Broken Seas and Open Hearts

Ch.1 : Frigg's Problem and Solution

The simplicity of the work calmed my overworked mind and nerves. I bent over holding my heavily pregnant belly and tended to the herbs for medicine salves. "Wife, always trying to push the limits to the end." Ragnar gruffed as his bright blue eyes travelled across my frame. My body still held the muscles of a hard worker and Shield Maiden but I was never one to sit still either. My flaming hair fanned behind me from the edge of the ocean's water.

"Husband. Nothing thou will happen to this child. If they wish to be born with the fresh air then the Gods and Goddesses command it. Stop with the worrying." I pause as I pull some carrots and set them in the basket sitting next to me. My own eyes, as raging as the ocean's current pull to Njoror, was the same feeling of being left behind on the raids. "Or Aresto will take the lead in the raidings because you have been caught in your wife's plot."

Ragnar lets out a booming laugh that still easily melts my heart for the man. He kicks off the house and marches towards me. He smiles down at me with a long scar across the left side of his face. He had almost entered Valhalla with such a wound. The Wise One, Leiah of the Western Winds, had explained against the orders of the Gods that it would be my love that would save him. That's when I had found out about my pregnancy in the first place. Bowdin chased the hound around our little farm with a wooden sword. Our third child, I had whispered to Ragnar's body, needs their father and mother or thou will follow my husband to the halls of Valhalla. Leiah had at that moment been stricken of her sight on this plane of existence in Yggdrasil. But, Ragnar had awoken.

"Aresto would just hand you the reins to my ships and men. Would you really refuse me, wife, if I asked nicely in the name of Odin?" Ragnar questioned as he leaned down next to me. Ragnar's lips twitched at his words as I let out some laughter.

"I prefer my husband to beg for it," I stated as I looked at Ragnar with a calm look on my face. Ragnar looked at me searching my face to see if I was joking or not. "You had to slay a boar, hound, and a forest cat before I would glance at the offerings for my hand, husband."

Ragnar shook his head as his braids slapped his shoulders gently. "Always as twisting and turning as the tides in Thor's anger." I let out a small smile at Ragnar's mutterings. He was correct, of course, but it was always freeing for us to drop our masks that we had curated out of necessity.

Ragnar leans on his knees in front of me as he places his gruff hands softly on my stomach. “Once out of your mother’s belly, she will be the one doing the begging then to go on the raids,” Ragnar said to my stomach. I slapped his shoulder in retaliation. “But, then my wife will only smell of my scent once more,” Ragnar stated as he looked at me.

My legs quivered at the thought of once again being completely wrapped within Ragnar’s arms. “And everyone will know the great Ragnar belongs solely to me,” I said with a teasing smile as I kissed Ragnar.

“Ew. Seriously you two? All I’ve asked is to do it where I won’t see it,” Bowdin complained loudly. I snorted at his words. He has my tack, that's for sure, I thought fondly.

Ragnar immediately stood up. “Getting big there boy. Maybe soon we should find a suitable match for you.” I just shake my head at Ragnar’s word.

“Mom would beat you up if you tried,” Bowdin retorted as he suddenly blocked the lunge Ragnar gave to him.

“Don’t step on the garden,” I call out as Ragnar switches to teaching Bowdin more about swords. Bowdin loved the thought of soon being allowed to go on his first raid. He was already eleven years here and yet to be on a raid. Maybe, Ragnar’s next raid he could go, I thought to myself as I stood up.

“Are you okay mom?” My oldest child, Norna, my baby girl, at thirteen years old asked me. I smiled at her curly red hair, just like mine. I groaned and gritted my teeth. Underneath me was a puddle. Norna looked down too. “DAD!”

Ragnar appeared out of my corner of my eye and swooped me into his arms like a treasure he couldn’t live without. “Right till the end Arika Gormsson,” Ragnar said as he easily carried me to the bed.

“I could’ve walked Ragnar son of Gorms,” I grumbled as Norna snorted and Bowdin hit her shoulder.

Norna just twirled around after grabbing a knife from Ragnar's strap and sliced Bowdin’s arm. “Try it again, Bowdin son of Ragnar,” Norna stated in a firm and stiff tone of voice. Bowdin recognized the very real threat and backed down from his teasing.

