

Chapter 15



Relationships. The first hiccup in what had seemed like the perfect dream lives as girls for Thor and Odin. They were both annoyed at their men, but neither wanted to admit it to the other. Whenever they talked, it was all about how amazing Tech and Jax were, how much they were in love.

Odin, at least, was still very much in lust with Tech, but as much as he enjoyed their time together, he couldn't help but feeling he wanted more; he wanted a true partner who talked to him about everything, someone who would go dancing with him— tech thought dancing was stupid— and snuggle and watch Sunset Harbor. He wanted a guy who would *just know* when he was upset— even when he was trying to hide it- and hug him and listen to him talk about whatever was worrying him even if he made no sense! He wanted a guy who would just spontaneously send him flowers, show up outside his window some night and sing him a love song from some opera, go to see a romantic movie even if he thought it was dumb but love it because he knew Odin loved it!

Am I expecting too much? Odin wondered while searching on his smart pad for the perfect color of nail polish to wear at the skating competition. He didn't care. It was

what he needed to be happy! It was what his heart demanded! He couldn't settle for anything less because—

Oh! That was the perfect color! Odin smiled. He'd looked at a hundred different colors, and it had been worth it because this was— he couldn't even. It screamed *skateboard princess*. He and Thor, he decided, should have matching nails, outfits. It would be so fun!

When he told Thor about his idea for their matching outfits, Thor squealed and threw his arms around Odin. "I love it! Love it! Love it!" Odin showed Thor some of the ideas he'd been thinking about, and the two crowded around the laptop, searching through different outfits, giggling and smiling as they planned out what to wear. "Everyone is going to be taking pictures of us!" Odin said as they started to zero in on their look.

"Omigod, right?" Thor said. "We'll be all over social media!"

"I bet we'll get 10,000 likes!"

"Or more!"

Both of the men had found themselves increasingly obsessed with social media—and increasingly obsessed with having more followers, more likes. It just seemed so important! They did have one last huge problem to solve and which they couldn't come to agree on. The name for their skate team.

"The Asgirlians," Thor threw out.

"Lame," Odin said, sticking his finger in his mouth. "How about Two Cuties, but we use the letter 2 instead of the word?"

Thor shrugged. "Maybe." He did an internet search for 2 Cuties. "Cutie is the name of some kind of fruit?" He thought. "Maybe it should be something edgy, but cute at the same time?"

"Like what?"

"How about— Danger Dimples!?"

"No. Just no."

Thor sighed dramatically. "Our name has to be perfect!"

Odin sighed dramatically. "And easy to hashtag!"

"And memorable!"

"And unique!"

“And accessible!”

They threw themselves dramatically onto the bed.

“Sometimes it’s so hard being a pika,” Odin said, reverting to the Old Norse word for girl.

Thor sat up. “Systir,” he said, reverting to Old Norse himself. “That’s it! You’ve got it!”

“I do?” Odin said, sitting up. “What?”

“Pika! That can be our name! It’s cute! It’s Norse! It’s easy to hashtag!” He searched Pika on his phone and screamed. “It’s even the name of a cute little mouse!” He showed the image to Odin. “Omigod! I want one!”

“I know, right? We could put them on everything, sell them on Redballoon!”

“Pika,” Odin said, trying out the word, picturing it on a tank top. A tote bag. “We’re Pika!”

They hugged, both having fallen in love with their team name.

“It’s so much prettier than the word for ‘boy,’” Odin said, playing with his hair, once more feeling so lucky to be a female. “Magu.”

“Or, even worse, Mogr.” Thor shook his head. “Like Ogre. I feel sorry for boys.”

“Me, too! They don’t even get to wear makeup.”

As the big competition approached, the boys continued to practice. They’d felt really confident. Some of the other girls were good, but they knew they were better. They practiced as much because they wanted to get some super great videos to post to social media. Darcy had agreed to shoot them, and in her usual Darcy way she’d recruited a couple other girls to shoot their performances as well.

“We’ll get you from three different angles,” Darcy explained, showing the schematics she’d made of the skatepark, the locations of each camera. “And we’ll shoot close, medium and long shots. Then, I’ll edit them together into the most amazing video clips.”

“You’re amazing!” Thor said, impressed with all the work she was putting into it. “I just hope it doesn’t rain.”

“Rain?” Darcy said. “It never rains in Captiva. Now, as soon as your clothes come in, I want to shoot a bunch of test shots in the sun to see how they’ll look, make adjustments to our settings. Don’t forget.”

“Forget what?” Odin said, playing with his braid.

“Omigod. Airhead,” Darcy said, turning to Thor. “You’ll remember, right?”

“I’ll text you as soon as they’re delivered.”

