough to make Sleipnir shiver.

“You will never have to serve him again brother.” Fenrir said soothingly. “If he moves to enslave you again, Jormugandr and I are prepared to give ourselves up in your place.” Sleipnir made to protest but was quickly hushed by his brothers.

“You have been denied freedom long enough, brother. T’is a small price to pay.” Jormugandr said. The brothers huddled against each other for support as the jet carried them closer to their father.

“So, Thor is on his way with the others at this moment?” Sigyn asked in a calm tone and Tony nodded. They’d managed to pull Sigyn away from Loki and the kids and had debriefed her. She’d had taken the news of he and Thor’s adventures eerily well and he was beginning to worry.

“And you kept it from Loki because...?” She asked again, her voice trailing off.

“Thor said he wanted it to be a surprise and I don’t know...I figured he would know best.” Tony muttered as Sigyn glared at him.
“So, you thought Thor, the man who until a few months ago completely disregarded the suffering Loki had endured at Odin’s hands, would know what was best?” She asked incredulously, her tone sounding more enraged with every word.

“Look, Tony’s not...the best at judging stuff. What’s done is done. What do you want us to do?” Bruce asked. Sigyn took in a deep breath.

“Well, they are not going to attack us so you can all put away your weapons.” She said pointedly at them. Natasha and Clint guiltily put away their guns.

“If they’re on their way here, that means Heimdall knows and if he knows, so does Odin. So, we need to prepare for that.” Sigyn said her mind already starting to strategize.

“And Loki?” Steve asked. Sigyn sighed. She knew how Loki would react to the impending arrival of his children. He would most likely panic and try to leave so they did not meet and so Odin would not have a case against him but the time for that was long gone.

Also, she did not want to risk him vanishing to some unknown part of the realm and further risking Odin’s fury. “We have to tell him before he meets them but we can wait till they get here.” Sigyn replied finally.

“Alright, we’ve got about twenty-five minutes till they get here. Do you want us to do it on your floor?” Clint asked and Sigyn shook her head.

“Let’s do it in the common living area. If and that’s a very weak if, things go badly, I want to know you’ll be close by.” She said. Steve nodded.

“Okay. I texted Darcy and told her to stay over at her mom’s for a while so she’s good.” He said. “What of the kids? If Odin comes, do you want them here?”

Sigyn immediately shook her head. Odin had never moved to threaten her children but she wasn’t going to wait around for him to do so.

“Where to then? We’ve all got safe houses. Name one and we’ll get them there.” Tony said earnestly. While Sigyn appreciated the offer, she had something else in mind.

“Jarvis, could you please send Ragna to the lab?” Sigyn called. While the team waited for Ragna to arrive, they tended to other business. Tony sent an alert to S.H.I.E.L.D to warn them of the situation should Odin appear. Natasha and Clint were getting into contact with friends should they end up needing the backup.

“Jarvis said you needed me?” Ragna said as she came into the lab. She took in the serious faces of the Avengers and her mother and connected the dots. “I’m assuming this has something to do with Odin?”

“How did you-?”

“Mother’s here and Father isn’t.” Ragna said in reply to Steve’s question. “What do you need me to do?”

“Could your siblings stay on Jötunheim for a short period of time?” Sigyn asked. Ragna frowned.

“Of course, but...what’s going on?” She asked in a confused tone.

“Thor thought to bring your step siblings here and Odin is not going to take that lightly.” Sigyn
explained. Ragna instantly adopted a serious tone.

“Alright, I’ll contact Helblindi and inform him. If Odin is going to be here then I should be here as well.” She said.

“Ragna that might not be the best idea.” Tony said slowly and Sigyn nodded in agreement.

“I’m the rightful heir to Jötunheim.” Ragna said as she squared her shoulders back. “I can’t run away every time Odin shows up. Besides, he might as well know.” Sigyn nibbled on her bottom lip but nodded in agreement. There wasn’t much she could say to discourage her daughter and she knew Ragna wasn’t going to listen to her.

Ragna went off to a corner of the lab and muttered a few spells. What looked to be a small portal opened up and Helblindi’s face appeared. The two began to converse in another language and Sigyn turned back to the team.

“I guess the last thing to do is tell Loki huh?”

Loki paused in surprise as he came up to the communal kitchen. The team was standing in a group and to his surprise, Thor was back. “What is this?” He asked, not bothering to beat around the bush.

“Well...we’ve...Thor can tell you what’s going on.” Tony said, stammering before finally pushing Thor forward.

“The Lady Jane informed me that I had much to make up for in all the years I had treated you wrongly.” Thor began. Loki eyed him warily. The situation was beginning to look like a ‘how uncomfortable can we make Loki with our remorse’ party and he wanted no part of it.

“I approached Anthony and sought his help for this and we found your children.”

Time stopped as Thor’s words echoed in Loki’s mind. Tony pulled a hologram view of the next room and Loki blanched as the images of his estranged sons as well as his other children were shown.

The room spun around Loki as he stared at the three figures on the screen. Thor was still speaking but all he could hear was the blood pounding in his ears.

This cannot be. He’d last seen his children in centuries but he knew why he couldn’t contact them. Odin’s spell on them was too strong and he promised himself that he’d stay away for their safety. “Loki?” Sigyn said gently and her hand reached out to touch him.

Loki jerked back and Sigyn held her hands up in surrender. This isn’t real. That was the only explanation for this and if this wasn’t real, what else wasn’t real? Was his entire interaction with the Avengers false? Was he even on Midgard? Loki’s blood ran cold.

He was still with Thanos. He had to be, why else would the Avengers have accepted him into the team? Why else would they have set him free? Why else would Thor come to his defense? “Brother?” Thor said and Loki squeezed his eyes tightly shut.

“Stop.” He said in a small shaky tone.

“Loki?” Natasha said and she slowly took steps towards him.

“Just stop. Please. I’ll do anything just...please.” He said, his arms wrapping around himself. The
team exchanged confused glances. Of all the reactions they’d expected from him, this wasn’t it.

“Loki, I know this is a huge shock but it really is them. We can take you to go see them if you want.” Steve said softly and Loki’s eyes filled with tears.

“I promise, I shall do better next time just stop. Ju-Just leave them alone.” He stuttered. Natasha’s eyes widened as she finally realized what was going on.

“He thinks he’s still under Thanos’ control.” She said in a soft whisper. Thor’s face fell.

“Oh, Loki.” Sigyn said in a heartbroken whisper.

“Loki can you tell me where you are?” Tony said softly. Loki shook his head and Sigyn took a step closer to him.

“Loki, can you please open your eyes for us?” She asked gently and again Loki shook his head. He knew once he saw them, he’d believe anything they said and he wasn’t going to let himself fall for another one of Thanos’ tricks.

Seeing the distress on her husband’s face, Sigyn took to the last resort. She called her weapon to her and turned it into a small dagger. “Loki, look at me.” She said as she stepped closer to him. Again, he shook his head but Sigyn was already standing in front of him. “Look at me.” She repeated in a firm tone.

Against his better judgment, Loki opened his eyes. Sigyn was standing in front of him and she gave him a reassuring smile before quickly pulling out her dagger and swiping it across her palm. Loki’s eyes widened in surprise as blood trickled from her palm. They both knew that blood in illusions never quite looked like blood in reality and her cut palm proved it.

“What the fuck?!” Tony said as he jerked back from Sigyn.

“Blood takes on a different appearance in an illusion.” Sigyn explained. ‘Go on.” She thrust her hand towards Loki and he gingerly took it. He knew it was real which meant everything else was real and Loki felt dizzy. Steve went to grab the medical kit and Loki felt guilt flash through him.

“Loki?” Bruce asked, speaking up for the first time. “Do you want to take a break? You don’t have to make any decisions right now, you can think things over.” His voice was soothing and calming and Loki latched on to it like a tether.

“Bruce is right. They shall be under my protection for as long as you need.” Thor said in what he hoped was a calm tone. Loki nodded weakly and let Tony and Natasha guide him to a sofa. Clint prepared a cup of tea for Loki and Tony and Natasha sat next to Loki.

None of them had seen Loki this distressed before but they were all determined to take care of him. “Odin’s going to take me back to Asgard. If I see them.” Loki said in a flat tone. “I’m okay with whatever he does to me but he can’t have them. Promise me. Promise me you’ll take care of them when he comes for me.” His last words were said with a tone of desperation and Natasha rubbed his back in soothing circles.

“Brother, I know I have not given you much reason to trust me.” Thor said gently as he crouched in front of Loki. “But you have my word on Vár that I will protect you and your kin.” Loki’s eyes welled up with tears at his brother’s words.

“Point Break’s right. When we said you were part of the team, we meant it.” Tony said as he sat next to Loki.
“We’re ready to fight Odin if it comes down to it.” Steve added as he returned with Sigyn. Her hand was now wrapped up and she joined the team pile on the couch. Loki smiled through his tears as his team surrounded him. It was still hard to wrap his mind around sometimes but this was his family now.

“Thank you.” He said softly.

“Of course.”

“Don’t mention it.”

“You’re our family.”

Loki felt himself tearing up again at the comments from his team. It was still so unbelievable to think that they genuinely considered him part of the team. He was so ready to believe that it was Thanos’ influence because that made more sense than them thinking he was a good person. Clint handed him a cup of tea and he took it with a grateful smile. The team fell into a comfortable silence before Sigyn spoke up.

“Do you want to see them still? The children are entertaining them but you can put it off.” She said softly. The apprehension Loki felt at seeing his children was slowly disappearing. Now that he knew he had backup in the form of his team, his excitement was slowly building.

“Probably. There’s no telling the kind of mischief they’re getting up to.” He said with a weak smile.

“Oh god, you’re right.” Tony said in mock horror.

“Isn’t one of them like a huge snake or something?” Natasha asked teasingly and Tony’s eyes widened in real horror.

“Christ, are any of your spawn normal?” He shot at Loki and Loki rolled his eyes. He made to get up but something very crucial occurred to him and he sank back down.

“My love? What’s wrong?” Sigyn asked noticing the way her husband’s face fell.

“What if they hate me? Because I couldn’t break Odin’s spell.” He said in a small voice.

“Well, they can fuck right off then.” Steve replied, shocking everyone with his language. “You’re a great father and you haven’t seen them because Odin is a horrible person, no offense Thor.”

“None taken, Steven.” Thor said with a sad smile. “You speak the truth. If they do not appreciate the sacrifices you have made on their behalf, I am more than willing to give them a good shaking.”

“Do you want us to be there?” Natasha asked but Loki shook his head.

“I think I need to do this on my own.” He replied. He slowly stood up and headed towards the living room with his heart in his throat.

He hesitantly opened the door. He could hear the voices of his children coupled with the manly voices of his sons. Now that he was here, he was beginning to think this was a bad idea. What was he going to say? Just because they had followed Thor did not mean they were accepting of him.

Some part of him wished he had accepted the offer of his team but he knew he had to do this on his own. *I have faced the Mad Titan. I can face my own kin.* Loki opened the door wider and took a step in.
Einar and Aric were showing of their magic to Sleipnir while Ragna, Bodil and Brenna were speaking to Fenrir and Jormugandr. Bodil caught sight of her father and signaled to the rest of her siblings. Fenrir, Jormugandr and Sleipnir looked up and locked eyes with their father.

Brenna and Bodil ushered everyone out while Loki stepped closer to his sons. A silence hung in the air as they stared at each other before the boys broke out of their stunned surprise. Loki barely had time to speak before he found his arms full with his sons.

“I’m so sorry. I’m so, so sorry.” Loki chocked out as he hugged his kin to him. There were tears streaming down his face and the faces of his son.

“Faðir, there is nothing to apologize for.”

“T’is Odin who should be sorry.”

“We’ve missed you so much.”

The group found their way to a sofa and Loki sat down surrounded by his children. He still felt like this was some sort of dream or apparition that he’d imagined. It felt too good to be true. As he looked into the gleaming eyes of his sons, Loki couldn’t recall a time when he felt more content.

The team lit up as Loki and his sons emerged from the living room. They all looked emotionally wrung out but Loki’s smile had never looked brighter and the men next to him looked just as glad.

“Alright, introductions. This is Fenrir, Jormugandr and Sleipnir.” Loki said, gesturing to each son as he introduced them to the Avengers and to his family. Fenrir and Jormugandr stepped forward to greet the team while Sleipnir lingered behind with his father.

“You must be Anthony.” Jormugandr said as he stepped forward.

“Please call me Tony.” Tony said as they shook hands.

“I am surprised.” Fenrir said, his voice deep and rumbling. “Last I heard, my father was your prisoner here on Midgard and yet you’ve helped him find us. Why?”

“I don’t know what you’ve heard but Loki is our ally. Your father’s here of his own free will.” Steve replied.

“How?” Jormugandr asked, his question directed at the team and his father. Loki nervously chewed on his bottom lip. He supposed he’d have to tell his children of his crimes against humanity but he didn’t think he would have to tell them so soon.

“We would’ve thought you would imprison my father for his actions in Midgard and yet you say you have released him.” Fenrir continued. “I see no reason for you to forgive him unless you know why he attacked Midgard in the first place.”

Loki blinked in surprise. He had only just been reunited with his sons and yet they’d seen through his ruse of attacking Earth. The looks on everyone else’s team said they shared the same.

“What makes you think he had another motive?” Natasha asked, wanting to understand how they figured out what they’d missed for months.

“Because if I were going to take over a realm, I would target its leaders and not its heroes.” Jormugandr stated bluntly. “It makes more sense to seize power at its source.” Natasha couldn’t
argue with that. It’s what she would have done if she was trying to take over the world.

Loki and Sigyn locked eyes and she gave him a subtle gesture to continue. They were all aware of his time with Thanos and no one judged him for the things he’d had to do to keep him and his family safe. Loki took in a deep breath. If the Avengers and his wife could accept him despite knowing the truth, then maybe his sons could do so as well.

“I...I came into contact with Thanos.” Loki said slowly. He didn’t expect his sons to know who that was but they all shared a glance.

“The Mad Titan?” Sleipnir said, speaking up for the first time. Loki nodded, at a loss for words.

“What did he want?” Jormugandr asked. Loki knew he hadn’t told the team the purpose behind Thanos’ attack but now was as good a time as any.

“The Tesseract. It’s...It’s the Space Stone.” Loki replied.

“You didn’t tell us anything about a space stone. What else have you been hiding?” Clint said suspiciously.

“Hey, none of that.” Steve said sharply as Loki recoiled at the suspicion in Clint’s voice. His sons were tensely looking at the team and Sleipnir had inched even closer to his father. “What’s a space stone?” He asked in a firm yet gentle tone as he turned to Loki.

“One of the six Infinity Stones.” Loki replied. “It’ll make more sense if I show you. Is that okay Clint?” Loki asked, waiting for the archer’s consent. Clint paused for a moment before nodding. He hated when Loki did his mind tricks but if it was easier to see then he’d bear through it.

Natasha brushed her hand against Clint’s arm in a show of support and he shot her a grateful look.

