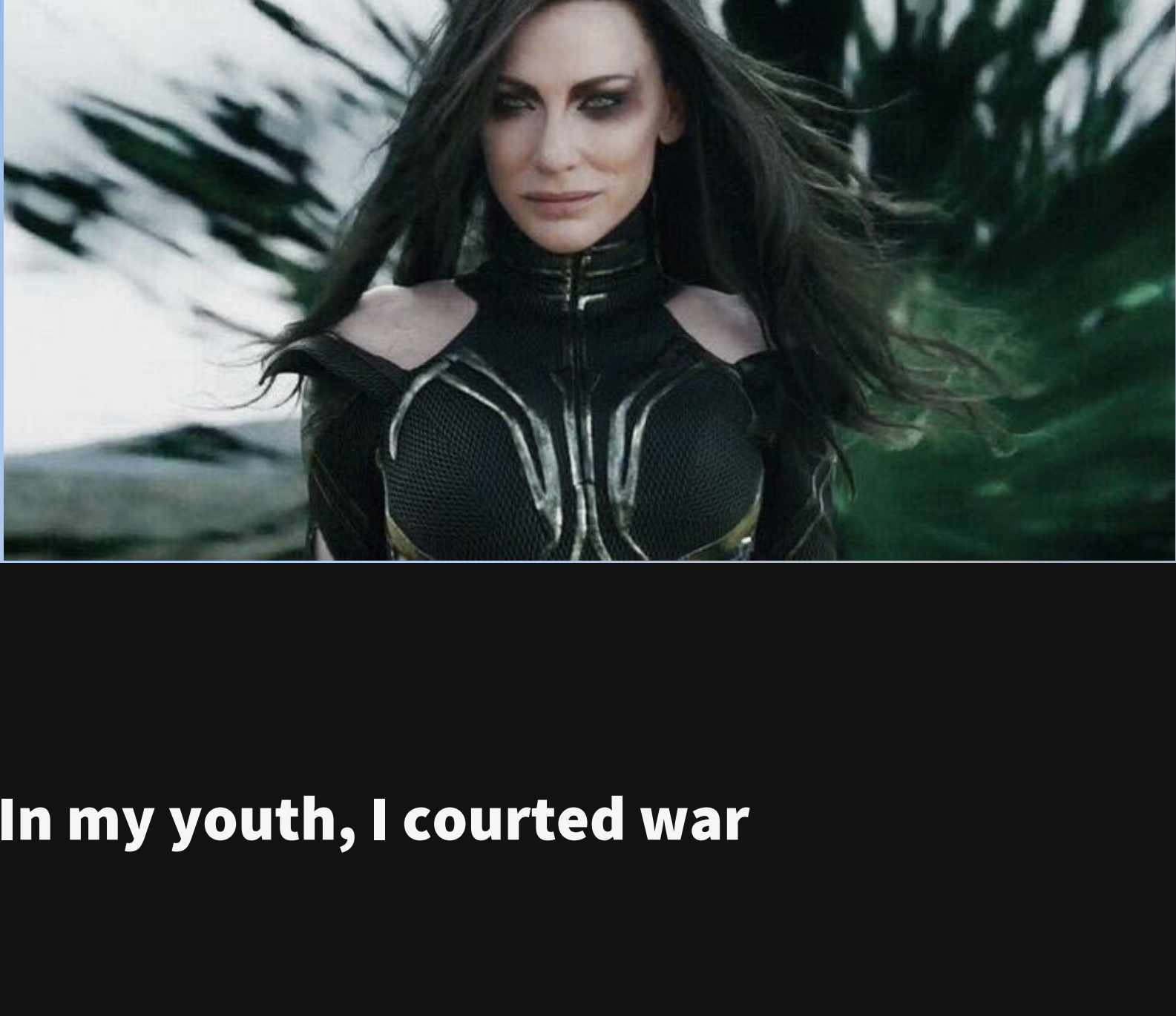




In my youth, I courted war

<<<2018 - Norway>>>

Freya, Loki, and Thor found Odin standing alone at the edge of a cliff. Surrounded by green grass, staring at the ocean in front of him. The three siblings gave each other a wary glance before walking up to him.

"Father?" Thor called to him. Odin took in a breath, he looked at Loki and Thor then he turned to his right. His eye widened, only slightly, when he saw Freya.

He smiled and turned his gaze back to the sea. "Look at this place. It's beautiful."