She gave them both hugs and air kisses, and then left.

“Why does everyone think I’m an airhead?” Odin said in his small, extra-cutesy voice. In fact, he loved it.

“Mostly because you are, pika,” Thor said. “But we love you for it.”

Odin just giggled. “Wait. What were we talking about again?”

“About you being an airhead,” Thor said, rolling his eyes.

“Oh, yeah. I forgot!”

Thor, meanwhile, found himself thinking about what Darcy had said. *It never rains in Captiva*. He thought back through his time in Captiva, thinking it must have rained at least once? But, he couldn’t remember a single day that had been other than sunny and warm. The weather here was always perfect.

Too perfect?

He went to his weather app. There was a function where he could look at the typical 12-month weather patterns in Captiva over the years. It showed the same range of temperatures for every month and the same amount of precipitation: zero.

Was it possible there was a place where it was always warm and sunny, and it never rained? Thor may have been a silly girl, but he had once been the God of Thunder, and he knew the answer. No. It was not possible.

It bothered him. This was something he had not realized about Captiva. He felt like he’d come to know his town, this perfect little beach town just made for a girl like him. Now, he wondered if he didn’t know it at all. The thoughts disturbed him. His head hurt. He decided he would worry about it later. For now, he decided, he would just be grateful he lived in such a perfect place!

Days passed. Their outfits came in, Darcy worked out the best filters and ways to shoot their performance. They were all super excited.

Everything was set up perfectly for the SkateFest right up until the day before the big competition. That’s when *she* showed up.

Tall, beautiful, she effortlessly flew up the halfpipe, did a flip and skated back down, the whole time moving as gracefully as if she was floating on air. She had a superior

look on her face, like everyone around her was beneath her, and held her head up, nose in the air.

Thor slit his eyes, immediately hating this new female who'd invaded *his* space. He hated her tattoos, her face, her long legs. "Who is she?" He hissed.



"She's good," Odin whispered, watching her. "She's not competing, is she?"

"She is," Hannah, who'd skated up to them, said. "She signed up at the last minute. Looks like we have some serious competition."

"Do you know her?" Thor asked, feeling an insane urge to skate up to that arrogant girl and scratch her face with his long nails.

“No, but she’s actually a legend around here,” Hannah said. “We all thought she’d retired from skateboarding a couple years ago. She lives at Stone Circle, that big mansion on the Outer Point?”

“Of course, she does,” Odin said, his own hatred of this pretty girl growing. “Look at her. She thinks she’s so great.”

“She is great,” Hannah said, awestruck. “In fact, she calls herself Perfection.”

Tech skated up to Perfection. They popped their boards and stood talking, and Perfection reached out and put a hand on Tech’s arm.

Odin’s face turned red. “Bitch,” he whispered.

Hannah tried not to smile.

“They’re just talking,” Thor said, but he could see the way they looked at each other.

“I’m putting a stop to this,” Odin said, hopping on his skateboard and rushing over.

“You better go with her,” Hannah said. “This could get ugly.”

“You’re right,” Thor said, skating after his jealous little father. *Oh, boy*, he thought.

Oh, pika!

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Odin skated up and wrapped his arms around Tech's arm, giving him a kiss on the cheek.

"Oh, hey," Tech said, caught off guard.

"You gonna introduce me to your friend?" Odin said, looking up into the girl's haughty eyes, and as their eyes met he startled in recognition. Skrymir, the giant and master of illusion! What was he doing here?

Skrymir, too, found himself stunned as looked down at the pretty, freckle-faced girl and recognized Odin, All Father, trapped behind those big, innocent eyes.

Tech, feeling very uncomfortable having been caught flirting with Perfection, was also a bit tongue tied. "Uh, yeah," he said. "Perfection, this is Krystal."

Thor skated up and also recognized Skrymir inside the tall, leggy blonde. Skrymir? His hatred for the girl redoubled. Skrymir had once humiliated Thor in an event which became a part of the sagas spread throughout the Norse world. Thor had long held a grudge against the giant, and now he could only wonder: Why does he get to be so tall, beautiful and rich? The three former men looked each other over, feeling both embarrassed to be women, while also sizing each other up as women. They were all pretty, with great skin, and each one rapidly concluded that he was the prettiest of the three girls.

Odin, despite a sudden self-consciousness at being a female, was mostly just concerned with making sure Skrymir knew Tech was *his* man. His need to fend off other females over-rode anything that was left of the former Lord of Asgard. "I'm Tech's girlfriend," he said, tossing his hair and squeezing Tech's arm even harder.

Skrymir, regaining his poise, smiled, but it was a full, toothy smile, like a shark. "Isn't that sweet," he said. "And Krystal is such a pretty little name."