I groan as I open my legs. “Norna, give your father his knife, your sibling is coming,” I state through clenched teeth as I feel my head get light as the veins pop. I pushed as Ragnar set up the small room. We were lowly farmers to the king and couldn’t afford a midwife in these harsh times and lack of success with Ragnar’s raids. Ragnar was going to help deliver this child into this world just like he did for Norna and Bowdin.

Norna stayed after that statement as Bowdin went back to working the horses we owned. “Gods and giants,” I groan out as Norna helps to keep me cool with a wet cloth. Ragnar gave me a slight smirk. The sun slowly faded as I continued to push and pray to Frigg to protect my unborn child. Norna was patient in a way that shocked me. Soon she would be a woman and not my little girl anymore, I thought as I panted and gave one last push.

Ragnar cut the umbilical cord from the life force of my child and me. There were no cries though. No screams. Nothing but absolute silence that left me numb. I knew instinctually but I didn’t want to process it. Norna silently left Ragnar’s and I’s room. Ragnar just looked at me sadly. “Thoren only knew the best touch, wife and mother of my children.”

I stared at Ragnar as I swallowed the lump in my throat. “Thoren,” I whispered brokenly in a wrecked voice. “I need to hold him, Ragnar,” I said as calmly as I could. Ragnar didn’t question it and handed me Thoren. He was blue and had entered Hel’s realm from my womb.

“I will have Solveig build him a proper rest,” Ragnar stated in the candlelit room as the morning sun started to rise from the darkness. I stared at it for a long time. I couldn’t look at Ragnar. This was supposed to be the one, I thought. The last child I could grow inside of me with all the other losses. Ragnar left to go talk to Solveig, his best friend and ship creations that seem to tame the seas.

I finally looked down at Thoren. I wiped the blood from his eyelids as I noted how cold he felt to my warm body. I gently wrap a blanket I had painstakingly made. I wrapped him tightly like I had felt him only three days ago, moving. I gently lay Thoren at the edge of the bed and kiss his eyelids. The blood stained my skin as I grabbed my coat and headed into the forest and away from the farm.

The path was already memorized as my legs burned but my soul cried. I could feel the pain eating me alive. Thoren didn’t make it because I wasn’t strong enough. “Always thinking you know your own paths and choices you have,” Leiah stated as soon as I entered the cave. “It’s the way of the Gods and Goddesses, Arika. You bartered with them and they always collect in the most painful ways.”

I kneel before Leiah as she stretches a wrinkled hand to me that I drop a blood from my womb onto her hand. She immediately draws her hand to her mouth and licks the blood. “They took more than they bartered,” Leiah muttered before her white and sightless eyes seemed to lock onto my own. “A different God or Goddess is protecting you and demanding retribution for such a gift to this realm away, too early.”

“Thoren was supposed to survive?” I asked in slight anger, coating my tone of voice that I couldn’t hide.

“Yes,” Leiah stated blankly and bluntly. “But this powerful new entity is protecting you. Odin favors your husband and is often involved with communications between the two. This being doesn’t wish for anything but retribution and protecting you.” Leiah fanned the flames that roared between us causing smoke to quickly feel the breathable air. Yet, I could feel the burn but it didn’t hurt like it should.

“I am favored?” I asked quietly, humbly, and confused. Why me? I barely understood Odin’s relationship to my husband and now I had to understand this?

Leiah wacks me upside the head with her staff as I let out a groan, “Always twenty steps behind the workings physically yet, right on par with Odin emotionally.” Leiah just shakes her head. “This is new and dangerous,” Leiah continued to mutter.

“How can I be favored when Odin demands my son, Thoren, as the sacrifice for this path?” I asked as the anger quickly came back. The darkness of the cave and cool breeze cleared the air quickly as I stared at Leiah.

Leiah just chuckles darkly at me. “You’ve paid the price at least three confirmed times have you not, woman?” Leiah demanded and I couldn’t help but pause. It was true. How was this time any different than the last?

“Why let me meet him already dead then?” I asked instead softly as I realized the only difference was he had been alive three days ago and moving in my womb.