“The story goes that in the beginning, there were six singularities.” Loki began, his magic creating an illusion that showed an empty galaxy. “Then the Universe exploded into existence and these singularities were forged into objects called the Infinity Stones. One that gives the ability to transport between dimensions.” An image of the Tesseract appeared.

“One to manipulate reality.” An image of Jane being covered by the Aether appeared and Thor flinched.

“One that gives unimaginable power, another to control time, one to control souls and the last, the Mind Stone is rumored to give life.” As Loki listed the stones, they all appeared in front of the Avengers. The images lingered before the Avengers for a few more moments before the illusion faded away.

“If he wanted the Space Stone, he most likely is looking for the others.” Fenrir said to Jormugandr.

“He’s moving quicker than we expected.” Jormugandr.

“Than you expected?” Loki asked, his heartbeat picking up. The way his sons spoke was as if they knew Thanos, something Loki desperately hoped wasn’t true.

Fenrir and Jormugandr exchanged a look before turning back to the team. “We’ve been watching the stars.” Fenrir said slowly. “We figured if we were going to bring about Ragnarök, we might as well familiarize ourselves with the worlds we were born to destroy.” He said with a glowering glare towards Thor. Thor looked away guiltily.
“Unfortunately for us, someone had beat us to it.” Jormugandr continued. “It took us a while to figure out who but apparently the Mad Titan has made a hobby out of destroying half the population on the planets he visits.”

The team descended into shocked silence.

“I didn’t—I didn’t know that.” Loki stuttered as he took in the shocked looks of the team.

“Even if you did, it’s ok.” Tony said gently. “I mean...it’s not the best but you don’t have to tell us everything that happened during your time with him.”

“Does anyone else know this?” Natasha’s question was directed towards Fenrir and Jormugandr and the duo shrugged.

“I’m sure Heimdall has caught wind of it.” Fenrir said nonchalantly. “As we’ve been estranged from practically everyone, there hasn’t been a way to warn others.”

“Well, he’s going to be coming back.”

Everyone turned to the sound of Tony’s voice. “When I...When I went through that portal,” Tony began, his hand automatically reaching up to rub his chest. “I saw hundreds of ships. Even with the missile...there’s no doubt in my mind that there’s more from where that came from.”

“Well then.” Steve said slowly. “We’re gonna talk about how you’ve never said that to any of us but as of now, it’s pretty late and we’ve probably got a huge day ahead of us tomorrow if Odin shows up.”

Loki held Sleipnir closer as he felt his son shudder at the sound of Odin’s name. He would forever hate Odin for what he did to his children. He would have taken all the torture and suffering that the AllFather had to give if it meant his children were left out of it.

“The Tower’s on alert.” Tony said as he stood up. "Jarvis tracked the energy signature Heimdall makes when he transports people. It’s not much but at least we’ll know.” The team nodded in appreciation and slowly made their way back to their floors.

"We have an extra room on our floor." Sigyn said as she carefully made her way to Loki and his sons. "You're welcome to have it for the night."

Sleipnir and Fenrir nodded in appreciation but Jormugandr eyed her in suspicion. She’d grown up knowing them from a distance and had witnessed how heartbroken Loki was when he’d lost them. She hadn’t reached her famous status when they were banished but her name was already synonymous to Odin’s wrath at that time. She knew they probably had some sort of vendetta list against Asgard and all Asgardians but she was beginning to wonder if her name was on their list.

Heimdall frowned as Fenrir, Jormugandr and Sleipnir were cloaked. He could still see them but they had been cloaked under a spell. He could also see Mjolnir and Thor. The same concealing spell was on them and he was growing suspicious. He’d been tasked by Odin to watch Loki since he’d arrived on Midgard.

Although he would never say so, he thought Loki and Sigyn’s visit to Midgard did them a world of good. It was no secret that they were unhappy on Asgard. The duo had blossomed among their friends on Midgard and despite the break on Odin’s seal, Loki seemed to be co-operating.

However, the appearance of his children with Thor was concerning. Odin’s spell was binding on
Loki but not on any other individual. All Asgardians were aware of the prophecies on Loki and his children and the only one who would lift a finger to find them was Loki. To see Thor with his nephews raised an alarm.

Heimdall’s loyalty was to Asgard not to the throne and at this moment, Thor was threatening the safety of Asgard. With a deep breath, Heimdall summoned the King. Odin deserved to know what his kin was getting up to.

Hela watched with a smile as her brothers reunited with her father. Odin’s spell on them had been broken and their meeting had already triggered a series of events. Hela grabbed her cloak and set it upon her shoulders.

“Your Highness?”

The surprised tone of her servant made her smile. She hadn’t left her realms in eons but today was a special occasion. “I have business to attend to on Midgard. I shall not be long.” The servant bowed in respect and Hela whirled out. She had been waiting for this day for years and now that it was here, she wasn’t wasting another second.

Chapter End Notes

So there we have it! I couldn't resist making this a bit angsty, I feel like Loki’s reaction makes sense. Odin and Hela will be showing up in the next chapter and that's bound to be very action packed.

We're also going to have an extra character show up, I'm thinking of going through the more traditional routes with Thanos' backstory. I hope you all enjoyed this and suggestions and comments are all welcome!
Hello all,

This is more of an explanation of why I've been so slow in getting the last 2 chapters out. If you've been following this story since the beginning, you'd know that about 3 years ago, my father was diagnosed with cancer. Although he had treatment and went into remission, for the past couple of months, he relapsed and was in pretty poor health. Last month, he finally succumbed to it and passed away. I've had to return home for the funeral (Home for me is another continent from where I currently am) as well as deal with work and school (I'm in my final year of Uni) and it has been extremely overwhelming.

I do know where I'm going with this plot and the end is so near I can practically taste it but I just haven't been able to write. My father meant everything to me. He was my protector, my best friend, my confidant, he was completely supportive when I came out (even though I'm from a very homophobic culture) and was just one of the best people I knew. His death has been a huge blow and doing literally anything else has been a chore. I do want to finish this fic, the end is almost in sight but I don't know when or if I can. The last few chapters have elements of death in them and my dad's passing still seems too raw to confront anything related to death.

I hope that I can finish this before the year runs out but I am open to any suggestions you might have for me. I wanted to let you all know because you were all so supportive when he was diagnosed and you kinda deserve to know why I've been silent for the past 2 months. Thank you so much for being interested in this fic and I hope to update an actual chapter at some point.

Cadburytrooper96
Sigyn slowly sipped her tea as she watched the sunrise. She’d had a rough night and was hoping the tea would calm her nerves. Loki had stayed with Fenrir, Jormugand and Sleipnir for the night and she had stayed alone. Helblindi had managed to convince Ragna to temporarily return to Jötunheim and she’d taken the others with her, leaving Sigyn at peace. *At least if Odin comes asking for our heads, the children will be safe.*

There was no doubt in her mind that Odin was going to show up. She’d been tasked with carrying out his vengeance on others and had witnessed first-hand the extent of his brutality. Hopefully, Thor could talk sense into him but she doubted it.

“Couldn’t sleep either huh?”

Sigyn turned to see Steve coming into the communal living room. The blond-haired soldier had a cup of coffee in one hand and his shield in the other. He sat down opposite Sigyn and she nodded at his question.

“I am not so bothered about Odin coming.” She murmured as she took another sip of tea. “I just hate waiting. Waiting gives my mind more time to speculate and wonder what he shall do to us.”

“What’s the worst he could do?” Steve asked, his mind already mapping out strategies. Sigyn shrugged.

“Kill us.” She stated plainly. “Loki’s children are a threat to Asgard’s safety. Contacting them is an act of treason. Odin would be well within his rights to kill Loki and I. You all went against his wishes when you gave Loki his freedom. Odin shall not take that lightly.”

Her words hung in the air and Steve slowly took a sip of his coffee. “Well, I’m not going to apologize for that.” He said casually. “Freedom is a right, not a privilege. I can’t understand how that is a topic even worth debating.” Sigyn shrugged again.

“The AllFather does what he pleases because he can.” She replied. It was true. No one stood up to Odin’s rule. The only reason why Loki was able to get away with passing as Odin for so long was that no one dared to question the logic behind Odin’s decisions. “The most we can hope for is that Thor manages to talk some sense into him.”

“Any advice?” Steve asked.

“Do not attack him.” Sigyn replied. “You will want to but don’t. Attacking him will mean war and from what I’ve seen of Midgard’s defenses, no one is ready for that.”

“Rude.” Steve muttered and Sigyn chuckled. The temperature in the room suddenly fell a few degrees and Sigyn turned around in confusion.

What she saw made the blood drain from her face. Standing in front her was a figure cloaked in a jet-black robe. Her skin was ashen and her hair a blue that was almost black. She was of a moderate stature with an average build and yet her skin possessed an eerie glow that seemed to illuminate her skeleton ever few seconds.
Sigyn could hear the Avenger's alarm going off in the background and the thundering sounds of footsteps making their way to the living room but she remained rooted to her seat in sheer terror. Steve had taken a defensive stance in front of her with his shield raised but the figure showed no interest in him.

“Hello, Sigyn.” Hela said with a smirk.

The Avengers rushed in to find Sigyn frozen in fear and Steve glaring at the figure cloaked in black stood in front of them. The rest of the Avengers took their positions but Loki stood in shock in the background. The figure turned and the Avengers were met with the Queen of Helheim.

“Leave us. I wish to speak to my father.” Hela said in a dismissive tone as she locked eyes with Loki.

“Okay, first of all-” Tony started but Hela held her hand up as a motion for him to be quiet and Tony looked around in stunned outrage.

“Alright, enough. You are in his house after all.” Loki said with a small smile as he stepped forward and Hela cracked a smile at her father. The duo grabbed each other in a hug and Loki held his daughter tightly in his arms. This was the first time in eons that they’d seen each other in the living realm and he just took in a moment to just breathe her in and hold her.

The duo pulled apart and Hela looked him over. “You seem...healthy.” She said reluctantly. “Shame, I was looking forward to killing the ones the AllFather tasked with your punishment.”

“Loki, who is this?” Steve asked in a very put-upon voice. Everyone else had slightly relaxed their positions, she’d called Loki her father so it didn’t seem like she was planning on killing anyone regardless of what she said.

“Avengers, this is my first daughter, Hela. Hela, Avengers.” Loki said by way of introduction.

“I’m not interested. By now Heimdall will have notified Odin.” Hela said dismissively. “We have to leave.”

“Our plans on that might have to change.” Loki started gently but was cut off by his children swarming into the kitchen.

“I’m surprised it took you so long to get here.” Fenrir mumbled to Hela as he, Jormugandr and Sleipnir stumbled in. He blinked and looked around in confusion at all the people crammed in the kitchen. “Is this...a normal practice? Do you always gather at the crack of dawn to a blaring alarm?”

“No, we don’t, Jarvis tracked your sister's energy signature and freaked out.” Tony grumbled as he got out of his suit.

“What do you mean our plans might change?” Hela asked, ignoring everyone else and focusing on her father.

“There are more important things to worry about now.” Loki began and Hela’s eyes hardened.

“More important than what they did to us?” She asked in a low tone and Loki sighed. Of all his children, Hela was the one most like him. Stubborn, arrogant and prone to mood swings. Coupled
with her power as Queen of Helheim, Hela Lokiðiottir was a force to reckon with. In all honesty, he was secretly glad the whole business with Thanos had cropped up. Exacting his revenge on Asgard was not in his interest anymore. He wanted nothing to do with the realm and was content in pretending it didn't exist if he could help it.

“Hela-”

“No need to explain.” Hela said, cutting him off harshly. “I see the only children who matter to you are the ones from Sigyn.” Her words cut deep and Loki automatically stepped back.

“Hela.”

Hela paused at the sound of her brother’s voice. Jormugandr was glaring at her and Hela held his gaze for a few moments before dropping it. “Alright, what is more pressing than our birthright?” She asked sarcastically and Loki winced.

“Well it’s-”

“Sir, I’m picking up a signal.” JARVIS interrupted and the air in front of them began to shimmer. Tony stepped back into his suit and everyone else automatically dropped to battle stances. Fenrir pushed Sleipnir behind him and Sigyn called her weapon to her.

A bright light shone and they all shielded their eyes. The lights dimmed and standing before them was Odin.

Loki felt fear sear through him. He knew what Odin was here for and he wasn’t one to wait for explanations. He could see his team ready to fight from the corner of his eye and his children looked like they were one word away from attacking. He couldn’t have that.

His children might survive Odin’s wrath, there wasn’t much he could do against the Queen of the Underworld but his teammates definitely wouldn’t and neither would Sigyn. Keeping this in mind, Loki did the only thing he thought would spare them.

“I’ll come back to Asgard, just leave them alone. Please.” Loki pleaded. He had no doubt that he was risking severe punishment and even death by going back but better him than his loved ones.

“The fuck you are.” Tony replied as he stepped forward. Odin regarded them with a cool stare before focusing on Loki.

“Loki. I assume you know why I am here as well as the consequences of your actions.” Odin said calmly and Sigyn’s eyes welled up with tears.

“Death, I am aware.” Loki said softly. “Just don’t hurt them, they’ve done nothing wrong.” He said referring to his team. A year ago he wouldn't have cared what happened to them but they were his family now.

“You’re not laying a hand on him.” Sigyn said in a trembling voice as she came to her husband’s side. “You’ve taken more than enough from him, Odin. Let him have this.”

“You will address me by my proper title, Sigyn.” Odin said with a sneer. “Do not think for a second that because you are on Midgard, you are free. Your marriage to Loki changes nothing.” Sigyn felt nauseous at his words but held her ground. There was nothing he could do to her that hadn’t been
done already and she’d be damned if she let him hurt Loki under her watch.

“Loki has not violated the terms you set for him, Father.” Thor said, stepping in front of Loki in a protective stance. “I brought his children here. If anyone is to be punished, let it be me.” Odin looked taken aback at Thor’s words and Hela chuckled.

“Punishment suddenly becomes difficult when it is your kin, does it not?” She said darkly. “Did you ever think to ask how my father managed to return from the dead not once but twice?”

Odin’s brow furrowed in a frown before he glared at her. “Bringing back the dead is against your sworn oath.” He snapped and Hela scoffed.

“You should have considered that before banishing me.” Hela snapped back. “You think I care about my oath? He’s my father, I will bring him back a hundred times if need be and that stands for everyone in this room. I will not stop you if you insist on being barbaric and murdering them in cold blood but I will keep bringing them back.” The Avengers all paused at her words. No one was interested in dying today.

“I think I speak for everyone when I say that we’d rather not have that happen but we will fight you if we need to.” Steve said evenly. His mind went to Darcy and the baby and he gripped his shield tighter.

“Please throw the first punch so I can smash your face in.” Bruce murmured as his eyes turned green and Natasha subtly inched closer to him.