"Father, it's us," Thor said.

"My sons." He looked at Loki and Thor. "My daughter," He turned to Freya. "I've been waiting for you."

"We've come to take you home," Freya said with a soft voice.

He nodded, "Home, yes. Your mother, she calls to me. Do you hear it?" He asked and closed his eye. Thor shot a harsh gaze at Loki.

"Loki, listen to your magic," Thor said.

Odin turned to Loki and her brother tensed up. But all Odin did was give him a kind smile, "Took me quite a while to break free from your spell. Frigga would have been proud." He put a hand on Thor's shoulder and Freya's. It was the first time she'd seen him in over ten years, it was the first time he'd touched her. Her father. "Come and sit with me. I don't have much time." He said and walked over to a few large rocks. The three siblings gathered around him like they had when they were just children.

"I know that we failed you, but we can make this right," Thor said.

"I failed you." Odin said, "All of you. It is upon us... Ragnarok."

Thor shook his head, "No, I've stopped Ragnarok. I put an end to Surtur." He sat close to Odin, the golden sun, the warrior, the once King. His blue eyes were glistening with unshed tears.

"No. It has already begun. She's coming. My life was all that held her back, but my time has come. I cannot keep her away any longer."

"Father, who are you talking about," Thor asked.

"The Goddess of Death. Hela. My firstborn." He looked directly at Thor, "Your sister." He said. Freya's eyebrows furrowed together, there had been another daughter. She looked at Loki and he held the same expression on his face.

"What?" Thor asked.

"Her violent appetites grew beyond my control. I couldn't stop her, so I imprisoned her. Locked her away. She draws her strength from Asgard ... and once she gets there. Her powers will be limitless." Odin explained. He looked at Freya, "I locked you away, limited you because of my fears. Fears of creating another daughter, so evil."

"Whatever she is, we can stop her. We can face her together."

Odin took Thor's hand, "No we won't. I'm on a different path now. This you must face alone. I love you, my sons." He struggled to breathe. "I treated you unfairly, I hope you can forgive me."

Freya grabbed his hand. She had already lost Frigga without saying goodbye, without getting closure, she wouldn't make the same mistake with Odin. "You're forgiven." She said, unsure if she had forgiven him. Looking past him and forgiving, not just Odin, but Frigga and her past.

"I love you." He said and turned toward the sea. She couldn't say it back but she knew he meant it. They sat in silence watching the waves crash along the cliffside. "Look at that." The sunlight touched the ocean highlighting the water with golden light. "Remember this place. Home." He disappeared into dust, and the winds carried him out to sea. Freya stood and followed the dust to the edge of the cliff.

The skies above darkened and the sea breeze turned to a harsh wind. Thor looked at Loki with rage and anger. Lightning trailed down Thor's arms.

Loki stood, "Brother."

"This was your doing."

Freya walked in between them, "Stop! Loki is many things but he is not the reason father is dead." She pressed a hand to Thor's chest and pushed him back. There was a crack, like the sound of a whip and all three turned to the noise. A large portal opened up a few meters away from them.

Freya stretched her hand to the sky and her outfit turned from her mortal clothing to her white armor. Her staff grew from her palm out to the sky. Her brothers also adorned their armor now, they all agreed. This was Hela.

She walked from the portal casually, she wore a tight black bodysuit, her black hair more like Loki's than Thor's. Her eyes were pale and narrow. She looked between the three siblings.

"So he's gone?" She asked. "That's a shame. I would've liked to have seen that." She sighed. Her face was so indifferent, her aura was chilling, threatening.

"You must be Hela. I'm Thor, son of Odin." Thor took the first step forward. His shoulders squared, hand clamped around Mjolnir.

"Really, you don't look like him." She tilted her head to the side and gave Thor a once-over. "Who are you supposed to be?" She asked looking directly at Freya.

"Freya." She said.

"Hmm." Hela regarded her with a wary stare. "My replacement, then?" She raised an eyebrow.

"Perhaps we can reach an arrangement," Loki said.

"You sound like him." Hela's lips curled up. Loki stepped forward and glanced over at Thor. "Kneel," Hela said and her chin raised.

"Beg your pardon?" Loki's eyebrows knitted together. From nothing, Hela manifested an ebony black blade.

"Kneel... before your Queen," Hela said and a smile grew on her chapped lips. Freya felt her magic as it bubbled at the surface of her skin.