Leiah freezes at the question. “It must be…” Leiah trailed off before standing up and pointing at the opening of the cave. “Time to leave Arika Gormsson,” and all the candles went out. I nodded slowly in the darkness of the cave.

I slowly walk to the mouth of one of the places Leiah stays in. I turn back as the sunlight hits my back, instantly warming me up. “No more sacrifices, Wise One.” And in that moment when I had said that the wind blew and the Njoror and Mani seemed to agree with me. I turned and walked away.

The Wise One stared after me. “She might just be the one to break the cycle, Frigg. She’ll be the solution to the problem won’t she?” Leiah whispered to the wind. The wind blew harshly back into the Wise One’s face. “May you watch closely, Frigg. Her sacrifices have just begun for the problem to end. The fight coming will not be pretty.” Leiah shakes her head and vanishes from any sight.

Chapter 2 Thor and Loki Are in Agreement

Solveig immediately had the place of rest for Thoren built. Bowdin stared at the blue baby as Ragnar kept drinking from his husk. Bowdin turned to his father, angry. “If we are the great sons of Odin, then why does he keep demanding our sacrifices more than others? Has mother not been through enough, father?!” Bowdin screamed out finally as his emotions exploded.

Norna didn’t even blink or flinch at Bowdin’s outburst. She just kept staring sadly at Thoren. “I wish I knew, boy,” Ragnar said quietly, which quickly calmed Bowdin. Bowdin was his father’s son. Ragnar just pulled Bowdin into his side.

Aresto marches into our home and sees Thoren for the first time. Aresto flinches before looking at Ragnar and myself. “I am sorry for your loss, brother,” Aresto said gently as he clapped a hand on Ragnar’s shoulder. I simply try to ignore Aresto. Ragnar’s response is the same, he keeps drinking. Solveig could see the problem immediately when Aresto’s eyes locked on my form.

Before I could blink Aresto was by my side. “How are you doing Arika?” Aresto asked as he leaned further into my ear. At that moment I wished for my shield and sword. Aresto, even married to his brother, Ragnar, would constantly try to sleep with me.

“If I had a sharp stick you would already be dead before Thoren,” I say softly but with a biting edge. I watched as Aresto flinched at my words.

“Always so hard to please,” Aresto said sharply at me as Solveig interrupted us.

“Let us prepare to move, hm?” Solveig asked before letting out a small chuckle. I swore to the Gods and Goddesses that Solveig was one of Loki’s disciples here to cause chaos.

However, I wasn’t above taking the road away from Aresto so he could live another day for Ragnar. I did promise Ragnar not to kill his brother. Later amended to no killing, maiming, or scarring the other person. I nodded at Solveig as Ragnar stepped up with Solveig and carried Thoren’s resting frame outside. We walked silently in a cloud of Thor’s anger and Frigg’s sadness.

I blink the tears away from my eyes as I stare at the small ship Solveig built to give Thoren a proper burial, the viking way. I wait till Ragnar and Solveig step away from the ship before I lean over to Solveig and give him a kiss on the cheek. “Thank you,” I whisper to Solveig.

“No thanks, hm. He’s family just as you are. Even Loki is quiet in this damnation,” Solveig stated simply. I thought he was starting to sound like some of the slaves that the raids brought back.

Slowly each one of us gifts something to Thoren for his space in Hel’s realm. Norna placed a weaved basket she had made. Bowdin put a wood sword that looked hand carved into Thoren’s hand before whispering something into Thoren’s ear. Aresto sets the toys he had created into the ship. Ragnar slipped the gold necklace off and put it around Thoren’s neck. I stepped up and placed a bow and arrow I had crafted for years. “You’re an Odinson, my son Thoren,” I whispered in his ear as I brushed his hair away from his face. I step back as Solveig places the toy ship at the starboard before pushing him into the water.

The currents quickly took his body into the middle of the lake. I had stayed standing as Solveig and Ragnar started a fire. My eyes never strayed. My soul was breaking at that moment. Ragnar looked at me before passing his bow and arrow over. “You have to be the one to do it,” Ragnar stated. I had to be the one to light Thoren’s ship with the flames. I thought wildly that Thoren had Ragnar’s hair for a moment.