“Your choice, Glad O’ War.” Hela said mockingly. “I, for one, have been looking forward to exacting my revenge and so have my brothers.” She gestured to Fenrir and Jormugandr who were glaring at him. Jormugandr’s eyes had become thin and reptilian-like and Fenrir looked like he was seconds away from ripping someone’s head off.

“Look, this has all been exciting but wasn’t there a bigger issue at hand?” Clint said, diverting everyone’s attention.

“Yes, the issue of the Mad Titan.” Fenrir spat out. “It concerns Asgard as well so it would do you well to listen.” Fenrir’s words hung in the air and everyone waited to see Odin’s reaction. Odin took in the spectacle in front of him. When Heimdall had informed him of his son’s actions he assumed Loki had tricked Thor but that was looking less likely and he wasn’t pleased with that. Loki’s actions deserved punishment but any threat to Asgard was a threat to him.

“Thanos is destroying planets in search of the stones.” Jormugandr said, picking up where his brother left off. “And as you know, Asgard is home to the space stone. T’is only a matter of time till you find him at your doorstep.”

“What reason would he have for doing so?” Odin asked.

“How would we know, we’ve either been banished or used as a bargaining tool by you.” Fenrir shot back and Odin gave him a warning look.

“What do you mean destroying planets?” Hela asked, ignoring Odin’s questions.

“He’s killing half the population.” Loki replied quietly. Hela frowned.

“He’s the one who had you wasn’t he?” She asked softly. Loki glanced nervously between Hela and Odin. He wanted to be honest but he also wasn’t ready to let Odin know what he’d suffered at the hands of Thanos.
“So that is where you found the Tesseract.” Odin said and Loki swallowed nervously. “Why should I believe anything you and your kin have to say, for all we know, you could be working in league with the Mad Titan.”

“Father, I can assure you he’s not working with Thanos. If anything, he has tried to shield us from the Mad Titan.” Thor said calmly. Mjölnir hung casually in his hand but Thor wasn’t afraid of using it if he had to. He wasn’t ready to lead Asgard but he would take up the mantle if need be, he wasn’t ready to let his father keep hurting his brother.

“Then he should have no problem returning to Asgard to prove his claims.” Odin replied. Loki felt his stomach turn. Returning to Asgard would be the end of him. Perhaps, in the beginning, he would have been glad about that option as opposed to staying but not now. Not when he’d known what it felt like to belong and to be loved.

“He’ll do no such thing.” Hela said coldly. “If you need proof of his claims, I shall provide them but he is not returning to Asgard.” Odin glowered at her but she held her ground. “You might be able to dictate to them but I am a Queen in my own right and I do not serve you.”

Odin’s glare intensified but he finally relented and Hela gave a smug grin. “Very well. But know this, if I find your proof to be lacking, I shall not be lenient.” He said and Hela gave him a curt nod.

“I do not know the full details concerning the Mad Titan, but I know one who does.” She said to Odin and the others. She quickly made a flurry of motions with her hands and an ominous black symbol wavered in the air before a portal opened. A figure in a jet-black cloak stepped out and Hela immediately bowed in respect. “My Lady. I’m sorry to disturb you but this was urgent.” Hela said in a soft tone.

The figure stepped forward and pulled back her hood. Her skin was deathly pale with an ethereal glow. Her hair was pitch black and so were her eyes. Her form looked to be hovering above the floor and despite the power radiating off her, she was of small stature with a frail gait.

"Hela. This is quite the surprise."

Her voice felt like it was being projected in their minds while simultaneously reverberating in the room. The otherworldly beings bowed their heads in deference while the Avengers looked on in bewilderment.

“My apologies but there is something I thought you should hear in person.” Hela said with a tone of urgency. “My brothers are saying Thanos is decimating planets.”

Lady Death's eyes widened in surprise. “He’s been looking for the stones.” Hela continued and the being’s expression took on one of concern.

“I’m sorry but who exactly are you?” Tony blurted out, tired of the cloak and dagger nonsense. Both Hela and the woman faced him with mutual looks of amusement on their faces.

“I’m surprised to hear that question from you, my Merchant.” The woman said with a small smile. Tony’s eyebrows furrowed in confusion before realization dawned on his face. He went pale as blood rushed from his face and he took a nervous step back.

“Wait, what? Who the fuck are you?” Clint demanded, looking between the woman and Tony.

“This is my mistress, Lady Death so it would do you well to watch your tone.” Hela said with a glare towards Clint and he shrunk back.
“Why should we believe you?” Natasha snapped back and Loki shot her an incredulous look. Now is the time you choose to ask questions?

“I would think you of all people would believe her. I’ve had the pleasure of welcoming many of your kills, myshka but I think Marina was one of my favorites, don’t you?” The figure known as Lady Death asked with a cruel smile. Natasha froze at her words and to everyone’s surprise, her eyes took on the sheen of unshed tears.

“That’s enough. With all due respect, you’ve made your point ma’am.” Steve said firmly as he stepped in front of Natasha.

Lady Death raised a brow but turned her attention to Loki. “He wants to use the stones, I assume?” She asked and Loki nodded.

“I was sent for the space stone but I suspect he has found others.” Loki said, keeping his gaze lowered in respect. Lady Death’s brows furrowed with concern and she hummed under her breath.

“Alright. I admit this is...sooner than I expected. It seems our plans have changed, Hela.” She said and Hela gave a nod of acknowledgment.

“Asgard was not informed of any future plans, my Lady.” Odin said, interjecting himself into the conversation.

“It will surprise you to know that not everything revolves around Asgard, Odin.” Hela said, her tone dripping with sarcasm.

“Oh okay before this turns into a huge fucking fight, can someone tell us what’s going on.” Tony snapped, clearly tired of being jerked around. “Or do we mere mortals not have the privilege of knowing?”

The otherworldly individuals in the room turned to stare in shock at Tony’s tone.

“So fiesty.” Lady Death said in a fond tone before turning to Odin. “Leave us. You have my word that Asgard will see no harm from Hela nor her siblings.” Hela pursed her lips at her words but remained silent.

“What of the threat from the Mad Titan?” Odin asked, clearly not willing to leave.

“Asgard will be made aware when the time is right.” Lady Death replied firmly. “For the time being, I wish to speak to Loki and his friends alone.” She stared Odin down and he gave a nod of submission.

“My Lady.” He said with a bow before turning to Loki. “Loki. I shall not forget what happened here.” Odin said in a tone that clearly indicated how he felt about the events that had taken place.

“I would hope not.” Thor replied coolly as he looked at his father. “It would do you well to remember Loki’s allies.” Sigyn looked in surprise at Thor’s words. She knew he’d said he would protect Loki but seeing him actually do so was shocking.

Odin glared at his son and Thor held his gaze. “Thor. We shall discuss this later.” He said reproachfully and Thor gave him a curt nod. Odin turned to the Avengers and they instinctively crowded around Loki and Sigyn.

“Tis a shame we had to meet under these circumstances but I look forward to knowing the friends of my son.” Odin said in a falsely pleasant tone and Clint scoffed.
“Likewise.” Steve replied in the same tone and Odin made a noise of discontent before bowing to Lady Death and vanishing.

The moment he was gone, Sleipnir let out a choked sob and was in his father’s arms before anyone could blink. Loki murmured soothing words to his son and the rest of the team watched as the brown-haired boy broke down in his father’s arms.

“We were owed Asgard. All of it.” Hela muttered in a low tone and Lady Death gave her a scathing look which had Hela submissively lowering her eyes. Lady Death turned her attention back to the group of individuals in front of her. Sleipnir had calmed down considerably but he and Loki were still clinging on to each other and Loki had his arms protectively wrapped around his son.

“Now that we are in more...pleasant company, I suppose the real fun can begin.” Lady Death said lightly. Odin’s disappearance left Hela and Lady Death as the only threats. Steve glanced at Sigyn for direction and she shook her head. If either of the being’s in front of them wanted them dead, they would be already.

“Stand down, Captain. I’m not here to collect any of you just yet.” Lady Death said as she caught Steve’s look before turning to Loki. “Why did Thanos send you here on your own? He could have easily come for the space stone himself, why you?” She asked.

“He wanted some form of control over Earth and I asked because I needed to leave his side.” Loki replied, not even bothering to lie. He hadn’t told the team this but keeping secrets with an entity as old as Lady Death was pointless and would probably piss her off. “The barriers between realities is weaker here, he wanted to use that to his advantage.”

“And you say he destroys planets how?” Lady Death asked, turning to Jormugandr.

“Killing half the population.” He replied and she frowned.

“He’s smarter than I gave him credit for.” She muttered under her breath before turning to the Avengers. “I should apologize, I’m afraid you are in this predicament because of me.” She said softly.

“The first time I met the Mad Titan was when he invoked me.” Lady Death continued. “I do not know how or why, the spells necessary to summon me are old and dark but he managed to complete them and I am bound to comply. Most who summon me do so for revenge or power, he wanted neither of those.”

Everyone had fallen out of their defensive positions, Tony had come out of his suit, Steve’s shield was down and they had all sat down to listen to Lady Death’s tale.

“What did he want then?” Steve asked and Lady Death gave a tired sigh.

“Till this day, I cannot tell you what he wants. All I know is that he seems to have some sort of...obsession with me.” She replied and Natasha rolled her eyes.

“Good to know there are ‘nice’ guys in every race.” She muttered under her breath.

“I have neither the time nor interest in him or any mortal so I refused him but he became insistent.” Lady Death said with irritation. “The last time I answered his summons was when he sacrificed his wife and children to me and I made it clear that I was unimpressed and that he was delusional. He has attempted killing himself to be in my realm but I have made that exceedingly difficult for him.”

“What do you mean?” Loki asked, his voice trembling with fear. “He cannot be killed?” The thought
of an immortal Thanos was enough to make him shake with fear and he clung tighter to Sleipnir.

Lady Death shook her head. “No, even I cannot disrupt the laws of nature. He will meet his end but I will draw it out for as long as I can.” She replied in a firm tone.

“So, I’m sorry, you don’t want to deal with him so everyone else just has to put up with him till he finally fucks off?” Tony snapped and Steve gave a tired sigh. Hela’s eyes narrowed and she took in a deep breath.

“It would do you well to watch your tone, Anthony.” She said in a clipped tone and Steve shot Tony a warning look.

“Even if I had not, there are events that are yet to take place, Anthony.” Lady Death said serenely. “I cannot interrupt fate, certain things must happen. There is a reason Hela was unaware of who held you, Loki.” Loki’s blood ran cold at her words. He had always wondered why his daughter was unable to reach him every time he’d come close to death at the hands of Thanos.

He’d assumed the world he had fallen into was beyond her reach but from what he was hearing, it seemed like he’d intentionally been shielded from her. Hela looked at Lady Death with something akin to betrayal in her eyes and Lady Death chuckled.

“You didn’t think you were reviving him without my knowledge, did you?” Lady Death asked in an amused tone and Hela had the decency to look ashamed. Lady Death turned back to Loki. “I’m sorry for what you endured, I truly am but it was necessary.” She said.

“Let me guess, it was for the greater good?” Bruce said, his irises switching between green and brown. “Because we’ve all heard that story.” Natasha rubbed soothing circles on his back and his eyes stayed a brown color.

“With Loki’s invasion, you would have never formed a team.” Lady Death replied. “Loki would have never informed you of Thanos’ arrival and Thor would still be unaware of Odin’s treachery. Furthermore, Midgard would have no defense when the Mad Titan arrived. As I said, it was necessary.”

“You know you guys are really starting to get on my nerves with the whole ‘We’re gods and we know better’ bullshit.” Tony snapped. “This isn’t a fucking game. If you know how to defeat Thanos, either tell us or stop wasting our time.”

“I cannot tell you that.” Lady Death replied in a frank tone. “There are many realities, each one changing by the second. I cannot tell what happens in this reality, however, I will say that you have more knowledge in this reality than your counterparts. My advice? Keep building your team and prepare for his arrival.”

“What happens if Thanos gets all six stones?” Clint asked, asking the question everyone had on their mind.

“Whatever he wishes.” Hela replied. “And that is a big ‘if’. Wielding one is enough of a hardship, no one has been known to wield all six stones. At least...not without some form of sacrifice.”

“But...isn’t he destroying populations?” Natasha asked, remembering what Jormugandr said. “I mean that has to count as some sort of sacrifice, right?”

“Unfortunately, yes. If he’s absorbing their life force then he might be able to.” Lady Death said tiredly. “I and the Fates shall keep watch.”
“So, what, we just keep waiting?” Steve asked and Lady Death nodded.

“For now, yes. There is much that needs to happen before his arrival.” She replied.

“You mean more people who need to die?” Tony shot back and again, Lady Death chuckled.

“There are many who have died to put you all in the positions you are now.” She said in an amused tone. “Yinsen’s death and the deaths of those villagers spurred your decision to be Iron Man, did it not?”

Tony had gone pale at her words and Lady Death smirked.

“How did you—”

“When someone is called the Merchant of Death, I tend to take notice.” She said in reply to his unanswered question. “Your weapons have sent many my way. I feared I would meet you in that cave but you were surprisingly resilient and still are, to be honest.” She finished with a fond smile.

“Never seen a soul so determined to remain with its host.” Hela muttered under her breath. “I was to make sure you did not cross over but, in all honesty, I wasn’t needed.” Tony’s hand unconsciously wandered up to his chest and Natasha watched him for signs of a panic attack.

Lady Death turned her attention to Hela. “Stay. Consider it a treat for postponing your vengeance.” She said and Hela beamed with joy. “But—” Lady Death continued sternly. “—we shall have words concerning your actions.”

“Yes, Mistress.” Hela replied with a respectful nod and Lady Death turned back to the Avengers.

“It was a pleasure meeting you all.” She said with a small smile. “You have quite the path ahead of you and I shall be watching.” She gave them one last smile before vanishing, leaving an acrid smell in the air and a lingering sense of doom.

Chapter End Notes

Another chapter down! This chapter and chapter 23 were supposed to be one full thing but it was getting up to 10k words in length and I just had to cut it in half. We finally get to meet Hela and Lady Death! Also, Odin finally shows up and is given the verbal dismissal he deserves. I was gonna do a fight scene but tbh I suck at that and while I think the Avengers are a kick-ass team, Sigyn is right in saying that they wouldn’t stand a chance against him. The next chapter should see Hela interacting with her siblings as well as some potential storylines opening up.

Finally, thank you all so much for your kind words of support and comfort. These past few months have been hellish what with my father’s death but also my relationship taking a nose dive and finishing this story has sometimes been the only motivation for me to keep moving. I hope you enjoy this chapter and Happy Holidays/ Happy New Year to you all!
A heavy silence settled over the group before it was broken by Hela rushing into her father’s arms. “Thank you.” Loki whispered with emotion and Hela gave him a squeeze.

“No need to thank me, I would do anything for you.” She replied in an equally emotional voice. They held on to each other for a few seconds before Hela pulled away. Her eyes lit up at the sight of Sleipnir and she rushed forward to give him a hug. The duo started conversing in what seemed to be Old Norse and the Avengers turned their attention towards themselves.

