

Chapter 26 - Friends!

The coffee was decent, though nothing to write home about. I sat at a small circular table with Erik, who was clearly doing a lot better. Ema stood behind me, a hand on the back of my chair. I had barely had my second sip of coffee when we heard a gasp from behind us. We all turned to find a younger woman standing by the back entrance.

“What is the Bowman doing here?” She asked, quickly stepping closer.

“Who?”

“Bowman, you know the guy who was helping in Harlem? Shot that big mean dude in the face? Made him disappear?”

We all looked blankly at her, getting a sigh and a soft scowl.

“I expected that from Jane, but Erik you actually watch the news.”

Me and Ema shared a look before I shrugged.

“We were there but we hadn't realized we got a nickname already. “ I admitted before holding out my hand. “You can call me Jack, or Maker. Neither of them are my real name, sorry.”

“Yeah yeah that's nice, I hadn't realized Bowman was a Bow woman!” She said excitedly.

“He isn't.” Ema corrected. “Maker was the one in this suit when Abomination rampaged through Harlem.”

“So your Bowman?” She asked, now facing me.

“No, I'm not.” I said with a roll of my eyes. “I'm Maker.”

“Rightttt...” She said, sitting down in one of the free chairs. “Prove it.”

“Darcy!” Jane said disapprovingly .

“Okay, but I'm very much not here to talk about this.” I said. “I'm here to figure out what's going on.”

I pull off my jacket with a shrug, holding it out with one hand before making it vanish into a card. I flick the card into the air, boomeranging it around to the other hand and pushing the jacket back out.

The barrage of questions was intense, everyone save Thor asking me how it worked, was it some sort of power, what it could be used for. Eventually I held up my hands in surrender.

“Woah, Woah!” I said, gesturing for them to calm down. “I get that what I can do is impressive and breaks a lot of rules. We can talk about it later. For now, I need a few more answers from Thor.”

“What do you wish to know?” He asked over his shoulder as he helped Jane prepare breakfast.

“Well for starters, I'd like more information about what's going on.” I answered. “Background information would be good as well.”

Thor stopped for a while, distracted with the plates in the sink. After a long moment he turned and looked at us, sadness in his eyes.

“I can never go home.” he said. “My father has passed to Valhalla. And it is my fault.”

Jane gasped, covering her mouth with her hand before stepping closer and hugging Thor from the side. He looked down at her with a small smile.

“I'm sorry to hear that Thor.” I said quietly, mind running wild. Odin dying was a big deal, and would have a lot of repercussions.

“When did this happen?” Erik asked, empathetic but still clearly not fully believing Thor's story.

“After my banishment.” He explained. “My brother visited me last night, explaining what had happened. My father couldn't bear a looming war and my banishment.”

“By your brother... do you mean Loki?” I asked. “Our mythology suggests you have more.”

“No, Loki is my only sibling.” He explained. “Now he is ruling Asgard in my father's place, since I must remain banished.”

I couldn't help but shake my head, I was now pretty sure that Odin was still alive. Just the fact that Thor trusted Loki at all meant something but I wouldn't trust anything he did, even if I saw it with my own eyes. I held back though, not wanting to call Thor's grief into question by insulting his family.

“Why can you not return home? Surely if Loki cares about you he could end your banishment.”

“Loki managed to negotiate a peace with the frost giants, but it only last as long as I stay banished.”

“And you just believed him?” Darcy asked, getting a wince from me and Erik. “Isn’t he like the god of lies?”

“You would accuse my brother of lying about such a thing?” Thor asked unhappily. “He may enjoy mischief but he would not go to such great and terrible lengths.”

The room was quiet for a long moment or two as Thor put plates of food in front of us, getting a thank you from each of us, though Ema waved him off.

“What is your interest, Maker?” Thor finally asks. “You claim to only be...consulting? Consulting with your Shield.”

“It’s like a mercenary, but not for combat.” I explained. “I have skills and knowledge that Shield wants but I refuse to be tied permanently to an organization that likes to... Exert so much control over everything.”

“Then why associate with them at all?” Jane asked, pulling up another chair to the table, sitting next to Thor.

“Because I’m new to the game.” I admitted. “I would have never heard about this without them.”

“But why are you so interested?”

“I’m a builder, a crafter... a combination between Iron Man and Q from James Bond, but without the technology” I explained. “But by studying... exotic I’m going to really bump up my creations. By following the trail of weirdness I’m hoping to find some inspiration I can use to elevate my crafting.”

“So it is all about personal gain?” Thor asked, clearly not liking the idea.

“No, I want to help as well. Making stronger and better things means I can be more effective and help more people.”

“That is... And you made that necklace?”

“I did.” I admitted with a wince.

“What necklace?” Jane asked, curiosity peaked.

“His necklace cured my hangover.”

“I think we are getting a bit distracted.” I said, waving off any more questions. “There is plenty of time to talk about what I can do later. I’m more focused on what’s going on here.”

“What do you mean?” Jane asked. “We already figured out what was going on. The astrological anomalies I was detecting were caused by the Bifrost, letting us see other realms.”

Thor nodded before continuing. “The Bifrost was how I was sent here. It is an incredibly powerful method of travel between the nine realms. Jane managed an impressive feat, and was studying the effects it has on the universe as we use it.”

“And you all believe this?” I asked.

“Not quite”

“Maybe.”

“Of course “

Jane gave Erik, who was still unconvinced, a harsh look before giving Thor an apologetic one. He only nodded, as if expecting it.