I couldn’t handle the image of that and didn't argue with Ragnar because it was a fact, I had to be the one to do it. I light the tip of the arrow and set the bow and arrow in the sights of Thoren’s ship to Hel’s realm for good. The moment I let the arrow go the wind picked up and my hair seemed to match the flames now in the middle of the river. It felt like an omen. It felt like a battle

I couldn't grasp nor see. It felt neither good nor bad though. That's when I realized that I couldn't cry for Thoren because I already did, with my soul.

I grabbed Ragnar's hand and squeezed it till my finger tips were biting into his skin. He turns around to look at me. His eyes widen as his eyebrows shoot up at the storm created at sea by Thor's displeasure looking back. "I am going on your next raid. Whether the king sends you or you try to go behind his back." I state simply. In those words, held so many paths that I could swear I saw Ragnar frown.

Looking at the burning ship, I let out a roar. A Shield Maiden's roar before facing battle and possibly entering Valhalla. I nod slowly at the ship, turn around and marches off leaving our small family behind.

That night Ragnar found me outside practicing. "You cannot go," Ragnar says, like it was already determined and judged by Odin himself.

"I can, husband," I snarl as I tear the sword from the tree as bark goes flying. "You shall not stop me. The king cannot stop me and the Gods will dare not intervene!" I yelled as I suddenly blocked Ragnar's sword.

"Then win," Ragnar said simply. Before he started attacking with two swords and immediately put me on the defense. I duck under one sword as my hand grabs my ax on my back and blocks the second sword before pushing Ragnar with my shield. He fell back a step or two then we were locked.

Neither of us were fighting to kill but we both were trying to make a point to the other. Ragnar believed me incapable after just losing a child and possibly going on a raid very soon because of his need to prove that I am physically weak. I had to prove how hard this had made me and how this rage needed to be let out in a way that would mean something. I had to get Ragnar to see that. I couldn't hang back. I couldn't watch my husband's back sail off when my heart yearned for raiding. The seas that would flip on a dime and Thor's tests of strength before embarking on the shores of the village we would raid.

The sword clattered behind me as I rolled and swung my arm out as Ragnar slid under my shield. He tried to slice my stomach with his remaining sword as I spun out of reach. I swing my ax and Ragnar plucks it out of the air before it could smash into his face. He swings the ax and lets it sail back towards me. I block by putting my shield up and kick my back leg out which connects with Ragnar's chin sending him to the ground. I spin around and take the ax out of the shield and start swinging. I was starting to see red as I felt the need for someone's blood rise

inside of me. My lips pulled back as I snarled like a vicious hound. I blocked Ragnar's sword only to be punched in the face. My nose cracks and I am instantly tasting blood.

I fall back a step or two but don't bother worrying about the injury. Whereas, it seemed like Ragnar was more worried but he blocked my ax and grabbed my shield. Ragnar threw my shield off into the tree line. "Is that all you have, Arika?" Ragnar taunted. Then I did a move that Ragnar had never seen me do before. I bent backwards to the edge of the cliff before catching myself at the edge. Ragnar was already running towards me before I pushed off of the ledge and am airborne. I land directly on Ragnar's back and nick his neck before he could think.

"I win," I say as I get off of Ragnar. I was still seeing red and wanted to see someone's head on a stick. I duck knowing Ragnar goes for the cheap shots. He flew over my head and landed in front of me.

"Don't you ever do that to me again, woman," Ragnar gruffed out harshly. He was panting just as heavily as I was. I think that is why Ragnar became interested in the first place, a Shield Maiden who could sometimes beat Ragnar. He had found it attractive enough to find me.

"Wouldn't have worked if the panic you felt wasn't real," I say gently back in a type of an apology tone. I look at Ragnar as the moon hangs high in the skies. "Wouldn't have worked on someone that doesn't care about me anyway."