“What do you think, Cap?” Clint asked, referring to the fuckton of information that had just been unloaded into their laps.

“Tony?” Steve asked, turning the question to the engineer. He had been silent ever since Lady Death’s revelations and Steve made a mental note to notify Pepper as soon as they were done here.

“I...I think she’s right.” Tony replied and if anyone thought his voice was unusually hoarse or strained, they kept it to themselves. “I mean, Steve and I have spoken briefly on it in the past. As much as we hate to admit, we can’t be everywhere at once. We need help.” He said and Bruce shook his head.

“I don’t work well with others.” He gritted out and Tony gave a tired sigh.

“Neither did I before you guys.” He replied. “Look, there’s...talk in the military, something about putting a system of checks and balances for us.”

“I think it’s uncalled for.” Steve began and Tony rolled his eyes. “-but I agree with Tony about us being unable to do things on our own.”

“You bring the military into this and I walk.” Bruce said in a barely suppressed growl and everyone subtly inched away from him.

“Bruce, it’s a-” Tony started but Bruce had already gotten up from his place and walked off. Natasha watched him walk away with an indiscernible look and an awkward silence settled over the group. It carried on for a few seconds before Thor spoke up.

“What do you suggest we do then?” He asked in a troubled tone. “I would offer Asgard at your service but I fear I am most unwelcome there.”

“You have me.”

The group turned at the sound of Sigyn’s voice. She had quietly moved away from Loki and the children and was looking at them with a serious but sincere expression. “Odin is not going to stop and neither will Thanos. My oath does not apply here, I’m done waiting.” She said.

“I am pleased to hear so, you were wasted at home.” Hela said as she joined in on the conversation. “How are you feeling?” She asked, referring to Tony.

“Why do you care?” Tony snapped and Hela rolled her eyes.
“Trust me, I do not but my Mistress does. She seems oddly fascinated with you.” Hela said with annoyance and Tony snorted.

“Jealous?” He shot back. “Do you kneel for her too?” He asked in a clearly suggestive tone and Natasha rolled her eyes.

“I serve my Mistress in whatever way she requires.” Hela replied with smirk and Clint chuckled.

“I like this one.” He said with approval and Steve just looked fed up.

“You what?” Loki asked in shock as he wandered over, Sleipnir clinging to his arm with Jormugandr and Fenrir in tow. Hela shrugged nonchalantly.

“It’s not as though I’m spoilt for choice and it’s not as though I don’t want to.” Hela replied with a knowing smirk and Jormugandr scoffed.

“Fear not Father, Hela is pretty into eating-”

“Fuck you, Jory.” Hela snapped as she cut him off and Fenrir chuckled.

“Good on you, it’s not as though Jormugandr has anyone willing to serve him in that way.” Fenrir said teasingly and Jormugandr scoffed.

“That’s just because I have standards, something you would benefit from.” He shot back and Hela chuckled.

“Still bedding anyone who breathes in your direction, Fen?” She asked and Fenrir shrugged.

“Tis not a crime, the AllFather said nothing about abstinence.” He replied. Jormugandr rolled his eyes and Hela snorted.

“What about you, Sep? Anyone you’re fond of?” Hela asked, noticing Sleipnir’s silence and Jormugandr scoffed.

“We’re still working up to greeting strangers so I wouldn’t hold your breath.” He muttered and Sleipnir blushed.

“I don’t see why though, I know a good deal of men or women who would be proud to bed you.” Fenrir said to his brother who was looking like he’d rather die than finish the conversation.

“Alright, enough teasing.” Loki chided as he planted a kiss on Sleipnir’s forehead and the rest of his children snickered.

“I thought Odin separated everyone, how come you know each other?” Natasha asked as everyone stared at Loki’s children. The level of normalcy the four of them displayed was downright creepy compared to the threatening personas they’d exhibited in the past couple of hours.

“I always knew where they were.” Hela replied. “Odin sent us all to separate places but I could see where everyone was, t’was just a matter of making sure we all met.”

“You took a lot of liberties with Odin’s mercy.” Sigyn murmured and Hela made a disinterested noise.

“If he is unhappy with my decisions, he knows where to find me.” She replied casually and Loki sighed.
"Hela-" He began but she cut him off with a look.

"So, we keep searching for others?" Thor asked, going back to their original conversation and Hela nodded.

"Was there not a school for...talented youth?" Loki asked and Natasha nodded.

"Professor Xavier and Magneto both train mutants. S.H.I.E.L.D’s had their eyes on them for a while." She replied and Tony nodded in agreement.

"Alright. It’s good enough to start with." Steve said as he looked around his team members and Loki’s children. "I for one, am going back to bed. I’m exhausted plus I have to tell Darcy that we’re not actually being murdered today so she can come back home.” Steve stood up and so did Clint.

"I’m off to go talk to my husband cause this has been a clusterfuck.” He finished.

"Don’t tell-"

"I know, don’t tell Phil unless we have a plan.” Clint snapped at Steve. “We better have one quick because I’m not going to lie to my husband forever and I bet S.H.I.E.L.D’s going to find out about the Brady bunch at some point.” He and Steve wandered off, leaving Thor, Natasha, Loki, Sigyn and Tony. Thor looked uneasy and Loki waved him away.

"Go on, be with Jane.” He said and Thor eagerly ran off with Mjölnir to locate his partner.

Hela rolled her eyes at his actions and turned to her father and siblings. The five of them went back to speaking amongst themselves and teasing each other from the sound of the laughter coming from the two.

"Nat? What do you think?” Tony asked and Natasha pursed her lips.

"I think if she wanted to kill us, we’d be done with.” Natasha murmured. “I don’t think she’d have any reason to lie to us and you and Loki are acting as our shields right now.” She teased and Tony rolled his eyes at her.

"Sigyn?” Natasha asked, looking for her opinion. Sigyn shrugged in reply.

"To be honest, Hela does not care much for people other than Loki and her siblings.” Sigyn replied. “As long as Loki is fine with you, she will not bother you.”

"Well, thank God we welcomed him in when we did then.” Tony muttered before turning back to Natasha. “Is Bruce going to be okay? I’m not trying to go near him right now but I’m concerned.”

"Give him time to cool off, I’ll talk to him.” Natasha replied and Tony nodded. There was a little shriek and the three of them looked up quick enough to see Jormugandr’s fangs retract back into his mouth.

"I’m so fucking tired.” Tony said in a fed-up tone and Natasha could only agree with him.

“Where are the little ones?” Hela asked nonchalantly as she and her siblings sat with Loki. Everyone else had wandered away and Sigyn had left them alone to spend time together. “Not eager to meet their beloved older sister?” She asked and Loki gave her a look.
“Hela, please don’t ask me to choose between you four and them.” Loki said sharply. “You’re all my children. All of you. I would fight for them the same way I would fight for you, you know this.”

“Well, they have the advantage of growing up with a father, we weren’t given any of that.” Hela hissed in return and Loki felt his eyes well up with tears. Her words weren’t a surprise, not a day had gone by where he hadn’t berated himself for letting his children grow up without him.

“He did it to save us, Hela.” Sleipnir said softly. “Trust me, you all got the better half. I would have taken being shipped off to Norns knows where than being his steed.” His words made everyone sober up and Hela felt shame well up in her.

“I’m sorry, Faðir.” She muttered, her gaze turned downwards in guilt. “I have waited for the day when we would all be together so we could take back what was denied us and now we cannot even have that. What do we do now?”

“Live, Hela. We live.” Loki replied gently as he reached out to take her hand. “I felt the same when I was sent here but there is so much more to life than revenge. There is so much more to you than revenge.”

“There’s not much life to be had in Helheim.” Hela muttered and Loki scoffed.

“That’s not what I heard earlier. If you have time to kneel, you have time to do other things.” Loki said pointedly and this time, Hela averted her gaze in embarrassment. Jormugandr snorted in amusement and Hela glared at him.

“The same goes for you all.” Loki continued. “And living does not mean bedding everyone in sight, Fenrir. Are you at least being reasonable or am I to hold the title of ‘grandfather’ soon?” Fenrir blushed at his father’s words and it was Hela’s turn to snicker at her sibling’s discomfort.

“Father.” Fenrir whined in embarrassment. “I’m not speaking of my affairs with you.”

“Suit yourself.” Loki replied with a hint of a smile. “But in all seriousness, there is much for you all to do and see, in this realm or in others. You could be anything you want, Odin will leave us for a little while.”

“Perhaps. We’ve never lived in New York.” Jormugandr said tentatively. “Fen and I have more than enough to make a home here. For the meantime.” Sleipnir looked ecstatic at the concept and Loki smiled.

“I would love to have you nearer to me but ’tis your own choice.” He said gently. Sleipnir looked at his brothers with pleading eyes and Fenrir chuckled.

“It wasn’t much of a debate, Sep. We can move here within the month.” He replied and Loki felt his eyes fill with tears of joy. He would finally have the majority of his children next to him at last.

Tony shakily sat in his seat. The past twenty-four hours were exhausting, to say the least, and he was still trying to process everything that had taken place. Pepper would probably never let him hear the end of it but if they were going to be attacked then perhaps it was time to restart the Iron Legion.

Speaking of his better half, her picture flashed up on a hologram in front of him and Tony accepted her call.
“Hey, sweetheart. How are you doing?”

Despite his mood, he couldn’t help the smile that stretched across his face at the sound of his partner’s voice. Pepper had left pretty early for a business deal in San Francisco and though she was only going to be gone for a week, he already wanted her back.

“I’m...uh...I’m doing pretty great.” Tony lied. There would be a time to fall apart in her arms but he wasn’t going to pull her away from what sounded like a pretty important deal.

“Really? Cause you don’t sound like it.” She replied and not for the first time, Tony wondered how she’d gotten to know him so well that she could tell his moods over the fucking phone.

“It’s fine, Pep. How’s San Francisco treating you?” He asked, deflecting the topic.

“San Francisco’s fine. I heard you had visitors today.” She said hesitantly and Tony groaned internally. Of course, someone told her.

“Who was it? Jarvis? Nat? Steve?” Tony snapped, his patience growing thin. There were a few moments of silence on Pepper’s end before she spoke up again.

“I have meetings all day but my nights are free.” She said casually. “I’m not going to ask because you don’t sound like you’re going to tell but let me know when you get in and we can go to that pizza place you like. You can work during the day and...maybe ‘play’ during the night. Deal?”

“Why, Ms. Potts. Are you trying to persuade me with activities of a carnal nature?” He asked in a scandalized tone and he swore he could see a grin stretching across her face.

“Hey, I threw in some pizza too.” Pepper said indignantly and Tony laughed. His decision had already been made from the moment she’d said she had free nights. God, I love this woman.

“Throw in some movies and you’ve got yourself a deal.” He replied and Pepper giggled.

“Alright. I love you, Tony.” Pepper said softly, her tone taking on a more serious tone. “I know you don’t think you deserve it but you do. You’ve become so much more than what you were and I am super stoked to one day be your wife.”

Tony felt his throat constrict with emotion at her words and he swallowed thickly. “You say that to everyone or am I just a lucky girl?” He asked lightly, his voice wavering slightly.

“You’re just lucky.” Pepper said cheerfully. “Alright, I have to look some things over. Talk later?” She asked and Tony nodded before remembering she couldn’t see him.

“Yeah, sure. I love you too, Pep. Always will.” He replied before hanging up. Tony took a few seconds to calm himself. He would probably have nightmares tonight so there was no point in sleeping. He’d be better off working on new prototypes.

There was a fight coming soon and he sure as hell was going to be prepared when it arrived.

“You’ve done my family a great service.” Hela said as she stood in front of the Avengers, minus Thor and Bruce. Her twenty-four hours were almost up and she was paying them her final goodbyes. “This also goes against my oath but I think in this instance, you’ve all deserved it.” She said with a secretive smile. “I shall grant you one opportunity to speak to a lost loved one. Anyone you wish but
The Avengers all looked among themselves. The last thing they were expecting from her was this offer, especially considering how cold she was to them in the beginning.

“Well, you guys can have this one. There is no one who's dead that I’d like to meet again.” Natasha said as she plopped into her seat. “I’m pretty sure Bruce feels the same.”

“I’m going to tap out of this one too.” Clint seconded. “All the people dead in my life are better off staying dead.”

That left only two more individuals. Hela eyed the duo with a small smile. “I suspect I know what your reply is, Anthony but are you certain there is no one you wish to contact?” She asked. Tony paused for a few seconds before shaking his head.

“I’d rather not, to be honest.” He replied dryly and Hela looked at Tony for a few more moments before giving a subtle nod.

“Captain? I assume your mother?” She asked and Steve paused. Truth be told, he barely remembered what his mother’s voice sounded like anymore or how she looked. It had been years since he’d seen her and by the time she died, it was more of a relief for him because at least she had stopped suffering. No, there was only one person he truly wished he could see.

“Um, no actually.” Steve said hesitantly. “Bucky? James Barnes?” Tony looked at Steve in surprise. Everyone knew of the bond between Steve Rogers and Bucky Barnes, he was just surprised Steve was picking him over family.

Hela’s eyes flashed black for a split second before she spoke. “I cannot do that.” She began and Steve’s face fell. “I was not done speaking. I cannot do so because he is not dead.” Steve’s head shot up so fast, Natasha could’ve sworn he’d sprained something.

“I-I saw him fall.” Steve stammered and Hela shrugged.

“Well, wherever he fell to, he did not die. I may not have tended to him but I would know.” She replied before turning to her father and brothers, leaving Steve to process her words.

Hela’s eyes flashed black for a split second before she spoke. “I cannot do that.” She began and Steve’s face fell. “I was not done speaking. I cannot do so because he is not dead.” Steve’s head shot up so fast, Natasha could’ve sworn he’d sprained something.

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“Well, wherever he fell to, he did not die. I may not have tended to him but I would know.” She replied before turning to her father and brothers, leaving Steve to process her words.

“Take care of yourselves. I mean it, I do not want to see any of you in my realm.” Hela said sternly to her father and brothers. “That goes for you all as well.” She said referring to the Avengers. “I see any of you come in before your time, I will kick you out.”

“For a moment there, it sounded like you cared.” Clint said teasingly and Hela rolled her eyes.

“I do not, I’d just rather not have to deal with you.” She snapped back and Loki smiled at her words.

“Thank you.” Loki murmured in her ear as he wrapped her into a hug. Hela smiled and hugged him closer to her and for a split second, it was as though she was a child again.

“Of course, Faðir.” She whispered to him as she pulled away. “Family protects family. I could not stand by and watch Odin continue to ruin our lives.” Loki gave her a smile of appreciation.

“And it had nothing to do with upsetting Odin?” He asked knowingly and Hela smirked.

“I cannot say I did not enjoy it.” She replied happily. “The AllFather should have thought through his actions before he sent me to Helheim.” Jormugandr, Fenrir and Sleipnir came forward to see their
sister off and they enveloped her in a hug.

“Have fun kneeling for your mistress.” Jormugandr teased and Hela glared at him.