"I don't think so," Thor said, the winds grew strong once more, and he threw Mjolnir at Hela. But — she caught it in mid-air with a slight tremor as she fought against its strength. "It's not possible," Thor said as his eyes widened.

"Darling, you have no idea what's possible," Hela said, Mjolnir cracked under her strength. It exploded and there was a wave of energy that came from it. Freya put up a forcefield and blocked the impact. The winds died down and Freya removed the forcefield. Hela was staring at her when the field vanished. "A witch." She said.

"Bring us back!" Loki shouted up to the sky. Freya and Thor look to their brother and then both looked to Hela, whose smile grew wide.

"No!" Thor shouted, but it was too late. The Bi-Frost's light shot down from the sky as Hela charged them. Freya was unprepared for the feeling of the Bi-Frost. His stomach was left on Earth as she rocketed into space. Hela followed close behind them. Loki glanced down and threw two daggers at her. But she zooms past Freya and knocks him out of the Bi-Frost.

"Loki!" Freya shouted and pushed her hand up against the current of the Bi-Frost. She shot a blast at Hela. She was unprepared but turned her wild gaze down at Freya. She created a sword in her hand. Thor knocked it from her grasp. She grapples him closer and they struggle against each other. He kicked her but, was thrown back by the force of the kick. His back hit the edge of the Bi-Frost's light and he followed Loki into the abyss. Hela reached out and grabbed hold of Freya's throat and she gasped.

She didn't even have time to register her body was thrown from the Bi-Frost. She was being sucked into a red portal. Her body spun and her limbs flailed. Her body spat out and she was free falling. She stopped herself and hovered in the air. She looked around. A giant city made of a mismatch of metal. The sky was filled with red portals spitting out the trash. Below she was giant piles of trash.

<<<Present Day - The Amazon>>>

Death. An unspoken truth of life. Anyone could go, even those who could live forever. Freya never got used to the hole that kept growing in her soul. Each friend she had lost, each family member, was a piece of a puzzle that made her up and now that piece was forever missing. She couldn't imagine a life where Gabriella wasn't there. Just like a part of her pretended that her mother and Loki were still alive, they were just somewhere she couldn't be. It was easier that way.

Gilgamesh died protecting Thena, protecting the one he loved. Freya wondered if Gabriella felt like she died in a righteous way. Freya replayed the moment in her head a million times. She could've healed her, ignored Gabriella's last wish. She could have killed Anu right then and there. She was played a fool... falling for a projected self. She had been distracted.

There was nothing she could do, no redo. She had lost again. She had lost and the cost was greater than she had ever imagined. The funeral was for Gilgamesh and Gabriella. Two separate woodpiles, with their bodies amongst the flames.

She had to keep strong. She had to comfort Maria and David, they had never been through a loss like this. It would be selfish to take up space. Thena and Matteo lost lovers. David and Maria lost a mother. So she stood up straight watching the flames soar high into the sky.

The flames quelled eventually and the ashes were collected. Matteo held onto the urn. Tears in his eyes, with one arm wrapped around Maria. Freya hugged David and she hugged Maria.

"I promise you, I will find Amora." She said. "She will pay for what she did." Maria smiled and Freya said.

"Don't promise that," Maria said as tears trailed down her cheeks.

"And don't get yourself killed. She wouldn't want that. Promise me you'll live, for her."

Maria's eyes were Gabriella's eyes. The little girl who wanted to be just like her. The now woman was better than Freya because she was like her mother. "I promise." She said. The three of them said their goodbyes and went back to the village. Freya turned back toward the river. The sun was rising and its warm light bounced off the dark blue water.

Druig stepped up next to her. He didn't say anything, nor look at her. She glanced down at her hands and back up at the rising sun. "In my youth, I courted war." She recalled an Asgardian poem. "Stubborn as the armor I wore. Cruel as the sword I yielded."

"Blaming yourself for their deaths won't bring them back." He said softly. "Why carry that weight on your shoulders?"

"I don't know how to live without it." Freya said, "I used to think there was a finish line. That's what Tony always wanted. He carried the weight of the world on his shoulders and he kept looking for the end, the day when he could say the work is done. But the only finish line for people like us is death."

He stood quietly and she fidgeted in the silence. He took in a breath. "I'll try to put Tiamut to sleep." She looked at him with wide eyes. Their eyes met. "For my family, for the village, for Gil." He turned to face her. His nose inches from her own. "For you. But promise me something. Freya."