“Do you believe it?” Darcy asked me, her eyebrow raised.

“The ability to question what is possible is a basic requirement of what I can do.” I explained, nodding and gesturing back towards the desert. “I examined Mjolnir myself. It exhibits several properties that aren't possible in the eyes of science. But yet it exists, stuck firmly in place like a true immovable object.”

I shrugged and leaned in, looking from Thor, to Jane, to Erik and Darcy then back to Thor. I smiled and nodded again.

“I'd say I believe him.” I answered before continuing. “Thor, I don't know what is going on in Asgard, but I can say that I think I have your measure. If Asgard won't have you then we will.”

Thor smiled and stood, reaching across the table, once again clasping my arm in a warrior's handshake.

“I'll even arm and armor you myself. It won't be like wielding Mjolnir but I'm sure I can whip something up.”

I was pretty sure this wasn't actually over, but on the off chance that Thor was stuck here and had to prove himself... Well what better way than by being a hero?

“And Shield would just let that happen?” Erik asked.

“Oh I'm sure they will have a lot of questions.” I assured them. “And if they don't I certainly will. But there's no reason to treat you harshly, especially in your current state. Not to mention I have

a bit of influence. They are desperate for the things I can make, pushing through a new identity for Thor would be a drop in the bucket.”

“I thank you my friend. Perhaps I will take you up on that offer once I have settled into this world. I feel I have a lot to learn before that though. And a lot to grieve. I left many friends behind at home. The thought of never seeing-”

“Found You!”

All of us spun towards the slightly muffled voice to find four people standing outside the glass door. Three men and one woman, they were all dressed and armed with four different styles of armor, and all four looked happy, waving at Thor with big smiles. Meanwhile Erik, Jane and Darcy looked at the newcomers in abject shock.

“Oh shit, it's starting.” I said, looking at Ema. “Tell Coulson that more Asgardians are here. Make sure he understands you aren't joking. Lie if you have to, tell him you saw them use super strength or something.”

She nodded and walked away to get somewhere private as I stood up, watching Thor rush to his compatriots.

“Friends! It is good to see you!” He said happily before gesturing to us. “These are my new friends, Maker, Erik Selvig, Darcy Lewis and Jane Foster. Friends, Lady Sif and the warriors three, my friends and compatriots in many a battle!”

“It's good to meet you.” I said, reaching out and shaking hands with Sif first before the other three, who all introduced themselves. “It's good to meet such famed fighters and warriors.”

“Friends, it is very good to see all of you... But why have you come?” Thor asked once introductions had been completed.

“To bring you home of course.” Lady Sif said with a confused smile, dropping the smiling part when she saw how heartbroken Thor was. “What is the matter?”

“I cannot return home, Loki already explained it. With my father gone I-”

“Gone? The Allfather remains in Odinsleep but he has not gone anywhere.” Volstagg corrected, now as confused as Sif. “Did Loki truly tell you your father had passed?”

“Called it.” Darcy stage whispered, earning a shoulder smack from Jane.

“He... Loki visited me last night. Told me that my banishment and the war was too much for him, that he passed. He explained that I couldn't return because the peace he was brokering was dependent on me staying exiled.”

“Thor... all of that is lies.” Sif said, her hand on his shoulder. “Your father fell into Odinsleep quite suddenly, and he sleeps deeper than he has in quite some time but he still lives.”

“Loki... What is he planning?” He said under his breath, stepping away and pacing. “Has he done all of this for the throne?”

“Lady Sif, would Loki know that you have come here?” I asked as Thor paced. “Would he-”

A distant rumbling sound ran through the building and Ema, who had been around the corner, came rushing back.

“I just lost contact with Coulson.” She said worriedly.

“Fuck... I hope they are okay.” I said softly before pushing past everyone and into the street. Another explosion echoed through the town and I looked down the main street and out into the desert. Sure enough off in the distance was a fireball, slowly dissipating.

The rest of the group, both the Asgardians and the humans joined me, Ema already by my side. Around us the citizens of the town whispered and talked, a tone of worry coloring everything.

“Ema... keep trying to get in contact with Coulson.” I said before turning to the group. “Whatever it is, we need to go out and meet it. Letting it come to us puts the town at risk.”

“That is a sound plan.” Thor agreed with a nod. “Do you have something we can ride into battle?”

I gestured to my truck, the green and gold hood gleaming in the morning sun.

“A worthy chariot I am sure.” Fandrall said with a grin, before looking at Thor. “It will be good to fight by your side again Thor.”

“No my friends, I will only get in the way.” The blonde Asgardian shook his head. “I only go in hopes to dissuade Loki from committing to this path.”

“If you're going I'm going.” Jane said, stepping closer to us.

“Nay Jane, you and your friends must stay here, to evacuate the town if something goes wrong.” Thor said emphatically, cupping her chin. “It is not safe, not even for me.”

For a moment Jane looked as if she would argue, but Erik put his hand on her shoulder and she looked at him, before looking back to Thor.

“Come back to me.”

“I will.”

Thor kissed Jane on her forehead before turning to Ema, myself and his friends. He nodded and I led them to the truck. Thor climbed in the passenger side door while Ema, Lady Sif and the warriors three climbed into the back.

“Hold on tight everyone.” I warned the people in the back. “She is faster than she looks.”

I peeled out of the parking lot, speeding down the main road and towards the conflict in the desert.