“Well, you don’t seem to have anyone to kneel for so let me know when you want some advice.” She snapped back and Fenrir snorted.

“Take care, sister. Sorry for not informing you of the Mad Titan sooner.” He said apologetically and Hela waved his words away.

“I’m just glad to see you safe.” She replied, wrapping him a hug before turning to Sleipnir. “You’re alright now. Odin’s never going to take you, not under my watch.” Sleipnir nodded tearfully and Hela grabbed him in a hug.

“You’re safe, you have Faðir and you have us.” She whispered to him, switching to their native tongue. “We will never let anything hurt you. Never.” Sleipnir nodded against her and she squeezed him tight for a few more moments before letting him go. She turned back to her father and flung into his arms.

“Oh, darling.” He whispered as she clung on to him.

“I was so scared he would hurt you.” She replied emotionally. “I could not let him, I would have done anything.” Loki planted a kiss on her head.

“You cannot keep risking your throne for me, there is much that rests on your shoulders.” Loki replied gently and Hela shook her head.

“I don’t care-”

“Hela-”

“I do not care, all that matters is our family.” She said sternly. “Even the little ones. I will not stand by and watch any of us get hurt ever again.” Loki looked at his daughter with a conflicted heart. On one hand, he was glad to know that someone with the ability and power to protect them fully was doing so but on the other hand, he hated the fact that Hela felt as though it was her life’s mission to do so. It was a horrible weight to put on anyone, no less his child.

“I know, I know but you cannot carry our weight alone.” He said softly to her. “They’re good people, they’ll take care of us.” He said referring to the Avengers. “We’ll be safe, you just remember what we talked about.” Hela managed a small nod at that and Loki planted another kiss on her forehead. He pulled her in for another hug and she held on tight for a few more moments before letting go.

“You all keep busy, I assure you Thanos will get what he deserves.” Hela said to the Avengers in English, her voice taking on a more dark and sinister tone. “No one hurts my family and finds peace, I promise you that.”

“No one doubts that.” Tony muttered under his breath and Hela gave him a look.

“Goodbye.” She said with mock politeness. “Be good, Anthony. I’ll be watching.” And with a puff of smoke, Hela was gone.

“Your daughter is fucking creepy.” Tony snapped and Jormugandr snorted.

“She is the Queen of the Underworld, what did you expect?” He replied sarcastically and Tony
glared at him.

“Jory.” Loki admonished before turning to Steve. The blond was still in shock from Hela’s reply and Loki cautiously approached him.

“Steve?” He asked carefully and Steve looked up to see his team staring back at him.

“I left him.” Steve said in a faint voice. He sounded like he was still processing what had happened and Loki subtly summoned a seat and pushed Steve into it. “I just...left him. W-We have to find him. We have to-” Steve’s voice shuttered off as he took in a shaky breath.

“Steve, you’re panicking. Deep breaths, come on.” Loki said as he gently placed his hands on the captain’s shoulders. He took in exaggerated breaths and Steve followed till his breathing patterns stabilized.

“If he’s out there, we’ll find him.” Natasha said softly. “You have a S.H.I.E.L.D agent, a former Red Room spy, Tony Stark and Bruce Banner, two gods and a former shieldmaiden on your team. We’ll find him.” Steve nodded soberly.

“You might not need to find him per say.”

The team turned to the voice of Fenrir. “If you can get something he owned, we might be able to put a tracking spell on him.” He said gently and Loki nodded in agreement.

“And if that doesn’t work out then Fen and I can try.” Jormugandr added. “We’ve got the best sense of smell this realm is ever going to see. Plus, I can work over large bodies of water in my other form and Fenrir can travel over large expanses on land. ‘Tis the least we could do.”

“See?” Natasha said with a reassuring clap to Steve’s shoulder. “We’ll get him, Cap.”

“We can start with S.H.I.E.L.D.” Tony murmured from his place. “Jarvis is still in their system, if anyone would know, they would.”

“T-Thanks.” Steve stammered and Loki gave him a reassuring pat on the back. It wasn’t much but it was a start.

Tony woke up with a start. He was lying in bed next to Pepper after flying the accelerated two hours to San Francisco. Pepper had delivered on her promise of pizza and mind-blowingly amazing sex but he’d only managed a meager five hours of sleep before he was jumping awake from some nightmare.

Tony reached for the light and slowly sat up before something caught his eye. Sitting on the bedside table next to him was an oddly shaped rock. He reached out to take it before noticing the slip of paper attached to it.

*When you are ready, take the stone and visualize the person you wish to see. Use it well, Anthony. - H*

Tony uneasily eyed the stone. In all honesty, he didn’t take Hela up on her offer because he wasn’t sure who he’d like to call up. There were many people who were gone in his life that he either wanted to apologize to or scream at for abandoning him.
He didn’t think he could handle doing so in front of everyone but Hela unsurprisingly saw through his shield of nonchalance. Tony looked at the rock with no small amount of apprehension before opening the desk drawer and carefully ushering it in. Maybe someday he’d summon the courage to use it but today definitely wasn’t that day.

Natasha lay still while Bruce climbed into bed next to her. Her mind had been racing with all the information unloaded on them in the past day. With this new knowledge, leaving S.H.I.E.L.D wasn’t looking like the best idea. Even with traitors amongst them, S.H.I.E.L.D was still a considerable force against any foreseeable invasions. My best would be to dismantle it from the inside. Find the agents who are loyal and those who aren’t. Bruce moved deeper into bed and Natasha's train of thought shuttered off.

“Babe? Are you alright?” Natasha whispered as she turned to him and his fists clenched. He was lying face up and she could tell something was weighing heavily on his mind.

“Alright...we don’t need to talk about it, we can talk about anything else?” She offered and there was a moment of silence before Bruce spoke up again.

“I don’t think we should accept Sigyn’s offer.”

Bruce’s words sounded unusually loud in the silence and Natasha turned to look at him. “That’s what you’re choosing to talk about?” She asked incredulously. Bruce raised a brow and she sighed.

“Fine. We shouldn’t accept now or ever?” She asked softly and Bruce’s brows furrowed in a frown.

“I don’t know, I just...” He sighed and turned over to face her. “If what we heard today was right then we’re going to be in a lot of battles in the coming future with the bonus of having strangers about. Can we really handle a child right now?”

Natasha inched closer to him and Bruce took her hand in his. “There’s always going to be a fight on the horizon, Bruce.” She replied. “If we keep waiting for the world to be safe, we’ll be waiting for a long while. Also, everyone's a stranger till you get to know them.”

“I know but I...I don’t want to raise a child knowing someday some lunatic is going to come here and kill off half of the population.” Bruce said as he gently squeezed her hand. “And I sure as fuck don’t want to raise them with people we don't know.” Natasha remained silent for a few seconds before speaking up.

“What I’m hearing is that you can’t raise a child under certain conditions not that you don’t want to raise one.” She stated and Bruce sighed.

“Does that really matter?” He asked in a slightly irritated voice and Natasha nodded.

“Yes, it does because if you do want one then...I’m okay with waiting.” She replied and Bruce groaned in frustration.

“Nat, I don’t want-” He snapped before pausing and taking in a deep breath. “If you’re waiting because you think this is what I want and you’re scared to lose me, then don’t.” He said in a level tone. The silence between them stretched on for seconds and Bruce was debating leaving because if this was just going to be an argument then he’d rather skip out on it when Natasha finally spoke up.
“She was in the Red Room’s program with me.” She said in a detached voice. Bruce opened his mouth to ask what she meant but she beat him to it. “Marina. The girl Lady Death spoke of.” Bruce felt his stomach sink.

“Nat, you don’t have to-”

“She was the only friend I had but she was weak and they knew it.” Natasha continued in the same clinical, detached tone. “They asked me to prove my allegiance to them so one day we went exploring in the woods. She loved being outside so I let her go ahead so she could play.”

Bruce had a feeling he knew where this story was headed and he felt vaguely nauseous.

“I didn’t even hesitate when I pulled the trigger.” Natasha continued. “I killed her and that was the end of that.” Natasha looked up at him and Bruce wasn’t surprised to see her eyes gleaming with tears. “I’ve used her memory as a reminder of why I don’t deserve good things, why I don’t deserve to be loved, why I deserve to never have children but... after Sigyn told me she could reverse it, all I could think of was a little girl with your beautiful eyes.”

Bruce reached out to touch her but she shied away from his touch. “There’s a part of me that wants this, Bruce and I know I don’t deserve it, I’m a horrible person-”

“Nat-”

“But I still want it. I’m not saying now, god definitely not now, but someday?” Natasha asked, not even bothering to hide the quiver in her voice or the tears that had begun to trail down her cheeks. “Can we at least leave it as an open decision?”

Bruce nodded. “Of course, we can, I didn’t mean to make it sound like we could never discuss it again.” Natasha gave a curt nod and swiped at her face before starting to get off the bed.

“You’re not sleeping here tonight?” Bruce asked, taking care to keep the hurt out of his tone. Natasha paused.

“I-I thought...I didn’t think you’d want to be in bed with me after that.” She replied in a hollow tone and Bruce swore he could feel his heart break.

“If you need space, I will provide it but I never said I didn’t want you.” Bruce stated and Natasha’s bottom lip trembled with emotion.

“How can you still-” Natasha said, her voice wavering. Bruce shrugged.

“I love hard and I am madly, head over heels in love with you, Nat.” He said in reply to her unspoken question. “Come back to bed, please?” He didn’t have to ask a second time, Natasha scrambled back into bed and was in his arms before he could blink.

“C-Could we...” Her voice trailed off and she suddenly looked very vulnerable.

“What? What do you need?” Bruce asked softly, tilting her face towards him.

“Make love to me? Please?” Natasha asked meekly. “I just...I need you.” Bruce nodded and gently ran his hand through her hair.

“Anything you need.” He whispered to her before pulling her in for a kiss. Natasha let herself melt into him, confident in his ability to take care of her.
Sigyn placed her head against her husband’s chest, content to listen to his heartbeat. Today had been a harrowing experience for them all. If not for Hela’s interference, they barely would have made it out alive.

She’d stayed away from Loki and his children because she was pretty sure none of them were fond of her. They had gotten married after the children’s banishment and she’d caught Hela’s comment about Loki only caring about the children he’d had with her. When last they’d seen her, she was under Odin’s command which probably didn’t do much in terms of making them trust her. They hadn’t made any effort to bond with her and she was giving them their space.

“I suppose I can’t persuade you to take the children on an extended vacation to Vanaheim?” Loki asked lightly and Sigyn vehemently shook her head.

“If he’s going to Asgard then he will eventually find his way to the other realms.” She replied harshly. “There is no place that is safe from him. Even if he didn’t, I’m not leaving you and neither will the children.”

“Very well.” Loki replied. “We’ll have to make preparations for them.” Sigyn nodded in agreement.

“Perhaps Jötunheim? The population is low enough that he would not bother and I doubt the Jötnar will care for Thanos.” She said.

“There are abandoned planets.” Loki replied. “The twins are wise enough to take care of themselves if need be. Along with any who follow.”

“I’ll inform Darcy when we have something stable.” Sigyn said before looking up at him. “Speaking of Jötnar...would you...can I see?” She asked softly. Loki’s brows furrowed in confusion before his eyes widened in realization.

“Absolutely not.” He said vehemently and Sigyn sat up to look at him. “Why not? I’ve seen it before.” Sigyn asked and Loki shook his head.

“I don’t...” Loki began in a clearly distressed voice. “Sigyn, I hate the fact that I am Jötun, other than in Helblindi’s presence, I never want to think about the fact that I am one of them.”

Sigyn sighed. “Ragna notices, you know.” She said softly. “She makes an effort not to shift around you or speak their tongue. You’re teaching her to be ashamed of her skin and it is not fair to you or her.” Loki gave a tired sigh.

“Just let me see. We promised to never hide from each other.” Sigyn pleaded. Loki remained silent and Sigyn thought the issue had been closed until she saw his skin started to change. It started from his feet and Sigyn watched with awe as his pale skin changed to blue with runes etching his body. Two small horns protruded from his forehead and his eyes fluttered open to reveal their ruby red color.

Sigyn reached out to touch him and he instinctively flinched. She waited for a few seconds before trying again. He felt cold to the touch and Sigyn traced over the runes on his skin. “What do they mean?” She asked in a voice barely above a whisper.

Loki shrugged. “Your guess is as good as mine. I never learned how to decipher it.” He replied coldly. Sigyn ignored his words and continued to touch him before chuckling.
“I show you my skin and you laugh at me.” Loki snapped and Sigyn made a soothing noise to calm him.

“Sorry, I was not laughing at you.” She said softly. “I’m just laughing because even in this skin, you are still so handsome. It’s almost unfair.” Loki waited for her to ridicule him but she continued to trace her hands over his skin. “It’s a soothing cold, it’s nice. You are beautiful, Loki Laufeyson. In both skins.”

Loki felt his eyes well up with tears and he tried to blink them away. “I didn’t know horns were of interest to you, is this why you were glad to be amongst farmers?” He said jokingly, his voice wavering slightly. Sigyn glared at him and reached up to touch his horns. Her fingers brushed against one and Loki jerked backward.

“I’m sorry, my love. Did I hurt you?” Sigyn asked in concern and Loki shook his head.

“It appears as though my...horns are more sensitive than I thought.” He mumbled shyly. Sigyn’s eyes darted to his horns before looking back down at her husband.

“Oh. Oh.” She said, a smirk stretching across her face. Loki’s skin immediately reverted back to its pale color and Sigyn pouted. “You deny me of my fun.” She said sulkily and Loki blinked.

“You don’t...You don’t think it’s revolting?” He asked hesitantly and Sigyn gave him a look.

“Loki, I just told you how beautiful you are.” She said slowly. “Why would I be revolted by your body?” Loki blinked again. Of all the things he expected when he showed his true skin, this reaction was not it.

“You truly think so?” He asked, not bothering to hide his fear. Sigyn reached forward and planted a kiss on his forehead.

“I do and it would be my pleasure to show you.” She said softly, her hand cupping his face. “If you’ll let me.” Loki stared at her and she held his gaze. Sigyn meant what she said, she found his other skin fascinating. She had been married to him for centuries and yet, here she was, discovering something new about him.

His self-preservation skills told him to shut her out, to stay in his Asgardian form but he’d never realized how starved he was of affection and acceptance towards his Jötunn side until right now. Sigyn’s words were like rain on parched soil and Loki was eagerly soaking them up.

He let his glamour fall away and Sigyn gave him a warm smile. “There we are.” She said gently, her fingers going back to his runes. “Beautiful. May I?” She asked and Loki immediately nodded.

Sigyn carefully moved from her former position and straddled him, shivering slightly at the cold. Loki’s face fell at her shiver and she hurried to reassure him. “It’s just a reaction, my love. I love it and I love you.’ She said gently and Loki slowly relaxed. “Will you let me show you how much I love your Jötun form, my love?” She asked softly, her hands spreading across the expanse of his skin.