Ragnar snarls lightly before his brain catches up to what I had pointed out. "You do make a point, wife," Ragnar says as he brushes himself off. "Sit?" he asks as he waves a hand next to where he now sits at the edge of the cliff. I simply curled into his side before he could blink. "I do not like us fighting," Ragnar admitted in the darkness. "It makes it feel like this will only end in heartbreak that would destroy my soul before it could even see Valhalla."

I don't move my head from Ragnar's chest as he says that. I look up to see Ragnar's face, his eyes searching the seas for the answers. They didn't have none that I had found yet. I place his hand on my heart and my hand on his heart. "We have made enough sacrifices," I state plainly, "our love will never become that." I kissed Ragnar, conveying the rest I couldn't put into words. Ragnar's hands instantly gripped my hips and started moving slowly. I pull away first.

"You still need time to heal," Ragnar said. Why was it that he was being the voice of reason all of a sudden? Like a flip had happened in Ragnar's mind and this man I had only seen a small amount of times. So, why did it scare me so? "Otherwise, this night would end very definitely and I would know my wife actually got the sleep she needed since giving birth."

I stare at Ragnar, searching his face. He always seemed to know… “Was it Odin that told you about me or is it someone else?” I asked pointedly and finally asked the direct question.

Ragnar’s eyes change from their normal piercing neon blue eyes to lightning. “Huginn and Muninn help,” Ragnar says simply with a shrug of his shoulders. At that moment, I didn’t see my husband, the farmer. I saw in the darkness that night a sign that I should’ve taken seriously. I saw my husband in a throne with another woman, pregnant. But, within a simple blink of an eye I am staring back at Ragnar’s regular blue eyes. The dread started in the pit of my stomach.

It was the start of the end. I only wished I had seen more and believed earlier what was happening. Afterall, if it wasn’t for Ragnar freeing me from being a slave, I would still be nothing but property. To be used and abused without a care. But, Ragnar cared even then. Though it took me longer to remember that since I had only been five years when it happened. Ragnar never forgot though. He just waited till our next meeting.

Always waiting, I thought as I stared out over the sea. Waiting for what? Waiting for when things would end? Or worse yet, waiting for things to begin? That night I prayed to Hel for Thoren as my skin glowed for a moment like the moon before finally falling asleep next to Ragnar, the waiting one.

Chapter 3 Hel’s Realm is Protected

I was right. Ragnar was going to try and go North when the king had only ever sent us down South. Solveig had been trying and appeared to be successfully making ships for the unknown currents that could handle anything. “I’m almost impressed,” I muttered to myself. Ragnar throws over his shoulder his egoistic, happy smirk at me. My mind went blank for a split second as a rush of lust flowed over me. Solveig just shrugs at me.

“The problem is, we cannot test them till we are in open seas and under the guidance of only Huggin and Muninn for land,” Solveig shrugs as he speaks, humming slightly under his breath. “King finds out, mm, all seized and raided. They would break my ships before they ever saw the open seas, hm!” Solveig just progressively got louder the more he talked. I couldn’t blame Solveig’s outrage at such a thing.

Ragnar stayed calm as I looked towards him. His spine was aloof and his legs swivelled as if he couldn't stay still. "Ay, but when you have this, it bends the way to land in the North," Ragnar said as he opened a box and brought out a compass. Solveig looked at it with feigned interest as he hummed. I let out a gasp and covered my mouth with my hands. Ragnar's smirk just widened further. "It is," Ragnar confirmed my suspicions.

"It's a compass," Solveig said bluntly in confusion as he scratched his head. Ragnar just hit his shoulder at stating the obvious as he threw his head back and laughed at Solveig.

"It's no ordinary compass. It sails North." I said as my lips fought off the need to smile. I wasn't exactly pleased with Ragnar bringing Bowdin in, leaving Norna behind to fend with herself. We had fought the previous night when he proposed his complete plan to me.

Solveig mouthed the words as if tasting them like a snake. The sea breeze started to pick up and goosebumps appeared on my arm. I glance at Ragnar to see if he noticed. He was frowning at me with something almost like suspicion. "Instead of following Njoror and Mani we now know the way of the North with this compass?" Solveig questioned unimpressed as he poked it with one of his fingers.