"Anything." She said.

"You can't die." He said.

"Then neither can you." She held out her hand with her pinky out. "I promise not to die if you promise to."

He looked down at her pinky and back up at her. He wrapped his pinky around hers. "Promise."

"Promise." She whispered with a sad smile on her lips. But this promise and the one she gave Maria, she wasn't certain she could keep.

<<<2018 - Sakar>>>

An orange ship pulled up next to her and flashed its lights in her face. "What do we have here?" A voice over a speaker asked. The ship spun around and a door hissed open. "Come on in, I don't bite." An older man with deep-set brown eyes and silver hair waved at her. He was tall and wearing gold and blue. "Unless of course, you want me too." He smiled and messed with his collar. Something about him seemed off. She didn't want to get on that ship. Freya glanced down at the trash heap and towards the city. "Oh, I wouldn't head down there if I were you. The scavengers will just pick you up for food or for me." He stepped to the side.

She gaped whether she could take him. He didn't seem all too dangerous. So she flew into the ship. It was foggy in the ship and she smelled peppermint and strong spices. Aliens of all different species were there on that ship. Freya took a step back but the man was already behind her door closed. "Woah there." He said with a smile curling up on his gold-painted lips. "You are just magnificent." He looked her up and down.

"Freya?" She turned and Loki was there, in an all-blue leather suit, different from his armor and yet the same. His hair is a bit longer, and cleaner than the last time she saw him which was only minutes ago.

"Loki! You know this fallen angel?" He stepped past Freya and over to her brother. Loki's eyes were wide darting between Freya and the man.

"Y— yes." Loki smiled and stepped over to Freya. "Grandmaster I'd like you to meet the goddess of Love and Light, Freya Odindautter... my sister."

The Grandmaster clapped his hands together and let out a little laugh. "Oh, I like this. A little family reunion, a little— Oh Topaz." A woman, with a staff in her hand and yellow suit on. "You know what I always say Sakar needs more of?"

"Death," Topaz said with a still face.

"No." His face scrunched up. His eyes darted over Freya's and he gestured at her, "Love and Light. I say it needs more love and light. Why would you say death?"

Freya's magic sparked off her hands and a glow wrapped around them. Loki noticed and quickly grabbed hold of her hand. "A little more princess, a little less power." He said and she looked up at him. "Trust me," He said barely above a whisper. "He can't know how powerful you are."

"Your majesty." The Grandmaster was right in front of them and they both jumped. He held out a hand for her to take. She glanced down at it. "It would be my honor for you to stay with me as a guest."

Freya bit the inside of her cheek. She could ask Loki about all of this later but, maybe just this time, it would be wise to trust Loki. She put her hand in his and gave a wistful look. Like the smiles, she gave Lords when her father was trying to marry her off. "That would be lovely." She said with a small bow. When her eyes met the Grandmaster's his eyes were wide and wild. A glint so mischievous in them it gave Loki a run for his money.

<<<Present Day - The Amazon>>>

Sersei stepped up to Druig who was standing at the edge of the water, watching Thena as she held an urn of Gilgamesh's ashes. "When I lie I thought of taking over the minds of every human on this planet." He said. "Violence, fear, greed." He looked up at her, "All gone."

"Why didn't you?" Sersei asked.

"Because without their flaws, they wouldn't be human." He said. She respected Druig and she had always been able to see the deep care he had for not only his family but humans.

"Please Druig, you can't stay here anymore." She said. He never showed what he was thinking on his face. He had mastered stoicism. "These deviants are trying to keep us from killing their own kind. They have a conscious now, that makes them more dangerous."

"No, Sersei." He shook his head. "That makes them us. Eternals, Deviants... Arishem's children." He paused and glanced at her, "But you are asking me to take control of a mind of a celestial. I do not have that kind of power."

"But you aren't alone. You have Freya." She said with an affirming nod.

"She shouldn't have to be involved in this. This isn't her fight." He said. "The power transfer... it can't be at her expense. I won't do it if that's the case."

"We'll need Phastos." She said.

"Well good luck." Druig said. "He gave up on humans along time ago." They watched Thena pour Gilgamesh's ashes into the river.

A/N

I hope this one wasn't as painful as the last one

We got a bit of Druig a bit of Ragnarok. I couldn't help but put the grandmaster in this. I love Je Goldblum.

Let me know your thoughts!!

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