Loki swallowed. This was him at his most vulnerable but it was Sigyn. She’d never hurt him and he trusted her to take care of him. He gave a small nod and Sigyn smiled before leaning forward and tugging him into a kiss.
And here we have the second part of the last chapter! I really like the way Hela and her siblings interact with Loki. There's a bit of tension there but they all understand Loki's actions were necessary. Natasha and Bruce also resolve the issue of having children for now and we get to hear a bit of Natasha's backstory.

This chapter also opens up the way for the Winter Soldier and the Accords as well as the boatload of drama that came with them. I don't think I would be extending this story that far, I only have about 2 more chapters planned but I would not be averse to one-shots if people requested them. Let me know what you think and I hope you all enjoyed it!
Natasha woke up to the sound of Bruce fiddling around in the closet. Her eyes opened to the sight of a gym bag on the floor and she felt pain sear through her at the realization of what was going on. She’d always kept it in the back of her mind that anyone she loved would eventually leave her. It was inevitable, loving a Black Widow wasn’t exactly a recipe for happiness, so she’d always planned to be left and yet waking up to Bruce packing his things hit her like a punch to the gut.

“So, was the plan to fuck me and then leave?” She snapped as she sat up. Bruce went still at the sound of her voice and Natasha felt anger bubble up within her. “Where were you going to go? I at least deserve that much.” Bruce remained silent and Natasha felt tears prick at the corners of her eyes. She knew she was showing more emotion than she usually would but she couldn’t make herself stop.

“Is this because of last night? B-Because of what I told you?” She asked, her voice trembling. “Because if it is, you should have just said so, Bruce. You didn’t have to sleep with me or lie to me, I was going to leave you alone and you made me stay.” Her voice broke on her last word and Natasha wrapped her arms around herself in an attempt to pull herself together.

“Nat, baby-”

“Don’t touch me!” Natasha snapped tearfully as she jerked out of his grasp.

“Natasha, I can’t stay here.” Bruce said, the anguish clear in his voice. “If the military is getting involved, that means Ross and I am not sticking around for that.” Natasha’s head snapped up at his words. Here she was, thinking he didn’t love her but if the problem was just Ross, then it wasn’t a problem at all.

“That’s what you’re worried about?” She asked incredulously.

“Yes, Natasha!” Bruce snapped. “Excuse me for worrying about the man who’s made my life a living hell since the experiment. I thought you would care about my safety, but apparently, you only care about me leaving you.” His words stung and Natasha bit back a retort. Their floor wasn’t built for the Hulk and she didn’t want to air out their problems right now.

“Do you want him dead?”

Bruce stopped short at her words.

“Tony’s had Jarvis on him since you moved in.” Natasha continued. “I know his address, his schedule, and his blind spots. We haven’t done anything, he hasn’t made much of a move since the Avengers but if you want him dead, I can make it happen.”

Ever since the ‘incident’, Bruce had wanted Ross off his back. The man had not only destroyed any chance of happiness for him but any potential future he could have had with Betty. He couldn’t count how many times he wished the Hulk would ‘accidentally’ kill the man but hearing it laid out like that was startling.

“Does Steve know this?” Bruce asked, saying the first thing that came to his mind. Natasha nodded.
“You know how Steve feels about military values and morals. Ross is everything he hates about the military.” She replied. “Even if you don’t want me to do it, Loki would. Or Sigyn. Hell, Sigyn would probably kill him even if he didn’t try to hurt you, she hates men like him.”

“So...you’ve all just been sitting on this?” Bruce asked slowly, still not willing to believe his ears. Again, Natasha nodded.

“Tony has eyes on everyone who’s a threat to us.” She explained softly, her former anger gone for the meantime. “And when we started dating, I may have stalked Ross a bit. Just to figure out his weaknesses in case I had to use them against him.” Bruce blinked in surprise. This was all news to him.

“So...you’ve all just been sitting on this?” Bruce asked slowly, still not willing to believe his ears. Again, Natasha nodded.

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“Why?” He asked in confusion and Natasha rolled her eyes.

“Bruce, I love you. I’m in love with you.” She said in an obvious tone. “Did you really think I wasn’t going to find out everything I could about the people who want to hurt you? I’d kill for you, you know that.”

Yes, at the back of his mind, he knew Natasha would stop at nothing to protect him but it had always been a vague awareness of some sort. Hearing her say it out loud and knowing she meant it was more than a little creepy.

“Look, you don’t have to say yes or no.” Natasha said, sensing his indecision. She reached out to pull him back into bed and Bruce followed willingly. “I just want you to know that you have that option. There’s no need to keep running every time he comes up, Bruce. He’d have to get through me and the rest of the team to get his hands on you.” She finished.

“I don’t want you guys getting into trouble because of me.” Bruce mumbled and Natasha gave a groan of frustration.

“For fuck’s sake, Bruce. What part of ‘you’re a part of the team’ don’t you fucking get?” She snapped. “We’re not letting anything happen to you.”

Her words finally sank in and Bruce felt the perpetual knot of worry he always carried in his chest loosen. He knew Tony and he knew Natasha. If they promised Ross wasn’t getting to him, he wasn’t. His fears would never completely disappear but for the first time in forever, he had hope. Now that he didn’t have that threat hanging over him anymore, Bruce was able to actually look at Natasha and what he saw made his heart sink.

She was sitting a few inches away from him but everything from her body language to her facial expression was closed off. Her earlier words registered to him and Bruce felt sick.

“Nat, I’m so sorry.” He began and she shrugged.

“It’s fine, there’s no need to talk about it.” She mumbled but Bruce shook his head.

“No, I want to talk about this.” He said firmly because he could tell how much he’d hurt her but Natasha stood up from the bed and made her way to the dresser.

“Well, you have fun with that.” She snapped as she pulled on her clothes. She stormed out, leaving Bruce behind with an empty room and half packed bags.
Sigyn smiled down at Loki as his eyes fluttered open. He was back in his Æseir form but she could still see the marks from the night before on his body. She felt heat curl through her at the memory but held herself back. *Norns sake, you’re acting like a new bride.*

“You can stop devouring me with your eyes.”

Sigyn snapped out of her thoughts at her husband’s voice and was met with his mischievous smile. “Sorry.” She muttered and Loki reached out to brush a hair from her eyes.

“I was just teasing, my love. In all honesty, I really enjoyed our night together.” He said shyly. “It was...” A flush began to spread down his body, doing nothing to hold back Sigyn’s arousal.

“I enjoyed it too.” Sigyn replied as she inched closer to him. Her intention had been to help Loki become more comfortable in his true skin, to help him see that he wasn’t the monster he believed he was but then they’d discovered that he was much more sensitive than they first thought and the entire plan went flying out the window.

There wasn’t a set dominant individual when it came to their bedroom, those notions did not apply to them but Loki had started making those lovely moans and whines and she just had to have him beneath her.

“Would you want-That is, only if you were agreeable, you do not have to-”

Sigyn pulled him into a kiss and Loki eagerly melted into her. His mouth met hers in a desperate clash and Sigyn moaned. “C-Can I see? If that is okay.” Sigyn said in between gasps and Loki nodded shyly. It only took a few seconds before his tan skin melted away to reveal his Jötunn skin. Her hand brushed against one of his horns and Loki shuddered.

“I shall never tire of that reaction.” She whispered as she licked a long, wet stripe up his neck. Loki let out a desperate moan and Sigyn felt the temperature in the room drop. She giggled and pulled him in for another kiss.

Darcy woke up to the sound of Steve’s voice. He was speaking in soft whispers and she decided to feign sleep for just a little while longer.

“Most of all, I hope you find yourself a good group of friends like I did.” Steve continued gently. “You probably won’t understand until you grow older but the Avengers are so much more than a team. They’re our family and they will always be there for you. Even with things you can’t tell me or your mom about although I would hope you could come to us for everything. Except maybe sex, your mother can take that one.”

Darcy couldn’t stop the giggles bubbling up within her and she opened her eyes. “How much of that did you hear?” Steve asked with a blush and Darcy smiled up at him.

“Enough to know that our little one is going to be spoiled rotten with love.” She replied. The team had managed to convince them to keep the sex a secret so that they could, in Tony’s words ‘Be surprised together’ and they’d agreed because why not? Steve was hoping for a little girl and Darcy pushed for a boy just to antagonize him but in reality, a healthy, happy baby was all they wished for.

“How are you feeling, sweetheart?” Darcy asked gently. She’d come back home to meet a devastated Steve and he’d told her everything through choked sobs. She’d never seen him break down that way and it had been a shock. Of course, she’d heard of Bucky, what self-respecting fan
didn’t know of the bond between Steve Rogers and Bucky Barnes, but the general consensus was that he was dead.

Bucky was the last thread Steve had to his past and she could feel her old fears begin to rise again. She’d never brought it up but she knew Steve and Bucky had a relationship that transcended beyond friendship. But that’s a problem for future me. Bucky was his best friend and Steve deserved to have him back.

“I’m, uh, I’m alright.” Steve mumbled and Darcy shot him a glare.

“Do we have to have the ‘toxic masculinity’ talk again? It’s alright to not be alright.” Darcy said as she struggled to sit up. Steve helped her up and she settled into the pillows.

“I know, I know. It’s just a lot to take in.” Steve said lowly. “When I woke up, everything was gone. The neighborhood, my friends, fuck we aren’t even fighting the same folks now.” He said with a bitter laugh. “I thought I’d lost everything and I’d come to terms with it, you gotta pick yourself up when you fall on your ass but now, I find out Bucky’s alive and he’s somewhere out there and...” Steve’s voice trailed off and Darcy’s heart ached with sympathy for him.

“When do you leave?” She asked, proud of the way her voice remained still even though she hated asking. Steve shot her a look of surprise.

“Not until the baby is born and probably not for a couple of months after that.” He replied. “You know there’s no way I’m letting you out of my sight until at least six months after the little one is here and even then, it’s going to be really fucking hard to leave. You know that, right?” Darcy remained silent and hurt flashed through Steve’s eyes.

“Did you really think I was going to just up and leave?” He asked, taking care to keep his voice level. Darcy shrugged.

“He’s your best friend, Steve. There’s no Steve Rogers without Bucky Barnes, everyone knows this.” Darcy tried to explain. It hurt saying those words but damn it, Steve deserved this. “Expecting you to stay while he’s somewhere out there would have been pretty selfish.” Steve took in a deep breath and took her hand.

“A couple of decades ago, that might have been true but it’s definitely not true now.” He said softly. “There is no Steve Rogers without Darcy Lewis, at least not this version of him anyway. Yeah, he’s my best friend but I don’t even know where he is. Jarvis is looking but we don’t know what we’re looking for and neither do I. What I do know is this, right here.” He finished, gesturing to her. Darcy nibbled on her bottom lip in an attempt to stop her tears but it wasn’t working.

“I-I just want you to be happy.” She said in a choked voice. “You’ve had so much taken from you, I don’t want to be what’s holding you back.” Steve carefully wiped her tears away and scooped her up in his arms. The duo adjusted themselves until Darcy was comfortable before Steve spoke up.

“You know, I had a panic attack when Hela told me he wasn’t dead.” He said evenly. “Haven’t had an asthma attack in over seventy years but she told me and I suddenly couldn’t breathe. The team helped but the only thing I could think of was being back with you, getting to hold you, just the thought of being with you was enough to keep me stable till you came back.” Darcy squeezed his hand in comfort and his lips brushed the top of her head in a kiss.

“You ground me, Darcy.” He said in a soft whisper. “And I love you for it so, thanks for giving me permission to leave you but I won’t. I can’t. I love you too much to do so. Sounds selfish but I think I’ve earned that right.” Darcy laughed through her tears.
“You have. I love you too, Stevie.” She replied and Steve gave the top of her head another kiss. His hand cupped her baby bump and Darcy settled back into his embrace. “Bath and then pancakes for brunch?” He asked and she gave an enthusiastic nod.

Thor took in a deep sigh as he stood by the balcony. The events of yesterday had shaken him up greatly. He knew what defying his father meant but he couldn’t sit on his laurels anymore. With the threat of Thanos on the horizon, all the realms would need to band together for survival and he could not imagine Odin taking the steps to do so.

“Jarvis said you needed to speak to me?”

Thor turned to the sound of his brother’s voice. Loki was wrapped in a blanket and he walked towards him with bleary eyes. Despite the blanket, he could glimpse a few bruises on his brother’s neck and Thor smiled. *Tis good to know they are back on good terms.*

Loki caught where his eyes had gone to and blushed. “Are you going to stare at me or speak?” He snapped and Thor held up a placating hand.

“How did I never see this? How did he never notice the way Loki constantly expected backlash or disapproval? Was this a recent development or have I always been blind?”

“Thor?” Loki asked cautiously and he snapped out of his thoughts.

“I’ve decided to take the throne.” Thor said simply, not wanting to beat around the bush. Loki’s eyes widened in surprise but he showed no other reaction.

“I assume Odin is unaware.” Loki asked and Thor shrugged.

“Heimdall sees all. If he is to tell Odin, then that is his right.” Thor continued. “I am informing you because I wish to have your counsel, Loki.” His brother opened his mouth to speak and Thor continued. “I will not pull you away from the team, Loki but I would like to consult with you if you would be willing. You have always been able to see beyond me and taking the throne will be no easy task.”

To tell the truth, he was a bit nervous. Loki had the right to refuse him but he was hoping his brother wouldn’t. He really didn’t know how to navigate the politics that being King required. He was too honest, too direct to navigate the treacherous waters that politics involved and Loki’s advice would be invaluable.

“Asgard will not accept me as an advisor.” Loki muttered. “I committed treason against the AllFather, seeking my advice will not be wise.” Thor huffed.

“I do not care, you have done more for the Nine Realms than any of those pompous fools. I will not stand to hear-”

“I hope this is not how you plan on addressing the court because it will not work.” Loki interrupted and Thor growled. “You cannot storm in there as you would into battle, they would tear you to pieces.” Thor gave him a look. Obviously, he was aware of that, this is why he needed help. Loki gazed at Thor with a discerning eye before sighing.
“I will speak to Sigyn of this, I refuse to make a decision without her say.” Loki said in a tone that left no room for argument and Thor nodded eagerly. In all honesty, he would like her advice as well. She hated his father but she’d worked for him for years. Her advice would also be useful. “And if you are going to take the throne you need to be very careful. Odin will not forget what happened here, he will not hand over control so easily.”

That was another issue. Not for the first time, Thor wished for his mother. Frigga would know what to do in this situation, she always did. “Approach Heimdall and demand he call the council of the Nine. If you can present your case, Odin would lose face.” Loki stated and Thor blinked in surprise.

The council had not been called for a long time, partly because the nine realms had drifted apart over centuries but also because there was no need. Asgard had a hold on Vanakhim, Nidavellir and until recently Jötunheim. Those three realms, not counting Alfheim which housed the Light Elves, held the most resources and power. Migard was of no importance to anyone until recently and even then, they were still regarded as underdeveloped.