"I love your blonde hair," Thor said.

"Thanks," Skrymir said, touching his hair. He was very proud of his bouncy, blonde hair.

“Is it real, or another one of your little illusions?”

Catty little bitch, Skrymir thought “This is all real,” Skrymir said, gesturing at his breasts, which were much larger than Thor’s. “I like your hair, too,” he said, keeping the smile locked on his face. “That’s a great hairstyle– for a 12-year-old.”

The three men all smiled and slit their eyes.

Tech cleared his throat. Girls and their drama! “Okay, then,” he said. “We should all get back to practice. Big competition tomorrow.” He left, followed close behind by Odin.

“Oh, I don’t know there will be much competition,” Skrymir said to Thor, wanting to rattle his female rival. “I seem to recall you failing, oh, three competitions last we met? Including being defeated in a wrestling match by an old woman?”

“Just one of your stupid illusions,” Thor said. “Bitch!”

Skrymir laughed. “I look forward to humiliating you once again.”

“Good luck,” Thor said, sweetly, but in a way that clearly conveyed– I hope you fall and break your neck.

“Buhbye!” Skrymir said.

“Ugh!”



“Hey,” Odin said, skating after Tech. “What the hell was that?”

Tech knew exactly why Krystal was upset, and he cringed, annoyed that he would have to deal with more female drama. “I was talking to another skater,” Tech said. “Just like I do every day.”

“Oh, please!” Odin shouted. He’d decided to create a scene in front of all the other skaters. “Do you think I’m stupid?”

“You are kind of an airhead.”

Odin’s mouth dropped open. “You’re a jerk!”

Everyone was looking, watching. Tech formed a pyramid with his hands and adopted his “Zen Master” voice. “Attachment is the source of all suffering,” he said calmly. “You must let go of the idea that you own me or anyone.”

“I don’t think I own you! You’re my boyfriend!”

“You hear yourself? *My. My* boyfriend. You must learn of the dangers of the I, Me, Mine.”

“This is such--- ugh! What are you even talking about?”

“For your own good, I must help you break free of your attachment to me. We will no longer see each other.”

“You’re breaking up with me?”

“I cannot break that which was never real, for as the—”



Odin slapped Tech across the face and turned and skated away. He couldn't believe Tech would break up with him in front of everyone! He'd thought Tech cared about him, but Tech was just—just-- an idiot!

Thor, meanwhile, who'd finished sparring with Skymir, watched it all, doing his best to hide his smile.

Later, Thor sat alone on the beach that evening, watching the sunset, struggling with so many feelings. He hated Skymir, and he hated girl Skymir even more. Skymir's presence disturbed Thor. The giant could create the greatest of illusions. He'd once made Thor believe he was trying to lift a cat when it had actually been the great world serpent. He thought again about the weather, the too perfect weather. Captiva, indeed, seemed like an illusion. Could Skymir be behind all this?

Thinking about that made Thor's head hurt. He felt dizzy. Then, looking around, he shook his head. What had he been thinking about? Oh. Tech, of course.

How was he supposed to ever get Tech and end things with Jax without being a bitch?

His phone buzzed. He looked to see a text from Jax. "Wanna get together?"

Think of the devil, Thor thought, *and he will text*. Get together was just code for make out. Thor put his phone down, thinking he would just ignore the text, but he didn't want to be rude. *Sorry*, he typed back. *Resting for the skateboarding thing*.

Understood. I'll be there to cheer you on, Jax responded.

He's so supportive and understanding, Thor thought, it makes me want to puke. He wished sometimes Jax were more— what? More of an asshole? More of a man, he decided. More the kind of guy I used to be.

Thor sighed. Nothing seemed right anymore, nothing seemed good. His whole life was a disaster! When is it my turn to be happy? He wondered. "When will my dreams come true?" He asked the sky.

And then, like a miracle, as there was, once again no rain, a rainbow appeared out, over the ocean. It was so pretty! And it was a sign. Clearly. Thor smiled and felt his heart flutter. The universe was speaking to him! Telling him everything would be—

His phone buzzed again. This time a message from Darcy. I'm here with Tech. Come join us!

Tech. Just the sight of his name made Thor thirsty. "OMW," he texted back, thrilled and nervous and all tingly with anticipation. Tech had broken up with his father. The universe had opened a path and now just like that an invitation. Everything was just falling into place for him to get the man of his dreams! He looked at the rainbow, still hovering out over the ocean. "Thanks, Universe!"

Thor's conscious pricked at him a little bit as he headed off to meet Tech. I mean, what about Jax? *He'll probably never find out* Thor thought, *and even if he does he's such a nice guy—I mean, he'll totally forgive me.*