The goosebumps didn't go away. Instead, it seemed like they only grew. Something was wrong, I thought, glancing around like a wild animal. That's when my heart stops. A female wild animal would only act like this if its children were in danger. "Hathen is under attack." I say leaping off the ship and running towards my remaining children. I wasn't going to allow any more sacrifices.

The two easily kept up with me as we weaved through the burning forest as we coughed. "You knew," Ragnar muttered as he stared with wide eyes at the attack.

"Look," I pointed at the emblem. The emblem was that of King Bjorn.

"They's going to try and destroy my ships," Solveig mumbled angrily. That's when I heard a scream.

Instincts took over as I ducked under Ragnar's arm as he called to me to wait but I was already slicing through bodies to reach Norna. The same scream and I was going to kill everyone that dared to try and hurt my daughter. "Mother!" Bowdin yelled as he swung me another shield before helping others in the same way and staying out of sight.

Then I saw them ravaging her. Her pained screams and I felt all of Odin's fury as I attacked like I was possessed. I couldn't even explain how I killed over twenty abled men. I didn't see the terror I was creating within the surviving enemy soldiers and my own people. All I saw was my child needing me.

Ragnar and Solveig appeared as I threw the last man off of Norna and picked her up like a child. She cried as she wrapped her arms around my neck. To Valhalla and back, how dare the Gods allow this to happen? Then I didn't see Norna for a moment. I was just staring blankly out into the sea trying to hold onto a body. Before I was back and carrying Norna home as Bowdin protected our blind spot. Aresto joined Ragnar and Solveig in creating a half circle around Norna and myself.

The ones that tried, met a grizzly end with no remorse. The smell of Norna's blood was something that started something within me at that moment. I shook it off as I held Norna. I carried her inside the house and onto her bed. I rubbed her hair as I gathered a bowl of warm water and a cloth. Gently, I started to clean Norna up.

"Storn was who I wanted to…" Norna finally spoke over a few hours and the darkness of night arrived. I looked at her with a look of a warrior. I didn't know how to handle that because I had been able to give mine freely and not have it taken.

"He is a good match for you." I finally settle on keeping my tone calm and caring but I don't try to please Norna with platitudes that what she went through wasn't that bad.

"He won't want me now." Norna said before rolling over and away from me. I frowned because I knew she would twist my words no matter what I said at that moment.

Ragnar was waiting patiently outside for me. I felt like I had defied the Gods and Goddesses. "How did you know?" Ragnar asked quietly. I sat down next to him for a long moment. Ragnar didn't see it coming.

"You didn't know?" I asked calmly as I stared at Njoror in the Nott of night.

Ragnar seems to almost shrink in on himself and for the first time, I worried about what had just occurred. "You can't change something that isn't seen." Ragnar finally settled on. It felt like a warning.

“You believe Norna will still die?” I questioned withholding my anger. It wasn’t at Ragnar but rather the situation we were in now.

“If she carries,” Ragnar said and my heart stopped because I knew.

I watch as Norna puts a branch inside of her and makes herself cry and bleed before passing out. I see that it was already done and too late. Norna was in a long rest.

Chapter 4 Tyr Solved Odin’s Warfare

I held Norna’s hand as Bowdin was heard screaming from outside our hut. Ragnar leaned against the frame watching Norna before looking at me. I had known again. I actually saw it. I couldn’t have seen it though. How did I see it?

“You knew…” Ragnar trailed off before looking at me with unreadable eyes. It was the first time Ragnar had ever laid eyes such as those unto me. He usually only had to do it to Aresto.

“Don’t you dare look at me like that,” I told Ragnar with all the anger of a striking snake. Ragnar didn’t even flinch. I wasn’t sure if that made it better or worse.

“You mean look at the woman who until a few days ago, just wanted to be a mother,” Ragnar stated plainly and simply the truth.

I gently released Norna’s hand and laid it next to her side. I could almost convince myself she was sleeping up till the moment the image of the bloody branch flashed behind my eyes. “I only ever wanted simplicity of life. Be a mother and raise warriors. Give you plenty of sons. Raid when wished but don’t you dare stand there before your wife and call me something that I still have no understanding over.”

“What did Leiah tell you?” Ragnar asked instead, shoving me into an emotion whiplash of feelings.