“The team can stand in for Midgard.” Loki continued. “And Hela would be more than happy to attend. We would have to inform Helblindi beforehand but we should have enough attendants to call council.” That seemed simple enough. Hela was not fond of him but she hated Odin more which was all that mattered right now. He nodded in response and Loki relaxed before frowning.

“Does Jane....” His voice trailed off but Thor knew what he was speaking of.

“We shall wait till I have taken the throne but she is willing to be my bride.” Thor replied. “I spoke honestly to Sif, there is only one I would like as my Queen.” He’d meant it. He knew she was a foreigner and that most people wouldn’t approve but he was confident she could hold her own. “I have already asked Idunn for the apple and she has given her blessing.”

“I see you’ve thought of everything.” Loki said dryly but Thor ignored his brother’s sarcasm.

“She would make a fine Queen. She made quite the impression the last time she was on Asgard.” He retorted and Loki made a motion of agreement. The duo stood in a comfortable silence before Loki spoke up.

“Thank you.” He said softly. “I know you do not wish for the responsibilities that being King brings so thank you.” Thor cautiously reached out to his brother and was relieved that he wasn’t received negatively. His hand snaked around Loki’s shoulders and pulled him to his side. Loki stood stiffly by his side but he wasn’t being stabbed so Thor counted it as a win.

“I know I have wronged you in the past and that you have no obligation to forgive me but I will strive for it regardless.” Thor said gently. “Mother considered us both our sons and would have wanted us to look out for each other.” Loki did not protest to the referral of Frigga as their mother and Thor counted that as another win. “No matter what comes our way, I will fight on your side. Whether you like it or not.”

Loki rolled his eyes but the corners of his mouth tugged upwards in a smile and again.

Thor counted it as a win.

A week later
Pepper screamed as she walked into the communal living room before immediately taking several steps back.

“Please tell me I’m not seeing what looks like a huge snake and some sort of werewolf? Please.” She asked in a slightly hysterical voice.

“Rude. How would you like it if the first thing I did upon seeing you was scream?” Jormugandr murmured as he sleepily opened an eye.

“Pep, you’ve met the boys.” Natasha said, noting Pepper’s fear.

“Y-Yeah, I guess.” She replied faintly. Her eyes were still drawn to the curled-up snake and the wolf snoring beside him. Pepper sat on the chair farthest away from Jormugandr and Fenrir and tried to turn her attention to Natasha.

“What’s up with you? Darcy says things between you and Bruce are kinda frosty.” She said.

Natasha handed her a drink and scowled.

“Darcy needs to learn how to shut up.” She shot back and Pepper held up a hand in surrender.

“It’s alright, really. If you don’t want to talk about it, it’s fine, we can just drink and I can talk.” Pepper said soothingly.

“Is it going to be talk about how good Tony fucked you over the week?” Natasha snapped and Pepper guiltily took a sip of her drink.

“We had pretty good pizza too.” She mumbled into her glass and Jormugandr snorted.

“Hey, the only reason I let you stay here is so you can sleep, remember?”

Natasha snapped at Jormugandr and he hissed in reply.

“Well then, either tell me what’s got your panties in a bunch or let me spill about how many times I got mine off.” Pepper replied and Natasha gave a sigh of defeat.

“It’s not that much of a big deal, anyway.” She muttered. “I just...happened to wake up and catch Bruce packing his shit to leave.” She said in a detached tone. Pepper frowned.

“Well that’s...later than we expected but we planned for that, Nat.” She said gently and Natasha looked away.

“Yeah, well I didn’t plan for him to do it right after...” Her voice trailed off and Pepper’s brows furrowed in confusion.

“Look, we fucked and then he packed up to leave, no biggie.” Natasha said in a nonchalant tone and Pepper’s expression fell. She opened her mouth to talk but Natasha shook her head. “It’s not a big deal, Pepper. I don’t want to talk about it and I don’t particularly want your pity.” She snapped and Pepper shot her a look.

“I wasn’t going to offer you my pity, Nat.” Pepper shot back. “After the first time we had sex, Tony locked himself in the lab for 16 hours and refused to come out.” Natasha’s eyes widened in surprise. It didn’t sound out of character, it was Tony but she couldn’t imagine how that would have felt. “He still pulls back sometimes, I don’t know what happened in my absence but we didn’t exactly spend our time talking things out.”
“I could-”

“It’s alright, I want to hear it from him.” Pepper said to Natasha. “I’m just saying, I get it. Bruce and Tony haven’t been through the same shit but they act a lot alike.” Her words hung in the silence and Natasha sighed. *Might as well.*

“I’m not so hurt over him leaving, it just...he could have waited.” Natasha mumbled and Pepper nodded.

“I don’t mean to sound dismissive but maybe Bruce didn’t connect the two?” Pepper said hesitantly and Natasha raised a brow in question.

“Like he might have woken up, realized the military and by extension, Ross would be getting involved and would have just wanted to get out.” She explained. Natasha pondered her words. It kind of made sense. The fact that he didn’t already have something packed was a sign that he wasn’t planning to leave. *That doesn’t change the fact that if you hadn’t woken up, he would’ve been gone.*

“Doesn’t excuse his actions.” She murmured and Pepper nodded.

“Definitely not and you let him know that.” She said in response. “Don’t let him beat himself up unnecessarily but let him know it’s not okay.”

“Norns, for beings with such a short life span, you Migardians make a lot of fuss.” Jormugandr mumbled and Natasha glared at him. The large blue scaled serpent lazily wrapped his body around Fenrir and the wolf snuggled deeper into his coils.

“Do you...always sleep like that?” Pepper asked, her voice only trembling slightly.

“Not as much but Fen likes it and being in this form is much easier.” Jormugandr replied, his sentence ending in a hiss. “Can I ask why you are so upset at this...Bruce, if his actions are what you would do the same?” He asked and Natasha bristled.

“How dare you-”

“You are a Black Widow, are you not?” Jormugandr asked and her eyes narrowed. “My brother and I have met some of your colleagues, people start to get suspicious when you don’t age. There’s a reason why we lived in the middle of nowhere. All, I’m saying is you would do the same.”

“She didn’t though.” Pepper replied coldly. “Bruce hurt her and she’s allowed to be pissed.” She snapped.

“I’m not saying so.” Jormugandr said in a more serious tone. “I’m just...interested in why you are upset if you would do the same.” Natasha took a moment to push down her anger and think. What’s annoying was Jormugandr is right. If Steve had told her the Red Room might be sniffing around, she would have hightailed it out of here.

She wouldn’t have done it the way he did though. She would have packed things, made sure they were lightweight and enough to get her far away without leaving traces before waiting till the next mission out of the country and disappearing.

Bruce knows how to hide, he knows how to be invisible. If he wanted to leave for good, she would have woken up one day to an empty bed. Somehow, the thought mollifies her. At least she knows that he doesn’t want to leave her, that he still loves her.

“I wouldn’t have slept with him.” She said in reply to his question and Jormugandr huffed in
“Fair enough.” He said simply before looking down. “Fen, are you going to sleep the entire day away?” He asked, applying the slightest bit of pressure on his brother’s body.

“Are you done discussing Natasha’s love life because I for one want to know more about Pepper’s fun week.” He mumbled and Pepper snorted.

“Not even in your dreams.” She said sweetly and Fenrir made a noise of disappointment.

“Smart decision.” Jormugandr said to Pepper before turning back to his brother. “Fenrir, I swear on the Nine, I will squeeze the life out of you if you don’t get off me.” Fenrir huffed but gingerly climbed out of his coils and gave a stretch before instantly shifting back into his human form.

“Where is Sep?” He asked with a hint of concern.

“Last I left him, he was entertaining himself with Darcy. She plans to take him shopping.” Jormugandr replied as he shifted back into his human form and Fenrir nodded in approval.

“It would do him some good.” He murmured before turning to his brother. “What say we go explore the city? New York has changed considerably since we last visited.” Jormugandr rolled his eyes in mock irritation.

“Very well, we might as well. Besides we need to look at apartments.” He replied. The brothers left and Natasha and Pepper were left alone.

“Well now that we’ve gotten that out of the way-” Natasha said with a mock sigh. “-I guess I can stand to hear about your fun week.” She might as well use this opportunity to find out what Pepper would want for a proposal. Pepper chuckled but took another sip of her drink and the two were soon giggling over Tony’s antics and discussing plausible wedding details.

Loki groggily walked into their private kitchen. The children should have been back days ago but Helblindi had taken one look at him through a scrying bowl and had decided to keep the kids for a week which...was really a godsend because he and Sigyn finally had time to reconnect and just take a breath.

Which in this situation meant only leaving their bedroom for food.

He and Sigyn had a considerably healthy sex life considering everything she had gone through but they hadn’t been this wild since the early years of their marriage.

He’d been really hesitant in the beginning, no matter what anyone said he didn’t think he’d ever be comfortable in his other skin but she’d been pretty insistent on bedding him in his Jötnar skin and...he was beginning to make some sort of positive association with his skin. When they weren’t lost in each other, they had talked and Loki had told her everything that went on with Thanos as well as any secrets he was still keeping. She had been distraught at his treatment but sharing it with her had brought them even closer.

“Good morning to you, father.”

Loki stopped short at the sight of Jormugandr and Fenrir. The duo were sitting at the kitchen counter
with mugs in their hands and with a smug smile in Fenrir’s case. He noticed one person was missing and despite the fact that he knew his team would never let anything happen to his children, he couldn’t help but the fear that shot through him.

“Where’s your brother?” He asked, not caring if he sounded panicked.

“Sir, Sleipnir is with Ms. Lewis and Ms. Potts. They appear to be shopping online as well as discussing schooling options.” Jarvis provided. Loki felt relief flow through him before Jarvis’ words registered.

“Schooling options?” He asked in a confused tone.

“He is actually a really impressive artist.” Jormugandr said lowly and Loki couldn’t help but feel like the comment came with a hint of reproach. He waved a hand and breakfast began preparing itself.

“Is your anger towards my absence during your childhood or at the fact that I also have a family with Sigyn?” He asked plainly as a cup of coffee made its way towards him. Silence settled between the trio and Loki sighed. “I will not fault you for your emotions but you have to talk to me if we want a functional relationship. I know I have no rights, you are grown men but I want to try.”

“Faðir, of course you have the right.” Jormugandr said earnestly. “You just...”

“You seem really happy with her and the little ones.” Fenrir finished in a serious tone. “Tis a good thing, we just wonder if you were ever as happy with us.” Loki blinked in surprise at his son’s words. He expected anger not insecurity from his boys.

“Of course I was.” He said, his voice still weak from their words. “We were together for only a short while but it was the best moment of my life. Especially with your mother.”

Angrboða was a noble from Alfheim. They had met during a diplomacy meeting and had bonded over their knowledge of magic and...other things.

It was a hasty courtship.

They were wedded and Jormugandr had quickly followed. Fenrir was born a few years afterward and then came Hela. It was a difficult pregnancy and an even worse birth.

She hadn’t survived.

Loki had been a wreck. He had three children to take care of and the love of his life had disappeared. Six years later, just as he was started to get a handle on things, the prophecy about Ragnarok had been proclaimed and his children had been torn from him.

His reasons for living had been torn from him and Loki hadn’t seen the point in anything anymore. That was when he and Sigyn had begun to grow closer. They bonded over their mutual misery under Odin’s rule and Loki liked to consider that period as when his title as the ‘trickster god’ took on a darker meaning.

“Your mother and I were young and in love when we wed.” Loki said gently. “I was still a prince of Asgard, I had no knowledge of my heritage, things were good and easy. I was...I was a different person, a good person and that was because of you two and your mother.” He said soberly. His memories of Angrbroða had been sealed away for years and although the pain had lessened considerably, talking about her still filled him with sorrow.

“When she died, I faltered but I tried to be there for you three.” He continued. “You were and still
are my world, my every decision was made for you so when Odin...” His voice trailed off and Loki swallowed past the lump in his throat.

“Your banishment broke me.” Loki whispered. “It damaged me in ways I can never fix. I am happy with Sigyn and the little ones are wilder than you three were but not having you or your mother left scars.”

There was a silence as the boys absorbed his words and Loki finished his coffee. The porridge he was making was done and he got himself a bowl of it. Sigyn would be expecting one as well but speaking to his sons took priority right now.

“I’m sorry, Faðir.” Jormugandr said softly and Loki frowned in confusion.

“What are you apologizing for?”

“Fen and I always had each other. We were scared and alone but we had each other.” Jormugandr said plainly. “Even Hela visited when she could and then we got Sleipnir and we were almost a family again. You were all alone, you didn’t have anyone.”

“I had Sigyn.” Loki replied with a sad smile.

“So we see.” Fenrir noted. “How is that going? Last we heard she was Odin’s hired killer.”

“Tis well. We have been together for a little over three centuries.” He replied, his smile a bit more genuine. “It wasn’t easy, she was Odin’s killer not by choice but we’ve both worked hard to get where we are. We are both stubborn so our fights are more intense than with your mother but...it’s good. I love her, we’ve both seen the worst of each other and we’re stronger for it.”

“Three centuries?” Jormugandr said in surprise. “So, the little ones were a very late addition?” Loki nodded. It had taken a long while for Sigyn to even feel comfortable sharing a bed with him, children had not come up until they were both firmly secure in their marriage.

“Although not for lack of trying, I assume.” Fenrir said dryly and Loki gave him a playful smack on the arm.

“Unlike you, I am married.” He shot back and Jormugandr snickered. “Speaking of which, did you always know about your attraction to men or tis a recent development?” Fenrir immediately clammed up and Jormugandr warily looked between him and Loki.

Loki frowned in confusion at their behavior before realizing what was going on. He closed his eyes and willed his male form to shift. It had been some time since he’d shifted into his female form but it still felt familiar. He opened his eyes to see the stunned expressions on his sons’ faces and chuckled.

“As you can see, I did not ask to be judgemental.” Loki said. “I’m just genuinely curious, you never mentioned it as a child.”

“Well, Asgard isn’t exactly known for its tolerance.” Fenrir said dryly. “And to be honest, I just...never knew it was an option. It’s gotten better for people with my tastes on Migard but I still get the occasional remark.”

“And I make sure to make whoever makes such remarks pay.” Jormugandr added darkly. “Migardians are so...young. They act like the little ones, constantly squabbling among themselves over irrelevant topics. We moved to Finland about a century ago and just stayed because it was much easier.”
“Well, you don’t have to worry about that here and not with me.” Loki said in what he hoped was a reassuring tone.

“My love, what’s-”

Loki turned to the sound of his wife’s voice. Sigyn was wrapped in a bathrobe and her hair was in a messy bun but he was hard-pressed to think of a time when she looked more adorable. Her eyes trailed over his form appreciatively before realizing they had company.

“Oh, I shall just...have breakfast later then.” She squeaked, her cheeks turning rosy and Loki chuckled.

“It’s alright, you can stay if you wish.” Jormugandr said lightly, smiling at the looks Sigyn and his father threw each other.