“The truth that Thoren was supposed to have lived,” I say brushing Norna’s hair with my fingertips just how she liked it. “And that war is coming.”

“War?” Ragnar asked in almost surprised disbelief.

I turned to look at Ragnar with something clearly surprising. It was clearly seen on my face. Ragnar’s own face hardened at the look. “War for our kind,” I said factually yet where was this coming from? That wasn’t what Leiah had said, yet it is tumbling out of my mouth like the birds that mimic our whistles.

Ragnar must have recognized the signs because he finally pushed off and sat next to me. He took my hands into his own. His eyes captured mine. “We will figure it out, together,” Ragnar said.

Darkness quickly overtakes my sight. I could only see our home burning and the fighting of King Bjorn continuing the attack. Before, I saw Ragnar sitting on the throne and another woman heavy with child sitting next to him. It wasn’t me. Then the vision cleared and I looked at Ragnar.

“Do you want more sons?” I demanded, feeling the blooming rage of Thor’s anger after Loki tricked him.

Ragnar remained quiet. That was telling enough. I had to believe what I saw wasn’t real when I could think about my daughter lying in bed for over a week now. Pushing back the raiding party from setting sail and following Ragnar. I swallowed it all, knowing the only choice I had now.

“Take Bowdin. I will stay.”

Chapter 5 Fenrir Causes Ragnarök

Within three days and the raiding party leaves as I stand on the shoreline watching them once again sail away without me. Norna stated in the deep slumber and Ragnar’s words echoed in my mind. “What wasn’t seen shouldn’t be changed.” The echoes of it still haunted my mind.

“Father, are you sure mother can handle…?” Bowdin asked Ragnar as he helped row the ship North. Ragnar at the starboard stared at Bowdin.

Solveig just answered simply, “May the Gods and Goddess have mercy on any soul that tries to against your mother, Bowdin.”

I allowed myself nothing but a mere moment before turning from the edge of the seas and head into the forest. Following a path known to all of the tribes. Leigh was waiting for me in a meadow with a single yellow pine grew. “Do you know why this tree is special?” Leigh asked, in a type of greeting.

“No, because the tree sleeps quietly with Norna’s breaths,” I snapped at Leigh. Leigh whipped around and slapped me so hard I fell.

I fell but swung my head as my hair created flames. “You dared to intervene! Different outcomes for what is neither done nor neither said. You fought to keep your children but are you happy to keep them as they are? You already sent one away.”

I spit out a wad of blood and feel my anger flaring wildly. “I dared intervene because they are MY children, not someone’s pawns.”

“We are all pawns to the Gods and Goddesses,” Leigh snapped right back. The sightless white eyes seemed to be warning me. “Take my warning, stop playing a goddess because you are not Frigg and Ragnar isn’t Odin.” Then she disappeared into the fog.

I stayed on the hard ground looking at the single tree that seemed to be almost wilting before the flowers of the meadow. The world still turned as my mind did with confusion and anger. It wouldn’t matter as my hands dug into the earth ripping out handfuls of soil, I threw it at the tree.

“The hanging tree, hear me, may death come swiftly to the king that calls himself proclaimed Bjorn of the Great Bjornson. They will fear my will because the Gods and Goddesses did.” I proclaimed as I had paid attention to reading in-between the lines of what Leight had said. She couldn’t say it with the Gods and Goddesses watching her all the time now. Leigh told me what I needed. The Gods and Goddesses didn’t know how I knew about the attack, but it was done out of malice from them.

I wouldn’t allow the sacrifice of Norna as malice from them… and that scared them. I might not be a God or Goddess but I can be a wolf that tears down what others proclaim as destiny and fate. I was going to go after King Bjorn and I was going to kill him. I would become Fenrir if it meant fighting this evil path that is trying to be put down onto me. Onto my family, and I am more fearful of what I will become before I will be afraid of the workings of man. I would start Ragnarök if that is what it took.

A leaf blows from the single tree onto my lap as I open my eyes. I could've sworn I saw a face staring at me from the wilting tree; one I recognized.

Chapter 6 Fenrir has Broken his Chains