“Oh, alright then.” Sigyn said, making her way over to hug Loki. He was shorter in this form and Sigyn planted a kiss in the crook of his neck before pulling away. Loki let his form shift back and Sigyn snuck another appreciative glance at him.

“Norns, should we leave?” Fenrir asked teasingly and Sigyn chuckled.

“Don’t mind me, ’tis the lack of children that gives me so much freedom.” She replied.

“No one screaming.” Loki added. “No fighting, Aric isn’t here to sneak into bed with us at night.”

“There’s still food in the cooling unit because Einar isn’t eating it in the middle of the night.” Sigyn added with a smile. “I love them dearly but I am glad Helblindi took them for the week.”

“They are hellions. I noted you put a bind on Aric?” Jormugandr asked and Loki nodded.

“His hold on his seidr is loose and he is more powerful than we thought.” He explained. “We’re easing him into it but feel free to help, you’re his older brother.”

Jormugandr felt warmth flood him at his father’s words. There was a small part of him that had feared that his father had forgotten all about them and the fact that he had holed himself up with Sigyn all week didn’t help. He knew it was irrational but he was allowed some daddy issues after everything.

He was the eldest and ever since their banishment, the pressure to keep his siblings safe had rested on his shoulders. He was used to it now and he would do anything for them but it was refreshing to know that he didn’t have to anymore.

Bruce reviewed the ‘Hulkbuster’ as Tony called it. It was nearly done and he was just going over the details. He’d been here for hours but he didn’t exactly have anywhere else to go. Returning to their floor was painful. Natasha hadn’t slept in the same bed with him since events a week ago and hadn’t spent enough time with him to ask where she was. Clint had been shooting him some pretty unsavory looks so he guessed she was with him.

Bruce was no stranger to shame and guilt but it had never felt this bad before. He knew what revealing that aspect of her life did to Natasha and he couldn’t imagine how she must have felt, waking up to him packing. Even if he didn’t have the assurance that Ross could be dealt with, he
should have trusted her. Or at least talked it out with her like an adult.

Now, he was pretty sure her trust in him had all but vanished and the only thing stopping him from just leaving, in general, was the knowledge that she would never forgive him if he did. He heard the lab doors and assumed it was Tony.

“You know, I think you might be on to something here but I’m still worried about the-” His voice cut off as he turned and took in the person standing in front of him.

It wasn’t Tony.

“Do you want to explain what happened last week?” Natasha asked in a level, even tone. There was no hint of emotion in her voice, no waver, it was the Black Widow talking not his girlfriend and Bruce supposed he deserved that. He hadn’t tried to talk to her about it since it happened but, in all honesty, he wasn’t sure what he would say.

She stood expectantly in front of him and Bruce figured he better start saying anything as opposed to remaining silent.

“I...I freaked out.” He said. That was an understatement but it was the easiest way to put it. “After we...”

“After you fucked me?” Natasha supplied and he winced.

“After we had sex-” Bruce continued. “I couldn’t stop thinking about how safe I felt and how things were going so well, not just with us but in general, and how it never stays that way. There’s always going to be someone out there chasing me and I just...” Bruce gave a tired sigh.

“I freaked out, Nat and I just needed to leave. I didn’t plan anything, I didn’t think things through, I just wanted out.” He said. Natasha remained silent for a few nerve-wracking seconds before speaking up.

“Do you still want out?” She asked in the same emotionless tone and Bruce felt his stomach drop.

“I-Is that what you want?” He asked cautiously, not even bothering to hide the hurt in his voice. Natasha shrugged.

“I’m not going to stop you.” She said nonchalantly. “I have a place in Brazil, you can get your bearings and move on from there.” It sounded like a dismissal and if he didn’t know her any better, Bruce would have accepted this as the end of their relationship.

“Natasha, if you want to end this then I will leave you alone.” Bruce started, his voice gentle but no less sincere. “What I did hurt you and I should have known better, I should have thought things through, I should have talked to you. If I could go back and change my actions, I’d do so in a heartbeat.”

Natasha folded her arms and looked unimpressed but he soldiered on.

“I don’t expect you to forgive me any time soon and I’m okay with that but please give me a chance to make it right.” Bruce pleaded. “I love you, I’m crazy over you and I will do anything to prove that.” There were a few moments of silence before she spoke up again.

“I felt used, Bruce.” Natasha said softly, her tone finally giving way to the pain and hurt in her. “I felt like a cheap fuck and it’s not a new feeling to me but I never thought I’d feel that way with you.” His feelings of guilt and self-loathing intensified but Bruce let her have her say.
“You can break up with me, tell me you never loved me or leave me and I’ll bounce back but please don’t do it after a night like last week.” Natasha pleaded. “I was raised to think that sex is just a manipulation technique and that my body is a tool for getting whatever I want and I need to believe that it can mean something so please don’t.” He was nodding before she even finished.

“Never again.” Bruce swore and Natasha gave a stiff nod. His hands ached to wrap her in a hug, to hold her and make her feel better but he didn’t have those rights anymore and he wasn’t going to touch her without her permission.

“Bruce?” Natasha asked meekly and Bruce waited for her next words. “Could I-Could you hold me? Unless you don’t want to -” His arms were around her before she could finish and he breathed in the familiar scent of her apple-scented shampoo.

“I love you so much, you’re so much more than your body.” He murmured in her ear. “You’re smart, gentle, loving, caring, you’re everything.” Her hold on him tightened and so did his.

Things aren’t solved between them, he knows it’s going to take a while for her to trust him again but Bruce is willing to take whatever she gives so long as he can keep holding her.

The team is gathered in the communal living room with boxes of takeout strewn across the floor. Everyone is present except for Thor who has returned to New Mexico to be with Jane. They’re supposed to be watching something but they’re too busy poking fun at each other and listening to Fenrir regale them with tales of their adventures through the years.

“So wait, you’re telling me you’re the Loch Ness monster?” Clint said with no small amount of amusement and Jormugandr scowled.

“I take one bath in a lake and you Migardians never let me forget.” He muttered and Darcy giggled.

“To be fair, it’s not like it was the one time.” She said. “I mean, there are multiple reports of you, Nessie.” Jormugandr glowered at the nickname and Steve snorted.

“Yes well, I wasn’t going to let it stop me from relaxing, it’s not my fault you lot can’t mind your fucking business.” He muttered and Tony laughed.

“You are so getting a t-shirt on the official Avengers franchise.” He said and Jormugandr’s glare intensified.

“I second that, you think we could get away with a dick joke?” Natasha added, prompting more laughter.

“Oh definitely, how’s ‘my snake is bigger than yours?’” Tony replied and Jormugandr went from glaring to utterly mortified.

“I’m not putting that on a shirt, Tony.”

“Spoilsport.”

“Don’t worry, Jory. I’d buy them.” Fenrir said in solidarity with his brother.

“I’m not encouraged by those words, Fen.” Jormugandr shot back and Sleipnr giggled. “See? You’re already poisoning Sep’s mind. Cover your ears, this is adult talk.” He said to his brother
and Sleipnir snorted.

“I know what sex is, my inexperience does not translate into ignorance. You two are not subtle and neither are Migardians.” Sleipnir shot back.

“I told you Netflix was a bad idea.” Jormugandr said to Fenrir and the group chuckled.

“Sir, I’m detecting a portal similar to what the visitors from Jötunheim use.” Jarvis said and the team turned to see the air in front of them ripple as a portal opened. Sigyn and Loki stood up in excitement as their children tumbled out, followed by Helblindi and another strange Jötunn.

“Oh, it’s so good to see you.” Sigyn said with a smile as Aric climbed into her arms and Bodil grabbed her in a hug.

“Missed you, so warm.” Einar mumbled as he snuggled into his father’s embrace.

“Ragna cast a protective spell but it’s so cold in Jötunheim.” Brenna said, resting her head on her father’s chest.

“We wode a fish!” Aric exclaimed with excitement and Sigyn raised a brow at his words. “And there was sno’ and we ate the fish and-” Aric continued to babble excitedly to his mother and Sigyn sat him in her lap so she could listen to him.

“We missed everyone, what happened when Odin came?” Bodil said, turning to the rest of the team but still staying close to her mother. Ragna scrambled into her father’s lap, slightly shoving Brenna.

“Uh, your sister showed up with her sugar mummy-” Tony started and Pepper jabbed him in the ribs.

“If Hela was here, I assume there is bad news.” Helblindi said and everyone’s attention turned to the Jötuns in the room. “This is Nánnir, my mate.”

“I must admit, I am surprised to see you here.” Loki said to Nánnir as he tried to balance his children in his arms. “Tis not often you leave Jötunheim, is everything alright?”

“I would say things are more than alright.” Nánnir replied with a smile in Helblindi’s direction.

“I am with child and Nánnir feels the need to follow me everywhere like I am prey to be stalked.” Helblindi said in a tone that said he was tired of being babysat.

Naennir rolled his eyes at his mate’s comments. “I would not be so clingy if you paid mind to your current state. I do not know who goes hunting knowing they are to birth a child come the next three moons.” Helblindi glared at his mate and Nánnir glared right back.

“Wait, wait, I thought you were a dude?” Steve asked, voicing the question that was on the team’s mind.

“Jötunns do not fall into the narrow categories the Æseir box themselves into.” Helblindi replied. “On Jötunheim, you can choose to sire a child or birth one or both, tis of no one’s concern.”

“Well, that’s definitely more advanced than what we have going on here.” Clint mumbled.

“Speaking of Æseir…” Helblindi turned his gaze on Loki and his brother gave a low whine of complaint before letting his glamor fall away. Despite being among everyone, Sigyn couldn’t help
but let her eyes linger on Loki’s form.

“I see you and Sigyn enjoyed your week off.” Helblindi said teasingly and Loki glared at his brother.

“Oh, is that why we didn’t see you this entire week?” Clint said and Tony gave a wolf whistle.

“I hate each and every one of you.” Loki said with a glare and there was another round of laughter.

“It’s so cool you’re pregnant, we can bond over overprotective partners together.” Darcy said to Helblindi while giving Steve a look.

“It’s just being cautious.” Steve mumbled.

“There’s caution and there’s hovering. Do you really need to be there while I shower?” Darcy snapped.

“Yes.” Steve and Nænnir replied and Helblindi rolled his eyes.

“So wait, do you have both male and female reproductive organs?” Bruce asked, finally speaking up from his place next to Natasha. “I’m trying to think of this in terms of humans but I feel like I’m failing.”

“Well, we aren’t humans.” Ragna supplied gently. “Jötunns have greater control over willing their bodies into certain functions. We can also choose when to bear children.”

“Without the Casket, there were fewer resources so having children was not the wisest decision.” Helblindi continued. “But now, we are free to rebuild as we wish and Nænnir and I decided we were ready.”

“Get ready for a lot of sleepless nights.” Sigyn said dryly.

“Can I have cookie?” Aric asked in a loud whisper and Loki summoned the cookie jar for him.

“I want a cookie too!” Einar echoed.

“Me too!”

“I want one as well!”

Sigyn and Loki shared a tired but amused look. Things were back to being loud and rowdy but they wouldn’t change it for anything.

“I know you don’t want to hear this but Laufey would have been proud.”

Loki turned to the voice of his brother in law. He and Nænnir were sat in a corner watching everyone else. Aric and Einar had quickly passed out but Ragna and the twins were playing with Jormugandr, Fenrir and Sleipnir. They looked to be teaching each other magic and a smile stretched across his face as he took in the joy in his children’s eyes.

Sigyn and the team were playing a rowdy game of cards, something called ‘Cards against Humanity’, whatever that meant and Helblindi and Darcy were busy bonding over their pregnancy. It was a nice night and Loki didn’t wish for it to be ruined by thoughts of his biological fatherhood.
“I doubt it. Laufey abandoned me, I doubt he cared much what I would have achieved.” Loki snapped. Nânnir gave him a look.

“Is that what Odin told you?” He asked and Loki shrugged.

“It matters not who told me, tis the truth.” He replied. Silence settled over the duo before Nânnir spoke up.

“You were a runt and he was in the midst of a war.” He said slowly. “Laufey left you in a temple because he was certain that if the rest of the royal family was slain, you would be somewhere safe and could be protected. How was he to know Odin would steal you away?”

Loki felt a chill run through him.

“Temples are sacred in Jötunheim. No one would go in looking to shed blood in a temple and Laufey knew that.”

Loki felt like throwing up. He’d justified his reason to kill Laufey and destroy Jötunheim passed on the notion that his father never wanted him and that the Jötnar were savages. While he was aware that the latter was untrue, he had held firm in the notion that Laufey had cast him away because he was weak and useless.

“Did he-?” Loki’s voice cut off and he tried. “Did he know it was me? When we met.”

“I doubt it.” Nânnir replied and Loki gave a sigh of relief. At least his father had died without the knowledge that his own son had slain him. “Do not punish yourself for your actions, Loki. He would have understood. Jötnar are hardy folk and you have done more than enough by way of reparations.”

Loki swallowed thickly and Nânnir placed a comforting hand on his shoulder. “Really. You may have taken him away but you have given us Ragna and she is at least willing to admit when she is wrong.” Loki managed a small laugh at that.

“It’s good to know I got my stubbornness from him rather than Odin.” Loki said faintly and Nânnir nodded.

“You brother is worse, believe me.” He said. “He was particularly determined to make up for lost time, despite the crimes against you. You have an ally in him and in Jötunheim, always remember that.” Loki blinked away his tears. He knew Helblindı had long since overlooked his actions but it still felt good to hear.

“Thank you, Nânnir. He made a wise choice in you as a mate.” He said softly and Nânnir smiled at him. The two sat in a comfortable silence before his brother in law spoke up again.

“Also, next time you two lay together, ask Sigyn to bite you.”

“Nânnir!”

Chapter End Notes

So there we have it! I tried to upload this chapter like twice before I finally got through it. Loose ends have been tied for now and the last chapter left is the epilogue! I was
wondering, would people prefer a flash forward several years into the future or is something closer like 2 years in the future enough for everyone?

Also, I like how Natasha and Bruce come off here. We've seen a lot of Natasha falling to pieces but not so much Bruce and I like how everyone pretty much prepared for him to bolt before he realized it. I also like the banter between Loki and his children. His relationship with them is definitely strained because, well they grew up without him but it's also good to see them trying to work through it. Plus we get to hear about their mom. I know Angbroda was a Jotunn but for this story, I've taken a bit of artistic license so I hope no one kills me for it.

I also like the fact that Thor has wisened up to what needs to be done even though he'd rather not do it. Lastly, we get to see Loki getting closer to not just Thor but also Helblindi which is cute. I liked the last additional bit about Loki's childhood because, to be honest, Odin should have asked some fucking questions. He must have known Loki was Laufey's from a young age, the least he could've done was ask if Laufey wanted him back.

Thank you to everyone who's read till this far and I hope to see you for the last chapter. Enjoy and let me know what you'd like to see in the epilogue!

End Notes

This is a new story. I really hope everyone enjoys it and feel free to leave kudos or comment.

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